

# the WINDOW

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## A Message from S. Pat: *How are you?*

I think this is about the time last year that word was becoming public about this mysterious virus spreading in many, if not all, nations. If I think about it for Mercy Haven, first on our list of priorities was our residents – their education, counseling and safety along with that of our staff. For certain that first concern was not the only ‘first’ on that list.

Perhaps that has been one of the hidden graces of the whole experience that we, as essential workers, as neighbors, as parents, spouses, siblings, caretakers within our own families – were called to rearrange our lives and to manage the care of our families and care of our residents and neighbors all at the same time. There were deliberate choices to be made, and I proudly say, that our community of MH – staff, residents and supporters did not miss a beat in finding alternative ways to express support for one another. It would be a year now since we first shifted almost everything we habitually did.

Joan Chittister OSB in “A Moment for Something More Soulful than Politics” says, “In every life there is a crossover moment after which a person will never be the same again. Somewhere,

*somehow the challenge comes that sets us on a different path. The path of purpose. The path of integrity. The path of transcendence that lifts us – heart, mind and soul - above the pitiable level of the mundane... As a culture, we may have come to that point in this culture en masse. It is a call to all of us to be our best, our least superficial, our most serious about what it means to be a citizen,”* a citizen of the world.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges for me was the physical distance from staff. Practicing healthy distances meant many staff working hours would be from home where they were also sharing work space with their spouses and home schooling their children. I worried about how we could learn a new way of communication, of support, of compliance, of our own personal growth. How could we create time so that staff could process their own experience of the virus and still be ‘available’ to counsel our residents and companion them through their journey.

At least we are almost through a full year of this pandemic. It has been an amazing grace to be the recipient of the generosity of all you who helped us through our financial challenges and the

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.

loss of a great moment for celebration - our 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Because of each of you doing your part and thinking of new ways of financial support we made it through this year. Knowing us, you know we aren’t going to let the pandemic steal our dinner dance, which now has been aptly named our 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and planned for October 29<sup>th</sup>. Don’t forget to put our golf outing in your date book as well. We look forward to being safely on the greens with you.

I believe many of us have learned and are more confirmed in the reality that work is our gift to the world. It ties us to one another. It gives us purpose and hope.

Thank you to each of you who have been faithful travelers with us through these challenging days. We couldn’t have done what we accomplished without you.

- S. Patricia Griffith, Executive Director

## MERCY HAVEN, INC. - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# A Virtual Twist on our 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## ... Not What We Planned, but a Celebration Indeed

The landscape by which we fundraise and increase awareness took a drastic turn this year. A Golf Outing that gathers our devoted players was put on hold... A Gala to celebrate 35 years of service was rescheduled... A world health crisis so strong peppered this landscape with fear, frustration, and change. Through this change, though, came a new way to reach out and spend time with our friends and supporters.

The redesign of our traditional, warm Fall Cocktail Party took shape as a Virtual Event that offered a glance into our year through a series of video interviews with residents and staff and culminated with a very successful Basket Raffle and Live Auction.



We were encouraged by our loyal volunteers, who all worked together to collect and deliver much-needed gifts and items to complete our Virtual Raffle and Auction. The efforts and dedication of all involved with the planning, preparation and delivery of this event, allowed us to raise over \$70,000 in much-needed revenue for the year.

## There Was Magic, Still ...

### ... A Safe & Special Time for Our Families This Holiday



Our family celebration, Holiday Magic, looked a bit different this year. With large gatherings on hold, we were not able to sing, dance and laugh with Santa as we typically do at this family event. The magic was not lost, though, it was just “detoured”. Our selfless and loyal friends from **HOLIDAY MAGIC**, a non-profit dedicated to filling gift wish lists for the less fortunate on Long Island, provided our children with the gifts they desired. Along with an abundance of toys and gift cards provided by long-time friends and supporters, **SHEILA & DEBORAH TASCONE-KENNEDY**, our families were delivered a very special holiday. Mercy Haven staff organized and implemented a safe gift pick-up and provided the necessary wrapping paper, tape and bows for the families. We were glad and fortunate to continue this tradition, and look forward to gathering next year.



# *- With a Thankful Heart -*

Thanksgiving baskets - gifts and meals for our residents and families - vital food pantry items. Each of these were donated by local businesses, nonprofits, churches, schools and individuals to help brighten the holidays for those in our care.



**CINDI BERDON** and staff from **ISLAND GROUP PLANS** donated more than 30 turkeys for our families this Thanksgiving.



**STEPHANIE BERDON** and the **CHICO'S OF STONY BROOK** team, our new friends, donated Thanksgiving food items. They plan to do this for us every year!



**JOHN & LAURA SOLDINGER** donated complete Thanksgiving meals for our Community Residences. and prepared sandwiches for another Community Residence 3 times a week during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**LONG ISLAND BIRTHDAY WISHES** donated 35 Thanksgiving Baskets filled with all the fixins' needed for a complete meal plus \$25 Supermarket Gift Cards for a turkey.

