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“The Face of Family”

I was visiting the Mary Brennan INN (MBI) in Hempstead last week, dropping off some of the “excesses” in my closet (those Must Have items that I really never needed) and after dropping off my items I stopped into the dining room where the guests were having lunch. There was the usual mix of single men and single women and of course the area where the families eat.

I was quite taken by the mothers, fathers, grandparents and of course the children. There is an area designated for family dining. High chairs are set up where needed. Families dine together. The faces of concerned parents, trying to get their kids to eat “healthy food”, are the same faces that I and my parents before me had in trying to teach good eating habits and good manners. I reflected on my own family. By all measures, I guess I grew up in a rather “traditional” family for the times. A mother, father, sister and brother. My dad went to work in the morning. Mom was at home though she worked outside the home in the evening, after we had dinner, so my dad could be with us. We lived in a two bedroom apartment with my parents sleeping in the living room. We didn’t have a lot — but we didn’t know that. Sometimes my father would have to work a second job on the weekends — but we thought that was what all families did.

As I watched the families at MBI, I realized that the face of family in this day and age looks quite different. Some families have only a mother and children; some have only a father and children; or a grandparent who has been relegated to raise the children of their children. I also made note that at the other tables at MBI, though single men and women, they were also part of a family. The table that they sat at was their family table. The meal that they ate, prepared by the loving hand of the volunteers, was a typical meal that my mother might have served at our family table. The love and care for each person in that soup kitchen made up “The Family” for each of the guests. And at that particular moment in time, they were loved, safe and secure in knowing that there were people surrounding them who cared.

I don’t know what your family may look like. The “traditional” family of my youth has many faces today. But the face of the family is far less important than the heart of the family. Where there is love, there is family. Where there is support, there is family. Where there are caring hearts and hands, there is family. Each of you, through your generosity of time, heart and resources, comprise the Family of the INN and, especially the “Family” for those guests whom we serve in the soup kitchens, the shelters and the long term housing programs.

I believe that we are all summoned in this life to care for others. On behalf of a grateful Board of Directors, we are blessed to count you amongst our “Family”.

Maureen Nappi
President
INN Board of Directors
How are you INNvolved?

Circle K from Adelphi University donates 753 lbs of food

Aer Lingus staff volunteers and makes a donation

Connor Ring collects school supplies

Nick Montoro collects over 30 pairs of sneakers

Members of the Pakistani American Community of LI volunteer on Pakistani Independence Day

Bank of America staff hosts a fundraising bake sale for The INN

GEICO donates school supplies
Serving Guests Needs Island-wide

“John” is a guest of the Bethany Hospitality INN in Central Islip. In the past two years John has been unemployed and has relied on this soup kitchen location to supplement the limited money he earns doing odd jobs. At this one location he receives a hot meal, groceries and clothing to take home with him. John was on his own trying to find time to locate employment to get through this difficult time.

Thanks to a grant from the Island Outreach Foundation he had his first meeting with an INN guest services social worker. At their initial meeting John reported that he was homeless and couldn’t get a start as he had no address to use. The INN social worker became a point person for communications. With this new connection he was able to obtain notices such as a job offer, paperwork from employers and obtain benefits from the Department of Social Services, including emergency shelter. This new outlet has helped with online job searches. With assistance from this new outreach, he was able to develop his resume, obtain appropriate clothing for interviews, submit online job applications and finally acquire a position for the job he wanted to obtain.

“Carlos” learned of the Patchogue Neighbors INN and that he could get a hot meal that he desperately needs. He had run out of hope and felt a sense of shame in relying on assistance from others. Even worse his current living situation and instability caused him to lose custody of his son. He knew no one who could help as his girlfriend left him and he has no family in the area. He had no money or income and was living on the streets. The guest services representative assisted Carlos in finding job opportunities. He was past due on the rent that he had to pay for a room he was renting. After his meal he approached The INN’s social worker as extended unemployment cost Carlos any savings he had and caused this unstable and dangerous lifestyle as daily he would try to find employment.

Carlos was a hard worker and it didn’t take long to obtain employment, but continued to work with his social worker at the Patchogue Neighbors INN toward his goal of an income that would improve his living situation and enable him to regain custody of his son. Carlos began to tell other guests of the great work being done to supplement the meal and others trusted and were willing to try this new outlet toward self-sufficiency. Thanks to persistence through job applications and a new resume they prepared, Carlos landed a job that should help him achieve his goals. Now that he has dramatically increased his income he is on track to repay debts and is hopeful of getting custody of his son.

These are just two of many stories resulting from the grant from the Island Outreach Foundation, helping The INN better serve the needs of the guests. This grant has allowed The INN to strengthen its relationship with volunteer steering committees and volunteers who make over 400,000 nutritious meals annually. We are pleased to report that guests are actively being engaged by our guest services staff. In fact 402 cases have been addressed Island wide through this program in just the first 4 months of program operation. Cases have consisted of employment, health care, domestic violence, housing, legal, immigration, drug and alcohol, veterans services and transportation assistance.

Guest Services staff members include Soup Kitchen Social Worker Angela Herrera, Soup Kitchen Coordinator Michelle Singh and Soup Kitchen Social Worker Nicole Mbya
A Special Treat from Atria

Atria Assisted Living advertises that they are much more than a place for older people to live. On August 1st, the warm and friendly team from Atria showed that actions speak louder than words when they served a high quality special meal at seven of The INN’s soup kitchens. This brought the culinary teams and staff from various facilities together to reach out to hungry Long Islanders. Each meal was a hot, nutritious and complete meal for each guest which allowed for the only day all year that the stoves and ovens of The INN were only needed for reheating.

