

COPE GALWAY

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IS PROVIDING ESSENTIAL HOMELESS, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SENIOR SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF GALWAY.







**COPE Galway**  
Let's help together

*'A community where every person is valued, cared for and supported at every stage of life'* is the vision of COPE Galway, the Galway-based social services charity. This unique combination of services gives COPE Galway a depth and breadth of experience and knowledge that is unparalleled and one which is underpinned by a team of professional staff and volunteers who are committed to making a positive difference in people's lives.

The Ireland Funds has been a long-time supporter of COPE Galway's work and has supported its Senior Support Service with a Donor Advised Grant and with support from its COVID-19 Response Fund. Additionally, a philanthropic donation facilitated by

The Ireland Funds, has supported the development of their Domestic Abuse Children's Service. During the COVID-19 crisis, all of COPE Galway's domestic abuse, homeless and senior support services have remained open and accessible by those who need them.

Here, Ciara Tyrrell, Children's Service Co-ordinator at COPE Galway's Domestic Abuse Service, talks about their new Children's Service, made possible with the support of The Ireland Funds, and how this support came at exactly the right time, coinciding with COPE Galway's move to Modh Eile House – the new home of their domestic abuse service and refuge.

COPE Galway has been providing a domestic abuse service in Galway for almost 40 years, where we have always sought to support people who are experiencing abuse, and the aftermath of that abuse, as well as working to address the fundamentals in our society which allow domestic abuse to happen.

For much of these 40 years we operated from Waterside House, a building in Galway city center which had become run down and unfit for purpose, containing single bedsit type refuge accommodation with shared bathrooms and no cooking facilities, and without wheelchair access or any outside space for children to play. After many years of development, and just as COVID-19 arrived in Ireland, we moved to a brand new, state-of-the-art building called Modh Eile House, which is now the new home of our domestic abuse service and refuge in Galway.

#### **Hope and Home: Healing at Modh Eile House**

Modh Eile, which means 'Another Way' in Irish, was named by women who had been supported by our domestic abuse service and wanted to give a message of hope to other women who would experience domestic abuse in the future. Modh Eile House also represented another way for us – it finally allowed us to provide a place for women and children that was not only safe, but also clean, warm, welcoming and properly equipped to support family life.

Within weeks of COVID-19 lockdown, COPE Galway opened Modh Eile House, ensuring that women and their children who were experiencing abuse within their own homes had somewhere safe they could come to. Concerned that women were either not aware that the service was available during lockdown, or that they were worried about contracting COVID-19 in a refuge setting, we undertook a publicity campaign through supermarkets, pharmacies and at bus stations to communicate the availability, and safety of our service.

#### **Supporting the Unique Needs of Children in Crisis**

Thanks in part to The Ireland Funds, the move to Modh Eile House allowed us to change our model of working with children, allowing us to finally put into practice what we knew was necessary if these children were to stand a chance of recovery and healing and of not having an abusive start dominate their life chances.

The support of The Ireland Funds has allowed us to develop a comprehensive, child-centered domestic abuse support service which recognizes and accepts the child as a victim of domestic abuse, and where children's physical, emotional, cognitive, social and behavioral development is supported. We have been able to employ three staff who work directly with children to unwind some of the adverse childhood experiences they would otherwise grow up with.

THE SUPPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED THROUGH THE IRELAND FUNDS IS ALLOWING US TO CREATE REAL AND LASTING CHANGE, TO PROPERLY AND PROMPTLY ADDRESS CRITICAL ISSUES WHICH HINDER A CHILD'S LIFE. THE IRELAND FUNDS IS LITERALLY HELPING US TO CHANGE LIVES.

#### **The Ireland Funds' Impact on our Work with Families**

With the support of The Ireland Funds, COPE Galway's domestic abuse service has been able to hire three additional childcare workers to work directly with children who have experienced domestic abuse. This has allowed us to achieve the following:

- **We expanded our team to ensure that we can cover areas in Galway city and county.** We have partnered with other agencies and schools who facilitate us by offering a room in their service in order to make our domestic abuse service more accessible. Having additional staff can also ensure that the service that families receive while staying in refuge is consistent, and tailored to the family's needs. Each child is seen as a client in their own right with their own individual needs, and not just a member of the family.

- **It has allowed us to meet mothers and their children in that area of the county that is more convenient for them.** It is not always feasible to expect a mother to come to the city with a child for an appointment. We want to make the service as accessible as possible by coming to them in a safe place agreed by both parties.

- **We are now accepting referrals from individuals and other agencies** who are delighted to hear about the work at our Children's domestic abuse service. Previously, we could only manage the families that came to stay at the refuge.

