



...THE NEWS!

SERVING HUNGRY AND HOMELESS LONG ISLANDERS

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Edna Moran INN

Charles and Sabrina came to the Edna Moran INN (EMI) Family Shelter in August of 2021 with their two sons, ages four and four months.

Upon arrival, the couple informed us of their intention to secure permanent housing as soon as possible; they had recently been approved for Section 8 (federal rental assistance). Charles was looking to gain immediate employment to increase their monthly income, thereby improving their chances of securing housing. Charles is a trained electrician, and his goal is to work for an electric company. However, he

GUEST STORY

Never Giving Up

was willing to work temporarily at any company to help support his family.

In September, he began working full-time as a cashier at a local supermarket, and part-time, overnights, as a stocker in a retail store. After leaving work he would return to EMI to assist with family responsibilities.

Also in September, Sabrina began having problems with one of her legs and was encouraged to seek medical attention. She initially felt she did not have the time as she was busy searching for an apartment and caring for the children. She eventually did follow up on care for her leg. During this time, she did not let her own medical issue keep her from caring for the children. She even made time to enroll her son in a Head Start

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Save THE Dates:

- May 11 – INNkeepers' Ball (see page 5)
- May 14 – Walk INN (see page 6)
- September 22 – INN Golf Classic
- October 21 – INN Luncheon

WHO IS MARY BRENNAN?

The largest soup kitchen on Long Island is named in her honor, but who is she?

There are many fine women who share this name. For any of you wondering if the Mary Brennan you know is the Mary Brennan of the Mary Brennan INN, the following should help answer that question.

The origin of the Mary Brennan INN (MBI) goes back to 1987 when the soup kitchen was just four years old (it

was the first soup kitchen to open in Nassau County). In the first four years of its existence, the soup kitchen moved four times, each time to a different storefront church in either Hempstead or Freeport. This was because The INN had successively



Mary Brennan

(continued pg 4)

TO SPONSOR A MEAL, PLEASE CALL (516) 486-8506, EXT. 115



Jean Kelly
Executive Director

REFLECTION The Dedicated Dishwashers

The volunteers at The INN have always been quiet, unsung heroes in my view. They serve on the front line as The INN fulfills its mission of “serving hungry and homeless Long Islanders”. They are dedicated to their tasks

and are the link between you and the guests. They could never be thanked enough.

When you visit the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen, you will see a variety of volunteers engaged in many different chores. You may not notice the dishwashers who toil among the pots, pans and sinks along the back wall. They may not be visible, but they are clearly essential. Two of our dishwashers were recently the topic of conversation among the volunteers, for very different reasons.

In early March we received the very sad news that one of our long-time and beloved dishwashers, Carl Ferguson, was fatally injured in an automobile accident in Florida. Tragically his wife Stephany also died in the crash. Carl was always full of warmth and good friendship. He will be dearly missed. We keep him and his family in our prayers of gratitude for his service, and condolences on his passing. His two adult children, Ziedah and Titus, have very thoughtfully

asked that donations be made to The INN in honor of his memory. A memorial page was set up on The INN’s website and several thousand dollars were raised in just a few days. This is a beautiful testament to what Carl meant to the volunteers, the guests and his many friends.

Another of our dishwashers, Johnny Kluskiewicz, joined us in the past year. He brings energy and enthusiasm to the job. He also shares these qualities with his family and friends as he talks about his experiences at The INN. As a result, many of them have been inspired to make a donation. When his daughter, Christine, heard her employer was looking to make a major donation to a charity, she recommended The INN. We were wonderfully surprised when The INN was chosen. Something else Johnny shares is his talent for woodworking. Visitors to the MBI are likely to find samples of his handiwork decorating the volunteer lounge.

At the Mary Brennan INN, we are fortunate to have volunteers who gladly offer to “do the dishes” and bring graciousness and elbow grease to the job.

May all volunteers — past, present or future — be blessed for giving us the precious gifts of their time and talents.

With much love and never-ending gratitude,

Jean Kelly, Executive Director

Never Giving Up (continued from pg 1)

program (unfortunately this was cancelled due to a teacher shortage).

September was a very busy month for Charles and Sabrina, they found a two-bedroom apartment in Hempstead for \$2,300. They made a deposit and were looking forward to moving in on October 1. Unfortunately, on October 1 the property owner informed them the apartment would not be ready until October 15. Then the 15th was moved to November 1. Late in October their case worker informed them the apartment had been offered to another family. Doubly unfortunately, their deposit

was not returned. An investigation is pending.

In early November, Charles and Sabrina, with the help of an INN housing specialist, found another two-bedroom apartment. This time in Roosevelt. The happy family moved into their home two days before Thanksgiving, their persistence and hope being rewarded.

If you would like to learn how you may assist a family on their journey to independence, please contact Cynthia Sucich at csucich@the-inn.org or (516) 486-8506 ext. 115.

