

“A lot of my friends and family wonder if I will last here and when I might be off again but leaving Ireland is not on the horizon for me.”

AILEEN MARKEY

Unglu-d



It was while living in New York City that Aileen Markey made the decision to return to Ireland after being abroad for almost three decades.

She decided to quit corporate life and set up her own business and thought home would be a good place to do it.

“The decision to move back made complete sense as I knew I needed to be in an environment where I had a good support network around me,” says Aileen.

“I treated the move in the same way I had moved to other countries — as if I was going somewhere completely new that I didn’t know. I spent time travelling around and falling in love with Ireland all over again.”

Originally from Dundalk, Aileen left Ireland in 1989 to study Hotel & Catering Management in the UK and lived abroad for 27 years.

She lived in London for around 20 years, had a short stint back in Ireland before moving to Australia, followed by Singapore and finally New York City, before returning home in 2016.

In May 2017, she set up Unglu-d in Dublin, which started as a pop-up shop but is now an online Gluten Free business, providing

services and support to people with Coeliac Disease or gluten intolerances.

It helps people access products they might not get in supermarkets and provides information to the communities.

“I was diagnosed with Coeliac disease before I moved home to Ireland. I had to change my whole diet, re-think how I shopped and get used to reading labels on everything. I then had to re-learn it all over again when I moved home as the symbols and rules vary between countries.”

Aileen had to go to several different shops to find what she needed so had the idea to create a one-stop shop herself.

“I thought what if you could go to one shop and find a ton of stuff you actually liked where there’s no risk of cross contamination and you don’t have to read the labels as it’s all done for you.”

Aileen has since moved to Annagassan in Co. Louth in a rural area beside the sea.

“I love being back in Ireland. I think a lot of my friends and family wonder if I will last here and when I might be off again but leaving Ireland is not on the horizon for me. My intention is to continue to integrate

myself back into the community as much as possible.”

Aileen didn’t find it difficult starting up the business but feels that keeping the momentum going and accessing funding can be a challenge.

“Back for Business was fantastic. It helped me to re-engage. It forced me to step back and take an objective look at my business and how I was managing things. It made me think about making changes I was perhaps holding back on doing.

“Every time I came away from a roundtable, I felt completely energised. You could go on a zillion courses, conferences, seminars all over the country but they would never give you the same value or return as the roundtables and that time with your mentor.”

Since the completing Back for Business Aileen started baking classes/tutorials for Coeliacs and people with Gluten Intolerance, some of the tutorials will soon be available online. In 2020 she also launched her own range of products and hopes to continue adding to the collection in the coming months. It’s a very exciting time for Unglu-d and Back for Business was a welcome key turning point for the business.



POSITION

Company Owner/Director

WHAT WE DO

Unglu-d is a dedicated online Gluten Free business, providing services and support to people with Coeliac Disease or who are Gluten intolerant.

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