



...THE NEWS!

SERVING HUNGRY AND HOMELESS LONG ISLANDERS

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GUEST STORY

Something, Sometime, Somewhat

"Trying something new" is something we all do. After our new experience, we usually learn something — it was fun (a first roller coaster ride), enlightening (a first yoga class), or any of a million other feelings. Each year at The INN, many people try "volunteering at a soup kitchen" for the first time.

The reactions can be emotional, thought-provoking, and surprising. One sometimes hears, "the guests are just like me", as if a volunteer starts the day thinking (innocently) the guests will be a fundamentally different type of

human being. They learn the guests, like them, like to be liked, appreciate kindness, can be stubborn, enjoy the familiar, value independence ... and try new things.

This is the story of Michael, one of the Mary Brennan INN guests.

On the streets of Hempstead, Michael is widely respected. He is a gentle man who walks and talks slowly and carefully.

Michael is vision impaired, and while it may be natural to want to assist, he

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INN GOOD COMPANY A Free Flea Market for All – Thanks to Publishers Clearing House

On a beautiful, sunny pre-summer day, the parking lot of the Center for Transformative Change transformed itself into a free flea market full of items donated by Publishers Clearing House (PCH). A wide variety of brand-new items were available to guests who waited patiently for their turn to "shop" among the tables full of clothing, household items, school supplies and more. At the end of the day, a total of 154 guests received 3,716 items.

After weeks of planning and preparing for the event, Jason Tessler, Donations Manager for The INN,



Publishers Clearing House Volunteers

was pleased with the outcome. "The weather was great, volunteers were filled with positive energy and the guests seemed to enjoy having access to the market," Jason said. "We are

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**Save
THE
Dates:**

- September 22 – INN Golf Classic
- October 21 – INN Luncheon

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



Jean Kelly
Executive Director

REFLECTION

... smiles, sharing, choices ...

Early this morning volunteers arrived at The INN. They prepared an excellent meal, stood ready to smile and share all we have, with whomever in need arrives. Today's hot meal

was chicken over pasta, with mixed vegetables, soup, salad, and dessert. For many of the guests this will be the only meal they have all day. We try to make it a very substantial one. (As a side note, we recently started announcing, in advance, the menu for each day of the following week, so the guests may have the joy of looking forward to a favorite meal. This newest information is really appreciated.)

Since the beginning of the pandemic, guests have a choice of two "lunches", both served to-go. Beginning at 9, a soup and sandwich lunch is available. The full, hot meal is served at 11:30. There are many reasons why a guest may choose one over the other.

When I came at 9:30, I saw a guest sitting outside eating his soup and sandwich. He had a relieved look on his face. He had obviously been hungry and did not want to wait until 11:30 when the full chicken meal was being

served. He was hungry now. Had he waited, he could have had the hot meal entrée. But today, he could not wait. He was hungry now. Who knows what he ate since yesterday's lunch, or even if he ate at all?

As you might guess, the lines are always longer for the 11:30 lunch.

In March we conducted a survey among the guests to learn their view of the portion sizes at the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen. We were happy to hear 89% gave us the highest possible grades. The remainder had a special need which we can accommodate. They were very grateful.

If you can help us, either as a volunteer, or a contributor, or as someone who forwards your prayers or positive energy, we will be so thankful. Every gift is priceless ... as are you, for simply caring and being kind. Please continue to take the best of care and stay safe and healthy.

Love,

Jean

P.S. We are planning to return to indoor dining in September. For those who choose, a to-go meal will be an option. We will keep you posted.

INN Good Company (continued from pg 1)

so grateful to Publishers and everyone involved for their support." Three PCH employees were on-hand to volunteer for the day and help the guests choose their items. Wendy Smith, AVP of Fulfillment & Postal Affairs, commented on behalf of the Corporate Social Responsibilities team, "PCH feels fortunate to be in a position to

assist guests of The INN through our donation of household goods." Although the number of items is significant, it feels like a small gesture compared to the generous assistance and compassion the staff and volunteers provide the guests each day. It has been such a pleasure to partner with The INN over the years."

VOLUNTEER STORY A Unique Way of Bringing Awareness

As a member of The INN's Speakers Bureau, volunteer Jeanne Petti is often talking about the services The INN provides and encouraging others to get INNvolved. So, when a unique opportunity arose at her daughter's elementary school, she jumped at the chance to help spread The INN's message.

