



40 Years
1985-2025
INN

...THE NEWS!

SERVING DIGNITY, RESPECT & LOVE SINCE 1983

VOLUME XL NO. 1

www.the-inn.org

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INN THIS ISSUE

REFLECTIONS

page 2

YOU MAY BE INTERESTED

page 2

FEELS GOOD TO LOOK GOOD

page 3

ELECTED OFFICIALS VISIT

page 4

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

page 4

INN EVENTS

page 5

HEALTHCARE

page 5

POETRY CORNER

page 6

WISH LIST

page 6

THE NEW MARY BRENNAN INN

Many people have enjoyed a tour of the Mary Brennan INN (MBI), the largest soup kitchen on Long Island. You are cordially invited to come on a tour. It is the most "eyes-on" way to learn what goes on at The INN.

To help us better serve the growing number of guests, the look and operation of the MBI has changed significantly since March of 2020.

In the dining room, in the aftermath of Covid, the spacing between tables has increased. There is a new entrance vestibule which keeps blasts of cold air (winter) and hot air (summer) from entering. A new low-maintenance, non-slip floor has been installed. Countertops worn thin from 20 years of wear and tear have been replaced



Two of The INN's High School bakers visit the refurbished kitchen

with bright, new surfaces. Instead of serving on disposable plates, hot meals are served on sturdy washable plates. The kitchen has been professionally cleaned from floor to ceiling and the walls are now easy-to-
(continued pg 3)

BED, BATH & LOVE

A simple email to past generous donors yielded plentiful and practical winter gifts for 33 men living in two of The INN's homeless shelters. The donations included new bed linens, blankets, pillows, toiletries, and a complete set of pots, pans and utensils for each shelter. Five of the donors, Alice Malloy, John Featherstone, Kathy McIntyre and Gloria and Dick Grafer, delivered the



gifts in five, fully loaded SUV's.

The donations were received with heartfelt thank you's. The shelter directors were overwhelmed with gratitude when they saw the parade

of gifts arriving, not to mention the guests when they realized what was happening. Joy was felt by all — givers and receivers.

(continued pg 4)

Save
THE
Dates:

(see page 5)

- May 10 – 40th Anniversary INNkeepers' Ball
- June 8 – Wine Tasting

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



Jean Kelly
Executive Director

REFLECTION

The INN's declaration of values includes this statement, "... volunteers are our primary source of strength, finding unity in their diversity ..."

At first glance, "finding unity in their diversity" seemed to me, to be a riddle. But after further reflection, I got it. There should be joy when a diverse group of people can find a unifying purpose. This can move mountains. I recall reading of the diverse political roots of the founding fathers of this country, but they overcame their diversity when their greater purpose became evident.

The INN's greater purpose attracts volunteers (and staff and donors) from all sorts of diverse backgrounds. I see it every day. Their unity feeds, shelters, clothes, heals, and comforts.

One day while visiting the Mary Brennan INN, I was having a conversation with the serving line volunteers. This day it happened to be five women, and for some reason, I don't recall what, we began talking about religion. "Oh, I'm a Methodist" said the first. "I'm Muslim" said the second. The balance were Jewish, Catholic, and Sikh. We all laughed. "And we're all getting

along!", they said in unison. On The INN's serving line an obvious unity was found amongst surprising diversity.

Being on the collecting end of an INN food drive can reveal a different type of diversity — the ability to give. I have been at food drives where a prior guest shows up to donate one can of vegetables. Eager to help second graders cheerfully hand me two cans of tuna fish. Next, an SUV pulls up with 500 pounds of food. The prior guest, the second grader, and the SUV driver, all with a very disparate ability to give, share a commonality — they want to help. (Every donation, no matter the size, makes a difference.)

I am often asked, "Who are the guests of The INN?" I respond, they are a diverse group in age, gender and ethnicity, and I am sure in many other ways that are not so visible. From speaking with them, I know they offer support to each other. This is their unity ... and strength.

We are fortunate to live in one of the most diverse parts of the world. The INN is fortunate to reflect this diversity.

It is truly encouraging to me that we can move forward together in a very diverse world.

With love and gratitude always,
Jean

YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING ...

Many companies encourage the generosity of their employees with "matching gifts". Perhaps your employer participates in a matching gift program. If they do, please let them know when you make a gift to The INN. If you are not sure if they have a matching gift program, an email or call to your HR department should be helpful.

For any readers of this Newsletter who would prefer an electronic Newsletter, that is available. It is forwarded to you in an easy-to-read format. Please email Cynthia Sucich to make the switch — csucich@the-inn.org.

The Mary Brennan INN (MBI) is fortunate to have

many wonderful volunteers ... and new volunteers are always welcome. If you would like to try our "volunteer-for-a-day" program, to see if volunteering in the soup kitchen suits you, please email us at volunteer@the-inn.org. We would be happy to welcome you.

Volunteer groups are also welcome. A corporate group, a group of teachers, a group of friends, any group — you are welcome to participate in a day of volunteering at the MBI. There is no need to be an expert in the kitchen, the only requirement is a willingness to help. And it's a great bonding experience to share with your group. Visit The INN's website — www.the-inn.org/volunteer.

IT FEELS GOOD TO LOOK GOOD!

A clothing “boutique” has always been a part of The INN.

The goal is simple, provide clothing to the guests. Donated clothing is displayed and guests shop for what they need, whether for themselves or their families. All clothing is free of charge.

For safety reasons, during Covid, the boutique was not open to “shoppers”. Instead, an INN staff member or volunteer would receive a list of needed items and shop for the guest. Guests missed the quiet excitement of exploring the displays and the joy of discovering something “just perfect”. Most of us can relate to this.

On March 1st of this year, The INN clothing boutique re-opened for shoppers, in a new, much larger location — still adjacent to the Mary Brennan INN. As you might imagine, it was a special day for the guests.

Volunteers in the clothing boutique share what they learn from the guests: warm clothing is vital in the winter; a nice appearance makes you feel good about yourself; feeling good about yourself makes you grow; a nice appearance can instantly change what others may think of you; and it is important to look good when looking for employment. We can all understand this.



Volunteers set up an attractive clothing boutique

Volunteers laugh about what they learn from the donors. Women are great at donating their gently used clothes and men hold onto clothes forever. One gentleman donor told a volunteer he has worn the same suit to every wedding he has attended in the past 15 years. When asked if his wife wore the same dress to all these weddings, he burst out laughing.

We welcome your gently used clothing — washed, and folded is much appreciated. If you would like to donate new clothing, that is welcome too. If you are a fan of clothing and would like to volunteer in the boutique, please visit The INN’s website, www.the-inn.org/volunteer. (please see page 4 for more details)

The New Mary Brennan INN (continued from pg. 1)

clean stainless steel.

Starting in March of 2020 through December of 2022, meals were served to-go at the front door. We have discovered many guests, for many reasons, still prefer to-go meals. Two permanent to-go windows have been added to the front of the building, along with a new, to-go kitchen/prep-room.

Prior to Covid a hot meal was served 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. Service hours are now greatly expanded. From 9:00 am – 11:30 am, a soup and sandwich to-go meal is served. From 11:30 am – 4:30 pm, the to-go windows serve a choice of soup and sandwich or a hot meal. Inside, in the dining room, soup and

sandwich are served from 9:00 am – 11:30 am, and a full hot meal is served from 11:30 am – 2:00 pm.

Each day a different crew of volunteers prepares the meal. This was the March 3rd lunch: chicken meatballs in marinara sauce, rice, mixed vegetables, hot soup, salad, dessert, and beverage. *There was a total of 1,425 meals served that day. To illustrate how the world has changed, prior to Covid, on March 3rd, 2020 the number of meals served was 335.*

We would be honored to welcome you on a tour. You will be inspired by the work of the volunteers and staff. Please contact Cynthia Sucich — csucich@the-inn.org, or (516) 486-8506, ext. 115.

Bed, Bath & Love (continued from pg. 1)

In addition, this group of donors gave each of the men a Valentine's Day treat. Chocolates, of course, and a pair each of bath towels, hand towels and face cloths. Thoughtful gestures such as these do

make a world of difference.

We are thankful to Gloria and Dick Grafer for organizing these thoughtful gestures of "bed, bath and love".

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

On page 3 of this Newsletter you read about The INN's clothing boutique. The boutique is in need of volunteers to help sort donations, stock and style the showroom, and serve as "personal shoppers". Personal shoppers assist guests in finding needed items, and add a reassuring personal touch. You may volunteer 8:30 am – 2:00 pm or 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, the weekday of your choice. If interested, please complete the application found at www.the-inn.org/volunteer.

You will then be contacted.

If you enjoy writing, The INN is looking for volunteer grant writers. You will be using your language skills to help The INN continue serving hungry and homeless Long Islanders. A unique aspect of this opportunity is, after an initial orientation period in the office, you may volunteer from home. Please contact Joanne Robinson – jrobinson@the-inn.org, or (516) 486-8506, ext. 109.

ELECTED OFFICIALS VISIT THE INN

The INN recently hosted a tour of its new and existing facilities for elected officials at every level of government in Nassau County. The officials were interested in learning more about the work of The INN and ways they could assist in meeting the needs of the growing number of guests at The INN.

Included in the visit were Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, Town of Hempstead Supervisor Donald Clavin, North Hempstead Supervisor Jen DeSena, Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino, Hempstead Town Clerk Kate Murray, Nassau County Comptroller Elaine Phillips, Congressman Anthony

D'Esposito, New York State Senators Jack Martins and Steven Rhoads and Nassau County GOP Chairman Joseph Cairo.

The elected officials were impressed with the work of The INN and recognized the need for a public-private partnership to provide a variety of essential services to help those challenged by hunger, homelessness and profound poverty. The officials are continuing to work with The INN to find new sources of funding and other vital support for the organization.



Left to right: Jean Victor – MBI Manager, Donald Clavin, Elaine Phillips, Joseph Saladino, Bruce Blakeman, Rob Kammerer – INN Board, Steven Rhoads, Ed Grilli – INN Board, Jen DeSena, Kate Murray.

INN EVENTS

2023 INNkeepers' Ball

Wednesday, May 10, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Nassau Country Club, Glen Cove

The 2023 INNkeepers' Ball will be honoring **Eric Carlstrom and Matthew Whalen**, both are hands-on, enthusiastic, and generous supporters of The INN. Eric is Executive Managing Director at Aon, and Matt is President and Chief Executive Officer at Cord Meyer Development Company.

The "Seven of Us" Award will be given to The INN's first Covid volunteers. These are the fearless women and men who came to volunteer in the first hours of the pandemic. The Honorary Chairs for the 2023 Ball are Constance Cincotta and Susan Lucci.

Last year's attendees so enjoyed the outdoor format — we will be outdoors again this year.

Sponsorship, Journal and Ticket information is available at www.the-inn.org/2023ball. If you have any questions, or would like to receive an invitation, please call (516) 732-6009.



Eric Carlstrom



Matthew Whalen

2023 Wine Tasting

Thursday, June 8
6:30 – 8:30 pm
Opus Steakhouse, Jericho

For the past two years The INN has had a virtual wine tasting. With the pandemic receding, the wine tasting will now be in-person.

Set in a private room at Opus, hosted by the resident sommelier, the tasting will include four wines and a full complement of hors d'oeuvres and stations. Please contact Nora White for further information — nwhite@the-inn.org, or (516) 486-8506, ext. 108.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES in Perfect Harmony with The INN

In a partnership with Harmony Healthcare Long Island (formerly the Federally Qualified Health Center), The INN welcomed the Harmony Healthcare Mobile Coach to our Madison Avenue campus (Hempstead) on February 27th. Moving forward, the mobile coach will be visiting two Mondays each month. The goal is to improve the wellness of all The INN's guests.

Staffed with a nurse practitioner, a medical assistant and a driver, the full-sized bus is equipped with two exam rooms and has a handicapped access ramp. On the first day at The INN's facility, seven guests were treated with medical services including general health screenings, Covid-19 and flu vaccinations, laboratory services, prescriptions, and referrals for specialty services.



Joanne Robinson, Chief Operating Officer of The INN, is delighted with the partnership: "Guests are often concerned about their overall medical health because of their lack of insurance or access to reliable transportation. We

hope that this partnership with Harmony Healthcare gives them peace of mind that they can come to a safe space and receive the medical attention we all need and deserve." Julie Harnisher, Vice President of Population Health for Harmony Healthcare, agrees: "We hope to create healthier communities by giving those in underserved areas equitable quality healthcare. Since The INN's guests are already coming here for basic needs like food, it is the perfect place for the Harmony Healthcare Mobile Unit to offer our services on a regular basis."




WALK INN

A FUNdraising event to benefit INN Guests

Saturday, May 13, 2023
10:30am-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




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, 9 am – 2 pm.*

*For directions please check our website or call
 (516) 486-8506, ext. 114.*

Thank you.

POETRY CORNER

The Right Thing

Doing the right thing
 isn't just when cameras
 are rolling, when people
 are watching, when someone
 asks for help.

Doing the right thing
 is wherever you have
 the chance to change
 a wrong to a right,
 to heal, comfort or console,
 for no other reason
 than it's the right thing to do,
 and doing the right thing
 is everyone's job,
 24/7, 365.

Dave Golbert



Serving Dignity, Respect & Love since 1985

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:

