



ALONE ANNUAL REPORT 2010

ALONE
there when you need us

VISION STATEMENT

A society where all older people are included as valued and empowered members of their communities.

MISSION STATEMENT

ALONE supports older people in need through a befriending service, long-term housing and crisis support in the community.

VALUES

PARTNERSHIP

ALONE listens to our service users and strives to meet their needs and help maximise independence. We work closely with a wide range of services, both statutory and voluntary.

INNOVATION

ALONE is committed to a process of continuous improvement by learning, training and adapting, to ensure that we meet the changing needs of our service users.

DIGNITY AND RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

ALONE believes that every citizen's dignity and human rights should be honoured. We listen carefully to our service users to understand the world from their perspective and offer them help as required.

TRANSPARENCY

We are committed to working in an accountable, responsible and professional manner.

COMPANIONSHIP

Our volunteers provide crucial friendship to many older people. At ALONE we extend the spirit of companionship to one another and to all organisations and others with whom we work.

NON-JUDGEMENTAL

We listen carefully to everyone that we work with, in an open and professional manner. It is ALONE policy to treat everyone we work with in a non-judgemental, open and professional manner.

PRINCIPLES

We encourage everyone to support and value older people.

Volunteerism is at the heart of what we do.

We are professional in attitude and in our services.

We take a rights-based approach because we believe older people should not be dependent on charity.

We value our independence. Our funding comes only from donations from people who share our vision.

We are non-denominational.

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INTRODUCTION

The older people who contact ALONE may find themselves marginalised for a range of reasons.

Family members may have moved away or a spouse may have died. Their housing conditions may be sub-standard due to the age of the home or their inability to afford or manage repairs. They may have lived with general physical or mental ill-health all their lives, or have a disability that has become a problem as they get older. For others ageing might have decreased their mobility or resulted in cognitive dysfunction such as memory loss, shortened attention span or dementia. Some may have fallen into debt or poverty, struggling to make ends meet on State pension payments, or even unaware of the benefits available to them. In other cases people are suffering elder abuse, most frequently from close family. Often they are isolated, desperate or afraid and see no way out of their situation.

Alone staff and volunteers are there to befriend and listen respectfully to the needs of the individuals who come to us for help. Our services are person-centered; we work together with each of the people who use our services to find a solution to the problem they face, appropriate to their circumstances. We want to protect their dignity and ensure that they can continue to live their life as independently as possible.

ALONE takes a rights-based approach. This means we believe that nobody should be dependent long-term on charity. Once we have met the person's immediate needs, our priority is to link them in with local service providers and supports where they exist.

Ageing can bring contentment to many and opens up opportunities for personal growth. Unfortunately there remains a significant minority of older people who face serious challenges on their own. ALONE is there for them.





JANUARY

Volunteers distributed more than 500 Unilever New Year Hampers



APRIL

ALONE Spring Dinner Dance at the Red Cow Hotel



MAY

ALONE Forum on Ageing in Dublin's Mansion House



Party to celebrate Bealtaine cultural festival for older people



JUNE

Completion of ALONE housing survey



JULY

Popular Newstalk broadcaster Tom Dunne became an ALONE Ambassador



AUGUST

ALONE Summer Dinner Dance at Fingallians GAA Club



SEPTEMBER

The Volunteer Handbook was launched



The Irish Gerontological Society and ALONE awarded the annual Willie Bermingham Medal to Mary Robinson and Seamus Heaney



OCTOBER

ALONE received one of the inaugural Making a Difference awards, presented by the Vision Impaired Service Providers Alliance (VISPA)



NOVEMBER

We moved our offices from an apartment at Willie Bermingham Place to Olympic House off Camden Street



DECEMBER

We launched our Christmas campaign asking people to Give One Hour to help an older person in their community



22 volunteers and staff worked around the clock over Christmas, to provide heating fuel, medication and food as part of our extreme weather contingency plan



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We are all aware of a story of a person who started studying in their 70's or went skydiving in their 80's or got a black belt in martial arts in their 90's. People like this are inspiring role models. Energy, vitality and confidence in later years is to be celebrated.

However, for the one in ten older people who are marginalised and vulnerable, the story is very different. They tackle serious challenges, many of which they have faced on their own for years. These are the people that ALONE staff and volunteers befriend and support 365 days a year.

We are a grass-roots organisation that believes that everyone has a role to play in making Ireland a great place to grow old. Our vision is of a society where all have a role to play, in medical services, housing services and local businesses and as neighbours, donors, professionals and volunteers. At ALONE we know that this approach can work because our services are delivered in this way every day, in partnership with others.

2010 was the first year of our three year strategic plan, *Strength in Unity*. We focussed on developing internal structures, supports, training and models of service delivery to ensure effective responses when they were needed. We achieved everything represented in this report because of our staff and volunteers working in partnership. It is a tribute to everyone involved in ALONE that we deliver consistent and high quality services.

Organisations like ours can accomplish so much because of the support we receive from the public, as well as those we come in contact with as we do our work. We strongly believe that nobody should have to rely on charity, that all members of the community should be included and valued by society. Plus we believe that every one of us has the right to age in our own homes for as long as possible.

ALONE is committed to maintaining a consistent quality of service when and where we are needed and to extending our services where necessary. We all face numerous challenges with the current levels of reduction in state services and general cutbacks but ALONE will always ensure that the needs of older people who use our services are met.

