



Serving Hungry and Homeless Long Islanders

Strategic Plan 2018-2021

March 16, 2018

CONFIDENTIAL

Section I

Executive Summary



Summary

The Interfaith Nutrition Network (“The INN”) was founded in 1983 as a single soup kitchen run by a small group of concerned volunteers. Serving at a storefront church in Hempstead, the volunteers discovered that not only were there large numbers of hungry people on Long Island, but that individuals working together could make a difference in the guests’ lives.

What began as a tiny seed quickly grew as other communities discovered that hungry people existed in their community too. As word spread of the success of the Hempstead soup kitchen, The INN became a magnet for individuals who wanted to help those who were hungry in their own communities. By sharing their knowledge, the volunteers began to form an interfaith network of soup kitchens to feed hungry Long Islanders. Soon after the Hempstead soup kitchen began operations, others opened in Long Beach, Freeport and Central Islip, ultimately leading to 21 soup kitchens, operating as part of The INN’s network across Long Island. Each of these soup kitchens quickly filled a desperate need that existed in these communities. With The INN’s guidance and support over many years, the network soup kitchens gradually became independent operations. In 2017, with full support of The INN, all network soup kitchens made the decision to separate from The INN’s 501(c)(3). The INN will continue to be a resource to these independent organizations and other communities in need. The INN continues to operate its Hempstead soup kitchen, the Mary Brennan INN.

The initial volunteers found that dealing with hunger was only one of the problems facing the soup kitchen guests. Some of the children and adults who visited The INN were also homeless. The INN responded to this problem by opening its first emergency shelter in 1984 and at one point operated as many as 8 emergency shelters. Today, The INN operates three emergency shelters: two of these shelters are for families and one is for single men. All offer temporary refuge and supportive services for homeless individuals while they reside as guests in a home-like environment. With staff support, the guests search for a home while working or seeking employment.

Shortly after opening the emergency shelters, The INN realized some families were chronically homeless because they lacked basic living skills. In 1990, The INN applied for and was awarded new NYS grants, which provided funding to purchase 13 single and two-family homes. A Long-Term Housing Program was created to offer comprehensive support services including case management, access to educational tutoring and job training. Many of these families have graduated into living independently in the community and some have even become homeowners. While NYS provided the funds to purchase these houses, The INN was responsible for the cost of maintaining the properties and running the program. Due to other organizations specializing in housing programs and the rising costs of The INN’s Long-Term Housing Program, The INN has sold several houses under a plan to optimize the effectiveness of its Long-Term Housing Program.

In 2016, The INN launched its newest initiative, the Center for Transformative Change (“CTC”), a unique facility located immediately adjacent to the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen in Hempstead. CTC serves as an all-encompassing resource center where guests of the soup kitchen receive help with housing, employment, missing identification, government benefits, computer literacy, basic literacy, immigration, legal services, access to health insurance and money management services. All services improve their life circumstances and allow them to become self-sufficient. Workshops offered also enhance the health and well-being of the guests, including cooking/nutrition classes, yoga, art classes and psycho-educational programs. In addition, CTC houses a clothing boutique, where guests can acquire free clothing, including business attire for interviews for a new job, and guests can also access gently used housewares.

From this simple start and through the vision and determination of a small group of dedicated staff, volunteers and donors, thirty-five years later The INN provides food, shelter, long-term housing, and supportive services in a dignified and respectful manner for those who seek our help. The INN is a working model of how to unite the community to overcome the challenge of hunger, homelessness and profound poverty on Long Island.

Throughout its history, in responding to the needs of the guests, The INN has undergone a series of transitions that presented challenges and organizational changes in support of our mission. The INN's Board and Management Team strive to get out in front of needed changes, which is the purpose of this strategic plan. To become a better organization for the guests we are once again an organization in transition. Building on the early success of CTC, an unexpected large donation of commercial real estate, the transition of our network soup kitchens to independent organizations, along with the ongoing management of the Mary Brennan INN, our emergency shelters, long-term housing program and finances are all key areas of focus as we build The INN needed for the next several years.

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Situation Analysis

The review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats provided a basis for identifying the Strategic Objectives detailed in Section IV.

Strengths

- Community Reputation
- Dedicated Board, Management Team and Staff
- Diverse Group of Committed Volunteers
- Loyal Donors
- Unique Offering of Essential Services
- Corporate and Community Partnerships

Opportunities

- Further Development of CTC
- Optimization of Real Estate Assets
- Improved Government Relations
- Diversification of Revenue Sources
- Paradigm Shift in Healthcare
- Maximize our Brand

Weaknesses

- Current Financial Challenges
- Over Reliance on Volunteers
- Skillsets to Manage New Services
- Resistance to Change
- Speed to Decisions
- Condition of Real Estate Assets

Threats

- Execution of a New Model Addressing Profound Poverty
- Decrease in Funding
- Workforce Stabilization
- Regulatory Changes

Strategic Objectives

The determination by the Board and Management Team of The INN's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats provided the basis for setting forth the following Strategic Objectives. These Strategic Objectives are to be the focal point of The INN's Plan and are considered critical to support and further The INN's adherence to its Mission. Each of the following Strategic Objectives are discussed in greater detail in Section IV.

1. Develop and Execute on a Three-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Stability
2. Explore and Execute on Opportunities to Expand the Services Provided Through CTC
3. Evaluate other Programs/Services for Needed Transitioning in Support of Our Mission
4. Determine the Most Efficient Use of Real Estate Assets
5. Foster a Strong Relationship with Government Officials
6. Develop and Execute on a Development Plan to Reach all Sources of Funds
7. Develop and Execute on a Strategy to Maximize our Brand

Section II

Vision and Mission Statements

VISION STATEMENT

We transform lives by addressing hunger, homelessness and profound poverty through awareness, action and generosity.

MISSION STATEMENT

The INN is a not-for-profit and volunteer-based organization that began as a single soup kitchen. We provide a broad variety of essential services to ease the hardships experienced by those challenged by hunger, homelessness and profound poverty. We advocate for the guests of The INN by partnering with them in a dignified and respectful manner to break the cycle of poverty.

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