

# Creativity *Hope* IMAGINATION



MERCY HAVEN INC.  
■ BUILDING COMMUNITY ■

ANNUAL REPORT › 2011



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR



Dear Friend of Mercy Haven,

Things don't just happen. We know that, right? For sure, we at Mercy Haven have learned that we can use our influence to create change. Sometimes this doesn't happen as quickly as we'd like and sometimes our self-doubt impedes us. We know it is all about relationships; relationships that are deeply rooted in hope. Whether you are reading about us for the first time or are part of the founding group, a funder, a staff member, or a participant, you know the added ingredient of hope changes things.

Hope is:

- a word we use when we are waiting for something to happen
- a feeling, maybe left unsaid, as we plant seeds and wait for blooms
- a value held by everyone connected to Mercy Haven
- a promise about tomorrow.

Our annual report is a way that we can share the signs of living hope that we experienced this past year. Whether it is through numbers or programs or life stories, we hope this document will invite you to experience the community you have helped us create.

We are especially proud of a new video about our agency that lets people hear directly from our participants about their lives with Mercy Haven. It will be posted to our website soon, and we urge you to watch and listen to these eloquent participants. On their behalf we thank our Board of Directors, Advisory Council, staff and you, our faithful supporters. We are truly blessed to be among such fine people day in and day out. It sure helps our hope!

With gratitude,

S. Patricia Griffith, DMin., LMSW  
Executive Director

Dorothy Overton  
Board Chair



*Logic will get you from A to B.  
Imagination will take you everywhere.*

~ ALBERT EINSTEIN



# COMMUNITY RESIDENCE HIGHLIGHTS

*Mercy Haven operates 3 Community Residences (CRs); two in Suffolk County and one in Nassau County. Residents stay in a CR for a period of 2-3 years in order to gain the daily living skills needed to move on to more independent living.*

## KRISTY -

### *"It's Different Every Day"*

#### **Community Residence Assistant Administrator**

Kristy hasn't worked for Mercy Haven for long, but she already has a great sense of the agency's history and mission. "I've been the Assistant Administrator at the Bay Shore Community Residence for six months. What I really like about working here is how appreciated I feel," Kristy explains. "Sister Pat held a luncheon for new staff just to get to know us and to say thanks. I thought it was really nice!" Kristy also shares how inspired she was by the history of the agency, which she learned about through Sister Pat's book, *The Heart of Mercy*. "There were so many challenges and obstacles at the beginning of the agency and to think that Sisters Pat and Kathy stepped out of their 'comfort zones' and kept pushing to help these people who needed a home—it's really so amazing."

When it comes to meeting the day-to-day challenges of her job, Kristy points to Mercy Haven's personable, positive work environment and commitment to helping those in need. "I like the job because it's different every day, but it is challenging because you are dealing with so many different personalities and diagnoses," she explains. "We also need to understand what financial benefits each resident currently receives, help manage their various medications, keep in touch with their case managers, doctors, day programs, and families. I need all my time management skills!"

Despite the challenges, Kristy feels supported in her efforts. "My Administrator, Diane, is a great mentor and other staff members here are really supportive and so willing to help whenever I have a question. The agency offers a lot of great

in-services for staff on topics like stress management and financial education, so they care a lot about our well-being." When asked to share the most rewarding part of her work, Kristy smiles. "Our work here helps our residents learn the skills to live independently," she explains. "Even when I've gone home really tired after a long day, I sit back and think how satisfied I am because I know we really help people."

## AUGIE -

### *"A Good Relationship With Everybody"*

#### **Resident, Community Residence**

As the delicious smell of sausage and peppers floats through the room, it doesn't take long for Augie to say what he enjoys most about living at Mercy Haven's Community Residence (CR) in Bay Shore. "The food is good," he says with a grin. Augie has lived in our Bay Shore CR for several years and has made the most of opportunities to grow and learn during that time. "I like to do a lot of different things here like playing catch in the backyard and going to the library to read books," he says. "I also like that we all pitch in around the house and have chores. I get to clean the TV room, which I like."