Once again, I would like to thank all the volunteers, trustees and staff for their dedication, hard work and commitment to ALONE.

Seán Moynihan



We are a grass-roots organisation that believes that everyone has a role to play in making Ireland a great place to grow old.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

2010 was a special year for ALONE, marking 20 years since the untimely death of our founder, Willie Bermingham, whose spirit and vision has inspired and driven our charity. As we look back and celebrate Willie's work and our achievements since then, we also look forward to the challenges ahead, which is how he would have wanted it.

ALONE is committed to being an organisation that brings professional excellence to services driven by the energy of volunteerism. In 2010 we launched a new strategic plan entitled *Strength in Unity*. The plan recommits the organisation to helping the most marginalised and forgotten older people in our community, the single purpose for which ALONE was founded and with which we are determined to continue.

Our dedicated CEO, Seán Moynihan, and our volunteers have put in extra hours, developing new structures through which we can better support one another and channel our strengths with staff to hold specific areas of responsibility. I would like, therefore, to thank our volunteers and staff for their dedication, skill and effort in defining new models of service delivery that support the achievement of our strategic aims.

I would like also to thank my fellow Trustees for their commitment in guiding ALONE and keeping it faithful to the aims of our founder. As I come to the end of my term I wish my successor, Pat Morgan, every success as Chairman.

My final thanks must be to our individual and corporate supporters. I hope that this report gives a good insight into the difference that ALONE makes in the lives of so many older people who have nowhere else to turn. On their behalf especially I thank you and hope that you will continue to support us and value the work that we do.

We can't do it without you.

Michael Kelly



Our strategic plan recommits
the organisation to helping
the most marginalised and
forgotten older people
in our community.

FACTS AND FIGURES FOR 2010

ALONE employed 6 full-time and one part-time staff and had 110 volunteers. Together on an average day we provided direct services to 330 older people in need

Between July and December we received 1,300 requests for assistance, a jump of 50% on the previous six months

In 2010 nearly a quarter of residents in ALONE homes were aged 80 or over

We distributed €200,000 to over 1,000 older people who could not meet their gas bill payments

Our quarterly dinner dances were each attended by 180 people

51 older people (supported by 16 volunteers) went on the annual ALONE summer holiday

All of the work represented in this report was funded by generous donations from members of the public or companies

ALONE presentations were made by volunteers to 1,200 students in over 30 schools to raise awareness of issues facing older people

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Strategic Goal: ALONE will develop a process to respond to requests from older people in emergency situations or suffering hardship.

To deal with an increase in calls to ALONE, we set up a new department with a staff member dedicated to giving professional assistance to older people in emergency situations. The Community Response Service was soon dealing with 35 calls a month.

IN 2010

- From July to December the number of calls to ALONE from older people in crisis rose by 50%.
- Through this new targeted service we improved our links with other professionals such as public health nurses, occupational therapists, respite managers etc.
- The most frequent advocacy by Community Response was with the HSE (47%) followed by Dublin City Council Housing (29%) and then Social Welfare (12%).
- We distributed €200,000 donated from Bord Gáis to assist older people in fuel poverty who could not afford to pay their bills.

“Being with ALONE gives me a comforting feeling that people care and that makes a difference.”

JOHN'S STORY

A community nurse asked us to visit John (75) because she was concerned about his isolation and accommodation. His house was in poor condition, in need of renovation, repair and tidying up. The ceiling in the kitchen and extension was falling down in places and a bucket on the kitchen table caught water coming through the roof. ALONE worked with Dublin City Council on John's behalf to secure grants to cover the cost of urgent repairs.

We discovered that John was not receiving his full benefits and we negotiated with social welfare on his behalf. We got the situation rectified and in addition, secured back-payments due to him.

BRENDAN'S STORY

Brendan (81) lived in fear in his house that had been vandalised by local youths for years. Isolated and virtually under siege he was comforted by the weekly visits of two ALONE befriending volunteers.

Brendan's front windows had to be replaced twice and finally substituted for laminated glass. The reinforced panes bore the heavy marks of frequent attacks with bricks, building rubble and, most recently, parts of paving slabs, so they had become in danger of falling in. The volunteers alerted ALONE Community Response.

To minimise the risk to Brendan, we arranged the installation of transparent poly-carbonate sheets that could repel missiles without damage. We arranged to have the installation paid for by a combination of the insurance company, the Community Welfare Officer and what Brendan could afford himself.

Community Gardaí supported the claim and undertook to increase vigilance in patrolling Brendan's street. ALONE volunteers continue to visit Brendan providing companionship and reassurance. The level of intimidation has abated in recent months.

The names of the people in these stories have been changed to protect their privacy. No photo's of 'John' or 'Brendan' appear in this report.

BEFRIENDING SERVICE

Strategic Goal: We provide trained and supported volunteers who befriend and support older people in the community.

Regardless of the challenges they face, the greatest need that many older people have is friendship and company. ALONE befriending volunteers offer reliable companionship to lonely older people through weekly visits and support.

IN 2010

- We increased the number of volunteers from 80 to 110.
- We visited more than 180 older people every week.
- Community Response assisted 10 older people who needed higher levels of support than their befriending volunteers could offer by themselves.
- Community Response met older people who applied to the Befriending Service, to assess their needs and ensure that the service would suit them.