TAKING IT ALL INN: Volunteer's Personal Experience Prepares Her to be on the Speakers' Bureau

The INN's Speakers' Bureau is a team of enthusiastic, well-spoken, engaging volunteers who help to bring The INN's vision, "to transform lives by addressing hunger, homelessness and profound poverty through awareness, action and generosity," to the community at large. Part of the process to become a speaker is participating in volunteer activities at the Mary Brennan INN. Marie Polifrone, a new speaker-in-training, recently shared her experience after two days of volunteering at the soup kitchen during the holidays. With her permission, we have shared her feedback, INN her own words ...

"Now I see why everyone on the Speakers' Bureau needs to volunteer. All I can say is WOW! The operation is huge, and the amount of work that takes place is immense. We served so many guests in just one day. I am blown away by the whole experience and amazed by Michelle, Jean and Jason and how they run the daily work at The INN. It runs like a well-oiled machine, and I have so much respect for the work they do. I also have so much respect for the other employees and all the amazing volunteers.

I must admit that I was not prepared mentally (or physically, even though I work out regularly) for the manual labor involved in volunteering for just one day. This is the most physically taxing work I have done since working in restaurants in college! On Monday I made sandwiches, which sounds easy but as you know, requires

standing and some lifting. On Wednesday, I was a 'runner/replenisher' for other volunteers who were giving out turkeys, food bags, fruit, veggies, juice, oil and so many other items. The amount of running, lifting, bagging, and breaking down boxes literally wore

me out and I'm still feeling the effects. But I was able to hear the guests talk about their holidays and see the various people and families that came from all walks of life. I also experienced a camaraderie with the other volunteers and the feeling of doing something truly useful. It is all so worthwhile and made me want to continue to help. This experience has motivated me to really seek out opportunities to speak to others about the great work being done, and now I can share my personal experiences as an INN volunteer when I go out to speak. I'm sure there will be more to share as I work a few more times."

Becoming a speaker provides volunteers with a unique opportunity to get more INNvolved and spread their passion to others. Many speakers feel fortunate to be able to inspire and inform hundreds of other Long Islanders who really care.

If you'd like to learn more about The INN's Speakers' Bureau, please contact Cynthia Sucich at csucich@the-inn.org or (516) 486-8506 ext. 115.



Marie Polifrone

THE OBLIGATORY STANDING OVATION

There is an old cliché that goes, "If I had a nickel for every time _____". (You can tell it's old because most children today don't even know what a nickel is.)

We will complete the cliché, "If I had a nickel for every time a friend says to us, 'I have all these nice (insert name of item), I don't use them, they are too nice to throw away, would The INN want them?'"

The great British playwright Andrew Lloyd Weber likes to use this very perceptive phrase, "obligatory standing ovation". You may have witnessed one. A performance doesn't seem to merit a standing ovation, but for some reason, probably related to group psychology, the audience stands and applauds. This is an OSO.

Our turn of the phrase is "obligatory gift giving"

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NEW YORK ISLANDERS "HOCKEY WITH A HEART"

On January 25, the New York Islanders hosted an "INN Night" at the new UBS Arena in Elmont. Fans attending were invited to bring new hats and gloves as a donation for the Mary Brennan INN, and we were also a beneficiary of the proceeds from a 50/50 raffle held that evening. The INN was featured on a "Jumbotron" interview between the second and third periods. A special thank you to all The INN volunteers and staff who participated, as well as the New York Islanders' fans.

For those of you who may be interested in The INN volunteers' review of the new arena, we add the following: There has been a lot written about parking difficulties, but if you arrive early, parking works out quite nicely. The arena is ... well, it's brand new. The paint is shiny, the floors are spotless, and all the lightbulbs are bright. The concourse is spacious.



INN volunteers at UBS Arena

Many of the walls are decorated with Islander photos and history. On this evening the Islanders were playing the Philadelphia Flyers (the Islanders won 4-3) and it was surprising to see the number of Flyers' fans who made the trip to Elmont. For many of them seeing the new arena was as important as seeing the game. Both the Islander and Flyer fans were unanimous in liking the new arena.

Who is Mary Brennan? (continued from pg 1)

outgrown its location. You can imagine the disruptions this caused to the guests and the volunteers. One of The INN's co-founders, Michael Moran, reached out to a friend, Fr. Emil Wcela (now Bishop Wcela), to ask if he knew anyone who might be able to help The INN purchase a building. Michael was introduced to John Brennan, and after a short discussion John made a generous contribution which initiated the purchase of 148 Front Street in Hempstead. This small two-story building was shortly christened the "Mary Brennan INN Soup Kitchen". At the time, The INN's other co-founder, Pat O'Connor remarked, "This building is being named for the Mother of a gracious donor."

Mary Brennan was a widow who raised three young children in Elmhurst, Queens. Her husband, John, had been a World War I veteran. Mary contributed to the war effort by testing the Ever-Warm Safety-Suit (she repeatedly jumped into the East River while wearing it). Mary was beloved by her children and the entire neighborhood. She was thoughtful, caring and had time for everyone, whether she knew you or not. It is fitting that John

chose to name the soup kitchen in honor of his Mom, a woman whose loving, respectful, and supportive nature echoes the mission and values of The INN.

In 2000, the MBI, again having outgrown its home, moved two blocks from its original location to its current location at 100 Madison Avenue in Hempstead.

