



...THE NEWS!

SERVING HUNGRY AND HOMELESS LONG ISLANDERS

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GUEST STORY

Creating a Feast —

as told by Jean C. Victor, Jr.
(Mary Brennan INN Manager)

“We have been through some extreme changes at the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen since Covid-19 changed everything. While guests used to come into the building to sit down and have a hot meal, since March, they are now waiting outside on line each day for bagged lunches, pantry bags of groceries and other basic items.

One day, back in March, a guest came by, and as she approached me, I saw the confusion on her face as she started asking me questions. ‘What about my family? Are you still giving out toiletries and groceries? Is all that



still going to happen?’ As I explained how our new system was going to work, she started taking notes. She explained to me how her husband lost his job because of Covid-19 and how her place of business was closed. She was so happy that we were open because she did not know where her next meal was going to come from for her family.

The next day, we were giving out chicken cutlet sandwiches in the
(continued pg 2)

INN VOLUNTEER TURNS COVID FRUSTRATION INTO FUNDRAISING

Her name is Linda Goldstein, but at the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen, she is also lovingly known as “Linda Latte”, since one of her main jobs is preparing and serving coffee, tea and hot chocolate during her Monday shift, one she has kept for the last decade. She also regularly volunteers on holidays and is a familiar face helping at INN events. Imagine her frustration in March, when the Covid-19 pandemic stopped her from being able to give her time to a place she loved.

While quarantined at home, Linda decided to turn her frustration into something positive and creative. Although not previously a jewelry maker, Linda enjoys other artistic hobbies, like stained glass, watercolor, and acrylic painting. Inspired by a need in this new mask-wearing world, she began making personalized, beaded face mask jewelry and selling



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Save THE Dates:
(see page 5)
• February 11th – February Wine Tasting
• May 6th – INNkeepers’ Ball



Jean Kelly
Executive Director

REFLECTIONS

Silver Lining Gratitude

When I reflect on the past year and all that has transpired, I hope we can take time to focus on some silver linings...

A major one involves the improvement in the environment from less pollution. We can be thankful for this gift to everyone on the planet.

The unexpected gift of time, when everyone had to stay home, allowed some children to spend more time with their parents. We can be thankful for the positive impact this can have for the emotional health of these future generations.

Likewise, parents now actually see what their children's "job" is when they go to school. We hopefully all appreciate and are thankful for everyone who teaches children. And are more tolerant of how challenging it is to be a child at this time.

We have experienced the value and importance of physical touch. The need now to refrain from shaking hands or offering a hug seems

painful and awkward. And yet, once the world is safe, we will all hopefully remember to be affectionate with those seeking our touch and appropriate with those to whom a touch may still be unwelcome or difficult to accept.

A great lesson we have been reminded of is to appreciate what we have. We see those who have lost much during the pandemic, and those who struggled to survive prior to the pandemic who now find themselves in even worse shape. We can only hope and pray that everyone's eyes can be opened, and their hearts too, to see the need for change that can help everyone have enough to eat and a safe place to sleep.

Here, at The INN, we continue to be present to everyone in need. We are maintaining safety protocols and letting every guest know we care with nourishing food, and through the smiles they can see in our eyes. We share our collective understanding that any one of us could be on either side of the counter. Thank you for the millions of silver linings your exceptional support has provided us for all these many years. Please know we hope you are well and keeping safe and healthy. Be well. Be peace. Be love.

Love,

Jean Kelly
Executive Director

Creating a Feast (continued from pg 1)

bagged lunches. We gave her enough for her and her husband and children and she was so grateful. When she returned, she was so happy to tell me that with the chicken cutlets in the sandwiches, and the pasta in the grocery bag, she was able to make a full meal of chicken parmigiana and spaghetti. I smiled through my mask when she said, 'I made a feast, and I didn't even have to go to the store!'



In the middle of October, she came back again. This time, she wasn't on the line for food. She drove by, got out of the car and told me how she and her

husband both started working again and that things were finally better. 'I came back to say thank you,' she told me. 'You guys saved us; you guys saved the world!' That felt so good to hear. I gave her a big 'air hug' and told her we would be here if she ever needed us again.

This is what we do here at The INN. We treat each guest with dignity and respect. And it took all of us; the volunteers, the staff, the donors, to help that one guest survive the months until she was able to get back on her feet. That feels good. Thanks to all of you for helping that one guest, because you made a difference during this difficult time."



MAUREEN NAPPI, INN BOARD MEMBER

Well, as of this mailing, 2020 is just a bad dream. A year we will be grateful to forget!!!! We have embarked on a new year with renewed hope for a return to some form of normalcy — the New

Normal! It is the perfect time to reflect on what this past year has taught us about ourselves and about others and, hopefully, life lessons that we will carry with us as our lives and the world is renewed once again.

