

FUNDRAISING

Thanks to everyone who donated to ALONE while visiting Paddy Campbell's wonderful exhibition in Bewley's over the Christmas period. In total there was a €15,046.21 raised for older people in need! A special word of thanks also to those who volunteered at the event.



Dear Friend

Towards the end of 2013 there was understandable public outcry in light of media cover relating to certain charities in receipt of state funding. ALONE would like to assure all our supporters and volunteers that we operate to the highest standards and take a leadership position around transparency and accountability.

We have a strong ethos about how we operate and how we manage money which has been donated. It is important to us that we live our values through our work. At every level in this organisation, with every policy and every procedure, our ethos is turned from words into action.

We ensure the best use of the wonderful support we get. Without this support, whether it be through time offered, money donated or skills shared, it would not be possible to continue our work with the 1 in 10 older people most in need. All of the information regarding transparency is available on our website. Should you have any further questions, please contact me directly.

We have seen a dramatic increase in demand for our services in recent times and we envisage that demand will continue to rise in the years ahead. As we begin our new Strategic Plan we are confident that we will continue to meet the needs of the 1 in 10 older people in need.

On behalf of everyone here in ALONE we would like to extend a huge thank you to all of our generous supporters over the last year.

Sean Moynihan

CEO

FLORA WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON 2014

The Flora Women's Mini Marathon is fast approaching and this year we are hoping to recruit 100 ladies to step out and raise much needed funds for older people in need.

Please support our cause by contacting Suzanne on 01 6791032 or email fundraising@alone.ie.



Helping older people in need

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NEWSLETTER SPRING 2014

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Dear Friend...

ALONE provides vital support to the 1 in 10 older people at risk. ALONE receives no government funding and our essential activities are funded by donations from the public.

6 OLDER PEOPLE REHOMED IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS

Since last October, six new residents have moved into age friendly ALONE homes. Many of these older people were previously living in unsuitable conditions and were at risk of homelessness.

Tony, one of the newest ALONE residents, had lived in a damp and dirty bedsit in South Dublin for the past six years. There was mould growing on the walls and he nicknamed it 'the freezer' because it was so cold. 65 year old Tony said that he used to go to the doctor every few weeks with colds and flus and that his mood was badly affected. Speaking about how his previous accommodation impacted his mental and emotional health Tony said, "I was highly depressed and didn't care whether I lived or not".

Now, settled into his new ALONE home, Tony could not be happier. "I really couldn't have asked for better, I hardly think I deserve my new home." When asked how his

ALONE home had impacted on his life he said, "I can't describe it, it's just a world of difference. I have a really happy feeling about this place and I love bringing people over to show it off".

CEO of ALONE, Sean Moynihan said, "Tony reached out to ALONE after his landlord decided to sell the house that contained Tony's bedsit, leaving Tony with nowhere to go. Having previously been in emergency homeless accommodation he was very apprehensive about returning to that kind of accommodation again. We are so grateful that we were able to move Tony into his own fully refurbished ALONE home, this wouldn't have been possible without the support of the public and our volunteers".

ALONE provides 100 homes for the one in ten older people who are most in need across Dublin.

Photo above, new resident Tony with Siobhan O Connor

36 YEARS ON - WHAT HAS CHANGED?

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

From last summer we have seen unprecedented demand for our Community Response services. Since July of last year the team has been consistently supporting over 50 older people in crisis situations every month.

"It may be 36 years since ALONE was established" says Community Response Worker Kevin White "however for some older people, little has changed."

Kevin has recently been working with James, an older man from East Wall, around his housing conditions. "James used to work in the construction sector, however he became unemployed during the recession in the 80's and he has never been able to get himself back on track. He has mental health problems, is very isolated and over the years he has been filling up his home with domestic waste."

At a cost of just under €2800, and with 2 men working for 5 days, 3 truckloads of waste were removed from James's house. After the clear out, the house was disinfected and painted and maintenance was carried out to ensure it was safe and comfortable for James to continue living in. "In some ways that's the easiest part" says Kevin. ALONE will now work with the relevant services to ensure that James receives the proper support he needs around his hoarding issues and general mental health.

Another recent Community Response Case is that of Brian, a 67 year old man living in a bedsit in Ranelagh. He had been living for 23 years in a bedsit that had no windows. "It was cramped, smelly, damp, was a fire hazard and basically unfit for human habitation." says Kevin. With a real shortage of decent housing for single older people, shocking as it may be, many of the older people who come to us for help are living in conditions such as this.



SUITABLE HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE - A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUE

HOUSING

ALONE will be campaigning for the provision of adequate social housing for older people in the upcoming Local Election.

On a day-to-day basis we encounter increasingly challenging cases of neglect of vulnerable older people, a situation which has not changed much since the foundation of ALONE over 36 years ago. Vulnerable older people were on the fringes of society when our organisation was set-up, they remained so during the decade of economic growth, and are now disproportionately affected as a result of the downturn. We have very serious concerns about the ongoing welfare of vulnerable older people in the State, and these concerns are heightened by the lack of clear policies from any political party relating to older people.

Over the next few weeks we will be sending out more details on how you can support the campaign.

THREEFOLD INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR BEFRIENDING SERVICE IN 2013

BEFRIENDING

In 2013 we saw a threefold increase in demand for our Befriending Service. "One trend we have noticed is that more and more older people are referring themselves to our service." says Deirdre Madden, Volunteer Coordinator. "Some come to us because family have emigrated while others are isolated and lonely and have nowhere else to turn". The ALONE Befriending service provides crucial companionship to isolated older people by a trained and vetted volunteer. "Loneliness is considered as damaging to your health as obesity so by visiting an older person for an hour a week volunteers make a huge difference to an older person living alone."

ALONE's Befriending Volunteers visit an older person for an hour a week and it proves to be a very rewarding experience for both parties. During Friendship Week in February we ran a campaign to highlight the wonderful friendships that develop between the volunteer and the older person they visit. Below Elaine tells us of her experience of volunteering with ALONE.

On my way to work on a lovely summer's day in June 2012, I spotted a huge ALONE poster and I knew instantly that this was a charity which I would love to be involved with. I got in touch, signed up for training and was then matched with my new friend, 83 year old Florrie, who lives by herself in her ALONE home.

From the moment I met Florrie, I knew instantly that she was going to become someone very special in my life. I visit Florrie once a week and always leave her house smiling. I look forward to our cup of tea and of course the odd cake or biscuit – she is a devil for the chocolate and I am not much better! Often we catch up on our favourite soap Emmerdale or sometimes we just tell each other how our weeks have been.

Being part of ALONE has added greatly to my life. I have met some lovely people and I have made a very special friend in Florrie. Her friendship has made a huge difference in my life.

For me, befriending an older person is not just something that benefits them; but something that hugely benefits me. Even on a bad day in work I will visit Florrie afterwards and I always come out smiling. There really is "something about Florrie"!

ALONE SOCIAL EVENTS - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ALONE Spring Dinner Dance - Saturday 29th March, Fingallians GAA Club, Swords

ALONE Small Event - Sunday 11th May, Maritime Museum, Dun Laoghaire

ALONE Holiday to Wexford - Sunday 25th - Thursday 29th May



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