A Message from S. Pat

I always look forward to sending updates to you. Sometimes it’s a little easier to grab the ‘good news’ from our memory. This time I’m finding it a bit of a challenge. Not that there isn’t good news to share; you’ll read plenty of that inside. But I think it’s because there’s just so much challenging news flooding our daily lives from the minute we arise and have any ‘media’ within the grasp of our senses. I’ve heard many say “I just can’t even engage with any of the news.” I do understand and have similar feelings myself. But I’m caught between that and knowing that everything still changes (and not necessarily for the better) if I just sit quietly.

There aren’t easy solutions for anything. I’m not pretending to think that or know what they are. But I can’t remain detached when I read about some of the dehumanizing actions of our time... like families not being able to simply enjoy a ‘garlic fest’ without worrying about violence springing up – and death and fright filling their day instead of fun. It’s not the only example, but I’m blessed to have been able to take two and a half weeks away from it all for retreat this year. It doesn’t provide me flowery, unrealistic solutions. What it does give me is the time of refreshment for my soul.

Astronomer Carl Sagan described his image of the Earth during his voyage in 1990 as merely a ‘blue dot.’ On that “dot”, everyone, yes every one of us, lives. We’re finding out how close that really is as our technological life has expanded and made us literally moments away from one another. This increases the almost instantaneous impact we have, for better or worse.

Here’s hoping this publication of “The Window” opens your day to the gifts that are alive and well and shared in our community. There’s plenty of other ways we can support one another – so if you have an idea, just give us a call. If you have time to share your talents, just give us a call. We are a living witness of what good can come from a small group that was willing to try.

Thank you, to each and every one of you, for whatever it is that you do to make this world brighter.
Our 20th Annual Golf Outing

“To find a man’s true character, play golf with him.” – P.G. Wodehouse

We were greeted with a beautiful, breezy early June day for our 20th Golf Outing, which took place once again at the elegant Hamlet Golf and Country Club in Commack, offering up a challenging course and an exceptional networking experience on and off the greens.

Our Honoree was our friend and volunteer, Paul Conefry, who is no stranger to our Golf Outing. He has chaired and participated in this fine event for more than 15 years. His commitment to Mercy Haven expands beyond the Golf Outing, as he serves as a member of our Board of Directors for as many years. Longtime supporter Bud Harrelson, former NY Met and co-owner of the Li Ducks, was in attendance with his family for dinner, sharing stories and engaging guests. The tournament was presented by premium sponsors Empire National Bank and Ridgewood Savings Bank, proud Gold Business Partners. Special thanks, also, to our Bronze Business Partners: AVZ Wealth Management; Farrell Fritz, P.C.; Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein, PC; Ruskin Moscou Faltischek, P.C., and Northwell Health-Southside Hospital.

As our guests were enjoying their dinner, Sister Pat greeted them with a warm introduction of our speaker, Bill, a Navy Veteran and resident in our Supportive Housing program. Before finding a home with Mercy Haven four years ago, he described his life as always on the move and unsettled. Diagnosed with mental illness and other health conditions, he traveled many times between Virginia and New York seeking proper Veteran’s services. He lost two homes to fire, one devastated by Super Storm Sandy, leaving him homeless and in search of stable housing, again. In 2015, his housing application was approved for Mercy Haven and he could finally settle down. Forever grateful for this opportunity, Bill commends the staff as being “supportive, helpful and compassionate to all of my needs.” His mental and physical health continues to improve, and he attributes this to having a safe and stable home. “I am thriving and happy. I will continue to help other residents find their way to happiness. We are all in this together.”

Sister Pat extended words of thanks to guests for their continued support and encouragement. She stressed that the first step toward stability and self-care is proper housing. “Your presence today helps us to give nearly 400 persons the care that is so needed in having their own home. None of us is exempt from bringing light to our world. We indeed have the power to change this world. You’ve seen it. We feel it. Thanks to your faithful support and generosity.”

The evening continued with golfers and guests taking chances on raffles and auction prizes, as well as a 50/50-Split-the-Pot raffle. Board Member Jim DiGiovanni, who served as our Golf Committee Chair thanked the committee for their tireless efforts and presented prizes to the contest winners. A great day of golf, partnered with warm wishes for the year, leads us to look FOREward to next year!
A Foundation From Which Everything Grows

A long-time in the making... Mercy Haven’s brand new construction project in Central Islip is underway, with the first building’s foundation complete and the 2nd being done as we speak!

These 2 new beautiful buildings will take the place of 3 run-down homes that were determined to be in too bad of shape to be rehabilitated. Instead, Mercy Haven demolished these sites and worked with an architect to design 2 multi-unit buildings, complete with a community service center, that will provide permanent housing for 20 individuals and 2 families. This is the 2nd time in Mercy Haven’s 34-year history to take on a new construction project.