The school's Parent Teacher Organization puts together an event that raises funds for activities that directly benefit the students. The annual evening of dinner and dancing is a popular event in the community and is always well-attended. Many families choose to "sponsor" the event and use it as an opportunity to advertise their family business through signage during the evening. Jeanne decided to be a sponsor but wanted to use the promotional benefits to help generate awareness for The INN. She worked with The INN to create an image



Jeanne's daughter, Maddalena Petti

highlighting simple ways families can get INNvolved. The family-oriented message (along with a picture of Jeanne's daughter, Maddalena, in an INN t-shirt) was displayed at the event throughout the night.

It was an innovative way to raise funds for Jeanne's school while also encouraging other families in her community to get INNvolved.

INN SUPPORTER IS A REAL "DREW GOODER"

East Meadow resident Todd Weinstein is the founder and administrator of the community Facebook group, "Nice Things that Happen in East Meadow." They have supported The INN with donations of funds and goods since its inception in 2016. Todd is also a huge Drew Barrymore fan, and recently came face to face with the celebrity on her CBS talk show, thanks to his wife Robyn.

On the Drew Barrymore Show, the actress highlights individuals who she calls, "Drew-Gooders," people who give back to those in need in their communities. Todd's wife, Robyn, reached out to one of the show's producers and told them about her husband's philanthropic activities. Robyn and Todd were invited to be audience members for a taping of the show. At the taping, Todd was thrilled, then shocked, when Drew selected him out of the audience and asked him about the Facebook page, and his work with The INN. After the shock wore off a bit and he was able to speak again, Todd announced on national television his plan to organize a canned food drive in honor of his 50th birthday in June. His goal is to collect 1,972 cans of food for guests of The INN, as a



Todd and Robyn Weinstein on the Drew Barrymore Show

nod to his birth year, 1972.

Drew was so inspired by Todd's generosity, she agreed to record a special video for Todd to share in the group, asking people to donate to the cause. She also decided to have the show donate \$1,000 to The INN, which she matched with her own donation of an additional \$1,000.

Dana Lopez, Director of Marketing & Communications for The INN, has been working with Todd for six years. "We have been so grateful to Todd and the Facebook group. It's no surprise that the national recognition and generous donation from Drew and the show was inspired by Todd and the wonderful people of East Meadow."

Something, Sometime, Somewhat (continued from pg 1)

holds onto his independence. As volunteers and guests will attest, if you ask Michael, "Can I help you cross the street?", the answer will be, "No thank you, I can do just fine with my red and white walking stick."

In the soup kitchen, Michael likes to sit at the same table with the same people (think back to your high school days). Together they enjoy a nice meal and being with people they like and who like them. It is a treasured moment of comfort in an otherwise hard day.

Michael is a senior citizen. One very cold winter night, I was driving home and stopped at a red light. I happened to look to the side, and there was Michael standing in a storefront doorway. I couldn't believe my eyes. I pulled over and walked to Michael. "Michael, it's me" (he knows my voice). "Oh, hi." "Let me take you to a motel." "Oh, no need to do that, I'll be fine here." "But it's freezing out." "I'll be fine. It's OK. You have a good night." Michael is so stubborn. He is so stubborn it can hurt.

Michael is loved by the other guests. In the early days of the pandemic, when the new normal was very long lunch lines, Michael would arrive and slowly find his way to the end of the line. He never expected special treatment. When the guests would see this, they would say, "Michael, you should go to the front of the line." He would smile and make his way forward. He would never ask, but when his

peers spontaneously told him it was OK to move to the front, he was touched.

Having a conversation with Michael can be good for your ego. He usually wants to talk about you, not about him. Every once-in-a-while, he may say something like, "if you have a new pair of socks, I could really use them." The wall of stubbornness has developed a little crack.

One miraculous day, the wall of stubbornness came tumbling down. After years of asking, Michael was willing to try something new. He agreed to The INN finding him a place to live. We found him a one room apartment, furnished it with donations, rent covered by social security, and in Michael's beloved Hempstead — walking distance to the Mary Brennan INN. A small part of the wall remained. When I asked Michael, "Would you like a service dog?", he replied, "No thank you, I don't like dogs."

Michael's life is full, has its ups and downs, and is somewhat complicated. Just like most of us. But unlike most of us, fate has dealt Michael a very difficult hand, repeated difficult hands. But where fate favors some and not others, it is those who are favored who can help those less fortunate. Like "trying something new", it is something we do.

If you would like to learn more about ways to help guests like Michael, please contact Cynthia Sucich at csucich@the-inn.org or (516) 486-8506 ext. 115.

FIVE QUESTIONS

Now that the pandemic is more under control, is there anything different at the Mary Brennan INN?

