**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY AT THE NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS HELPLINE DURING Y/E 31 DECEMBER 2021**

**Foreword**

2021 has been another challenging year for everybody at the National Missing Persons Helpline, as living with uncertainty has extended well beyond our community to become the norm for many.  It was a great privilege to assist families of missing loved ones during these especially difficult circumstances. With the bulk of interactions now being online, we have seen a huge increase in our followers on Facebook and visits to our website. During the year we also managed to strengthen international ties, opening doors for further collaboration into the future. We now have links with similar organisations in Poland, UK, Australia, Spain and Denmark.

The high level of Missing Persons reports has continued unabated, with lockdowns and closures limiting families’ ability to search, and further heightening feelings of hopelessness and helplessness for those left behind.  Consequently, the need for our services seemed more acute for those directly impacted and more easily understood by those who weren’t.

**Family Support Days**

In 2021, it was planned that we continue with our Family Support Days, aiming to hold one each quarter. However, Covid put paid to this and having tried and failed with online meetings in winter of 2020 we were left with no option but to postpone our endeavours until restrictions are relaxed.

**DNA Profiling**

One area which has seen a huge improvement and for which we must praise all involved, is the success of the DNA initiative. Gardai are continuing to take DNA samples from family members of Missing Persons and these have proved successful in identifying a number of previously unsolved cases.

While this will be a continuing and no doubt highly successful process, a limiting factor was the apparent lack of a Nationwide Register of unidentified remains or those interred over the years. This is now being addressed and Gardai are in contact with Coroners throughout the country in order that a register can be compiled and up to date records maintained. It would be remiss of me at this point, to not mention the work of Rene Gapert who has put in a huge amount of work in his efforts to bring about an improvement in the way that Coroners carry out their business.

**Fundraising**

In 2021 our fundraising efforts continued to stretch our resources. In previous years our main effort was directed towards our highly successful annual Golf Classic and also Awareness/fundraising during our Shopping Centre days**.**

Our annual Golf Classic was a success both in terms of fundraising and enjoyment for those who participate. However, Covid again put paid to our 2021 event which had been planned for Palmerstown Golf Club and we were forced to cancel.

During the 2019 we established a working partnership with Deliveroo which resulted in our Posters being displayed prominently on their delivery backpacks and bags during the 2019 and 2020 National Missing Persons Days. Deliveroo also made a donation of €10,000 to the Helpline in both years. This arrangement has not been renewed and the donations to our cause, will be badly missed.

Our main source of funding is now an annual grant from the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime (CSVC), without this we would not be able to carry out our vital work with families of the Missing. We are extremely grateful to the CSVC for their continued support.

**People at the Helpline**

Our Organisation has a total of 11 volunteers, 9 of whom serve on our Board of Directors.

Ciaran Casey continues to be our Co-ordinator at the National Missing Persons Helpline. The position is part time and Ciaran is based in our offices for 4 hours each morning, Monday – Friday. Outside of these hours calls are diverted to a mobile phone where they will be answered by one of our volunteers.

I cannot find enough words to thank all of our volunteers who give so freely of their time in order to ensure that our service continues 365 days a year.

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**Support to families of Missing Persons.**

During 2021 we dealt with 360 new contacts, up from 158 last year.

        104 contacts by emails,

        117 notes to Facebook page,

        138 phone calls to the Helpline.

**Facebook page for 2021,**

Persons reached 5,586,915.

Engaged with us 806,032

Followers 26,745

Likes 26,042

**Garda Press Releases during 2021**.

We were notified of 293 people going missing,

    261 were located safe & well,

     21 were sadly located deceased

11 still untraced at year end

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Income 2021:** | **€** | **Expenses 2021** | **€** |
| **Membership:** | *10.00* | **Phone:** | *1705.68* |
| **Deliveroo Donation:** | *10000.00* | **Training:** | *260.33* |
| **CSVC Grant:** | *24000.00* | **Running Expenses:** | *292.66* |
| **Bank Refund:** | *0.37* | **Bank Charges:** | *45.27* |
| **Prize Bonds:** | *50.00* | **PAYE/PRSI:** | *3,980.58* |
| **Donation:** | *100.00* | **Insurance:** | *1864.04* |
| **TOTAL INCOME:** | ***34,160.37*** | **Salary Costs:** | *14,727.00* |
|  |  | **Stationery:** | *261.53* |
|  |  | **Counselling:** | *840.00* |
|  |  | **TOTAL  EXPENDITURE:** | ***23,977.09*** |

Signed: *D Browne*

Chairperson