We know housing is a basic human right, and the most essential key to recovery and self-sufficiency. Without a foundation - a home - recovering from life’s struggles with homelessness or any illness would be nearly impossible. We are excited to enter this community, revitalize the grounds, get to know our neighbors – and most importantly, give these people in need a place they can call home.

Service Spotlight

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) were created and developed collaboratively by New York State’s Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), and the Department of Health (DOH) as a means for individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders with Medicaid to receive services in their own home or community rather than institutions or hospital settings.

Mercy Haven is proud to offer five services through HCBS to not only our own residents who may qualify, but for any Medicaid recipient on Long Island seeking the following:

- **Habilitation** (i.e. communication, self-care, use of community resources, adaptive skills and socialization)
- **Psychosocial Rehabilitation** (i.e. building meaningful relationships, health and wellness skills)
- **Pre-vocational service** (i.e. general work skills – punctuality, communicating with others, appropriate work attire)
- **Intensive Supported Employment** (assisting recovering individuals with mental health/substance use to obtain and keep employment)
- **Ongoing Supported Employment** (ongoing support during employment to develop new skills that can further their advancement)

Goings On Around the Garden - Our 8th Season!

This season to date: 102 lbs. of produce harvested!

Since 2012: 5,031 lbs. of produce harvested!

2019 Community Garden
Job Training and Placement can be a challenge with our population, for residents and staff, with many of our people out of the workforce, dealing with mental illness symptoms and struggling to remain stable. Our 10 week Supported Employment Program provides all the tools necessary for job searching, on-the-job skills training, relationship/conflict management, internship placement, and competitive employment, with staff that understand and work with their conditions. Employment training and empowering populations like ours to re-enter the workforce are priorities for Capital One and the State Farm Foundation, who recently awarded Mercy Haven grants to support this program in particular – thank you both for changing peoples’ lives for the better every day.

In 2018, Domenico advocated on Mercy Haven’s behalf to be one of two nonprofits to be involved with their New York Islanders’ Save with Ridgewood program in which Ridgewood donates $10.00 for every goal saved by the NY Islanders in their season – a program that Mercy Haven has had the benefit of participating in for 2 years. Ridgewood then decided, both in 2018 and 2019, to increase their commitment as a Gold Partner in Mercy, making them a head sponsor and active advocate at Mercy Haven’s fundraising events. They have brought in new guests to learn about our mission, donated raffle baskets and golf outing gifts - which are just some of the many ways Ridgewood has shown, time and time again, how invested they are in their community. Thank you Ridgewood, and Domenico, for believing in us and our mission.

Follow Ridgewood on Facebook and Instagram @ridgewoodbank

**Bank of America**

Mercy Haven recently received a $50,000 grant from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation in support of the services we provide for the residents who come into our housing. Our services include supported employment training and job placement, free legal services, independent living skills teaching, youth and family programming and homeless education and outreach, among others. These services are the keys to success our residents need that allow them to maintain stability on their path to self-sufficiency and a healthy life. Simply providing a space for someone who is homeless is only part of the solution – Bank of America understands and supports the vital services that solve the complex issues. We are so grateful for their partnership as these services expand to accommodate our growing population coming in 2020.

Other Recent Program Supporters:
Special thanks to Allstate Insurance for their day of service (second year in a row!) and to Liberty Mutual Insurance, who completed 4 major projects this past May. They have been committed and faithful corporate volunteers for the past six years. Beautifying our homes and keeping our community garden in shape is a gift, and for this, we say THANK YOU! If your company is interested in a day of service, please call Heidi at 631-277-8300.

Volunteer Spotlights

From our Board of Directors
We are Proud to Welcome Donnalynn Darling and Barbara Bradley

Donnalynn Darling
Donnalynn is currently of counsel to Meyer Suozzi, a Garden City general practice law firm which has been in existence for sixty years. An attorney for 41 years, she is recently retired as the chair of the firm’s Personal Injury Law Group and Education Law Group.

She is proud to have originated the Education Law Practice at Meyer Suozzi, a service created in response to increasing requests by parents of learning-disabled children for assistance in securing timely educational evaluations, services, and accommodations for their children in public and private school settings under federal and state law. Donnalynn had worked with Mercy Haven to ensure that our children who are enrolled in the local school districts receive their full educational rights and services under the law.

Donnalynn will now bring her years of experience and expertise to our Board. Her vision for Mercy Haven is that we continue to obtain and provide housing to more clients. Welcome, Donnalynn.

