



40 Years  
1985-2025  
INN

# ...THE NEWS!

SERVING DIGNITY, RESPECT & LOVE SINCE 1983

VOLUME XXXIX NO. 4

[www.the-inn.org](http://www.the-inn.org)

WINTER 2023

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- May 10 – 40th Anniversary INNkeepers' Ball

## 1983 – 2023

### The INN's 40th Anniversary

By definition, a Newsletter contains news ... about "things" that are new. Much of what happened over the past 40 years is no longer new, but for this Anniversary article, there are pivotal ideas, moments and emotions that give understanding to the origin and evolution of The INN.

The point of origin of The INN was in January 1983 when a group of Hofstra students were returning to campus after volunteering at a Brooklyn soup kitchen. While waiting at a traffic light in Hempstead they saw a man eating from a garbage can.

The mission of The INN is to "... provide a broad variety of essential services to those challenged by hunger, homelessness, and profound poverty. We partner with those in need in a dignified and respectful manner to help them achieve self-sufficiency."

The INN formally began, as a soup kitchen, in May 1983 at a storefront church in Hempstead. In February 1984 two INN guests succumbed of hypothermia while sleeping outside. We were shocked that something like this could happen on Long Island. Before the end of summer that year, The INN opened its first emergency shelter.

The needs of those we serve were and remain paramount. We wanted to help solve problems. That is what we do.



INN co-founders Pat O'Connor and Mike Moran visited the Mary Brennan INN on November 16.

The Mary Brennan INN (MBI) soup kitchen emphasized "dignity and respect". What we were doing was important, and how we did it equally important. This combination becomes life changing. After hearing about the "what and the how" at the Mary Brennan INN, a group of Long Beach residents came to Hempstead asking our help in opening a soup kitchen in their community. They wanted to be like The INN. More than 20 other Long Island communities followed in their footsteps ... coming to Hempstead seeking help in solving the problem of hunger in their neighborhood. The INN had become a leader, a role model, and an inspiration.

People who support The INN are grateful to know their contribution makes a difference.

In 2016, a guest ran to me outside the Mary Brennan INN. "I have my

(continued pg 3)

TO SPONSOR A MEAL, PLEASE CALL (516) 486-8506, EXT. 115

## EVERY DAY ANOTHER STEP FORWARD ... TOGETHER



Jean Kelly  
Executive Director

The INN opened the first soup kitchen in Nassau County in 1983. Forty years and more than 15 million meals later, that was the first step of so many.

Today, amongst all The INN programs, that soup kitchen — the Mary Brennan INN, is the largest soup kitchen on Long Island. Just like the very first day, anyone in need is welcome, with the hope of helping them find their way to independence. We have been joined on this path by countless volunteers, each with incredible strength and a heart of compassion. It doesn't matter which side of the serving counter you are on at The INN, we are together in thoughtfulness and spirit, taking that next step supporting each other.

Together means it is not about any one of us but about all of us. Volunteering works best as a group effort. Ego takes second place to unity. We show up knowing it is a privilege to be of service.

None of what we do would be possible without the exceptional generosity of The INN donors. While they may not be there in person, they do allow the lights to be turned on, the stove to be lit and the 45-gallon soup kettle to be filled.

After making it through the pandemic the past 2½ years with "window-service", we are so thankful to have resumed indoor dining at the Mary Brennan INN. During the pandemic, we had learned some guests feel more comfortable with window service, and they have continued to be given to-go meals. But for those who prefer to eat in the "dining room", they are being welcomed into the newly renovated interior space.

We welcome all of you to visit the renovated Mary Brennan INN. The changes are many

and include improved energy efficiency and in the aftermath of Covid, the tables are more spread out. Please know we have also made an important addition to the site — we have acquired a "new" large building located on the right side of the Mary Brennan INN. Here, we can expand the Center for Transformative Change services, have more room for mental and primary health care, the workforce development facilities, the growing clothing boutique ... and more. All services that positively address the "social determinants of health" for the guests.

These many steps are thanks to your inspiration and the vision of our co-founders, Michael Moran and Pat O'Connor. Michael and Pat recently visited The INN and were excited to see the progress being made. You can see them in the photo on page 1. I have often heard Michael speak at gatherings, where he enjoys quoting Margaret Mead as he closes, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Amen!

Hoping you can be with us as we step forward together.

With love and gratitude always,

Jean



Newly renovated dining room at Mary Brennan INN. Improvements include a much-needed new floor, enhanced ventilation, sturdy new countertops and sociable round tables.

## The INN's 40th Anniversary (continued from pg. 1)

own email address!", he shouted. This was exciting news for him. He had come from the just opened Center for Transformative Change (CTC). The CTC is perfectly named: it is in a central location and offers access to transformative change. In this guest's case, his life was just transformed. He could now be engaged with the world electronically, and more specifically for him, apply for jobs online. Within a month he had found a job.

In the 1970's New York Mayor Ed Koch was known for asking city residents, "How am I doin'?" How is The INN doin'?