Augie enjoys a good relationship with the staff that he describes as helpful whenever he needs them. Soon, though, Augie's time at our CR will come to an end as plans are underway for him to move on to a home in Mercy Haven's supported housing program. This is a big accomplishment and the hope of all who enter a Community Residence program—to gain the skills necessary to live more independently. When asked about his plans for the future, Augie pauses, then answers: "I want to have money in the bank for emergencies and I want to have a good relationship with everybody."



## 2011 COMMUNITY RESIDENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

*34 residents*

*Admitted 10 new residents*

*Discharged 8 residents to Supported Housing, family, or our Adult Home*

*Received quality-assurance audits of 95% or higher in Medication Management, Documentation, and Environment of Care*

*Received 86% satisfaction in our Annual Participant Satisfaction Survey.*



# H.E.A.R.T.H. HIGHLIGHTS

## HEALED, ENRICHED, AND RENEWED THROUGH HOUSING

*Our Supported Housing program, known as H.E.A.R.T.H., is a scatter-site apartment program for individuals and families who are supported by Mercy Haven's staff in living independently. While our "Highlights" tells the quantities of Mercy Haven's residents and sites, the impact of our housing on the lives of our people and their families is evident in the stories shared below.*

### H.E.A.R.T.H. 2011 HIGHLIGHTS:

177 residents, comprised of 140 adults and 37 children (25 families)

24 Owned Supported Housing Sites

34 Rented Supported Housing Sites

Awarded \$2.4 million grant from the New York State's Homeless Housing Assistance Corporation (HHAC), which will enable us to provide homes for an additional 5 families currently living in homeless shelters. These homes are scheduled to open in Summer 2012.

97% satisfaction rating in the Annual Participation Satisfaction Survey

#### DIANE - "A Home of her Own" Mercy Haven Resident

Diane, who had suffered from depression for years, came from a women's shelter and into shared supported housing. Obtaining housing really helped her follow through with active treatment and improve her self-esteem and all-around skills. The change in Diane was seen by Mercy Haven's staff, but most of all by Diane's family who had kept her at a guarded distance. Diane was able to begin to re-build her relationships with her family. Over time, however, the shared housing in which she resided posed some obstacles. When a single apartment became available Mercy Haven's Housing Specialist saw an opportunity to give Diane a chance for further success. Now she is able to have her family over for dinner without concern of disturbing roommates. Her family now sees her as a loving mother and grandmother who provides a stable and nurturing home to visit and play.

#### JOHN - "A Family Christmas" Mercy Haven Resident

Family court denied John overnight visits with his daughter because he was living in his car. Visiting at McDonald's and the library was not "conducive to a positive father-daughter relationship." Upon receiving John's application for shared supported housing and interviewing him, Mercy Haven offered him a single apartment where he could begin re-building his relationship with his daughter. Mercy Haven worked with John on parenting skills and preparing the home for a child. The court, seeing that this Mercy Haven resident was now able to provide safe and adequate housing for his child, re-established overnight visits. As these visits continued, the bond with his daughter strengthened. John told Mercy Haven staff that he would like to gain full custody of his daughter, so Mercy Haven provided guidance and encouragement, assisting him in defining individual space for his daughter and himself. He finally won full custody of his daughter, and for the first time in years, Anna spent Christmas with her father.





# PLEASANT GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS

*Acquired by Mercy Haven in 1998, Pleasant Gardens Adult Home in Bayport provides a residence for individuals who are unable to live independently. Residents receive personal care and are provided with recreational activities that keep them active and engaged.*

## PLEASANT GARDENS 2011 HIGHLIGHTS:

*Home to 26 adults*

*Received a grant of \$31,743 New York State Department of Health EQUAL funds program*

*Improved the physical building with upgrades to two bathrooms, new flooring, new bed linens and window treatments, and several entertainment items*

*97% satisfaction rating in the Annual Participant Satisfaction Survey.*

### ISIS AND RAY - "A Lot of Activities!" Residents, Pleasant Gardens

"Outstanding!" is how Isis describes living at Mercy Haven's adult home, Pleasant Gardens, where she has been living for the past 16 years. It is a bright and sunny spring morning in the picturesque hamlet of Bayport when Isis and fellow resident Ray sit down in the airy dining room to share their thoughts. "I like the freedom here," says Ray. "We get to do a lot of activities like ping-pong and bowling. I also like to play ball with the recreation counselor." In addition to providing ample opportunities for recreation and activity, the staff at Pleasant Gardens deliver 24/7 care that includes medication management, meal preparation, and housekeeping services.