BETWEEN 2001 AND 2010, THE NUMBER OF OLDER PEOPLE LIVING ON THEIR OWN ROSE BY 14% (FROM 141,500 TO 161,600)

This means that 20,000 more older people were at risk of isolation and loneliness than ten years previously. ALONE will continue to offer companionship to as many lonely older people as possible by recruiting and training befriending volunteers. Our target is 150 volunteers by 2012.

MARY'S STORY

Mary (78) returned from England some years ago. Her family, childhood friends and neighbours have all passed on. As she gets older, her ability to make friends and maintain relationships has diminished.

Mary has suffered from poor health throughout her life. Her eyesight is weak and she has restricted mobility. Mary struggles financially, living from week to week. She is proud, independent and self-conscious about how her life has turned out. Ill-health and anxiety are part of her everyday experience. Mary contacted ALONE searching for companionship and support.

Mary and her befriending volunteer look forward to their regular Wednesday visit. Mary waits with a line of post-it notes written throughout the week, detailing everything of interest that occurred but which she had no one to tell. The volunteer and Mary discuss all the topics and events on the notes, one by one. The volunteer leaves, updated on the latest heated debates on The Joe Duffy Show, neighbourhood antics, lotto numbers and with an update on the death notices.

Mary is looking forward to the annual ALONE dinner dance, the weekend before their next visit. She will be waiting at the door from 3pm, ready to be collected at 4pm.

The name of the person in this story has been changed to protect her privacy. No photo's of 'Mary' appear in this report.





SOCIAL PROGRAMME

Strategic Goal: We have a range of social events, both big and small, which accommodate diversity and meet the social needs of older people in the community.

IN 2010

- We hosted spring and summer dinner dances, each attended by about 180 people. (Due to severe weather conditions the annual Christmas dance was postponed until February 2011.)
- We hosted a storytelling and traditional music event for over 100 people to coincide with the Bealtaine Arts Festival to celebrate creativity in older age.
- 51 older people, supported by 16 volunteers, enjoyed the annual ALONE summer holiday which took place in Ennis, Co. Clare.
- The cinema club ran on the last Wednesday of every month with attendees enjoying a light meal together after the shows.
- Larkin College Secondary School hosted 35 ALONE service users for a Christmas party and gift-giving.
- To cater for as many service users as possible, we appointed volunteer project leaders for different areas including; Large Socials, Small Socials, the Cinema Club and the Summer Holiday.

THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO ALONE IN MANY WAYS

I volunteered to be Transport Coordinator for ALONE social events for the older people, some of whom have mobility issues. Then I became Project Leader for Large Social Events. I have an enthusiastic team of volunteers and the ALONE office provides us with support.

The events are a great way for the guests to socialise as well as having a good night out. There is a sit-down meal, followed by a band, some open-mic singing and dancing. It's great to see the older people up on the dance floor and they sure know how to enjoy themselves! For some of them it may be the only opportunity they get to have a night out a few times a year.

Sinead Howard (Large Social Events Project Leader)

MARIE'S STORY

Marie (68) has had a life full of challenges, including a history of homelessness and alcohol dependence. Her difficulties eventually resulted in her being estranged from her family. Marie was given a home in sheltered accommodation and is now living independently. She takes great pride in looking after her home and ensuring her bills are paid on time.

Marie was referred to ALONE by the housing association which gave her a home, as she knew nobody in the area. Marie is visited weekly by an ALONE volunteer. They often go out together to the shops and Marie gets great enjoyment from the ALONE social events. Recently her volunteer has been teaching Marie how to use a computer. Marie has contacted her family and is delighted to be back in touch with them.

I'm 73 years old and I moved to a new address two years ago. I'm very active but I have no friends around here and feel very alone. I have a family of six children who have all fled the nest, and have families of their own, which keeps them busy. I'd love to be part of a group, or know where people of my age meet or socialise together. I'm lost. Would be most grateful to you if you could let me know of anything in my area.

Sincerely, Kate

The names of the people in these stories have been changed to protect their privacy. No photo's of 'Marie' or 'Kate' appear in this report.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Strategic Goal: We have sufficient support structures in place to allow residents to maximise their choices and maintain control over their lives.

Our Housing Support Service aims to sustain the independent living and quality of life of the older people living in ALONE homes. Residents may need support for a variety of reasons including when they are settling-in; if they are ill at home, getting ready for a hospital stay or being discharged back into the community; if they want advice about welfare benefits or external support services; if they are lonely. Our two Housing Support staff work closely with services in the community such as those provided by the HSE.

IN 2010

- We implemented a case management system to advance and support independence of residents. By developing support plans, staff provide quality individualised care and ensure that assistance is available to residents when they need it most.
- We informed all residents of their legal rights as tenants.
- We had 8-10 applications for every ALONE Housing vacancy in 2010.
- The average age of our residents was 34% in their 60's, 43% in their 70's and 23% were 80 years of age or older.

“I think there is something about the ALONE houses that makes your life last a bit longer. It's the security.”

MOLLY'S STORY

Molly (78) applied for ALONE housing following a period in sheltered accommodation that was inappropriate and hindered her independence. Molly has restricted mobility and prior to her arrival we adapted her ALONE home to suit her needs e.g. installing a waist-high fridge as she has difficulty bending, installing shower rails etc.