We are truly grateful to Atria for thinking of this unique gift to the guests, volunteers and staff of The INN which was executed so well. 1,172 hungry guests were served, many of whom offered a standing ovation for this special meal. For the many ways that Atria Assisted Living supports The INN, we are delighted to be paying tribute to this organization at this year’s Day of Thanks and Giving. This important fundraiser will take place at the Mary Brennan INN on Sunday, November 11th. Please bring your family for a traditional Thanksgiving meal with The INN and pay tribute to our generous friends from Atria Assisted Living. Please call (516) 486-8506 ext. 106 for details.

GrillINNIng and Grinning

The INN has long been known for informally bringing people of various faiths and backgrounds together to serve hungry and homeless Long Islanders. This year brought another first for The INN, our volunteers and staff. On June 10th, Temple Beth Torah in Westbury hosted the first ever Long Island Kosher BBQ Championship.

During event planning, organizers decided that proceeds, food and equipment generated from the event would be used to support The INN.

When organizers came and visited the Mary Brennan INN they saw the volunteers cooking and preparing such a wonderful meal for the guests. In their excitement they offered The INN a space for a team to compete with the top kosher barbecue teams around the country. The team was spearheaded by Mary Brennan INN Managers Jean Victor and Stephan Robinson and volunteers Ed Goldman and Barbara Schrier.

Team GrillINNIng did an amazing job cooking overnight and showing the crowd how great our cooks are as they offered samples to attendees. While our team did not win or place, they certainly created awareness of some of the tremendous talented people that volunteer to serve in our kitchens, while spreading the word about the mission of The INN. Thank you to all who worked so hard to make this event a success and to event organizers for helping The INN generate much needed support.
The INN Hits a Hole In One

Who could ask for anything more? Thursday, September 13th was a picture perfect day and the North Shore Country Club was the perfect backdrop to help The INN net $136,000 to fight hunger and homelessness. We are truly grateful to Eric Kramer of Farrell Fritz PC for allowing us to pay tribute to him for his generous involvement through the years in support of The INN’s efforts and mission.

The 2012 Golf Committee worked very hard to make this event the success it was. Chairman Sal Ferro was joined by new Co-Chair Angelo Mangia in spearheading this remarkable committee. Plans are underway to help make an even greater success in 2013. If you are interested in helping The INN with the 2013 Golf Classic, please call (516) 486-8506 ext. 106.

News Worth Sharing

Newsday is typically known for providing news rather than making it. At The INN, Newsday itself, along with its readers, have created news that is worth sharing. Newsday Charities and the McCormick Foundation recently presented The INN with a donation of $40,000 to support The INN’s Long Term Housing Program. One of the key focus items of Newsday Charities is “Moving People out of Poverty.”

The INN is delighted to have its Long Term Housing Program recognized for the difference made in assisting chronically homeless families and veterans in achieving self-sufficiency.

We are proud to share that in our 20th year we have 25 families and four veterans who have produced the following outcomes:

• 70% of residents have been engaged in educational or vocational training programs.
• 80% of residents showed an increase in household income by the end of year 3 in the program.
• 67% of residents improved their credit report.
• 80% of residents showed an increase in household income by year 3 in the program.

We are grateful to Newsday and the McCormick Foundation for recognizing this program and its very real impact on Long Islanders.
Upcoming Events – Mark Your Calendar

- **Mary Brennan INN Open House** on Saturday October 13th from 11AM-3PM
- **Ben’s Olde Time New York Deli Celebration** on Monday, October 15th at Ben’s Kosher Deli in Greenvale from 6-8PM
- **Day of Thanks & Giving** on Sunday, November 11th at the Mary Brennan INN from 1:30-3:00PM
- **12th Annual Martin Viette Holiday Reception** on November 17th from 6:30-9:30PM
- **Diwali – Festival of Light** on Sunday, November 18th at the Mary Brennan INN at Noon.

**Champions For Charity** – register your Champions Card to benefit The INN (25% of your pretax purchase) for holiday shopping at the Americana Manhasset and Wheatley Plaza from Thursday, November 29th through Saturday December 1st.

To request an invitation or for more information please contact Joe Barry at (516) 486-8506 ext. 106 or at jbarry@the-inn.org.

Our Wish List

The INN is in need of:

- Canned meats (tuna, turkey, chicken, ham), canned soup, canned pasta sauce (no glass, please)
- Non perishable vegetables, fruit, Chef Boyardee-type products.
- Hygiene products – soap, shampoo, toothpaste etc. (small, travel sizes preferred for all items)
- Disposable diapers (all sizes), baby lotion, wipes and baby powders.
- **New** underwear and socks.
- Gently used towels, washcloths, blankets and bed linens.
- Turkey and fixing bag donations.
- Gently used coats, hats, scarves and gloves.
- Brand new toys in original packaging to bring holiday cheer (consider a toy drive!)
- Volunteers to help plan the 2013 INNkeepers’ Ball; please call (516) 486-8506 ext. 108

Please bring your donations to the Mary Brennan INN at 100 Madison Avenue in the Village of Hempstead, Monday – Friday, 9AM-11AM or 2PM-4PM. For directions please call (516) 486-8506 ext. 114. Thank you.

The INN is on Facebook and Twitter.

To become a fan and receive updates on The INN’s activities and announcements please go to www.facebook.com/thetinnli or twitter.com/the_inn.

“Serving Hungry and Homeless Long Islanders”

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

The INN has established a policy regarding all guests. To protect their privacy, no guest is to be photographed or interviewed while using the services at The INN.