

## Life Skills



## Housing

**HEALTH**  
*starts with a*



## *Education*

## ADVOCACY





Established in 1985, Mercy Haven, Inc. is a non-sectarian, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. We envision communities where diversity and inclusion are valued and individuals reach their full potential. We are committed to be a place where experience and creative solutions come together to open the door of possibility for those most in need.

For more than 34 years, Mercy Haven has grown to be a multifaceted community resource and has served over 2,500 people. We have brought services to both Nassau and Suffolk Counties and are committed members of the communities we serve.

From a humble beginning in Bay Shore as a provider of housing for persons living with mental illness, our housing programs now include the elderly, veterans, persons living with mental illness, homeless and low-income families and survivors of domestic violence.

As of 2018, Mercy Haven owned or rented a total of 74 sites, representing 106 units of housing for 316 persons, and administered 75 Section 8 certificates. At the same time, construction began on 19 more units of housing, and we have now purchased 3 more homes, which will add 63 more people in need to our housing. Some of our support programs include free legal advocacy, education and life skills training, peer support groups, supported employment, community outreach, youth mentoring, and 24 hour on-call staff.



# OUR PROGRAMS

## HOUSING

**Community Residences** are licensed by the New York State Office of Mental Health and provide a home with 24 hour supervised care offering supportive and restorative services. Mercy Haven has three residences, totaling a maximum of 34 participants. The goal for each participant is to become self-sufficient and transition into permanent housing, either with Mercy Haven or elsewhere, within two years.

Our **Supportive Housing** program offers permanent housing in the community to single adults and families who are able to live with minimal supports. These housing opportunities are offered to those living with mental illness and families who are coming from homeless shelters. Referrals come through the County's Single Point of Access and through homeless shelters. Various types of housing are available in this program including multi-family and single-family homes and one, two and three bedroom apartments in various Long Island communities. Participants within the supportive housing program can choose to live in our housing for as long as they are physically able to live with minimum supports and adhere to their rent agreement responsibility. With the assistance of their Housing Specialist, participants can access a variety of services in order to stabilize and maintain their housing.



**Pleasant Gardens Adult Home** is a New York State Department of Health licensed permanent home for 26 individuals. Acquired by Mercy Haven in 1998, the adult home provides 24 hour staffing. In addition to housekeeping and laundry services, Personal Care Aides provide the participants with nutritious meals, scheduled trips, recreation and supervision of medication. The emphasis at Pleasant Gardens is on providing a safe, supportive environment for its participants who are not able to live independently.

**Section 8** – Mercy Haven manages 75 Section 8 vouchers that are available to income eligible disabled applicants through the Mainstream Program for Persons with Disabilities. These vouchers enable the elderly and persons with disabilities to rent affordable housing and live independently in the community. The vouchers are administered by the Community Development Corp. of Long Island and are being used throughout Suffolk County.



# HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) provide opportunities for Medicaid recipients with behavioral health conditions living in Nassau and Suffolk Counties to receive person-centered services in their own home or community.

## **Habilitation**

Habilitation services are designed to assist individuals with a behavioral health diagnosis in acquiring, retaining and improving skills necessary to reside successfully in home and community-based settings. These services assist individuals with developing skills necessary for community living and, if applicable, to continue the process of recovery from a substance use disorder. Examples of skills include communication, self-help, domestic, self-care, socialization, fine and gross motor skills, mobility, personal adjustment, relationship development, use of community resources and adaptive skills.

## **Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR)**

Services designed to help people restore and enhance personal well-being through social connections. It focuses on increasing health and wellness skills, while expanding social skills, building meaningful relationships and broadening community connections. Examples include: skill building and readiness development, relapse prevention planning and socialization skill building.

## **Pre-vocational Services (PVS)**

Services designed to prepare people for employment or volunteer positions. These services help people to develop and enhance general work skills and problem solving skills related to their career plan. Examples include: punctuality, communication with others, appropriate dress attire, working with others.

## **Intensive Supported Employment (ISE)**

These services assist recovering individuals with mental health/substance use disorders to obtain and keep competitive employment. They enable individuals who require support to learn and perform in a regular work setting and the ability to obtain and keep competitive employment at or above the minimum wage.

## **Ongoing Supported Employment (OSE)**

These services are provided after a person is hired and working. It is an individualized, person-centered service that provides people with on-going support to develop new skills that may further their advancement in their place of employment. Examples include: benefits and financial management, negotiating with employer, conflict resolution, anger management, work/life balance, and coping skills on the job.



## SUPPORT SERVICES

Our **Resident Empowerment & Achievement Program (REAP)** is filled with the programs and services that enhance our participants' lives. The program is always growing and changing based on the needs and recommendations of our participants. The goal is to reduce the habit of social isolation while also encouraging self-sufficiency by providing a variety of opportunities for recreation, self-advocacy, relationship building and life skills development. REAP activities include programs and activities such as:

**Peer Support Groups:** A key component to living with mental illness is the support and encouragement of others in the same situation. Mercy Haven has two peer support groups.

