A Message from S. Pat

You are in for a real treat with this newsletter. It is filled with wonderful moments of so much generosity. Some say it’s the season. I say it’s the best part of being human. We have the ability to see a need, to feel what another might be going through, and respond.

Speaking of ‘good news’, you might have seen this in a paper or on the internet, but I think it is worth remembering again. It’s the story of a man from Woodbury who was dying and desperately needed a liver transplant. Rabbi Ephraim Simon, from New Jersey, learned of this gentleman’s need through a website called KidneyMitzvah.com, and did not hesitate. His gesture of life started immediately and two days before the transplant he met Adam, the man who would receive this gift of life.

Imagine being that generous. I’m not totally surprised by it, because I believe we can give more than we ever imagined. Though I’ve never been an organ donor, I do know that generosity is instilled in so many different ways. Mercy Haven can tell numerous stories of people’s generosity either through what you will read here or the stories we are witness to in the changes in our participants lives. There’s plenty of opportunity within our society right now; perhaps more than ever. Whatever your political position, the Federal Government’s shutdown is impacting many more families and communities than just those who are employed or dependent on the government. There’s a real ripple effect because we do not live solitary lives. Times like these can bring a temptation, and a justification, to take care of our own. But I believe we’ve all experienced the opposite – the growth in understanding and compassion and personal decisions to care for more than our own.

At the beginning of this New Year, our staff and board gathered to celebrate not only our life together but to give thanks for all their generosity in spending their lives for our residents.

It’s certainly different than the generosity of the Rabbi, but it is also so similar. Without knowing a resident, staff sets out to engage their life with a stranger. They choose to give their time, their gifts and life energy for the ‘other’. It may not be the physical exchange of an organ but it certainly is life-giving and for some of our friends it has made the difference between their life and death, helping them to grow beyond their pasts and continue to develop a new understanding for the future. I’m so grateful to each of you, staff and supporter. You are a sign to me of the best of life.

P.S. Did I mention the Rabbi had already given another person one of his kidneys?
Our 33rd Annual Fall Cocktail Party
A Warm Celebration of the Year

A picture-perfect November day welcomed over 210 guests for our 33rd Annual Fall Cocktail Party. On November 4, 2018, friends old and new gathered at Southward Ho Country Club in Bay Shore to share in the warmth of the celebration, and reminisce over the many successes and challenges of the previous year. There is so much to be thankful for as we move into our 34th year of providing housing and services to those who are homeless, living with mental illness or living in poverty.

The committee, co-chaired by Pat Spiegel and Linda Tos, worked tirelessly to transform the room into a landscape of fall colors, from the front entrance and gift area to the decor that adorned the dining room and patio. The end result of all the hard work was apparent in the excitement of raffle ticket sales, encouraging feedback from the guests, and in raising more than $83,000 for our programs and services.

The program for the evening began with Sister Pat introducing Valeria, a 15-year resident of Mercy Haven, who confidently stood before the guests and told the story of her life since finding a home with us. Living with mental illness for most of her adult life, she came to Mercy Haven after deciding to take charge of her mental health and live independently. Valeria has made many new friends by getting involved with the many activities offered to residents through REAP (Mercy Haven’s Resident Empowerment & Achievement Program). She enjoys craft and cooking classes that keep her close to the friendships she has created. “I am thankful for Mercy Haven’s resident programs and valued staff who are wonderful and have become a great asset to my needs and well-being.”

Sister Pat then shared words of dreams realized as she spoke of the agency’s growth, thanks to $4 million in grant monies recently awarded to Mercy Haven. “This money will allow us to move forward with our plans to build a 19-unit apartment complex, as well as purchase and rehab 3 more homes that will provide permanent housing and services for homeless families.” She then proudly spoke of our recent award of being named one of Newsday’s Top Workplaces on Long Island, and how grateful she is for such a dedicated and compassionate staff. “Our staff and all of you involved with Mercy Haven know that everything we do or not do for another raises or lowers the degree of humanity in the world. Nothing changes unless we do something.”

The evening would not have been possible without our Event Sponsors, Empire National Bank, Ridgewood Savings Bank and the McNamara Family and the many baskets of prizes donated from local vendors and committee members. Through the generosity of our sponsors, event volunteers and guest speakers, the event will be fondly remembered. We look forward to sharing our stories of courage and hope with our many friends, new and old, at our 20th Annual Golf Outing on June 3rd, and our 34th Annual Cocktail Party on November 3rd, 2019.
“Fall Into Fall” Resident Party

Over 50 of our housing residents, along with Mercy Haven staff, partied in October to welcome the new season at our “Fall Into Fall” party. Residents and staff enjoyed dancing to the music provided by Erik S., our talented resident D.J. Thank you to our friends at Panera Bread in Bohemia for donating the delicious sandwiches and sides for this event. The food was enjoyed by all in attendance. Beautiful fall decor rounded out by chances to win fun raffle prizes added to the enjoyment of this festive afternoon.

Newsday Awards the Top Workplaces for 2018!

As a result of a Newsday survey opportunity for our staff, Mercy Haven was proud to learn that we were named a “Top Workplace on Long Island.” This past October, staff attended the award reception and was proud to learn that we not only won as a “Small Workplace”, but received another award in a Special Category for “Meaningfulness” in our work. Based on our staff’s responses, our workplace culture and the feeling of reward in our work, we won in this category amongst other non-profits nominated.

Staff Celebrate the Holidays ... and Each Other

Thanksgiving is a time of togetherness and gratitude. Not only to celebrate our own friends and families, but those we work with day in and day out. Our special team came together this year for a “Friendsgiving” celebration of the special bond we’ve come to have with each other, a blessing to certainly be counted on this special holiday.

Staff gathered again for some seasonal fun as we decorated cookies and drank hot cocoa on a cold December day.

“We must find the time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.”
- John F. Kennedy
A Heartfelt THANK YOU to Our Generous Donors this Holiday Season

Generosity of heart - providing gifts for our residents and families, Thanksgiving baskets, and a jolly Santa. Each of these was donated by local businesses, non-profits, churches, schools and individuals to help brighten the holidays for those in our care.

NORTHWELL HEALTH/SOUTHSIDE HOSPITAL – 15 Turkeys for our families.
CINDI BERDON and KEN DUNNE from ISLAND GROUP PLANS – 20 Turkeys for our families.
BETHPAGE FCU - for their generous donation of 100 tote bags and 50 piggy banks for our outreach program.
CUMBERLAND FARMS - for their generous donation of 25 loaves of bread for our 3 Community Residences and Pleasant Gardens.

DEBORAH & SHEILA TASCONE-KENNEDY – Donated new toys and games plus new outfits for children in our care. Necklaces were given to the moms. Friends who helped this project along were JANE LOGAN, LINDA HOESL and BARBARA WALDEN.

Delivery of homemade holiday cards for our participants was organized by MARY DONNELLY, English Chairperson at GRAND AVE. MIDDLE SCHOOL, BELLMORE whose middle schoolers created over 100 holiday cards for our veterans, participants and families.

Much-needed umbrellas and gift cards for 180+ participants were donated by:
OUR LADY OF THE SNOW RC CHURCH, Blue Point, NY
ST. MARY RC CHURCH PARISH OUTREACH, East Islip, NY
ST. THOMAS MORE RC CHURCH PARISH OUTREACH, Hauppauge, NY
HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL, Hicksville, NY
ST. PETER THE APOSTLE, Islip Terrace, NY
OUR LADY OF PEACE, Lynbrook, NY
HOLY CROSS RC CHURCH PARISH OUTREACH, Nesconset, NY
ST. LAWRENCE THE MARTYR RC CHURCH, Sayville, NY
OUR LADY OF LOURDES RC CHURCH, West Islip, NY

Thank you to PAT SPIEGEL and JESSIKA E. who spent a day wrapping gifts with us in time for Christmas.

Thank you once again to the generous volunteers from CHRISTMAS MAGIC/HOLIDAY MAGIC who fulfill the wish lists for our 60+ children. This year’s festive Holiday Party took place on Dec. 18TH at the American Legion Hall in Brentwood. Over 75 guests were in attendance to sing, dance, do crafts, eat pizza and wait for the jolly old elf’s arrival. Santa did not disappoint! He definitely helped us all believe in the magic of the season.