When Molly moved in we linked her to a public health nurse and a new GP; referred her to community occupational therapy; organised a meals service for her; helped her with banking, setting up direct debits, applying for rent supplement etc.

The volunteer coordinator matched Molly with a befriending volunteer who visits her weekly. Molly had a fall in May and ALONE helped her to apply for a respite service for three weeks. We also supported a successful application for carer support for personal care.

We worked closely with Molly and her Occupational Therapist to adapt her ALONE home to increase her independence by creating space for her to store a wheelchair.

We are currently assisting Molly with issues around her medication and money management. She gets great enjoyment from attending ALONE socials and holidays.

The name of the person in this story has been changed to protect her privacy. No photo's of 'Molly' appear in this report.



PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Strategic Goal: All ALONE housing meets the best standard to allow people to age at home.

ALONE provides lifetime tenancies with support, in purpose-built clusters of homes and individual houses in the community. ALONE accommodation is warm, comfortable, safe and served by our on-call maintenance team.

IN 2010

- We maintained 97 homes for 100 older people who would otherwise have been at risk of homelessness.
- We scheduled routine maintenance and improvement of properties in line with a new Housing Maintenance and Capital Plan. By implementing preventative maintenance measures, we anticipate a reduction in maintenance calls in 2011.
- We received 420 maintenance calls
 - 30 emergencies; including fire damage, replacement of front doors, burst pipes during cold weather, heating break-downs in winter and electrical faults.
 - 150 urgent; including snow-damaged guttering, blocked toilets and drains and heating break-downs outside winter months.
 - 240 routine; including broken appliances, minor leaks and wear and tear damage.
- We surveyed all ALONE properties and began work on an agreed standard for our housing. We will complete a specification of ideal location, layout, design and construction by mid-2011. We will benchmark ALONE homes against this standard to plan future improvements, sales and acquisitions.
- Based on research into best industry practice for insulation and heating, we insulated 35 roofs and began replacing all single-glazed windows.

- We fitted-out new offices in Olympic House.
- We refurbished a store room for donations of good quality second-hand furniture, TV's and kitchen equipment to distribute to residents as required.
- During the severe weather we prepared 6 properties for new residents so they could be in before Christmas (repainting, hanging new curtains, placing new floor coverings, installing new furniture and general maintenance).
- In December we cleared snow at ALONE Walk and Willie Bermingham Place; on the day before Christmas Eve the Defence Forces came to our assistance at both locations.

WE MOVED

In November our staff team moved to new offices in Olympic House on Pleasants Street in Dublin 8. The new location is central and includes a training room for volunteers and staff, meeting room for older people to visit should they have any problems, drop-in desks for volunteers organising social events etc. We had been using an apartment at Willie Bermingham Place as an office so an extra benefit of the move was to free-up this accommodation for an older person.







PHILIP'S STORY

Philip (61) moved into ALONE housing following two hospital social work referrals. He had been hospitalised for two years following complex hip damage due to a fall. He had spent a considerable amount of time caring for his elderly mother whilst he lived in his brother's house. Due to disagreements with his brother, Philip had to leave his house and was living in a hostel.

When he moved in to his ALONE home he was still in a lot of pain and was confused regarding his medication and medical treatment and medication. He was back drinking 5/6 pints a day as he had for the past 20 years prior to being hospitalised. He was depressed and missed caring for his mother.

Philip depended on ALONE staff for advice, support and advocacy with GPs, hospitals and physiotherapists. It was very important to him that he had someone to explain and clarify his treatment plan for him. He was hospitalised twice in the first three months of his tenancy. Alcohol contributed to confusion, medication intolerance, pain, lack of appetite, memory problems and insomnia. It was difficult for him when staff pointed out this connection but with their support, after a few failed attempts, he stopped drinking alcohol. He also gave up smoking.

About six weeks into his tenancy he expressed delight and appreciation for the support he was getting. As he was better able to manage on his own Philip's independence steadily increased. We worked with him to organise practicalities like banking and benefits. Joe was ambivalent about attending the ALONE socials. A volunteer was made aware of this at his first outing and ensured his comfort. Joe now suffers less from depression and gets weekly visits from an ALONE volunteer.

The name of the person in this story has been changed to protect his privacy. No photo's of 'Philip' appear in this report.

JOHN'S STORY

John (89) has lived in the same area all his life. He still greatly mourns his wife who passed away over 20 years ago. It is a matter of pride for John to keep the house just how his late wife would have liked it but this is becoming a bigger struggle for him as time goes by.

John has some very close neighbours who visit him and take him to Mass. But John no longer knows the majority of people on his street and he has started to feel like a stranger in his own neighbourhood. He says he misses the chats he used to have with people over his front gate.

John was referred to ALONE by his Public Health Nurse and has been visited by a volunteer for many years. On their visits they simply have a cup of tea and a chat. John says the importance of this cannot be over-estimated for someone living on their own.

BILL'S STORY

Bill (84) contacted ALONE in December as he could not get out of his house because of ice and snow. We checked in with him in the New Year and asked if there was anything else he needed. It turned out he was not receiving his correct benefits and his house was still in his deceased parent's name and this caused complications in a number of areas.

