



## Learn how to 'future proof' your home - and help city charity

**THE Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Simon Communities of Ireland recently launched the sixth annual RIAI Simon Open Door Weekend campaign.**

People in Galway can now log on to [www.simonopendoor.ie](http://www.simonopendoor.ie) to book a one-hour consultation with the RIAI architect of their choice in return for a €50 donation to the Simon Communities of Ireland.

Due to the phenomenal nationwide success of the campaign since it was launched in 2004, for the first time ever the Simon Open Door initiative will now span an entire weekend, taking place on Saturday and Sunday, April 24 and 25. Appointments are available all over the county.

The theme of this year's campaign is low cost interventions which help families create a home that helps them cope with their changing needs, as well as their bills. Architects call this process 'future-proofing.'

The Simon Open Door Weekend provides people in Galway with an opportunity to change the way they look at their home and make more of what they have by evaluating the way the space is used in relation to their needs.

Architects from all over the county have come together to contribute to a list of Top Tips for future-proofing homes, which include assessing furniture lay-outs and colour schemes, installing insulation and finding ways to maximise storage. All are available from the Simon Open Door website.

Emmet O'Donnell of O'Donnell Architects is one of the participating architects in Galway. He has been an architect for eleven years and his practice was recently shortlisted for an international award

for their design of the Centre Pier Building at Galway Docks.

Emmet is taking part in the initiative for the third consecutive year because, he says, "The Simon Open Door Weekend is a great way to help the Simon Communities of Ireland while also giving people the chance to improve their own homes.

"Some people might think that architects only deal with big public works or designer buildings but they can also help you with simple issues such as storage, lighting and heating which can make a big difference to your life, and your bills."

Other practices participating in Galway include 3G Architects and ORA Architects.

Speaking at the launch of the Simon Open Door Weekend Patrick Burke, CEO of the Simon Communities of Ireland said: "The current downturn means more people than before are at risk of homelessness. As increasing numbers of people are impacted by the recession, it's inevitable that more people will be seeking help."