On the simplest level, the Internal Revenue Service acknowledges that The INN meets and exceeds its standards for organizations that benefit the public. In the language of the IRS, The INN is a 501(c)3 organization and contributions are tax exempt.

Fifteen years ago, a local bank was planning a contribution to The INN. The bank president decided he would come to MBI to talk with some of the staff, unannounced. Wearing his three-piece suit, he entered the front door and was promptly handed a tray and pointed to the lunch line. In that moment he chose to remain anonymous and have lunch with the guests. He enjoyed the meal and his time chatting at the lunch table. The INN is fully transparent. Any donor at any time is welcome.

On a very sophisticated level, the most respected of the nation's charity "reviewers", Charity Navigator, has awarded The INN its highest rating – four



The storefront church in Hempstead where The INN began. Pastor Ida Bowles rented her small dining room to The INN's very first volunteers.

stars. This review is based on more than 30 criteria covering accounting, finance, transparency, adaptability, culture, and responsiveness to the community served.

On the most real level, the guests of The INN are grateful for what your support means to them. *It has fed them, sheltered them, clothed them, helped them with computer skills, language skills, legal guidance, primary and mental healthcare, finding jobs, acquiring personal identification, and provided them a welcoming place where they can be together with their neighbors.*

It was a winter day in the mid 1980's, it was snowing lightly as we were serving lunch at the Mary Brennan INN. The guests seemed to enjoy the weather and were sharing stories of their walk to The INN in the snow. I knew they walked but until that day I never realized how far.

The INN had the foresight (fortunately) to plan most of its services (see italicized list above) in one location (excepting emergency shelters). For you and me, getting from place to place is as simple as hopping in the car. The guests walk. Having the maximum number of services in one location has repeatedly proven to be the most effective way to respond to their needs.

Is there a proudest moment for The INN? There are many. Here is one that we can all easily relate to. In March 2020 The INN pivoted from the normal world to the Covid world without missing a beat. The INN did not miss a single day of being present for the guests. Everything was more challenging. The few remaining volunteers, the staff and the guests became an awesome community.

Please visit The INN's website ([the-inn.org](http://the-inn.org)) to read more about the 40th Anniversary. New "chapters" will be added throughout the year.



Mary Brennan INN volunteers – 1987

## REMEMBERING JOSEPH MANCINO

Joseph Mancino joined The INN's Board of Directors in 1995. Personally, he possessed a profound and unwavering concern for the well-being of others. Professionally, he was President and CEO of Roslyn Savings Bank. Combining his passion and his position, he helped guide and grow The INN for more than 25 years.

Joe served many roles at The INN. After joining the Board, he quickly became Treasurer, then Vice President and ultimately President. His tenure was marked by both growth in services and fundraising. In 1996 Joe founded The INN Golf Classic. The "Classic" has been held every year since and has raised a total of \$4.9 million. When The INN initiated its 1999 Capital Campaign, Joe quickly responded and the dining room at the Mary Brennan INN is now named

in his, and his wife Laurel's, honor.

Whenever there was a need at The INN, no matter how large or small, Joe was there to help. It did not require asking, if he knew, he helped.

Joe was a "down to earth", "good guy" from Brooklyn. Steadfastly loyal to his friends. Kind-hearted, humble and an "influencer" before the term became fashionable. An early Dodger fan and later enthusiastic Mets fan. Also, a fan of the 1956 Ford Victoria glass top.

We will dearly miss him.



## ONE "FOOD DAY" HAS LASTED 11 YEARS

In 2011, Jill Eisenberg, a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, was inspired by the concept of "Food Day," a campaign originally created in the 1970's by the Center for the Science in Public Interest (CSPI). Its goal was to raise national awareness about healthy, affordable, and sustainable food, as well as inspire Americans to improve their diets and make local, state, and national food policies better. Determined to get her community involved and make a difference locally, Jill brought up a "crazy" idea with the Port Washington Union Free School District Nutrition Committee on which she served. "I said, if every child in each of our seven schools in the district brought in one piece of fresh fruit or vegetable on Food Day, people who rely on food pantries would also have the opportunity to enjoy what nature has to offer in terms of fresh vs canned produce."

Since then, every year for the past 11 years, even during the pandemic, Jill has coordinated the Port Washington schools, supermarkets and other members of the community to hold their "Food Day" celebration on or around the original CSPI date of October 24th and donate fresh fruits and vegetables to a number of different food service organizations. She became familiar with The INN through a



*Food Day donations welcomed at The INN*

longtime friend and INN supporter Dave Golbert and chose the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen as one of the Food Day donation recipients. Staff and volunteers are always happy to receive the hundreds of pounds of fresh produce from the Port Washington community, which Jill and her Food Day volunteers personally sort and deliver to Hempstead every year. "The first year I came in," Jill recounts, "I remember I met the volunteer who was cooking the meal that day and he said, 'WOW, the soup is going to be great today!' It felt amazing to be able to put a smile on someone's face and know that we are helping to provide people in need healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables."