"The staff is very helpful," says Isis. The two residents also share positive reviews of the recent updates made to the home itself. "They've done a lot of painting," says Ray, pointing out new paint in all rooms. They compliment the new game area, too. "A lot of people like to play checkers," says Ray. Above all, the residents describe how much they enjoy the frequent staff-led outings. "I like the shopping trips to Smith Haven Mall the best," says Isis. Ray adds: "My favorite things to do are the trips, like going to the beach or to the Long Island Ducks game. I can't wait to go again this year!"





# MERCY ADVOCACY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

*The Mercy Advocacy Program celebrated its 14<sup>th</sup> year of providing free legal services for our residents' civil legal emergencies and continues to work toward systemic change on behalf of those living in poverty.*

## M.A.P. 2011 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Maintained an open case load of more than 220 cases bringing the total number of cases since the inception of MAP to nearly 2,100.
- Began new legal action *Cavetti v. Berlin*, which seeks to recover \$40 million in food stamp underpayments from New York State between April and September of 2011. MAP is again working in collaboration with Peter Vollmer, Esq. and Gene Doyle, LMSW on this class action suit on behalf of 344,000 food stamp households across NY State.
- Secured \$2,883 in rent arrears from Suffolk County for a Mercy Haven resident, along with a \$309 per month shelter entitlement and a basic needs allowance of \$166 per month.
- Reduced an erroneous \$632 monthly charge for Medicaid to the appropriate charge of \$0 for a Mercy Haven Resident.
- Prevented a shut-off of electrical service by LIPA by securing \$712.70 in emergency assistance from Suffolk County for another resident.
- Secured a correction of a food stamp underpayment of \$1,378 and a monthly increase of food stamps from \$57 per month to \$182 per month for a Mercy Haven resident.
- In May 2011 John Castellano, MAP's Attorney-In-Charge, received the Lawrence Timpa Award for Professional Service from the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission for his career in legal advocacy.

## ALISON -

### *"The foundation I need to help the residents"* Assistant Community Services Specialist

"MAP [the Mercy Advocacy Program] has helped me immensely with helping the residents I work with here at Mercy Haven," says Alison, a member of Mercy Haven's HEARTH staff. Central to Alison's job is to understand the entitlements that participants receive, which are essential to the survival of so many who are living with mental illness or living in poverty. Navigating these benefits can be confusing and frightening for anyone, especially those who live with mental illness. "When I came to work at Mercy Haven, I knew nothing about the process of obtaining and maintaining government entitlements," explains Alison. "Working with John Castellano [MAP's Attorney In Charge] has given me the foundation I need to help the residents I work with. John holds monthly training meetings with the staff and is available to us whenever an issue arises for one of our residents."

As an example, Alison describes the immeasurable benefit she saw MAP's services provide to Mary, a Mercy Haven resident:

*Mary had suffered many medical issues and when she arrived at Mercy Haven, she was in deep debt due to her medical bills. Creditors were calling constantly and the sheriff even visited her house. The first thing we did to assist her was write letters to all the creditors informing them that Mary was living on SSDI*

*(Social Security Disability Income). Therefore they are not legally allowed to utilize aggressive means of collecting debts. The simple fact that our actions stopped the harassing phone calls and the fear of the police showing up had a huge positive impact on Mary. The fear and anxiety she was experiencing began to lift. She was still concerned, however, that her doctors would not see her for future appointments because she still couldn't afford to pay the monthly "spend down" amount (premium) that Medicare requires. So the next thing we did to help her was to enroll her in the Medicaid Buy-in Program for Working Persons with Disabilities. This program pays the monthly spend-down amount for low-income people who are covered by Medicare and work part-time. Because Mary works part-time with Mercy Haven doing our mailings, she is eligible for this program. Now Mary is like a totally new person! Her financial burdens are alleviated; she can go to the doctor regularly without worry. It's been great to see the transformation she's undergone and it wouldn't have been possible without working closely with MAP throughout the process.*



MAP Attorney In Charge John Castellano (right) accepting the 2011 Lawrence Timpa Award for Professional Service from the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission.





