



Architects appeal to public to attend Open Door Day in aid of Simon

THE Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Simon Communities of Ireland today launched the fifth annual nationwide "Simon Open Door" campaign. On Saturday, 7th March 2009, in exchange for a €75 donation to Simon, members of the public will get an opportunity to have a one-hour consultation with an RIAI architect. Hundreds of RIAI members are participating throughout the country and members of the public can book a slot with their chosen architect via www.simonopendoor.ie.

"The global economic downturn and rising unemployment rates will force more people into homelessness", said Patrick Burke, CEO of the Simon Communities of Ireland. This year the RIAI and Simon are hoping to raise €50,000 through the campaign, bringing the total raised since 2004 to €200,000. All participating architects are giving their time for free and every cent raised will go directly to the Simon Communities of Ireland.

Brian O'Carroll is one of the participating architects in Roscommon and is this year's county spokesperson. He has been practising in Roscommon for 50 years, and his practise employs 11 people. O'Carroll Associates Architects are ongoing supporters of the Open Door Day, having been involved in the project for the past 5 years. Speaking about the Open Door Day campaign Brian said, "The Simon Open Door Day is a great chance for people to work with an architect in a friendly, informal way. You can come in to speak with us about any of the changes you have thought

about making to your home, however big or small."

Commenting on the launch Angela Brady, architect and presenter of Channel 4's 'The Home Show' and RIAI Council Member said, "The current economic climate is having an effect on everyone, from people who cannot afford a home to those lucky enough to own one. Many people who had planned to upgrade to a larger space to meet the changing needs of their families are now discovering this is no longer a possibility. That is where architects can really help. Whether it's a full-scale renovation or merely adding storage in clever and imaginative ways, architects can bring their creative design flare and technical experience to bear on projects of all shapes and sizes. The Simon Open Door is a wonderful opportunity for people to discuss their plans with an architect and give back to those in less fortunate positions."

Patrick Burke commented, "Homelessness was a serious issue in Ireland before the economic downturn; the current recession is magnifying this issue. As unemployment and poverty levels rise, many are struggling to keep their homes and inevitably there will be an increase in the numbers of people becoming homeless. While most of us in Ireland are fortunate to have a home, for those that do not every day can be a struggle for survival. The RIAI Simon Open Door is a great way for the Irish public to appreciate the homes they have and to simultaneously help those throughout the country who do not.



The 5th Annual RIAI Simon Open Door Day was launched at the RIAI. In exchange for a €75 donation, which will go directly to the Simon Communities, members of the public can book a one hour consultation with an RIAI architect via www.simonopendoor.ie. Pictured at the launch are three year olds Aoibhin Downey and Caoimhe Gergeraty. SR5901