A generous offering of Target and Walmart gift cards for 180+ participants were donated by:

**OUR LADY OF THE SNOW RC CHURCH** - Blue Point, NY

**ST. PETER THE APOSTLE** - Islip Terrace, NY

**ST. MARY RC CHURCH PARISH OUTREACH** - East Islip, NY

**ST. THOMAS MORE RC CHURCH PARISH OUTREACH** -  
Hauppauge, NY

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES** - West Islip, NY

**HOLY CROSS RC CHURCH PARISH OUTREACH** - Nesconset, NY



# Our Journey Continues



The pictures are hung, the curtains are prepped, and the dishes and pans are tucked away waiting to host their first meals. Twenty-eight new residents will soon begin a new chapter at Mercy Gardens.

Our 19-unit, newly constructed complex, complete with Education Center, has entered the “finishing touch” stage, and will be occupied this Spring 2021.

This journey was not without its unexpected delays, but the hard work of the many involved in this project is

now evident in the beauty of the home and the property it sits on. And while we are fortunate to have had the opportunity to create this vital addition to our housing program, we are humbled by the promise these homes will bring.

We encourage you to keep an eye out for this beautiful property in Central Islip and watch for a special piece, inspired by our Mercy Gardens journey, in our upcoming Annual Report.

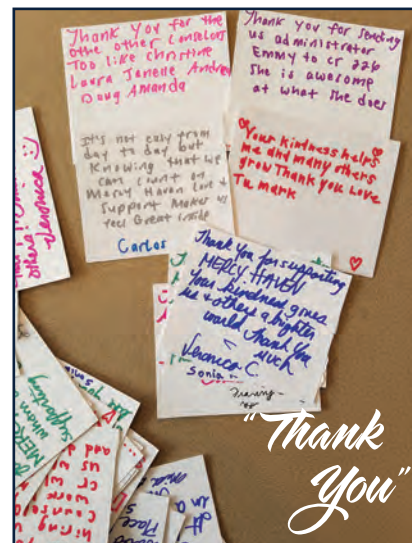
## Bringing Residents Together



One of our biggest challenges faced during these times was coming up with ways to bring people together during COVID! Staff worked to establish group classes via ZOOM and most importantly, ensure that all residents across housing programs had the proper means to access them.

Programs providing socialization were important prior to the pandemic, and are essential during it, when it comes to working with our mental health population.

## On a Personal Note



We spoke to some of our group home residents about our new Etsy store and how we would like to include simple thank you notes from anyone interested in writing them. Without a template, and just saying ‘we want to say thanks’, we got so much more than we had hoped for. Residents wrote thanks to donors, thanks to staff, and some wrote such personal

thoughts of gratitude. It truly warmed our hearts, and we hope our Etsy shoppers, on these especially cold days.

Check out our Etsy store at [lovemercygifts.etsy.com](https://lovemercygifts.etsy.com) and place an order to get yours!



## A New Board Member

### Welcome, Louise Regnante



Louise Regnante began her Mercy Haven journey in 1990 when she entered our Community Residence in West Babylon, after being homeless for several years. She shares that *"Mercy Haven is a place of hope. If you have never*

*had a mental illness or been homeless, it's hard to express the joy of having a roof over your head."*

Louise lived with us for 2 years. After leaving our Community Residence, she found steady work and an apartment on her own. *"I am proud to be a member of the Board and to be affiliated with this organization and will continue to lend my support... I believe in God and the work that Mercy Haven has done, and continues to do."* Louise is anxious to meet residents and be a witness to what is possible. Welcome, Louise. Mercy Haven is happy to have you.

## 30 Under 30

### Allie Lennon



A bright spot this past September was the awarding of **Long Island Business News' 30 Under 30 Award** to our very own Allie Lennon. An amazing honor, indeed.

During an engaging Virtual Event, Allie received this award with 29 other dedicated peers. She is an Assistant

Administrator at our Community Residence in Westbury, helping to guide a group of 10, all living with severe mental illness, to more independent and permanent housing. She also works part-time as a counselor, providing behavioral intervention to young girls with emotional needs. In her spare time, she volunteers as an EMT at the Mineola Volunteer Ambulance Corp. And, if she isn't busy enough, Allie is currently working on her Masters Degree in Public Health Policy and Management at CUNY School of Public Health.

*Congratulations, Allie!*



## Staff Spotlight

### Insight from Imran Ahmad,

Director of Management Information Systems (MIS)



The COVID-19 pandemic is perhaps the most ravaging healthcare crisis of our time. It has affected our agency and my work as much as it did the rest of the world. Faced with the urgent need to comply with stringent government guidelines, our agency had to adapt to the new normal.

The Management

Information Systems (MIS) Department was instantly critical for ensuring the essential operations kept moving despite the pandemic's disruptions.