# MERCY ENRICHMENT

Mercy Enrichment continued to offer programs that focus on respite, renewal, rejuvenation, and education for Mercy Haven participants, staff, and the greater community in 2011. Twelve groups whose values are in-line with Mercy Haven's mission used Mercy Enrichment for their gatherings. The hiring of a new administrator created an opportunity for staff to affirm their commitment to successful programs and to imagine new possibilities for this program. One of these new possibilities for the coming year includes the development of a Community Garden in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.

Programs offered in 2011 include:

- Twelve (12) trainings and in-services offered by Mercy Haven's Human Resources Department to staff
- Two 6-week nutrition courses and a parenting class offered to residents in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- Computer Classes for residents that included basic instruction on how to prepare a resume and use the internet to search for employment.
- Expanded community outreach through our role as advisors to John's Place, a shelter program on the North Fork of Long Island. This program is offered at St. Agnes Church in Greenport and Mattituck Presbyterian Church to those in need of shelter, from November 1-March 31. Mercy Haven provided monthly visits for volunteer training and support and a legal advocacy workshop to John's Place volunteers.
- Continued community outreach to those who are homeless or at-risk for homelessness through our Breakthrough program. In 2011 there were 3 Breakthrough program graduations with a total of 26 participants, bringing the total number of Breakthrough graduates to 117 since the program's inception in spring of 2007. Breakthrough's unique and imaginative emphasis on helping participants identify their strengths and mentoring them through setting goals for their future is key to helping them create their own solutions for obtaining and maintaining a place to live and hope in their future.



## PEOPLE RESPOND TO MERCY ENRICHMENT

*"We loved the space—it was just what was needed for our group!"*

~ JEAN

*"A few days in the peace and quiet and beauty here restored us to New Energy! Thanks!"*

~ BETTY & ROSEMARY

*"WOW! An oasis of peace & beauty. God in the midst of Brentwood. A wonderful place to rest, pray, and be one's self."*

~ FR. LARRY





# MERCY ENRICHMENT/STRATEGIC PLAN

## R.E.A.P. *Resident Empowerment & Achievement Program*

In 2011, Mercy Haven's R.E.A.P. program continued to provide residents with opportunities for self-exploration, self-expression, self-reliance, and fun! Staff, volunteers and other partners led classes and activities at our Main Office site, our Community Residences, our Adult Home, and Mercy Enrichment. Successful R.E.A.P. programs from past years continued, including the book club, creative writing class, movie nights, and holiday parties. Through R.E.A.P., Mercy Haven also offered residents the opportunity for paid employment on mailings and other projects that help the agency, build resident skills and experience, and provide opportunities for paid employment.

New highlights in 2011 included a new class entitled "Self Discovery Through Art," which used various projects like "Soul Collages" and "Goal Making Boxes" to help participants understand their own self-image and their perceptions of others, assess obstacles to meeting goals, identify their strengths, and set goals for their future.



*R.E.A.P. Artwork*



## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In December 2010, the Board of Directors and staff at Mercy Haven completed another two-year (2011-2012) Strategic Plan by re-assessing the organization's needs and the environment in which we operate. Consideration was not only given to economic and industry trends, but also to past performance and any outstanding initiatives remaining from our 2008-2010 plan. Due to the uncertainty we face based on the current economic recovery, we have chosen a shorter scheduling horizon for this plan than in previous years.

