



GOOD SHEPHERD CORK



First a Home, then Hope

The Ireland Funds is helping ensure no vulnerable woman or child is turned away.



JENNIFER KNEW SHE HAD TO LEAVE.

The violence in her home was at a point where she feared for her life and in her words, "I was gonna end up dead." • Jennifer found a bed at Good Shepherd Cork's Edel House, an **emergency accommodation which serves over 50 homeless women and children a night.** • Jennifer spent the next nine-and-a-half months at Edel House. She battled drug and alcohol addiction and is now in recovery. **Good Shepherd Cork has continued to support Jennifer's journey with housing, advocacy, and education.** • At first Jennifer was unsure, but soon saw the benefits to the education program. "I thought it might not be for me at all. It's really changed me, helped me to get routine in my life. I hadn't had it for such a long time. I forgot what life was. It's just shown me bit by bit. Computers, communications... just the people...everyone's caring! I realize that there really is more to life." • **Today, thanks to Good Shepherd Cork, Jennifer has found a new level of independence and is living in her own home.**

JENNIFER'S STORY

is not uncommon in Ireland. Good Shepherd Cork works with these women, children and families who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. Good Shepherd Cork is the only agency in Cork that can admit and care for children who are homeless. Grounded in a belief in social justice and equality, it addresses the root causes of homelessness and social exclusion and aims to break the cycle of homelessness through generations. All backgrounds, ages and stages of life are welcomed and served.

Life in emergency accommodation is extremely stressful for children. Research shows that homelessness in childhood can lead to poor health, low self-esteem, problems in school, alienation, and ultimately, as an adult, high risk of future homelessness. But as the homelessness crisis increases, people are staying in emergency accommodation for longer periods, typically several months and sometimes over a year as it becomes increasingly difficult to find affordable housing.

In response to this crisis, Good Shepherd Cork is providing women, children and families with a safe place to stay and practical supports to find and move on to secure long-term housing; along with a wide range of educational, therapeutic and emotional supports to build the resilience and coping skills to best manage the many stresses of homelessness. Its services include:

EDEL HOUSE: *emergency accommodation:*

Edel House is emergency accommodation for women and children who find themselves homeless. Every night there are over 50 women and children in residence with a staff that works with women to help them to return to independent living as quickly as possible.

REDCLYFFE: *a family hub and support to families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation:*

In mid-2018 Redclyffe was opened. It is a 70-bed 'family hub' to provide temporary accommodation for families. Outreach Workers support a further 50 families in B&Bs who cannot be accommodated at Edel House or Redclyffe when the services are at full capacity.

RIVERVIEW: *residential care for teenage girls:*

Riverview helps girls ages 15 - 19 who are homeless achieve greater resilience and wellbeing. Key workers engage on a one-to-one basis with each girl to help them to resolve issues and to move on to independent living or to return to their families, whichever is most appropriate.

BAILE AN AOIRE: *longer-term supported and transitional housing:*

Baile An Aoire offers quality accommodation to single adult women in a safe and nurturing community. There are also two apartments which provide transitional housing for vulnerable families.

BRUAC: *education and development:*

Good Shepherd Cork's Education & Development program, based at Bruac, offers fresh educational opportunities to girls and women who are unable to access mainstream education. Students are often highly vulnerable and dealing with a range of issues which prevent them accessing mainstream services. The approach is to place an equal emphasis on personal as well as educational development.

SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY:

A Support and Advocacy team personalizes services to meet the individual needs of each woman and child as they progress to sustainable independent living. Support and Advocacy workers actively involve women in decision making and planning, providing practical and emotional support as well as links to other appropriate services.

HOW HAS THE IRELAND FUNDS HELPED?

Good Shepherd Cork received two grants through the Small Grants Round 2017 and 2018, totalling €7,000. These grants have enabled women to stay in emergency accommodation and receive therapeutic support as well as education and personal development. The grants have also allowed them to provide summer camp places for children staying in emergency accommodation.

The Ireland Funds is pleased in addition to benefiting from the Small Grants Round, our introduction of Good Shepherd's work to other funding sources opened additional opportunities to the value of €300,000 over 3 years.

"There is a crisis of family homelessness in Ireland," says Allison Aldred, CEO of Good Shepherd Cork. "Support from The Ireland Funds is helping us to break this tragic cycle by allowing us to develop and deliver educational and therapeutic supports to women and children in our services, encouraging them to learn, develop skills, improve health and build their self-esteem and resilience and so better cope with and move on from the trauma of homelessness. It is these additional supports that can really make a positive difference to the long-term well-being of our service users and we are extremely grateful to The Ireland Funds for their encouragement and assistance."

ONGOING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Good Shepherd Cork is seeking funds to be able to continue and expand these supports to families to include:

- A drop-in facility for families staying in B&Bs where they could do laundry and make a family meal (estimated cost €20,000 set up and one year running costs).
- More one-to-one and group therapeutic supports for vulnerable women and children—e.g. counselling, play or art therapy, parent and toddler program (cost approx. €16,000)
- A program of sports and physical activities for children living in emergency accommodation (cost approx. €7,500)
- Furniture, bedding, kitchen items etc. for the newly-expanded Edel House facility. (cost approx. €120,500 to fully equip the expanded and re-furnished shelter)



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IN NUMBERS

- In **2018**, Good Shepherd Cork **worked with** over **800 women** and **children**
- Regrettably, in **2018**, Good Shepherd Cork's Edel House had to **turn away 232 women** and **230 children** because all beds were full
- Women and children account for over **60% of homeless people** in Cork
- In March of **2019**, the total number of **families who were homeless** in Cork City and County was **109**. This is a stark **increase of nearly 100%** in under a year
- The **109 homeless families include 245 children**. **55** of these children are currently **staying in emergency accommodation provided by Good Shepherd Cork** (Edel House or Redclyffe family hub) and the remainder are in private emergency accommodation (B&Bs or hotels).



SUSAN

"I feel a lot better now...calmer, more confident. I used to think it was the end of the world for me...I had to remember my confidences...where they were...the person I used to be. I've a lot of friends at Good Shepherd Cork."

JENNIFER

"You just have to believe and keep setting goals. Now I've got a house and my whole life has changed really. I'm so much more comfortable. I can sleep at night...I have my own key, my own shower. I'm still attending classes and looking into going into Further Education."



ROSALEEN

"Good Shepherd Cork has helped me plan for my future...it has taught me to never give up."