Today the MBI serves more than 800 meals each day, and in the height of the pandemic over 1,200 meals were served daily. It is a welcoming "home", affectionately known by tens of thousands.

Jean Kelly, The INN's Executive Director, adds, "While I never met Mary Brennan (although there are some who mistake me for her), hearing how selfless and helpful she was, it makes us proud to have her name represent our efforts."

Four generations later, Mary Brennan's family continues to support The INN. She has so many reasons to be proud. And we at The INN have so many reasons to be thankful.

2022 INNKEEPERS' BALL

The Kick-Off reception for the 2022 INNkeepers' Ball was on January 25th. The evening's highlight was the introduction of the 2022 honorees.



Michael Dowling

Michael Dowling is President and CEO of Northwell Health. He is one of health care's most influential

voices, taking stands on critical societal issues such as gun violence and immigration. He leads a clinical, academic and research enterprise with a workforce of more than 77,000 and annual revenue of \$15 billion.

Compassion and public service have always been a part of Michael's life, including his serving as New York State's Director of Health, Education and Human Services and Commissioner of Social Services.

Michael's career has consistently

been guided by "doing the right thing", and we are grateful to honor Michael Dowling at the 2022 INNkeepers' Ball.



Carol Silva

Carol Silva is the veteran, Emmy Award-winning news anchor from News 12 Long Island. For decades she had

the honor of sharing people's lives from the News 12 anchor desk. She has received multiple journalism awards and has been inducted into the Silver Circle of the NY Chapter of the National Academy of Television, Arts & Sciences, and the LI Journalism Hall of Fame.

Carol has made hundreds of motivational appearances throughout the metropolitan

region on topics including empowering women in the workplace and coming back from defeat.

A Mexican American, Carol was honored as an Hispanic role model by the Nassau County Hispanic Cultural Association. The INN is happy to honor Carol Silva at the 2022 INNkeepers' Ball.

Also introduced were the Honorary Chairs – Frank J. & Janet DellaFera, Frank Ingrassia & Elizabeth McCaul, and Ralph & Maureen Nappi. A special thank you to each.

The 2022 INNkeepers' Ball will be on Wednesday evening, May 11, at the Nassau Country Club. **For information on tickets, journal or sponsorships, please call (516) 732-6009 or (516) 486-8506 ext. 108.**

Standing Ovation (continued from pg 3)

(OGG). It occurs when people feel obligated to give something to someone who "has everything". The end result is, "I have all these nice (insert name of item), I don't use them, they are too nice to throw away, would The INN want them?"

Granted not everyone has everything, and sometimes giving "a nice little something" is the perfect thing to do. But there are many times when there is a more special option.

It is not new, and not earth-shattering. Next time you are straining to come up with a gift idea for a friend or family member, why not instead donate to a

charity in their honor? (May we suggest The INN?)

It is easy to do, please visit www.the-inn.org or call (516) 486-8506, ext. 115. Your friend/family member will receive a personal card letting them know you have made a contribution in honor of their birthday, anniversary, wedding, graduation, or any other occasion. We can think of at least three reasons why this is an improvement over OGG, they are: 1) you are making a real difference to someone who "has nothing", 2) you are removing a stress from your life, and 3) your friend/family member will feel good about not having to store your gift.



Serving Hungry and Homeless Long Islanders

"Walk INN"

A FUNdraising event to benefit INN Guests

Saturday, May 14, 2022

10:00am-12:00pm

Hofstra University

Hempstead, NY

Calling all families, friends and groups to join INN on a fun walk around Hofstra's beautiful campus to raise funds and spread awareness about The INN's programs.*

Registration is \$10 per person. Children 5 and under are free.

**Proof of Covid-19 vaccination is required at Hofstra to use bathrooms and any other indoor facilities*

Information & Registration

www.the-inn.org/walkinn



Did you know? The average American walks 3,500 steps in a day. The Walk INN is a comfortable 2,000 steps (1 mile). If you have any questions regarding the walk, please call (516) 486-8506 ext. 108.

Our Wish List

The INN is in need of:

- Non-perishable food – **no glass please**
- Juice boxes/juice pouches
- New underwear (men, women & children)
- Gift Cards (supermarket and Visa) – preferred amounts, \$10, \$25 and \$50
- Diapers/wipes – larger sizes (4, 5, 6 & pull-ups)
- Toiletry items – lotion, shaving cream, deodorant, and toilet paper (personal and family sizes)
- Auction items for upcoming INN events – activities, experiences, etc.
Please call Nora White at (516) 486-8506, ext.108

Please bring your donations to the Mary Brennan INN, 100 Madison Avenue, Hempstead, M-F, 9am-2pm. For directions please check our website or call (516) 486-8506, ext. 114. Thank you.



"Serving Hungry and Homeless Long Islanders"

211 Fulton Avenue
Hempstead, NY 11550
(516) 486-8506
www.the-inn.org

OUR MISSION

As a not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization, The INN provides a broad variety of essential services to assist those challenged by hunger, homelessness and profound poverty. We partner with those in need in a dignified and respectful manner to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

Follow us on:

