

# the WINDOW



Issue 38, Vol. 1 · March 2023

## A Message from S. Pat:

One of our cornerstones has retired. Yes, Sister Kathy. For all sorts of reasons, it's a good decision on her part. As she starts this 'new' journey, anyone who knows her also knows it will be filled with joy. Kathy has a way of bringing humor to a conversation just when it's needed. I admire her willingness nearly 40 years ago to leave the ministry she was in to 'help' write grants, create a non-profit, and enter conversations with elected officials. I know she would agree that that time was purifying for us. Any illusions we had about government caring for all citizens would shatter. But Kathy's healthy, humorous, response led us over and over to keep trying! And here we are with a cause and a mission that captured her heart for nearly 40 years. We are who we are thanks to her generosity of heart. She will be missed!

I get the best of two worlds. I'll still have Kathy whose humor and competence will help me ask larger questions than before about belonging, and to whom, about believing, and in whom, about information and who to believe. I think these are the hidden gifts that beg my attention. So even within Mercy Haven with each of our staff, and our dear residents, I feel like we have the opportunity now to restate our values, our ways of being with one another, and the opportunity to broaden our understanding of one another and what we hold dear. It can't be business as usual. It hasn't been so for over 2 years. We have, once again, the

opportunity to redefine ourselves, our agency, our communities, and our understanding of our differences. All the while bringing the values of inclusion and humor as S. Kathy taught us.

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.



"My time at Mercy Haven was one of the greatest blessings of my life. In particular, my years in Breakthrough working with the participants, mentors, presenters, cooks and other staff will be especially cherished. I am grateful to each and all of you for your whole-hearted dedication and commitment. Your faithfulness was always an inspiration to me."

## MERCY HAVEN, INC. - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY



## OUR FIRST FOOD DRIVE - *An Amazing Community Effort*

This past summer, we hosted our first-ever Food Drive in support of our Community Food Pantry. We welcomed vendors from Northwell Health, Project Hope and Long Island Cares. Staff and volunteers from Emerson Reid were on sight and available to greet many friends who delivered their donations.

Between the donations that were dropped-off and those that were delivered from our Amazon Charity Page, the response was overwhelming. Our shelves were able to be fully stocked. We are grateful to all who helped create and execute this successful food drive, the first of many more to come.

Please share Mercy Haven's Community Food Pantry with those you know who can benefit from this service.  
Current Pantry Hours are: **Tuesdays 9:00 am – Noon** and **Thursdays 1:00 – 4:00 pm**

## YOU CAN HELP KEEP OUR SHELVES STOCKED FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME!

Scan the code above for access to Mercy Haven's Community Food Pantry Wish List at Amazon.com. Make your selection from the items listed, and Amazon will deliver right to our Pantry!

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Helena, left, with Pantry Assistant, Kelly, in the Food Pantry

This past summer, we were fortunate to have a Student Volunteer, Helena Danzi, assist with our Food Pantry and help plan our Food Drive. She was also responsible for creating and monitoring our Amazon Charity Page. When asked about her time spent here, she replied "What a great learning experience! The staff explained each task, which helped me understand the process. I had fun and learned so much." Helena was an enormous help and she is welcome back any time!

## Family Fun Days!

Our families enjoyed many exciting activities throughout 2022, made possible with generous funding from a local foundation.

Summer events included bowling parties, Dave & Busters, pumpkin picking and more, with our Annual Holiday Magic Family Party rounding out the busy year. Our 70+ children made the most of all of the fun.



Our Holiday Magic Family Party returned in style after a 3-year break. It was an evening of festive fun with staff and volunteers from CHRISTMAS MAGIC/HOLIDAY MAGIC entertaining our 50+ guests with song, dance, crafts and a pizza dinner before the arrival of our guest of honor, Santa! He definitely helped us all believe in the magic of the season.



Mercy Haven's "Our Life" program offers regular education, social and recreation opportunities to our growing community of families. For families who were previously homeless and many living with mental illness, this program is critical to their stability and wellness. It offers mentorship, behavioral and emotional support, as well as parent education.

# BREAKTHROUGH IN 2022 ...

... Commitments to Change

# A TIME TO LEARN TOGETHER



*“Breakthrough has helped me realize that I’m not alone and I’m stronger than I thought.”*

*Breakthrough has shown me I can make it through anything.”*

- Participant sentiment

The supportive ‘wraparound’ services Mercy Haven provides to our housing residents are key to their success, in both maintaining their housing and realizing their potential. For many of our residents, this may mean intensive one-on-one services, for many others, it means learning together and peer support. Our Resident Empowerment and Achievement Programming (REAP) provides monthly calendars filled with opportunities for residents to come together, socialize and learn important topics from our staff and volunteers.

Breakthrough entered its 15<sup>th</sup> Year in 2022, offering Spring and Fall classes and mentorships. Nine participants graduated.

The participants, upon entering the intensive 12-week, 24 session program, have a clear understanding of their commitment. With the help provided by volunteer mentors and educational workshops, they focus on the factors that contributed to their homelessness, learn from the tools provided, and work with confidence to achieve their personal goals. These goals typically include moving into stable housing (including Mercy Haven’s housing), finding employment, enrolling in college and remaining active in regular follow-up classes. **Congratulations to our Graduates!**

In 2022, our REAP calendar offered on average 24 activities per month, for our adults, children and families. We were fortunate to have Project Hope offer regular classes, as well as Northwell Health, with the large focus of the year being physical health. Thirty-five percent of our residents are living with a chronic medical condition, making fitness classes, health & wellness, and nutritional classes of high importance, along with various other activities for companionship and learning.

## TOP WORKPLACE - AGAIN!

“Sweet” Staff Appreciation Day



On a hot, summer afternoon, staff was greeted with a special gift of appreciation from S. Pat – an ice cream social in the parking lot! This sweet treat came rolling in and dished out sundaes for all who desired. Thank you, S. Pat!

This celebration aligned with our notification of winning a spot on the list of Long Island’s Top Workplaces for 2022.

**Congratulations to us!**



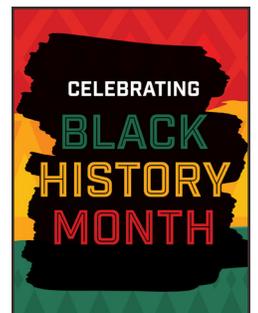
## DIVERSITY ♦ EQUITY ♦ INCLUSION

Mercy Haven believes that diversity in perspective, culture, background and experience is what leads to creative solutions. To continually encourage these values across the agency, staff created a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in 2022.



“Our Heritage Potluck”

This growing committee allows staff to take turns presenting on topics that are important to them, which has included Staff Satisfaction, Supporting Chosen Names & Pronouns, Our Heritage, and Black History. Together, the group oversees Mercy Haven’s DEI Mission and Policy, plans DEI events for all staff and enjoys candid, enlightening discussions amongst peers on important topics.



# Generosity of Heart

*Gifts of time... gifts of money... gifts in-kind... are all gifts from the heart.  
Thank you to our friends, donors and local businesses and churches  
for the variety of gifts you've given this past Holiday Season.*



*Thank You to the following Businesses & Friends  
for their Continued Support:*

- ISLAND GROUP PLANS** - Donation of Thanksgiving Turkeys
- BIRTHDAY WISHES** - Donation of 45 Thanksgiving Dinner Baskets
- LAURA & JOHN SOLDINGER** - Donation of 2 Complete Thanksgiving Meals for our Community Residences
- MARY DONNELLY**, English Chair at **GRAND AVE. MIDDLE SCHOOL, BELLMORE** whose middle schoolers created hundreds of holiday cards for our veterans, residents and families!
- DOMENICO CIACCIO**, Vice Chair of our Board of Directors, and his colleagues from **RIDGEWOOD SAVINGS BANK** who raised \$375 for Mercy Haven during their "Ugly Sweater Day" holiday fundraiser!
- MARY SEERY** - who delivered dozens of delicious homemade cookies to our 34 folks living in our Community Residences.



*"Dinner is Served"*  
Thank you  
**FERGUSON ENTERPRISES**



On December 20<sup>th</sup>, our residents at Pleasant Gardens Adult Home were gifted a catered dinner provided by volunteers from **FERGUSON ENTERPRISES**. Our 9 guests arrived with a delicious, hot meal of chicken, mashed potatoes, carrots and so much more! They set-up, plated, and served our residents their dinner, and then stayed and played a few rounds of Bingo, offering wonderful prizes to the winners. Michelle, a resident at PG, stood up and entertained us all with a beautiful rendition of "Oh, Holy Night", which left the entire room speechless. It was a lovely, memorable evening.

## THE GIFT OF TIME - Grateful for our volunteers

Our friends from Liberty Mutual  
- Serve With Liberty -  
have been faithful volunteers  
since 2014!



*Do you have a hobby you would like to share? Do you like to garden? Maybe office help is what interests you? Mercy Haven offers many volunteer opportunities that are fun and rewarding.*

If you or your group are interested in helping, please contact **Heidi** at **631-277-8300** or email her at [hhaller@mercyhaven.com](mailto:hhaller@mercyhaven.com). Visit our website at [www.mercyhaven.org](http://www.mercyhaven.org) for more volunteer opportunities.

# EVENTS TO REMEMBER

## Highlights from our 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

A picture-perfect June day greeted us for our Annual Golf Outing held at the Hamlet Golf Club in Commack. The all-day event hosted 126 golfers plus an additional 96 dinner guests and raised over \$132,000 in vital funds.



Golf Chair this year was Board member, **Jim DiGiovanni**, and our Bud Harrelson Award Honoree was **Alex Bateman**, a caring neighbor and eager supporter, who puts great energy into giving back to his communities. Our speaker for the evening, Jeremy, shared his story of homelessness, until S. Kathy and her Breakthrough Program led him to our new housing complex in Central Islip. The stability of this new home has allowed him to turn his life around, bettering himself and his family.

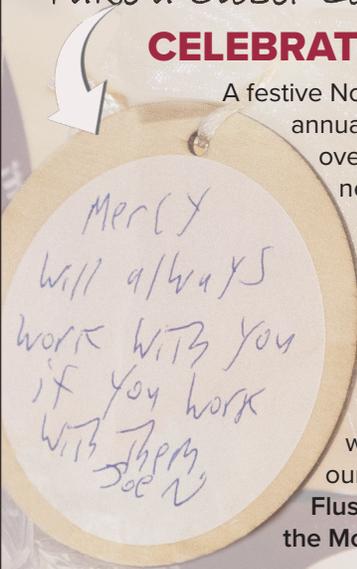


Thank you to our sponsors and Tournament Sponsor, **Flushing Bank**, and to the many businesses and committee members who provided an array of wine and raffle gifts to round-out our fabulous event.



## "Take a Closer Look at Mercy Haven" CELEBRATING 37 YEARS

A festive November day was on-hand for our annual Fall Cocktail Party. We hosted over 190 friends as we gathered at our new venue, Captain Bill's Restaurant in Bay Shore, to share in the warmth of the celebration, and reminisce over the successes and challenges of the previous year. The event, chaired by **Pat Spiegel**, raised over \$95,000 in necessary funds. The afternoon would not have been possible without our sponsors and our **Event Sponsors**, **Flushing Bank**, **Rev. John Rowan** and the **McNamara Family**.



## CEREMONY TO CELEBRATE OPENING

A beautiful October day greeted many guests to celebrate the opening of Mercy Gardens, our much anticipated supportive housing project. Representatives from the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP), the government program responsible for granting \$5.1 of the project's \$5.9 million needed, were present to receive our thanks. Added capital funding from the Office of Mental Health provided nearly \$118,000. The project also received more than \$310,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York, and Mercy Haven contributed more than \$340,000. Town of Islip Supervisor, Angie Carpenter, and many other dignitaries, staff, and Board members were able to share in this memorable day.

In closing, Sister Pat stated, "We are thrilled with the outcome of this project. Today we want to express our gratitude for the strong partnerships with the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program, the Office of Mental Health and the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. Without these connections, 28 formerly homeless adults and children would still be looking for a place to live."



*"The poor need our help today,  
not next week."*

- S. Catherine McAuley



# Moves for Mental Health and Housing

Governor Hochul's 2023 State of the State Address included long-overdue initiatives for Mental Health care and housing that could change the way we represent, care for and house those living with mental illness.

The multi-year plan includes increasing operational capacity by 1,000 beds for inpatient psychiatric treatment, creating 3,500 units of housing over the next five years to serve New Yorkers with mental illness, increasing insurance coverage for mental health services, dramatically expanding outpatient services, and creating systemic accountability for hospital admissions and discharges to better address the needs of individuals suffering with mental illness. These proposals, over time, will reflect more than a \$1 billion investment in mental health. Since Long Island is counted as part of Metro New York, there will be competition for proper funding, assuming it will be open bids.

In the coming weeks, the Governor will be releasing her executive budget proposal, which will start budget negotiations in anticipation of a final budget being agreed on by April 1. According to our Advocacy Partners, the Association for Community Living (ACL), even with the additions to mental health housing funding in 2022, the Office of Mental Health housing programs, a large part of Mercy Haven's housing structure, are still underfunded.

We continue to work with ACL to advocate for proper funding for mental health needs and the importance of solution-driven housing. The State of the State Address is a hopeful start.

*"For years, we have been advocating that housing is the foundation for recovery. The States' recognition of this by making mental health housing a priority is unprecedented! We are grateful for this new investment.*



Lorrie Oricoli -  
Director of Behavioral  
Health Services

*However, there are still many challenges for providers as we move into the new year. From staff shortages to inflation, and aging residents with many medical conditions, Mercy Haven will continue to advocate and work with both local and State officials to develop solutions that meet the needs of our most vulnerable individuals."*

## Create a Legacy

### PLANNED GIVING WITH MERCY HAVEN

Did you know that you can make a donation to Mercy Haven in your will of a set dollar amount, specific property, percentage of your estate or the remainder of your estate?

