

A VOLUNTEER'S STORY

Zoe was a Communications intern with ALONE for 6 months. Here she tells her story of attending the ALONE Dinner Dance.

'I have to admit, I was very nervous. I arrived at the hotel to find myself surrounded by people that I hadn't met before, but most of whom I recognised from photos in the office, or whose names I had become familiar with over the past few months.'

Despite my anxiety, I realised that this might be a once in a lifetime experience where I am surrounded with a wealth of unique stories and wisdom. I decided to dive right in and start introducing myself to the guests, all of whom were friendly, welcoming and incredibly thankful for the work that ALONE (including office-based interns like me) does for them.

I was shown how to jive and to waltz, gifted a legion of Mary medal, promised a dance at the next large event, and given much appreciated dating advice. I was told stories from their youth, their heartbreaks, their recent illnesses. One particular lady and I parted with a hug and a kiss as she asked me not to forget her, and honestly I never will. It was a night where I learned that I'm actually not that bad a dancer, but most importantly I saw first-hand the difference a social event like this can have on people who are otherwise isolated and alone; the difference ALONE makes to lives every day.'



ALONE's Christmas Dinner Dance

CHRISTMAS DINNER DANCE

The ALONE Christmas Dinner Dance took place in the Louis Fitzgerald Hotel on Sunday November 30th. Over 180 older people and volunteers attended the event and it was a great evening of food, dancing and fun. Intro Matchmaking attended the event with Mary Black to sign 50 copies of her new autobiography "Down the crooked road" for the first 50 guests and 200 copies of her latest album of the same name. A huge thanks to Intro Matchmaking for inviting Mary along and sponsoring the CD's and books on the night.

KEY TO DIGNITY RESTAURANT CAMPAIGN

We are delighted to announce that some of Dublin's top restaurants and bars are supporting our **Key to Dignity Campaign** up until 31st December 2014. During this time, diners are being encouraged to leave a €1 voluntary donation when paying their bill and all funds raised will go towards providing homes for homeless older people in the months ahead. If you are planning a

lunch or dinner with family and friends over the coming weeks, why not pop into one of the following restaurants and help support ALONE this Christmas.

- Abbey Tavern, Howth
- Bang, Dublin 2
- Brasserie66, Dublin 2
- Bon Appetite, Malahide
- Cleaver East, Dublin 2
- Fallon & Byrne, Dublin 2
- Mourn Seafood, Dublin 4
- Nancy Hands, Dublin 8
- O'Connells, Dublin 4
- The Counter, Dundrum
- Rocklobster, Dundrum

THANK YOU

Thank you to all of the individuals, companies, schools and groups who have generously contributed to ALONE over the last year. Without your support, we simply could not continue our day-to-day work with older people in need. We look forward to working with you again in 2015. Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year

Sean Moynihan, ALONE, Chief Executive Officer

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NEWSLETTER
CHRISTMAS 2014

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Thank You & wishing you a happy holiday

Top Photo: George Hook with Ben Drury and volunteer Lorna Purcell

ALONE is an independent charity that works with the 1 in 5 older people who are homeless, socially isolated, living in deprivation or in crisis. We provide Supportive Housing, Befriending, Community Response and Campaigning services to hundreds of older people every week.

No one deserves to be lonely at Christmas

We recently launched our Christmas campaign with the help of George Hook, to highlight the issue of isolation and loneliness among some older people at Christmastime. At the launch of the campaign ALONE called on members of the public to reach out to older members of their community who may be isolated or lonely this holiday season.

Sean Moynihan, Chief Executive Officer of ALONE commented, "170,000 older Irish people live alone, which makes them vulnerable to isolation. This risk increases at Christmas when the nights are darker and the days are colder, making older people less inclined to leave their houses. This winter we are reminding the notoriously generous Irish public, to check in on their older neighbours who may be particularly vulnerable. People are often surprised to learn that loneliness is actually a greater health risk than smoking or obesity".