Barbara Bradley
Born and raised on Long Island, Barbara built her 25-year career as a psychiatric nurse in the outpatient clinics of Kings Park and Pilgrim Psychiatric Centers. She retired from nursing in 2004. Barbara was a guest at a recent Breakthrough session, our homeless outreach and education program, and became immediately impressed by the dignity and joy the program offered. Her lifelong experiences and expertise in the mental health field will assist many in the agency. “The mental illness component of homelessness just looms so large,” she says.

She envisions Mercy Haven continuing to provide stable housing and quality of life programming. She says, “the Breakthrough graduation ceremony was so memorable for me. I would think Mercy Haven would continue to understand, to explore and to expand on programs for the homeless. I feel I have been very blessed in my life so I fully subscribe to ‘pay it forward.’” Welcome, Barbara.

Helping Hands for Healthy Starts

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When we met James, his world was falling apart – a failed marriage and a son who hasn’t spoken to him in years, homeless, substance abusing and hospitalized with severe depression. James’ first step to being whole again: housing.

When he came into our housing, it didn’t feel right to him, his past regrets and depression tried to take over “everybody deserves a second chance, and one day, I will accept that this also applies to me.”

With the help of therapists, medication and Mercy Haven’s community, James started to take pride in his accomplishments – big or small – to start letting go of the past and do what you can in the present.

After graduating one of our outreach programs, James wanted to get back to work – he started working nights at UPS, worked as an assistant at our adult home, and was offered the job of a Driver for Mercy Haven. He worked part time for us, driving residents to activities and classes, assisting in donation pick-ups and assisting in moving furniture into new homes. It is through this job that he met and worked with a member of our Administrative team, Sandy.

Sandy worked with James on donations and they became good friends, talking about family, work, school and goals. From his talks with Sandy, James was inspired to go back to school and get an Accounting degree. Sandy, who has an Accounting degree as well, coached James on the best classes to take, what teachers to look for, and cheered him on the whole way.

Three years later, James obtained an Associates in Accounting from Suffolk Community College and even came in to show all of us. We could see the pride on his face.

James lives completely independently from Mercy Haven today. He continues to be involved by volunteering with us and has even donated to us over the years – in hopes that his contributions can help someone else like him find their way.

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**Health Starts With a Home**

**James’ Story...**

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**Proud Artist**

**at the West Babylon Public Library**

Hard work and determination does pay off! David, Mercy Haven resident and artist, along with Life Skills Coordinator, Gianna Manaseri, found a home for his paintings after many years of searching.

Our Resident Empowerment and Achievement Program (REAP) is filled with the programs and services that enhance our participants’ lives. David is a regular attendee, never missing a Thursday painting class with Gianna. While painting is a passion, poetry is also near and dear to his heart, and he will offer up his binders of poems and short stories to anyone who asks.

“I am thrilled to have people view my work and grateful for this opportunity. I am motivated and would like to continue to pursue space for future shows,” David remarked. Many thanks to the West Babylon Public Library, who secured space for several of David’s paintings for the month of June.
Join the Circle that is fighting to end chronic homelessness on Long Island.

We are growing. Populations in crisis are increasing.

In our ultimate effort to end homelessness, Mercy Haven must continuously evaluate our communities’ needs and seek new housing projects.

New projects mean expanding our services, which means new staff and new programs to ensure the best possible outcomes for our people.

One donation each month adds up to a world of difference for those we serve - families, persons living with mental illness, veterans, disabled individuals, those living in poverty, and the elderly. Please join our monthly donor circle that is committed to fighting homelessness on Long Island.

Donate now at www.mercyhaven.org

To learn more about these and other ways to give, please call Ciara Jensen, Development Director at 631-277-8300

Have Fun - Make a Difference!

Our Volunteer Program has been expanding. We are seeking both individuals and groups interested in serving the Agency. We have created several specific volunteer positions such as painters, clerical assistants, mentors, and meal assistants. We hope to recruit people who may have the talents and interest to assist us. Perhaps you know of someone who may want to get involved or you have contacts in or belong to an organization that might be a source of volunteers. We would love to hear from you.

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

You Shop. Amazon Gives.

Make your shopping dollars go farther this summer season!

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to Mercy Haven, Inc. whenever you shop on AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Simply visit www.smile.amazon.com and select Mercy Haven, Inc. as your charity of choice.
SAVE THE DATE

Mercy Haven’s 34th Annual Fall Cocktail Party

Sunday, November 3rd 2019
4:00 pm - 6:30 pm
SOUTHWARD HO COUNTRY CLUB
BAY SHORE, NY
Great Prizes, Raffles & 50/50 Chances!

Our Committee is now in formation. To volunteer, call Heidi at (631) 277-8300 or email hhaller@mercyhaven.com

Visit us at www.mercyhaven.org Follow us @mercyhaveninc