This year, Mercy Haven assisted the ECNY Foundation in the collection and distribution of tote bags filled with toiletries and essentials for the homeless living on the streets. Pictured above are the businesses and agencies who organized and donated to this worthy project. Thank you to ECNY for asking us to partner.
Central Islip, New York will soon be home to 2 newly constructed buildings for 28 individuals in need of permanent housing. This brand new construction will revitalize this neighborhood and will also house a Community Service Center on-site to provide the services specific to these residents’ needs on the property as well as allow partners from other organizations to use the space to bring our residents and surrounding neighbors together, such as Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous meetings, family/parent/peer support groups, anger management, financial seminars and youth mentoring. Construction starts soon.

In addition to this project, Mercy Haven also received word in October from the New York State Homeless Housing Assistance Corporation that we have been awarded $3.2 million in funds to rehabilitate 3 scattered-site homes in Suffolk County to provide permanent and safe housing for eight homeless families. The urgent need to provide housing to homeless families is fully recognized by our agency. We know that these new families will benefit from our services and will teach us ways we can continue to expand to accommodate our growing family population.

This project combined with our Central Islip construction, will bring 63 people into our care, including up to 40 children!

**Complete Kitchen Renovation**

** Beautifies our Home at Pleasant Gardens**

Pleasant Gardens, Mercy Haven’s solution that provides permanent housing to 26 elderly individuals, has been a prominent beautiful home in the Bayport community for decades. Since our purchase of the property in 1998, upgrades have been done to make our residents comfortable, safe and proud of their home. One of the most important rooms in the house, however, our kitchen, after serving our residents and staff for 20 years, was in need of a makeover, and we are happy to say has been successfully completed.

Pleasant Gardens was the recipient of a COMPLETE kitchen remodel this past October. New industrial appliances including a new oven and dishwasher, and new cabinets and countertops were installed as well as a completely re-done floor. This renovation brings new life to our home and gives our residents even further pride in where they live.

A very special THANK YOU to Aiello Bros. Pork Store in East Islip, Satelite Pizza in Bayport and Terrace Bagels in Islip Terrace for providing meals to our residents during this renovation process. It was very much appreciated.
Introducing... Mercy Haven’s New Monthly Giving Program

In an effort to provide homes for our growing population, Mercy Haven must continue to move forward with new housing development projects. A direct result of this growth is the expansion of services according to the needs of those who are in our care, which means new staff and new programs to ensure the best possible outcomes for our communities.

One donation each month adds up to a world of difference for those we serve who are most in need on Long Island – homeless families, persons living with mental illness, veterans, disabled individuals, those living in poverty, and the elderly.

$15/month – adds non-perishable food items to our Food Pantry shelves year-round.

$30/month – provides arts & craft supplies for our children’s programs

$50/month – keeps food on the table for one week for one resident at Pleasant Gardens

$100/month – provides a week’s worth of fuel for our four program vans

$200/month – supports free legal services for a family

$500/month – helps heat a community residence group home for one month

Please join the circle that is fighting to end chronic homelessness on Long Island. http://bit.ly/CIRCLEOFMERCY

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

Gifts of Appreciated Stock

Those who own stock that has appreciated might find this method of sharing their financial resources to be convenient. Federal tax laws allow a charitable deduction for the full market value of appreciated securities on the date of your gift. In addition, the donor pays no capital gains tax on the appreciated asset. To receive the tax benefits of this type of donation, the stock must be transferred by the brokerage directly to Mercy Haven. Contact our Development Office or your financial advisor for more information.
SAVE THE DATE
Mercy Haven’s
20th Annual Golf Outing
June 3, 2019
Hamlet Golf and Country Club
Commack, NY
COMMITTEE IN FORMATION
CALL 631-277-8300 TO JOIN!

Coming Soon!
MERCY HAVEN’S RESORT RAFFLE 2019
Follow us on Social Media for more information in the coming weeks!