Yes. As you probably know, The INN, for safety reasons, had begun serving to-go lunches in

March of 2020. After more than two years, the Mary Brennan INN will be changing back to sit down meals in the dining room shortly after Labor Day. During the pandemic, The INN received suggestions for the dining room from health and food professionals, volunteers, and guests. All these suggestions have been reviewed, and many



of them will be incorporated in the "new" dining room. They include a high efficiency ventilation system, re-design of the pantry distribution area, a to-go window for those picking up meals for anyone physically unable

to come to the soup kitchen, increased spacing between tables and other design changes that are part of the new normal.

When will The INN resume donations of clothing?

Throughout the pandemic, The INN's health

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INN EVENTS

INN events offer an enjoyable activity shared with others, who like you, support the charitable work of The INN. Whether you have participated previously, or are adventurous and want to try something new, we are happy to welcome you.

INN Golf Classic

Thursday, September 22
Nassau Country Club, Glen Cove

Calling all golfers, and new this year, tennis players too, you are cordially invited to the 2022 INN Golf Classic. If golf is your game, sign up for golf, or if tennis is your racket, sign up for tennis. A day of good-natured competition is planned for September 22.

Adding another sport to the mix, the Honoree for the 2022 Golf Classic is Jon Ledecy, co-owner of the New York Islanders. Special thanks to our Co-Chairs Eric Kramer and Mike Watson.

For reservations and additional information, please contact Nora White at (516) 486-8506, ext. 108, or visit www.the-inn.org/event/2022inngolf.



Jon Ledecy,
Co-Owner, NY Islanders

INN Luncheon

Friday, October 21
Garden City Hotel, Garden City

The INN Luncheon is a great way to connect with friends — both new and old. A friend of The INN, Matthew Classi, founding partner of GCP Capital Group, is Honoree for this year's Luncheon. Event co-chairs Lisa Arning and Susan MacDonald invite you to visit www.the-inn.org/event/2022innluncheon. You may also call Nora White at (516) 486-8506, ext. 108 for further information.



Matthew Classi
Partner, GCP Capital
Group

WALK INN KEEPS PROGRAMS ON THE MOVE

On a warm spring Saturday morning in May, nearly 150 INN supporters took a leisurely stroll around Hofstra University's beautiful campus for Walk INN. Individuals, families, students, and community organizations, all in bright smiles and bright blue INN t-shirts walked 1.5 miles to raise awareness and funds for INN programs at the soup kitchen, resource center and shelters. The successful event raised over \$3,000 and was sponsored by volunteer members of The INN's Speakers Bureau.



"We are so thrilled to bring back the Walk INN event, which is one of my personal favorites," said Nora White, Director of Events for The INN. "Not only is everyone so happy to be able to attend in-person events again, but it's a great opportunity for families, friends, and groups to come together with the common goal of continuing The INN's programs for all those in the community who need our services."

Visit The INN's website for all upcoming events — www.the-inn.org/events

Five Questions (continued from pg 4)

advisors recommended only new clothing and professionally dry-cleaned clothing be accepted. Beginning after Labor Day, home-washed, clothing donations will also be accepted. For those who prefer to donate clothes in a “big black bag”, we ask you please do a simple fold of shirts, pants, dresses, sweatshirts, etc. before placing in the bag. They do not have to be folded perfectly, but just a simple fold avoids excessive wrinkling and makes the clothing much more presentable and respectful to the guests. Donations may be dropped off at the Mary Brennan INN, 100 Madison Avenue in the village of Hempstead, Monday – Friday, 9 am – 4 pm. If you have any questions regarding donations, please call (516) 486-8506, ext. 114.

I have a backyard vegetable garden and have extra vegetables, can I donate them to The INN? Yes, if you, or a neighbor, or a friend has a bountiful garden, donations of vegetables can be dropped off at the Mary Brennan INN (same days and hours as described in clothing donations above).

Are The INN’s guests vaccinated? Yes, most are. Northwell’s Mobile Health Van has been to the Mary Brennan INN/Center for Transformative Change seven times since vaccines became available. All INN guests were encouraged to be vaccinated. Because of this ease of vaccine accessibility, we estimate the percent of guests vaccinated to be higher than that of the general public, which as of May 2022 was 67%. Because of the ever-changing guest population and HIPAA privacy rules, it is not possible to have an exact percentage.

I have never visited The INN website, should I? We think yes. The address is easy, the-inn.org, and there is lots of interesting and helpful information there. You can meet The INN Staff and Board, see INN videos, view the photo gallery, read about the services available at The INN, learn about volunteering, catch up on upcoming events, and more. We would be grateful if you would stop by for a visit.

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-4pm.

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:

