



INN...THE NEWS!

SERVING HUNGRY AND HOMELESS LONG ISLANDERS

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- February 27 – 2025 Wine Tasting
- May 7 – 2025 INNkeepers' Ball

GUEST STORY

I Love You

"I love you."

Hopefully, all of us have been on the receiving end of these three words, the more frequently the better. They are a gift to hear.

One very unflashy change that occurred at the Mary Brennan INN after Covid was the introduction of round tables in the dining room (prior to Covid, the tables were rectangular). Who could have predicted the shape of a table would have such a positive impact on conversation and friendship?

Three guests (Matt, Kurt and Bryan) are "regulars" at one of the 60-inch round tables — the second table from the entrance on the left side of the room. Their friendship has grown around this table. Often, they are deep in conversation, but they also can be found sharing a good laugh. For them, coming to the Mary Brennan INN is like our "going out to dinner with friends".

Each of them spent many years working, and coming to MBI for lunch helps them stretch their social security checks to survivability.

Anytime I am at the Mary Brennan INN, I stop by their table to say hello. It is always a pleasant

exchange. They pause their conversation and make especially good eye contact. Like many men, they are poker-faced about their emotions, and as a fellow male, we sometimes joke about being "manly men". For these three men, revealing feelings was not the norm. Until ...

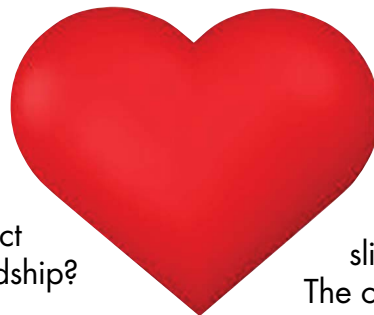
... a day in early December, it was unseasonably cold. I was scheduled to meet a donor at MBI and had arrived early. Walking through the kitchen, the volunteers were busy slicing, dicing and spicing.

The conversation was merry, the holiday spirit had already entered the air. Out in the dining room I could spot Matt and friends. I walked over to say hello.

We had a nice conversation. Even though it would be considered "small talk" by an eavesdropper, without directly asking the question, an important question was answered, "Is everything good with you?" And all was good. As I was walked away, Kurt called out to me, "I love you."

"I love you too."

In recognition of Valentine's Day, here is one of our favorite quotes: "The best thing to hold onto in life is each other" – Audrey Hepburn.



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



Jean Kelly
Executive Director

REFLECTION The Other Half

Seeing how the “other half lives” can be surprising, disturbing, and challenging.

Whenever I leave the Mary Brennan INN in the evening, I look at the benches in front of the

building to see if there are any guests there. If there are, I check with them to make sure they are safe for the night. Early in January I saw a guest, Steven, trying to sleep on one of the benches. He said he had nowhere to stay that night, but he would be fine outside if “we” could give him a warm blanket and something to eat. We gladly did so. Talking further with him, he said he was new to The INN and other than the soup kitchen, he was not aware of the other INN services. I told him we could help him and asked him to please speak to MBI staff the next morning. He again assured me he would be fine sleeping on the bench and said he would speak to the staff in the morning. It turns out he left the bench within an hour of my talking with him. He did not return until three days later.

Steven told us he had gone to a shelter a friend had recommended to him. He had a traumatic experience there, felt unsafe, left, and came back to The INN. He was still recovering from his experience. Our social work staff recommended we provide him safe shelter for a few days before attempting to discover his full history and the best

way to assist him. We did so, and on his return for the second time, it was determined Steven should accept shelter in the public assistance system. Understandably, he was reluctant to go to another shelter. Ultimately, he was convinced. Unfortunately, he had another bad shelter experience and one week later he was back at The INN.

We were hoping there would be room for him at the Donald Axinn INN – The INN’s shelter for single men. There was not. We again provided him with emergency shelter at a local motel.

Miraculously, after a few days, a bed became available at DAI. We called the Department of Social Services and asked if he could be placed in the “Axinn INN”. They readily agreed, and knowing the seriousness of his situation, Steven was immediately transported there.

At the DAI, Steven was grateful to be in a clean and safe home, where people really listen to each other, and where he is treated in the way we would want to be treated. The staff there are assisting him on the next steps of his journey – finding a job and housing.

We are able to help people help themselves. The positive outcome you just read about is possible, thanks to you. It is one of the many life-changing outcomes we witness. Thank you for inspiring us with your remarkable kindness and compassion.

