



Help Simon and cut heat bills

CHARITY Annual initiative with support from architects

BY DAWN LOVE

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THE Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Simon Communities of Ireland have teamed up to launch the seventh annual RIAI Simon Open Door Weekend.

From this week, people in south Dublin can log on to www.simonopendoor.ie to book a one-hour consultation with the local RIAI architect of their choice, in return for a €50 donation to the Simon Communities of Ireland.

All architects give their time for free, and every cent raised goes directly to the charity.

More than 1,000 people took part in the initiative last year, and almost €250,000 has been raised, to date.

This year, the Simon Open Door will take place across the weekend of Saturday, May 7 and Sunday, May 8.

One of the themes of this year's campaign is sustainability, and low-cost changes that will help people to make their house a home, while also reducing their energy bills.

The Simon Open Door Weekend provides people in south Dublin with an opportunity to change the way they look at their home, and see if they are using their space in the smartest and greenest way.

Improving the energy efficiency of a home does not have to be costly, and the

Simon Open Door architects will be giving advice on small improvements that can deliver a big difference in terms of both energy usage and costs.

Speaking at the initiative's launch, Mary Lee Rhodes, chairperson, Simon Commu-

nities of Ireland, said: "The current economic crisis is impacting on us all, but most heavily on those the margins of our society – people who are homeless, people who are at risk of homelessness and people with many related needs.

"Simon Community is about believing in people; believing in those who turn to the eight local Simon communities around the country every day, believing in the thousands of volunteers and Simon supporters, and believing that, with the appropriate housing, care and support, people can and do leave homelessness behind.

"We are delighted to once again partner with the RIAI on this excellent initiative.

"On behalf of everyone at the Simon Communities of Ireland, I want to sincerely thank all the architects who have signed up to give their services free of charge again this year, and to those members of the public whose donations demonstrate the kindness and generosity being shown to Simon during difficult times," she said.

'We are delighted to once again partner with the RIAI on this excellent initiative'

Mary Lee Rhodes,
chairperson, Simon
Communities of Ireland

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Andrew Blanker looks at the through-prints at the launch of the seventh annual **RIA Simon Open Weekend Initiative**