Supporters of our agency, from 18 to 88, choose to include us in their will or trust. Legacy giving is a great way to leave a large gift that reflects your beliefs and values, while leaving a meaningful legacy that supports Mercy Haven during your lifetime, and beyond!

Through this special way of giving, you are creating lasting impact in your communities and providing the financial security Mercy Haven needs to continue working hard for your neighbors.

Interested in starting your Legacy? Mercy Haven would be pleased to work with you and your attorney to design a plan specifically tailored to your wishes.



Contact Ciara Jensen, Director of Development at 631-277-8300 or scan the code at left for more information and helpful verbiage to include us in your will today.

Thank you to our 2022  
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ATTORNEYS

## BECOME A MEMBER!

The Mercy Business Partnership Program for 2023 is inviting all business to join! It's a great opportunity to give back to the community, be involved in events and get recognition for your generosity.

### INTERESTED?

Contact Ciara Jensen, Director of Development at 631-277-8300 or [cjensen@mercyhaven.com](mailto:cjensen@mercyhaven.com)



**Mother Cabrini**  
HEALTH FOUNDATION

## GRANT PROVIDES FOR EXPANSION OF OUR LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES ON LONG ISLAND

Mercy Haven was recently awarded \$75,000 from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to support a 20% increase in residents under our care in 2023.

*“When we develop homes, that is the first piece of a much larger puzzle”* said S. Pat, Executive Director, “Housing is the first step to ending homelessness. The support and advocacy our staff provide allow for our residents’ stability and personal development. In order for us to do this, we rely on, and seek support from, understanding donors like the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation.”

This funding will support staff and service expansion for our latest project of new construction, providing homes for 28 adults and children. Additionally, we purchased and renovated three more multi-family homes in Suffolk County to house 8 families. Residents will be provided life skills development, legal advocacy services, child & family intervention, emotional support, employment opportunities, peer support groups, and recreation.

*“We know that the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation understands that attaining stability for crisis populations can be complex. It relies on the quality and adequacy of our services,”* said Donna O’Hearon, *“We are grateful to have them as a partner in 2023 as we grow and help more people.”*

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the health and well-being of New Yorkers, bolster the health outcomes of vulnerable communities, eliminate barriers to care, and bridge gaps in health services. Named after a tireless advocate for immigrants, children, and the poor, the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation funds programs and initiatives across New York State that either provide direct healthcare services or address the social determinants of health.

We look forward to a long relationship.



## MERCY HAVEN + STATE FARM = Community



Jennifer Young, left, with S. Pat, center and State Farm Agents presenting the check

With a successful social media campaign, and with the help of staff, family and friends, Mercy Haven was able to finish in the top tier and win a \$25,000 State Farm Neighborhood Assist® grant award. This vital funding will help support our large increase in residents this year.

State Farm Corporate Responsibility Analyst, Jennifer Young, remarked *“Mercy Haven is one of only four grant winners in the entire state of New York. Their ability to earn enough support to win this grant demonstrates the strength of the community and their passion for helping neighbors in need.”* This assistance is crucial to our efforts of decreasing homelessness and increasing mental health wellness in our community.

A group of State Farm agents gathered to present Mercy Haven with the check at Mercy Gardens, our housing in Central Islip. *“Without partnerships like State Farm, projects like Mercy Gardens could never happen”* stated S. Pat, *“we are more than grateful for their generosity and dedication to our community.”*

## COMMITMENT TO Caring

In just 5 short years, Santander Bank has become a dedicated and reliable community partner. Their support of our mission through their grant funding has been tremendously impactful. Their further participation in our events as Sponsors and attendees has shown us even more of their care for the communities they serve. We are proud to have Santander Bank as a faithful partner in our work.



Santander Bank, Event Partner, at our recent Cocktail Party held on November 6, 2022



Longtime supporters of our Mercy Advocacy Program, the NY Bar Foundation came through again with funding for our vital legal services.

Supporting affordable housing is a priority for TD Charitable and we’re grateful to have been among their 2022 grantees providing this service to hundreds in their communities.



**MERCY HAVEN, INC.**  
 859 Connetquot Ave., Suite 10  
 Islip Terrace, New York 11752  
[www.mercyhaven.org](http://www.mercyhaven.org)

Thank You to our 2023 Business Partners to date

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MERCY HAVEN, INC.  
 BUILDING COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

MERCY HAVEN'S  
 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

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\$375 TICKET    \$125 COCKTAILS & DINNER ONLY

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**6<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL RESORT DRAWING**

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**November 12-19, 2023\***

\*Dates are flexible –  
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→

FACEBOOK LIVE DRAWING  
**MAY 2, 2023**



Proceeds benefit Pleasant Gardens Adult Home in Bayport, NY