We helped him to change names over on bills and apply for a Household Benefit package which comprised gas or electric units, a telephone allowance and a TV licence. We ensured he had his bus pass and checked that his medical card was up to date.

Bill wrote to thank ALONE, not only for sorting things out but also for taking a load off his mind. He had been anxious for a long time as he knew he had to update paperwork and felt overwhelmed by the task but any time he had tried to sort things out he said they just seemed to get more complicated. We organised a survey of Bill's house to see how it could be made more energy efficient. Hopefully this will help to make this winter more comfortable for him.

The names of the people in these stories have been changed to protect their privacy. No photo's of 'John' or 'Bill' appear in this report.





“We didn’t have anything like this training when I started as a volunteer, many years ago. It was excellent and has a lot of information for experienced volunteers like me as well as the newer ones.” Joan

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND TRAINING

ALONE would not exist, nor could it continue to do its work, without the dedication of so many ALONE volunteers of all ages and backgrounds who befriend and support older people in need every day.

IN 2010

- We captured the learning of a generation of volunteers in the new ALONE Volunteer Handbook, launched in September. The handbook details the role of volunteers, gives guidelines on important areas such as boundaries and health and safety and includes the supports available to volunteers.
- Core training (largely based on the content of the Volunteer Handbook) was introduced in October and 30% of volunteers completed the four modules in the first two months. The training covers the history and methodology of ALONE services, befriending and the opportunities and challenges of ageing.
- Guest speakers addressed our monthly meetings on a range of issues and specialised training was held on topics such as ageism awareness and age equality, manual handling and assistance for wheelchair-users and elder abuse.
- We introduced Garda-vetting of all ALONE volunteers.

VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP GROUP

After consultation with ALONE volunteers, staff and trustees, a new system of supporting and empowering volunteers was introduced. Through the new Volunteer Leadership Group experienced volunteers mentor newer volunteers, especially in their first weeks. Volunteer project leaders work closely with staff on specific areas of responsibility such as Social Events, Transport and School Talks.

MAURA SAYS SHE ENJOYS THE COMPANY AND TALK MOST OF ALL

Being a volunteer is very fulfilling and it's a great life experience. I have become more aware of the needs of older people. It doesn't even feel like I am a 'volunteer' because it is like I am visiting a friend every week for a cup of tea, which is when all good conversations start! I visit a lady named Maura once a week and give her a call now and again to check in with her. A lot of the time all anyone wants is a bit of company so we both get a lot out of the visit.

Maura says she enjoys the company and talk most of all. But she also knows that ALONE is there for her should she need help at any stage. Last winter, when the cold spell hit, ALONE delivered shopping to her; I know she was very grateful for this act of kindness. Maura also attended the Christmas and Summer dinner dances. She had nothing but good things to say about these events.

I feel in recent years during the economic boom everyone was so busy rushing about thinking about themselves. Now when life may be a little bit harder is the time to give something back. I find being part of ALONE is so rewarding for many reasons, I would recommend it to anyone.

Sinead Morrissey (Befriending Volunteer)

“I enjoy the chat and the laugh with my volunteer and I always get a positive reaction and encouragement from ALONE.”

CAMPAIGNING

In 2010 we actively campaigned on a number of issues including elder abuse, lack of standards in the home care system and the increased risks of isolation and loneliness for older people during Christmas. As well as bringing attention to issues of importance for the people who use our services, a heightened media presence increased awareness of our work and attracted more calls for assistance. Between July and December we received 1,300 requests for help, a jump of 50%.

CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN

For Christmas we ran a campaign based on the ALONE slogan; *Don't Leave It To Others, They May Have Left It To You*. We distributed posters and flyers throughout Dublin asking people to give an hour of their time to older people in their area. Many people contacted the office and our Facebook site with their ideas, ranging from taking someone to a garden centre or helping them put up their Christmas decorations to ensuring they had coal and gas. The campaign took on a special relevance when many older people found themselves housebound and short of supplies due to the cold weather.

ALONE AMBASSADOR

Tom Dunne, the popular Newstalk broadcaster joined ALONE as an ambassador to raise our profile. Tom is well known as presenter of *The Tom Dunne Show* on Newstalk 106 and as lead singer with Something Happens. "I want my listeners and the public to understand the important work the volunteers and staff of ALONE do for many vulnerable older people in Dublin," he said. "I hope that I can help ALONE spread their word and generate increased support for the organisation which has been a fixture in Dublin, and beyond, for over 30 years." A Christmas special of *The Tom Dunne Show* featured live interviews with ALONE residents and their choice of seasonal music.

SCHOOLS TALKS

Our schools programme reached 1,200 students in 30 schools all over Dublin. The aim of the presentation – which is delivered by experienced volunteers and includes DVD and Power Point content – is to give insights into the wider issues that affect older people in general and into the work of ALONE.

ON-LINE

We relaunched our website www.alone.ie in May. The site got over 80,000 hits by the end of the year. The ALONE-Ireland Facebook page received 36,700 views of published content. The number of active users grew by 850%, from 80 to 420 in the second half of the year and by December we had 720 Fans. We plan to continue to improve the quality of our on-line content and our use of social media including Twitter (ALONE_Ireland) and Linked-In in 2011.