Working with staff members to ensure smooth working operations for those working from home included coordinating access to Information Technology (IT) resources such as data and information to facilitate their remote work. During the lockdown period, employees were working both on and off premises. It was an interesting experience as it helped to highlight the applicability and relevance of remote working models and the role of MIS in such a context.

The pandemic is still here despite the advent of vaccines. I am in compliance with the rules of social distancing, wearing face masks, using hand sanitizers, and reducing contact with colleagues while continuing my efforts to work within this new normal environment. Today the need for IT to support and help workers have access to digital resources, virtual meetings and online collaborations, and other related IT operations and activities have become increasingly common.

The pandemic brought fundamental changes in the way organizations carry out routine operations, and to some extent the role of MIS was redefined, its significance becoming even more evident. These changes and the lessons gained from the experiences will in my view be important in my role and performance in the MIS department of Mercy Haven.



# Foundation Spotlight

## Jacob Marley Foundation (JMF)



The Jacob Marley Foundation (JMF) is a private foundation established by Chris and Traci Quackenbush in 1993 with a major focus on improving people's lives through education. Many educational, literary, charitable and religious programs have been initiated and other already existing programs have been funded by the Jacob Marley Foundation. The Foundation focuses its support in Long Island communities.



Chris Quackenbush cared deeply about the folks we support and our mission to better Long Island, helping Sister Pat and Mercy Haven from the start. Today, long after losing Chris on September 11<sup>th</sup>, his memory and legacy live on in our work, with last year, one of our most challenging, being no exception.



Laptop Purchases, Summer, 2020



Food Pantry Expansion

Our expenses grew while our revenues struggled, all while our populations needed essentials to remain safe and calm. At a time when many foundations and corporations we relied on were having their own troubles, Jacob Marley responded, increasing their award in 2020 to fund COVID emergency needs and initiatives for our residents. We cannot thank them enough.

## "3" Cheers for Mercy Haven!

*Newsday Top Workplace for 2020*



We are happy to announce that Mercy Haven has won a Newsday Top Workplace Award! Outstanding survey results, driven by the efforts of a positive and engaging staff, made this award possible, once again. Thank you to Newsday Media Group for this recognition.

## Thank you to our 2020 Business Partners!

We are grateful to have had the generous, year-long commitments from the businesses listed below. Our work is incomplete without the promise of their help.

### 2020 Gold Partner



### 2020 Bronze Partners



## Become a Member!

The Mercy Business Partnership Program will continue in 2021 and we invite all businesses to join. The program provides a great means for companies to give back to the community, be involved in our events and get recognition for their generosity.

## Interested?

Contact Ciara Jensen,  
Director of Development  
at 631-277-8300.





## Circle of Mercy Monthly Donor Program

Our Circle of Mercy Donors are the sustainers and the dreamers; a loyal group of individuals who want to make a big difference on Long Island.

Just as our population needs supports, our monthly donors are our support community that keep us going, and growing, throughout the year.

*“Drops of water make a mighty ocean.”*

A small monthly donation may not feel like much to you, but added together, our Circle has a major impact. Our total monthly donations in a year would cover any of these expenses, to name a few:

- Program costs for an entire year of our child and family services
- Supplies and incentives for 50 participants to go through our ‘Breakthrough’ homeless outreach program
- Renovation costs of a property to make it an updated, safe home for one formerly homeless family.

*“Gerry and I are very passionate about Mercy Haven’s mission and all that it does, which is why I originally got involved and why we have stayed so actively involved for so long (I think about 24 years now). Monthly donations just makes it so easy to make it happen.”*



Ron and Gerry Eagar, long-time monthly donors and friends. ❤️

Make a difference for your neighbors in-crisis all year long.  
Join the Circle today at [www.mercyhaven.org](http://www.mercyhaven.org).



## Why Support Us?

*We are providing a long-term and cost-effective solution to homelessness on Long Island.*



Poverty has many dimensions. Lack of food, shelter, education, unemployment and low-income all work together to reduce opportunities, limit choices, and threaten health. Those we serve, coming from homelessness and mental illness, have an even more complex journey to recovery.

Housing and transportation, which provides stability, access to medical care, community, employment and resources is essential. Mercy Haven provides housing and support services, which decrease emergency room use, connects people to resources including primary care physicians and psychiatrists, and teaches skills on an individual and group level to ensure the best outcomes for each person we serve. At any given point, over 300 individuals, including over 60 children, are living in our housing on Long Island.



## MERCY HAVEN, INC.

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

**2021 BRONZE PARTNER**



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# WE'RE ON FOR GOLF!



## MONDAY JUNE 7 2021

Hamlet Golf & Country Club  
Commack, NY

Scan code with  
phone for easy  
online registration



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

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual MERCY HAVEN RESORT DRAWING

One Week Stay at  
**Summer Bay Resorts**  
**Orlando, Florida**  
**+ \$1,500 VISA Gift Card!**

Sunday, November 7 -  
Sunday, November 14, 2021

**- \$100 per ticket -**  
**Only 75 tickets**  
**being sold!**

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