Through ongoing communication with the Board committees, we have achieved approximately 72% of the initiatives planned for the first year. As we enter the final year of the plan, both staff and Board remain committed to achieving the following:

- To improve financial stability by exploring cost reduction initiatives, assessing program viability, utilizing agency assets to increase profitability, and implementing effective internal controls
- To implement continued process improvement program that enhances current IT infrastructure, examines current and new business processes, and develops performance measures that will increase Mercy Haven's ability to fulfill its mission
- To create an environment that, as a publicly and widely recognized agency, is focused on creating leaders, internal growth opportunities, employee longevity, stability, and diversity within an organizational structure designed to support both the mission and long-term strategic objectives
- To expand the visibility of the organization and increase and diversify the funding sources of Mercy Haven so that the organization as a whole can attain the level of funding needed in the future
- To enhance and expand both quality and services in an effort to promote dignity among people who are homeless, living with mental illness, or living in poverty

*Doing the mailings helps me earn some money, meet new people and make new friends, which to me is the best part of the whole thing. It gives me a chance to get out, to be somewhere, to be useful, to feel like I'm needed, and that's an important thing in my life.*

~ ERIC, Resident & R.E.A.P participant





# MERCY HAVEN'S 2011 FINANCIAL REPORT

*The following information is derived from the Mercy Haven Consolidated Audited Financial Statement for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011, as audited by Cullen & Danowski, LLP, CPA.*

<b>Income Sources</b>	
Government Contracts and Grants	\$ 3,207,126
Resident Services	2,442,669
Contribution and Fundraising Income	201,308
Grant Income	464,867
Investment Income	25,248
Other Income net	77,393
<b>Total Income Sources</b>	<b>\$ 6,418,611</b>
<b>Program Expenses</b>	
Program Services	\$ 6,112,420
Supporting Services	622,866
Fundraising and Development	113,668
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 6,848,954</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(430,343)</b>
<b>Beginning Net Assets</b>	<b>2,640,759</b>
<b>Ending Net Assets</b>	<b>2,210,416</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>6,595,591</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 8,806,007</b>

## OUR SUPPORTERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

Mercy Haven relies on critical contributions of time, effort, and financial support to provide the best possible services and support to our residents and to extend our reach into the community.

Our generous supporters help to raise funds that meet costs not covered by our state and federal funding sources. These contributions are critical to several of our programs. In 2011, our donors contributed in a number of different ways including:

- Sponsoring and attending Mercy Haven's Golf Outing, Fall Cocktail Benefit, and other events
- Making automated monthly donations on a credit card/from a bank account
- Giving through our website
- Making gifts of appreciated stocks or securities
- Responding to Mercy Haven's direct-mail appeals
- Increasing the amount of a donation through an employer's Matching Gift Program
- Making Mercy Haven the beneficiary of a life insurance policy
- Including Mercy Haven in an estate plan
- Hosting a special event to raise funds. One example was a yard sale held in October that was organized by an Advisory Board Member who donated the \$4,000+ proceeds to Mercy Haven.





# MERCY HAVEN THANKS OUR CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

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## OUR VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

In addition to the financial and material support of our donors, volunteers make a difference in the daily lives of our residents by donating their time in a number of ways.

Individual volunteers provide clerical assistance in our main office and contribute to the success of our Breakthrough Program by cooking meals and acting as mentors and presenters. Mercy Haven was also the beneficiary of an Eagle Scout Project. Patrick Murphy of Troop 55 in Garden City spent the early part of 2011 preparing and planting a garden at our Westbury Community Residence. In addition, the agency continued to develop relationships with local colleges and universities to provide internships for students in various disciplines including social work and law.

Corporations sent groups of employees to complete projects at various Mercy Haven sites, provided technical expertise on a pro-bono basis and much more.

Examples of 2011 corporate contributions include:

- SMM Advertising—completed yard work at one of our Community Residences.
- CITI Corp—provided a group of volunteers to paint the interior of three apartments in one of our multi-family homes
- OSI Pharmaceuticals—sealed a wooden fence and a driveway at a two-family home.
- One Source Document Management—hosted the Holiday Magic party for our children and provided funds for Holiday gifts for residents.
- Regional Planning Associates—donated 25 Thanksgiving Baskets.
- Prudential Douglas Elliman of East Islip—provided funds to help augment holiday gifts donations from several local churches.

We are grateful for each of these acts of generosity. Mercy Haven always has room for more involvement and welcomes inquiries from individuals and corporations interested in contributing to a vibrant, inclusive Long Island.







MERCY HAVEN INC.  
■ BUILDING COMMUNITY ■

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*Mercy Haven's mission is to acknowledge the dignity  
and potential of people who are homeless, living with mental  
illness or living in poverty by providing housing, advocacy,  
education and life skills development.*