I've been reminded of vocabulary words that, quite frankly, I had little or no use for in the past: Herd Immunity, Quarantine, Lock Down, Isolation, Food Insecurity, and I hope they can be stored in my memory bank and never retrieved.

I have learned to redefine need and want! What seemed so important prior to the Pandemic has little significance now. The simplest things have given me joy and sadness, sometimes at the same time. Zoom calls have given me a chance to see my out-of-state family, to see their smiles, hear their voices, catch up on their lives. But the sadness comes in missing being able to hug them, to hold them, to snuggle and smell their hair before bedtime. To sit in the freezing cold

to watch a baseball or soccer game... to melt in the heat at a swim meet or marvel at them at their school concert. These simple treasures will once again return but not without the recognition of how precious these moments are.

But I do believe this Pandemic has given me a glimpse into the lives of the Guests whom we serve at The INN each day. All of the emotions we have been experiencing are part of their daily lives; the isolation, the fear, the longing, the need for human interaction, a simple smile, a gesture of affection, respect, compassion, companionship.

In time, our lives will return to a sense of normalcy. We will reunite with family and friends. We will tell stories of Pandemic 2020. For our guests, they will once again be able to dine in at the Mary Brennan INN. They will see the smiles and simple gestures that assure them they are welcome and cared for.

For all of you who have remembered The INN this past year through your generosity of resources, time, prayer... you have made a tremendous difference in so many lives. Your generosity has allowed us to fill some of the void in our Guests' lives. Happy, Healthy and Bright New Year to each of you.

Maureen Nappi
INN Board Member

COVID UPDATE

The safety of the guests, volunteers and staff continues to be a priority. Safety protocols of temperature checks, PPE and distancing remain vigorous. Meals at the Mary Brennan INN are served "to-go" and include a hot entrée, hot soup and sandwich. The number of meals served is triple

the pre-Covid number. Many donors have been using The INN's Amazon wish list to make their donations. The number of visits to the Center for Transformative Change has greatly increased. Many guests are concerned about becoming homeless. Warm clothing is being distributed. The emergency shelters and long-term housing continue in full operation.

Thank you for your generosity. We were able to do THIS, from March thru November 2020



182,078 meals were given out to nearly **45,000** guests



11,702 guests have been assisted by staff at the CTC



11,321 pantry bags of groceries were given out to families



120 guests have been safely quarantined in INN shelters and guests were placed in safe emergency housing for **332** nights

This is the third in a series of articles introducing The INN staff. In this Newsletter, we will be introducing the staff of the **Edna Moran INN emergency family shelter (EMI)**. The EMI is the successor to the very first INN shelter — the Hospitality INN. It is named in honor of the mother of INN co-founder, Michael Moran, and opened on December 15, 1992. Unlike the Mary Brennan INN or Center for Transformative Change, the EMI is open 24 hours per day every day of the year; an average of 12 families reside at EMI each night. As the name implies, families coming to EMI need emergency shelter, and without EMI the emergency would persist, further endangering the family.

The staff at the Edna Moran INN works to bring comfort, stability, and security to each of the families. When this is achieved, the family is ready to move on from the shelter and be on their own. This is a happy day for staff and the family. **The staff is dedicated, compassionate, talented, tireless and must love children. (This is the first of two articles featuring the EMI staff.)**

We asked them three questions: 1) What do you like most about working at EMI? 2) Do you have a favorite guest story? 3) Have you noticed a change in the guests since the pandemic began?



Corine Morris – Director of Emergency Housing. “I enjoy providing case management to the guests, to assist them with a plethora of needs, such as securing permanent housing, gaining employment, accessing community resources, and offering service linkage, as necessary, such as mental health, substance/alcohol use, domestic violence treatment programs, in addition to, assisting with child-care or school related issues and access to extra-curricular activities. I also enjoy having daily conversations with the guests, particularly the children.” *“In December, I enjoy*
(continued pg 6)

Diragi Raymond – Support Service Coordinator. “All the staff makes me feel very comfortable, like they were my extended family.” *“My favorite experiences involve talking with those guests who feel comfortable sharing what is/was bothering them.”* “Some guests, at times, are frustrated by the change in the curfew due to COVID-19.”