- **We have started to work with young people 18 – 25 years who have experienced violence and abuse as a child** or who have experienced a dating relationship that was abusive. We have the expertise to identify and verify for young people that what they experienced was abusive and wrong and can offer them support in a therapeutic way on their journey towards healing.

- **The support of mothers is important for long term healing.** We have always understood that by supporting the mother to understand the impact on the child, we will double the efforts of the healing process for the child.

#### **The Ireland Funds' Impact on Older People Across Galway**

COPE Galway has also benefited from a €40,000 grant from The Ireland Funds COVID-19 Response Fund and used this grant to make sure that every older person in Galway had access to the best nutritious food delivered right to their doors, so that they could protect themselves from the COVID-19 pandemic and keep themselves healthy and well. Since March 2020 COPE Galway have provided 41,058 meals to 249 older people in Galway city and county and this number continues to increase every day.

With this COVID-19 grant funding COPE Galway were also able to reach out to 343 older people through our telephone helpline and on a one to one basis in person, and we offered practical and emotional supports where needed to some of the more vulnerable and isolated older people who are living in our community.



**COPE GALWAY** recently launched the TIME TO CARE program for older people and is seeking donors to help fund the costs of communicating this program to every older person in Galway city and county.



## Additional Needs

### WHAT IS POSSIBLE WITH MORE FUNDING?

While our meals services have become an essential social service in responding to increasing numbers of older people cocooning, we are becoming extremely concerned about the many social supports and activities which have been suspended during the pandemic with consequent impacts in terms of isolation, loneliness, and general health and wellbeing of many older people in our communities.

There are over 4,523 people aged over 75 living alone in Galway city and county. With further support COPE Galway could make an immediate difference in the lives of older people who are becoming more and more isolated and lonely.



**COPE GALWAY** is looking for medium and long term support to help fund the salary cost needed to roll out and manage their telephone befriending program for one year.

Earlier this year, **COPE GALWAY** was presented a National Age Friendly Award for their social enterprise Meals4Health, which produces and home delivers fresh, nutritious ready meals to older people. Additional funding would help COPE Galway expand this service beyond Galway to meet the ever increasing demand for food support for older people.

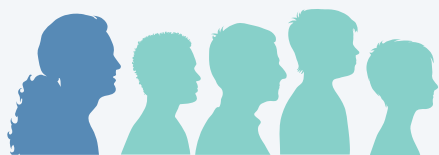


## MEET SOME OF THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE HELPED

\* Names have been changed

### RUTH\* 19

Ruth was nineteen when she presented to a mental health service with feelings of depression and suicide ideation. In meeting with her, the mental health service traced much of her trauma to an upbringing marred by abuse in the home, leaving her with feelings of isolation, inadequacy and no self-worth. The mental health service referred Ruth to COPE Galway's domestic abuse service, recognizing our expertise. Modh Eile House provided a safe and welcoming space for Ruth to come to, where our team acknowledged and validated all that she experienced, helping her to see that she was so much more than that experience. **Ruth will live with the memory of the abuse, but it will no longer define her future.**



### GRAINNE\*

& her four teenage sons

Grainne who has four teenage sons aged between 14 and 18, sought admission to Waterside House, following a particularly violent encounter with her husband. We could not accept her, as the building only provided for communal shower and bathroom areas, so it was impossible to have boys over fourteen on site. Grainne was faced with the unthinkable dilemma of leaving her boys to save herself, or staying, and so putting herself at risk. We were able to identify another safe location for this family, however, we were reminded of the need to provide for young men and women, who are also victimized. **Now they can be safely and appropriately sheltered in Modh Eile House.**

### CATHERINE\* 80s

"I am a woman in my 80s living alone and usually lead a very independent life, I have friends and family that I would see and they would visit me, so not being able to plan trips and visits made me feel alone. It was comforting to know that COPE Galway was there to help in a variety of ways and I knew that I could get help with shopping and my pension collection and a chat over the phone if I needed it. I am slowly gaining my confidence and independence back but I am still somewhat anxious about the future. **It is nice to know that COPE Galway is there for me at this difficult time.**"

### JAMES\* 80s

"I live alone and I have really appreciated the regular contact I have had with COPE Galway during COVID—just checking in with me means a lot and it picks me up if I'm feeling a bit down. **I know I can just pick up the phone if I need anything....**"

### RITA\* late 70s

"The staff in COPE Galway has been a great support to me over the past few years, they do everything they can to help me. The months during lockdown have been very hard when I couldn't do all the things I'm used to doing and I couldn't see my friends and family so COPE Galway has become even more important to me..... **They make sure I have food, my pension and my bills are paid, but really what I love is having them call to my door to say hello and have a chat.**"