Love,
Jean



After 20 years of serving as an administrative assistant, Deokie Santo has retired to enjoy time with her family. The INN is grateful for her exceptional service and the welcoming way she greeted thousands of visitors. Deokie said she will miss her work “family” and hopes to return as a volunteer.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In the last quarter of 2024, at The INN:

- 72,000 meals were served
- 75 guests received shelter each night
- warm clothing was made available for all guests
- primary healthcare was available for all guests
- 133 families were adopted for the holidays
- always in a dignified and respectful manner

COMING IN 2025

Being responsive to the needs of those being served is an important part of creating a positive impact.

88-92 Madison Avenue The INN will continue its expansion into the “new” building at 88-92 Madison Avenue in Hempstead. It adds 25,000 sq. ft. of space to the Hempstead campus, and its location, adjacent to the Mary Brennan INN, is not only convenient, but also essential. The building is one floor and is fully handicapped accessible.



88-92 Madison Avenue

The building is temporarily being used to receive donations, house The INN’s clothing boutique, and distribute

pantry and personal care items. INN staff and volunteers have designed a future floor plan, which will include relocated programs such as the Center for Transformative Change, growing programs such as mental health counseling, new programs such as “sleeping pods” and enhanced programs such as workforce development. Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2025.

This site will offer exciting opportunities for the guests and is a major step forward in The INN’s mission of “partnering with those in need in a dignified and respectful manner to help them achieve self-sufficiency.”

Edna Moran INN The EMI is also expanding. It is The INN’s emergency shelter for 11 families.

Typically bustling with children’s activity, the dining and living rooms in this nearly 100 year old home need to be



Edna Moran INN

renovated and enlarged. In 2025 two extensions will be built – one for the new dining room and one for a new living room (which will include dedicated computer stations for the students).

Mary Brennan INN Starting the day hungry is not helpful to anyone. The MBI will be growing its breakfast program in 2025. A response that began as a simple cup of coffee is now offering hard boiled eggs, bagels and fresh fruit. Simply put, not being hungry allows the guests to achieve their personal goal of changing their lives for the better. The breakfast program is in addition to the main, mid-day meal and the other services already being provided.

Donald Axinn INN The emergency shelter for men will be welcoming a new computer room for the guests. So much of what the men need to do – job searches, submitting employment applications, following up on job leads, furthering their education, apartment hunting, etc – is dependent on computer access.



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OUR VISION

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

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:



VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS

For many people the pace of life builds up in the last few months of the year. This is true for The INN's volunteers and donors. We are grateful to them. There are too many to list, but we hope the following are representative.



Portledge School
The Asian American Association at Portledge School baked 750 chocolate chip cookies at the Mary Brennan INN.

Carlow East

For ten years the Carlow East pub in Manhattan has held a holiday toy drive. In December the annual truckload of toys was delivered to The INN.



Camille, Liz and Joyce cooked a shepherd's pie dinner for the guests at the Donald Axinn INN.



Mary Brennan INN volunteers and staff – Thanksgiving 2024. Thanksgiving is always a special day at The INN. The guests were served a delicious dinner of smoked turkey, all the "fixins" and plenty of apple and pumpkin pie for dessert.

INN EVENTS

2025 Wine Tasting

Thursday, February 27, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Opus Mediterranean Steakhouse, Jericho

This casual evening of fun, good wine and good food will feature five stations – cheese & fruit, pasta, carving (beef & fish) and dessert, each with a paired wine. Lisa DeVito and JoEllen McKenna graciously chair this event.

For reservation information, please visit the-inn.org/2025wine or call (516) 486-8506, ext. 108.



2025 INNkeepers' Ball

Wednesday, May 7, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Nassau Country Club, Glen Cove



The INN's signature event, this evening celebrates the people of The INN. 2025 Honorees are Rocco Campanelli, Ed Grilli and Lenny Lufitano. Honorary Chairs are Lidia Bastianich and Gary Lewi.

Sponsorship, Journal, and ticket information is available at the-inn.org/2025ball. For additional information, please call (516) 732-6009.

A fun part of the Ball is the Silent Auction. If you would like to donate an item for the auction, the following are popular – Broadway show tickets, concert tickets, restaurant gift certificates, and behind-the-scenes tours of museums. Please call the above number.