NEWSLETTER

Our quarterly newsletter included interviews with older people engaged with ALONE services, volunteers and staff as well as up-to-date news on our work and issues of importance to older people in particular. All newsletters are available for download from our website.

ALONE ARCHIVE

ALONE's history is valued by everyone in the organisation. The knowledge of people who have worked in ALONE or engaged with our services over the years is given the importance it deserves and continues to inspire and inform our work today. In 2010 we decided to gather as much material as possible in an archive, to ensure it is preserved and can be shared in future publications.

We appealed for posters, news bulletins, pictures and memorabilia that we could collate. We began to upload everything that we could scan or photograph onto the website. Volunteers started recording interviews with people who had been involved with ALONE since the early days to ensure that none of our anecdotal history is lost.

“ALONE has done me the world of good. Thank you all for your good work and never forgetting about me.”





Willie Bermingham medals were awarded to Her Excellency Mary Robinson (ex-President of Ireland and UN Human Rights Commissioner) and Seamus Heaney, Nobel Laureate in poetry.

FORUM ON AGEING

In April, to mark the 20th anniversary of the death of our founder, ALONE hosted a Forum On Ageing in Dublin's Mansion House.

Chairman Michael Kelly, outlined the purposes of the event; "to commemorate Willie Bermingham's memory, to discuss issues relating to ageing which are central to ALONE's ethos and to forge new bonds and relationships with individuals and organisations working with older people so that we can all carry out our work more effectively".

The event was addressed by Lord Mayor Emer Costello and Minister for State for Older People, Áine Brady, Anne Connolly (Ageing Well Network), Professor Davis Coakley (St. James' Hospital) and Melina Ziegel (The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing – TILDA).

Seán Moynihan (ALONE CEO) called for greater partnership among independent charities who – in these difficult economic times – "have the freedom to move quickly to respond to changing demands." He ended with a clear message; "What wasn't possible before needs to become possible now. I believe this was Willie Bermingham's message to us all".



Pictured (Left to right): Michael Kelly (ALONE Chairman), Minister for State for Older People, Áine Brady, Lord Mayor Emer Costello and Seán Moynihan (ALONE CEO)

WILLIE BERMINGHAM

Willie Bermingham was a fireman who discovered, in the course of his duty and over a short period of time, the remains of a number of neglected older people who had died destitute and alone in the cold winter of 1976. Joined by a small group of volunteers, he began a 'search that building' campaign, to locate older people in need left behind in the inner city by the 'flight to the suburbs' of younger families. In 1977 he founded ALONE and we are proud to say that some of the original volunteers continue to this day to offer their time and experience to ALONE on the Board and as befriending volunteers. Willie Bermingham passed away on the 23rd of April 1990, aged only 48. His legacy is a challenge to us all; if we don't solve the problems we see in front of us, who will? ALONE has matured and expanded and our aim remains the same: to reach out to marginalised older people in need, to offer friendship and to help them in any way we can.



Willie Bermingham (1943-1990)

WILLIE BERMINGHAM MEDAL

Every year the Irish Gerontological Society (IGS) and ALONE award the Willie Bermingham Medal which is linked to a prestigious lecture. In 2010 The IGS, the Irish Society of Physicians in Geriatric Medicine and the European Union Geriatric Medicine Society hosted the largest scientific meeting dedicated to ageing ever held in Ireland. To mark the 20th anniversary of Willie Bermingham's death, medals were awarded to Her Excellency, Mary Robinson (ex-President of Ireland and UN Human Rights Commissioner), who spoke on Global Ageing and Health, and Seamus Heaney, Nobel Laureate in poetry. Seamus Heaney said of Willie Bermingham, "What I loved about the man was he had a feeling for the solitary and he showed solidarity with the solitary. He was an example of kindness and good citizenship. Willie's organisation was called ALONE for A Little Offering Never Ends, well this medal is a big honour that won't end either".

“The staff members who work behind the scenes are some of the friendliest people I have ever met, and they work long, dedicated hours so that older citizens of Dublin can receive the best possible services that they are capable of providing. Their depth of motivation has become embedded in me and in the work that I have done for them.”

Danielle Baker (a student from the USA who volunteered with ALONE).



Pictured (Left to Right): Ethna Traynor (Housing Officer), Kevin Kelly (Housing Support), Elaine Phelan (Housing Support), Emma Kennedy (Volunteer Coordinator North City), Seán Moynihan (CEO), Jackie Godden (Accounts), Sandra Fox (Volunteer Coordinator South City), Emma Morgan (Income Management), Kevin White (Community Response), Not in this photo is Terri Hughes, ALONE Administrator, pictured on page 3 (November)

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL ALONE VOLUNTEERS IN 2010!

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Erinna Behal | Barry Delaney | Jennifer Kane | Patrick McDevitt | Anne O'Hara |
| Eamon Behan | Mary Dempsey | Michael Keegan | Billy McDonald | Ibikunle Olokuntoye |
| Joe Behan | Kate Donohue | Fiona Kennedy | Catriona McDonald | Niamh O'Neill |
| Roger Bolger | Patrice Desmond | Liz Kilcommons | Martin McEvoy | Emma O'Riordan |
| Ray Bowden | Shaun Doyle | Siobhan Lally | Sandy McGroarty | Yvonne O'Shea |
| Aidan Bowers | Annette Egan | Pat Lane | Margaret Ann McLaughlin | Ita Patton |
| Sarah Boyle | James Egan | Stephen Langton | Tom McLaughlin | Sandrine Pigat |
| Eimear Brady | Elizabeth Eggleston | Patricia Larkin | Caoimhe Merrick | Robin Potke |
| Pat Brett | Angela Eustace | Pamela Lennon | Yves Michalet | Ann Marie Power |
| Sophie Buckland | Brendan Fanning | Rose Lew | Helen Mooney | Bryan Poynton |
| Stephanie Burke | Siobhan Farrell | Jacqui Lewis | Pat Morgan | Ally Quinn |
| Deirdre Byrne | Eileen Fitzgerald | Aideen Loftus | Sinead Morrissey | Angela Redmond |
| Carmel Callan | Chris Flack | Claire Looney | Veronica Muller | Debbie Rennick |
| Pamela Campion | Tommy Flynn | Tom Lynam | Sarah Jane Murphy | Louise Roche |
| Seamus Carthy | Joanna Gallagher | Janet Lynch | Deirdre Murray | Lorna Roe |
| Michael Casey | Elisa Garcia | Shane MacThomais | Akiko Nanjo | Kate Rooney |
| Jeremy Chapman | Annette Gavigan | Michelle Magnier | Marie Ni Bhain | Garrett Sheehan |
| Cordaelia Connaughton-Deeny | Sarah Hanlon | Rosanna Maguire | Lorraine Nicholson | Eithne Sherry |
| Michelle Corbett | Aidan Harney | Teresa Mallon | Marie Nolan | Harry Shiell |
| Maura Corcoran | Pamela Harte | Catherine Manley | Phyllis Nolan | Violet Sutcliffe |
| Nickey Corr | Imelda Hinz | Celine Martone | Adrian O'Brien | Laura Tyndall |
| Gerard Cosgrove | Michael Hodgins | Joan McAdam | Donna O'Brien | Sandra Vedres Cooke |
| Valerie Coyne | Barbara Hogan | Patrick McCabe | Fiona O'Connor | Mary Walsh |
| Aisling Cronin | Sinead Howard | Kevin McConville | Deirdre O'Doherty | Brita Waters |
| Mapi Defenio | Diana Ivanova | Margaret McDermott | Tommy O'Flanagan | |

FUNDRAISING

In 2010 we relied solely on the generous support of the public and organisations who recognised the importance and value of our work.

THANK YOU

On behalf of each older person assisted by ALONE services in 2010 we would like to thank everyone who contributed, for their generosity – whether through time, donations or gifts – in improving the standards of so many lives.

GENERAL DONATIONS

In 2010, ALONE received more than 800 donations from the general public, private companies and community and church-based organisations. Approximately 360 single donations were received, over half during the Christmas period.

LEGACIES

Legacies have always made-up a large proportion of ALONE's income. In 2010, ALONE received 14 legacies amounting to more than €330,000 in total.

MYCHARITY.IE

MyCharity.ie. is an online fundraising platform which allows individuals to donate funds to a chosen charity in a variety of ways. This includes single donations, planned monthly donations and community events where sponsorship is pledged to reach a target for an event or challenge. 138 donations were pledged to ALONE through mycharity.ie.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Individuals participating in community events are an important part of fundraising for ALONE. Community-based fundraising is a chance to bring together friends, family and the public in fun and creative ways which make a difference through raising awareness and vital funds to support our work. Two such events in which people participated to benefit ALONE in 2010 were the Flora Women's Dublin Mini Marathon and the Gaelforce West Adventure Race.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

UPS

During the summer of 2010 the staff of UPS volunteered to garden and paint at our housing development in ALONE Walk. A relationship was created between the two organisations and UPS staff experienced first-hand the impact of the work that ALONE does. On October 1st – to coincide with National Volunteer Day – the UPS Foundation made a generous donation of USD\$27,000 (approximately €20,000) for ALONE to purchase a minibus. The bus is now used to transport older people in need to appointments, to assist those with mobility issues in carrying out their daily activities and to transport guests to and from ALONE social events.



Pictured: ALONE Ambassador Tom Dunne (front) with residents of ALONE housing, representatives of ALONE volunteers and the people they visit, ALONE CEO Seán Moynihan, Jim Dempsey (back) and Jim Kearney (right), both from UPS.

“Thank you for your very generous gift of €200 towards my gas bill. To my mind, the thought behind your activity far outweighs the material gain. May the idea of ALONE continue to prosper far into the distant future.”

BORD GÁIS DONATION

In January, Bord Gáis Energy donated €200,000 to ALONE to distribute to older people who were struggling to pay their bills.

As we get older we are particularly vulnerable to cold. Fear of debt means that many will sacrifice necessities, even food, to ensure that they can pay their heating bills. Living in poorly insulated and damp conditions, some older people still cannot afford the cost of heating their homes.

ALONE Community Response worked with statutory and voluntary organisations, community groups and professionals, such as doctors and social workers, to ensure that the funds reached those most at risk from fuel poverty. In this way ALONE assisted nearly 1,000 households, where otherwise older people would have suffered cold and associated ill-health.

