



Simon says 'charity begins in your home'

Galway architects to give advice in return for donations to the homelessness charity

Galway architects are teaming up with the Galway Simon Community for the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Simon Open Door fundraising weekend which takes place May 7 to 8.

People in Galway can log on to www.simonopendoor.ie to book a one hour consultation with a 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 one thousand people took part in the nationwide initiative last year and almost €250,000 has been raised to date. The theme of this year's campaign is sustainability and low cost changes that will help people to make their house a home while reducing their energy bills. It takes place on Saturday and Sunday, May 7 and 8.

Helena McElmeel is one of the four participating architects in Galway. She is the western representative on the RIAI Council and this is her fourth year of involvement with the Simon Open Door project.

"The RIAI Simon Open Door Weekend gives Galway people a chance to improve their own home while helping those who are experiencing homelessness in Galway. It's great to give people a new perspective on their homes and possible improvements. Every year, I find it amazing that so many issues and options can be explored within the one hour consultations. There is no project too big or small - architects can give advice on anything from new builds and extensions to insulation, windows and

lighting," said Ms McElmeel.

Other practices participating in Galway are Blue Architecture in Kinvara, Lester Naughton Architect Ltd in Moycullen, and ORA Architects in Salthill. Bookings for the Simon Open Door Weekend can be made online at www.simonopendoor.ie until Friday May 6.



Ava and Alex pictured at the launch of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Simon Open Door fundraising weekend.