Sean continued "Thankfully most older people will enjoy a happy Christmas surrounded

by loved ones, but ALONE is urging the general public to be vigilant for those who are particularly vulnerable. We really hope that the public will support our campaign and our work over Christmas and take it upon themselves to ensure that older people in their community feel cared for. George Hook has very generously lent his support to help us get the message out there, that no one deserves to be lonely at Christmas."

George Hook commented, "I am delighted to help ALONE launch their Christmas campaign this year. ALONE do a great job of looking out for us older folk and I hope that people will take heed and check in on their older neighbours for a natter over a cup of tea."

For those who have concerns about their own well-being, or the well-being of a vulnerable older person in the community, ALONE can be contacted on (01) 679 1032. To make a donation and support ALONE's work this Christmastime visit www.alone.ie

ALONE LAUNCH NATIONAL BEFRIENDING DIRECTORY



Attendee's at ALONE's Befriending Event

On November 20th ALONE held a 'Shaping the Future of Befriending Services in Ireland' event in the Abbey Theatre. Here we launched our National Befriending Directory, along with presenting the first draft of our Befriending Services Coordination Guidebook.

The Befriending Directory lists all the Befriending Services for older people in the country and will be a valuable resource to

anyone working with vulnerable older people. The draft Guidebook was also presented at the launch to assist all organisations who currently run a Befriending Service or those hoping to set one up. ALONE have requested feedback and suggestions from other organisations to ensure a fully comprehensive guidebook on service provision in this area can be produced.

At the launch, Seán Moynihan, Chief Executive Officer of ALONE, commented "ALONE very much sees befriending as a preventative health measure and health intervention, however it is something that needs proper regulation and vetting to ensure the safety of both the volunteer and the older person. It's our vision that every vulnerable older person in Ireland will have access to a quality Befriending Service. We hope that by coming together today we can take the first steps in the formation of a strong befriending infrastructure for older people in Ireland."

If you would like a copy of the guidebook please get in touch with the office on (01) 679 1032

10 WAYS TO HELP ALONE THIS CHRISTMAS

1. Visit an older neighbour who might be finding the Christmas period difficult.
2. Support ALONE's Befriending Service to ensure more vulnerable older people can be supported by trained volunteers.
3. Donate to our **Key to Dignity Housing Campaign** to help us provide homes for homeless older people.
4. Help ALONE deliver Christmas Hampers to older people in need.
5. Organise a Christmas fundraising event for ALONE in your company or community.
6. Like and share our posts on facebook and twitter.
7. Hang ALONE posters in your local community - library, churches, doctor surgeries, etc.
8. Bring an older neighbour or friend out for a bite to eat over the Christmas period.
9. Deliver Christmas Dinners for ALONE.
10. Get in touch with ALONE if you have any concerns for an older person in your area.

Campaigning Success



ALONE's Campaigns for Change are designed to speak up when the rights of older people are not protected. Currently there are almost 5,000 older people on the social housing list but the real number in need of housing is much higher. Earlier this year we ran our Home Truths Housing Campaign to ensure that practical, effective solutions are put in place for homeless older people. We are committed to continuing our campaigns, speaking directly to decision makers to ensure positive change for those who rely on us.

The aim of the Home Truths Campaign was:

- To encourage local government to look at the issue of boarded up houses, and to ask them to support housing providers like ALONE to renovate these properties for social housing.

This campaign also had a specific target:

- To encourage DCC to release to us, a property that has been boarded up for 10 years, so that we can renovate and provide homes for homeless older people.

In ALONE we have been continuously campaigning:

- For more housing with supports for older people in need so they can live independently.
- For more step down care facilities to relieve pressure from the hospital system.
- To highlight the crisis that currently exists in the Fair Deal Scheme.

Results

- Secured funding of over €765,000 from CAS funding allowing us buy 5 new homes for homeless older people.
- DCC have released 8 units to ALONE. We will use these to provide homes for homeless older people.

These were very positive first steps but now we need support. We have launched our 'Key to Dignity Campaign' where we are asking people to make financial donations or donate skills and time. For more information visit www.alone.ie or call (01) 679 1032



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