The scheme had an unforeseen benefit: Many who availed of the scheme have since contacted ALONE for advice and assistance in relation to other concerns. On behalf of everyone who benefitted from their generosity, we thank Bord Gáis.

TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE

The UPS and Bord Gáis donations are excellent examples of how companies and charitable organisations can work together to support those most in need. ALONE is keen to work in partnership with any organisation that shares our concern for marginalised older people and wants to make a difference.

FINANCE SUMMARY

In 2010, ALONE recorded a small net surplus of €22,135 (including bank interest). Main sources of income were legacies, Davy ALONE trust, general donations and rent. Other sources were court fines, amortisation of grants and dividend income. We received no income from the State.

ALONE ensures that the maximum proportion of funds goes directly to supporting older people in need. In 2010, direct service-related costs accounted for nearly half of the total expenditure. ALONE operated with a ratio of 17 volunteers to one staff member. All volunteers and full-time staff were engaged in active delivery of services.

NUMBERS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN NEED SUPPORTED IN 2010

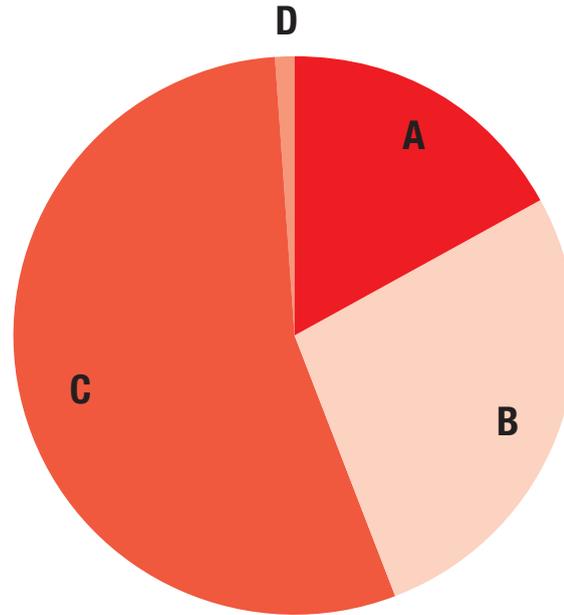
- 100 people were housed in ALONE accommodation and supported by staff and volunteers
- 420 housing maintenance call-outs were responded to
- 200 people received weekly visits by befriending volunteers
- 1,000 households suffering fuel poverty were assisted with their gas bills
- 2,110 requests for advice or crisis assistance were responded to
- 240 emergency interventions were carried out by Community Response
- 640 people attended ALONE socials
- 500 Christmas hampers were distributed

“We all face numerous challenges with the current levels of reduction in State services and general cutbacks but ALONE will continue to ensure that the needs of older people who use our services are met.”

Seán Moynihan, ALONE CEO

ALONE 2010 INCOME

- A** 17% Rent
- B** 27% General Donations
- C** 55% Legacies
- D** 1% Court Fines

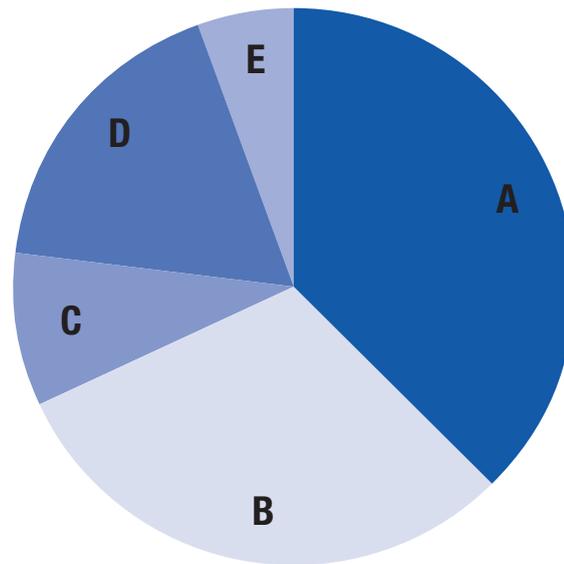


| INCOME | 2010 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Rent | €104,291 |
| General Donations | €164,524 |
| Legacies | €332,616 |
| Court Fines | €6,102 |
| Total Income | €607,533 |

ALONE 2010 EXPENDITURE

- A** 38% Staffing*
- B** 30% Service-Related
- C** 9% Office, Administration & Misc
- D** 18% Campaigning & Membership
- E** 5% Charitable Trust Donations

* In the charity sector the average expenditure on staff is >70%



| EXPENDITURE (operating) | 2010 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Staffing | €256,197 |
| Volunteer Activity | €53,882 |
| Transport | €4,306 |
| Office & Administration | €59,755 |
| Property Insurance | €20,866 |
| Property Repairs & Maintenance | €123,456 |
| Provisions | €6,297 |
| Communication | €59,991 |
| Fees / Memberships | €59,275 |
| Charitable Trust Donations | €36,479 |
| Total Expenditure | €680,504 |



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Facebook: ALONE-Ireland

Twitter: ALONE_Ireland

“Working as a Befriending Volunteer involves becoming a part of someone’s life, to share their routine, their happiness, their stories . . . but also becoming aware of their fears and the challenges they are facing every day. If I had to choose a word to describe my experience it would be ‘generosity’. The older person wants to share everything with you.”

Elisa