- **The Men of Mercy** peer group began with one participant asking for help with a problem that many other men were experiencing. The group meets monthly and provides men a venue to discuss problems they face and solutions to navigate their day-to-day challenges with others who are peers living with mental illness.
- **The Women's Support Group** is a way for participants to get together and discuss pertinent topics for them while offering the support and friendship of others.

**The Mercy Advocacy Program (MAP)**, established in 1997, is Mercy Haven's means of addressing the legal barriers to stable housing and self-sufficiency typically faced by those who are homeless and living with mental illness. MAP advocates to remove or circumvent any challenges to their entitlements which include: Medicaid, VA benefits, unemployment compensation, food stamp benefits, etc. Additionally, it is a resource for staff at monthly meetings and trainings to review the participants' entitlements as eligibility and enrollment changes occur. The MAP attorney also holds educational seminars for the participants regarding benefits, opportunities for growth and ways to advocate for themselves. We also work for systemic change on behalf of the poor through class action suits brought against the state regarding improper administration of food stamp and Medicaid benefits.

- Participants and staff have created the **Resident Advocacy Group**; a group in which participants can come together and promote advocacy. Whether that is through advocating in the community, and/or the government (local and federal), we believe they have a voice that ought to be heard. Work is done through flyers, emails, letter writing, legislator office visits, networking, trips to Albany and participation in community awareness events. In building relationships through visits and letter writing, a bond of understanding can be built with local, state and federal elected officials. Once again this year, we made our annual trip to Albany to help their understanding of the real life challenges from the perspective of someone relying on their assistance.

**Breakthrough** is our education program for those who are currently homeless and those at-risk of homelessness. The program is offered to persons in the community as well as Mercy Haven participants as a means of helping them identify the factors that have led to their history of homelessness. During the 12 week, 24 session course, Breakthrough provides education, tools, strategies, and mentoring to participants enabling them to make the changes necessary in their lives to move toward a path of self-sufficiency and permanent housing. The program helps with strategies that will prevent patterns of behavior that lead to homelessness in the future.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

**Recreational Programs** are designed to encourage social development. These programs provide participants with monthly choices of supervised and organized events, e.g., social trips, movie nights, poetry/book club, art classes, etc., that will entice them into a less isolated, more communal existence.

The **Supported Employment Program** is our evidence-based job readiness and workforce development program. The purpose of this program is to recognize and support the employment goals of our participants by providing the training and assistance necessary to secure and sustain part-time employment. This program includes pre-vocational, vocational and skills development plus integrated mental health services, benefits counseling, and individualized, ongoing supports. The program format includes classroom style learning, on the job training, a period of internship, and support during the first 6 months of part-time paid employment.

**Health & Wellness Programs** recognize the close relationship between mental health and physical health. In order to support both, we offer cooking classes, nutritional workshops, informational sessions on diabetes, stroke prevention, dental health, smoking cessation, yoga classes, fitness workshops and more:

- An integral part of our health & wellness programming is our ***Growing Together Community Garden***. The garden, established in 2012, has 16 garden beds that are tended by Mercy Haven participants, staff and various groups from the communities of Brentwood, Bay Shore, and Central Islip. The garden provides a place for people to come together and grow healthy food and enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of gardening. A requirement of garden membership is that 10% of all produce is donated to local food pantries.
- ***Our Life Youth and Family Group*** offers regular educational/social/recreational activities to formerly homeless children and their families. Our goal is to provide early intervention through mentorship, behavioral and emotional health support, parent education and support, and community oriented recreation in order to stop the cycle of homelessness.
- **Educational Programs** are offered on a number of topics that are relevant to Mercy Haven participants and members of the communities we serve. These topics include financial planning classes like debt reduction, financial literacy, and identity theft prevention. On an annual basis, Mercy Haven hosts gatherings that aim to reduce the stigma of mental illness and increase awareness about mental health issues. These have included movie screenings, discussion groups, open houses and health fairs.
- **Community Residences Meeting:** All three residences meet monthly, gathering participants and staff together to discuss issues related to living within the CR. Topics include day to day issues, grievance procedures, upcoming social events, meal planning and house rules, etc. Staff also educate the participants on the various housing models that are available within OMH housing. This meeting is another way for participants to interact and voice their concerns.



## *Building Community Since 1985*

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.



MERCY HAVEN, INC.

BUILDING COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

859 Connetquot Avenue, Suite 10

Islip Terrace, NY 11752

Tel: (631) 277-8300 • Fax: (631) 277-8394

[www.mercyhaven.org](http://www.mercyhaven.org)