Cheryl Miller – Evening Support Worker. “Preparing and serving dinner to the guests. During dinner, the guests talk about their day, things that they accomplished and the things that didn’t go so well. It’s a time the children spend together with their family and staff.” *“My favorite experience was helping a young student press his ROTC uniform. He needed it the next day and would be in trouble if it wasn’t pressed according to regulation. He and I pressed the uniform until it looked professional. His mother was happy because she didn’t have money for the dry cleaners.”* “During the pandemic, a young mother who did not have a job for months, started working not one job but three. She is now determined to find permanent housing for herself and her two children.”

Sheila Robinson – Weekend Support Worker. “My most memorable time was initiating Saturday and Sunday movie nights at EMI for the families. I would supply popcorn, chips, drinks and on occasions, hot wings.” *“It was two days before Christmas and a supervisor asked me to ride with her to deliver Christmas gifts to a guest who was very challenging. The guest was very emotional and appreciative, as she had no gifts for her two children.”* “The guests are more conscious with social distancing and understand the importance of wearing PPE. However, they become frustrated with in-school, blended and remote learning.”



UPCOMING EVENTS

February Wine Tasting

Thursday, February 11

This is an evening for the wine lover, the romantic, or the adventurous.

Carefully chosen bottles of wine will be shipped to your home from Sparkling Pointe Vineyard on the North Fork. On the evening of the 11th, our wine expert will greet you (virtually) and guide you through the joys of these wines. This will be a treat for the seasoned oenophile or the wine "newbie". To register, or for further information, please visit www.the-inn.org/events, or call Nora White (516) 486-8506 ext.108.



INNkeepers' Ball

Thursday, May 6*

The INN is happy to announce the Honorees for the 2021 INNkeepers' Ball — Elizabeth McCaul & Frank Ingrassia. Elizabeth and Frank are delightful friends and supporters of The INN, and as The INN honors them, they honor The INN with their participation. Honorary Chairs are Frank J. & Janet DelleFera. This will be the 35th annual INNkeepers' Ball.

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

(*format to be determined)

STUDENTS PARTICIPATE

Not only in Distance Learning, but Distance Giving

If there is any group that can seamlessly adjust to changing times, it is young people.

For over ten years, high school students in The INN's "Youth Advisory Board" have met October – May at the Mary Brennan INN, where they participate in volunteer activities and plan engaging fundraisers. This year, it was no surprise to anyone that their monthly meetings had to shift to virtual meetings, an occurrence with which they are all too familiar.

On October 21, the Youth Advisory Board welcomed 60 students to its very first Zoom meeting. Students watched from home as Dana Lopez, Youth Board Advisor, conducted a virtual tour of the soup kitchen, and encouraged students to be creative during these trying times for The INN guests.

Since then, students have delivered food donations, and have composed Thanksgiving cards with words of encouragement for the guests and their families. For the spring, several virtual fundraising events

are being discussed, including a 5K race and a movie night.

"With all the major changes to their lives these students have had to endure in the last year, I'm inspired by their motivation to still help others who are less fortunate," said Dana. "It gives me hope for the future to see young people who can see past their own obstacles and still lend a hand to someone else."

For more information, visit www.the-inn.org/youthadvisoryboard



Fundraising (continued from pg 1)

it to friends and family, donating all proceeds to The INN. To date, Linda has raised \$2,000 with her creations and is enjoying filling her growing orders. Linda says, "In these struggling times for so many of our fellow human beings, I feel a responsibility to give back as I am fortunate enough to have the time and health to do it."

Recently, Linda happily has been able to return to the soup kitchen to volunteer weekly, following all safety protocols. We at The INN are fortunate to have supporters like Linda, who found new ways to help temporarily, even from a distance.

Staff (continued from pg 4)

Corine Morris

working on Shelter Shopping night, when the parents are very excited to choose toys and other items for their children, which are then hidden until Christmas Day. I enjoy watching the children's reactions as they open their gifts, especially when they get what they wished for. "Most of the guests have adapted readily to safety protocols. However, they do express frustrations with not being able to spend more time with family members and friends. Some parents express frustration with not having a choice of in-person, hybrid or virtual learning for their children."

Our Wish List

The INN is in need of:

- Non-perishable food – **no glass please**
- New underwear, hats, scarves and gloves for men, women and children
- Gift Cards (supermarket and Visa) – preferred amounts, \$10, \$25 and \$50
- Diapers/wipes – larger sizes (4, 5, 6 & pull-ups)
- Toiletry items (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, 9-11am or 2-4pm.*

*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

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 of The INN.

PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

*Alana Grace INN Administrative Center
*Center for Transformative Change (CTC)
*Clarice Silk INN

*Crisis Housing Project
*Donald E. Axinn INN
*Edna Moran INN

*Homelessness Prevention
*Jane's INN
*Long-Term Housing

*Mary Brennan INN
*Mary Moore INN

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:



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