## INN EVENTS

### 2023 INNkeepers' Ball

Wednesday, May 10, 6:00 – 8:00 pm  
Nassau Country Club, Glen Cove

#### The 2023 INNkeepers' Ball will be honoring

**Eric Carlstrom and Matthew Whalen**, both are hands-on, enthusiastic, and generous supporters of The INN.

Eric is Executive Managing Director at Aon, and Matt is President and Chief Executive Officer at Cord Meyer Development Company. Last year's attendees so enjoyed the outdoor format — we will be outdoors again this year.

Sponsorship, Journal and Ticket information is available at [www.the-inn.org/2023ball](http://www.the-inn.org/2023ball). If you have any questions, or would like to receive an invitation, please call (516) 732-6009.



Eric Carlstrom



Matthew Whalen

## JOEL SIKOWITZ

### Attorney, musician, friend of The INN — we recently received this letter from him

It started more than ten years ago! Jean and Rob heard my band performing at a party hosted by Murray and Lillian Barbash. Murray and Lillian were two amazing people who were so helpful and charitable to many organizations (including The INN) all over Long Island.

The INN booked my band to perform at the annual INNkeepers' Ball at the Marriott in Uniondale. As the event gained in popularity, space for the dance floor became smaller and the need for music became less.

The event became a major fundraiser supported by a super Board of Directors, hundreds of attendees, diverse donors and show-cased by the amazing talents of our auctioneer — Bernadette Castro.

In 2012, my wife and I took a more personal interest in the workings of The INN, and after volunteering at the Mary Brennan INN, we decided to take a new approach toward our personal giving. We inaugurated a personal Turkey Drive.

I wrote a letter of solicitation to my fellow attorneys ... then clients ... then family and friends. The wave of



support that followed was incredible. I focused on Thanksgiving and then expanded to Christmas. Typically, I receive more than 40 donations, all various amounts.

In 2022 I delivered more than 420 turkeys, cold cuts, and meats. With the cost of turkeys escalating so dramatically last year, we are talking about a big jump in costs. Over the years I have delivered 3,500 turkeys totaling over 20 tons. (Editor's note:

Yes, Joel drove all these turkeys to The INN himself!)

The point of my little story to the readers of this Newsletter is to address the fact that each of us can do more to make the lives a little easier for those who have fallen on difficult times.

The work of The INN this past year is exceptional. Visit and see for yourself.

**Get INNvolved!** Make a plan! Contact business associates, family, and friends. The best feeling ever is after you have made a delivery to The INN. You will enjoy your own day so much more knowing you have made the day better for someone else.

# SUMO WRESTLING

## Fundraiser for the 'WINN!'

What started as a simple misunderstanding between two co-workers turned into a knockdown, drag-out, Sumo wrestling match where basically everyone became a winner.

Norman Egan and Bryan Calder, employees of Presidio, a technology company in NYC, were getting ready to attend the company's annual sales expo kickoff in Florida when a friendly disagreement ensued. They decided the *only* way to settle it was through a public sumo wrestling match during the expo. Ultimately, it was turned into a charity event, where both parties would choose an organization to donate raised funds. Norman chose The INN, since his wife Denise is a dedicated Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen volunteer on Fridays. Brian chose the Jimmy Fund, in support of a friend who lost a loved one to cancer.

Supporters donated funds through an online fundraising page, created T-shirts, posters, face paint and other visual displays of support for either Bryan or Norman. The result was a match "win" by Bryan, and over \$33,000 raised from nearly 300 people, divided equally between the two charities. Although he suffered a loss in the match, Norman was in great spirits afterwards. "It was as much fun as I've ever had at a corporate event," he said. "My wife Denise and I were thrilled to be able to donate over \$16,000 to The INN."

Watch our video podcast on YouTube "INN Gratitude" Episode 12 with Brian and Norman on our YouTube Channel [www.youtube.com/GetINNvolved](http://www.youtube.com/GetINNvolved).



## Our Wish List

### The INN is in need of:

- Non-perishable food – **no glass, please**
- New hats, gloves and scarves; new or dry-cleaned coats
- Gift Cards (supermarket and Visa) – preferred amounts, \$10, \$25 and \$50
- Diapers/wipes – sizes (3, 4, 5, 6 & pull-ups)
- Auction items for upcoming INN events – restaurant gift certificates, activities, experiences, etc. Please call Nora White at (516) 486-8506, ext. 108
- Toiletry items (family size)

*Please bring your donations to the Mary Brennan INN,  
100 Madison Avenue, Hempstead,  
M-F, 9am-2pm.*

*For directions please check our website or call  
(516) 486-8506, ext. 114.*

*Thank you.*



*Serving Dignity, Respect & Love since 1985*

211 Fulton Avenue Hempstead, NY 11550  
(516) 486-8506 • [www.the-inn.org](http://www.the-inn.org)

### OUR MISSION

As a not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization, The INN provides a broad variety of essential services to assist those challenged by hunger, homelessness and profound poverty. We partner with those in need in a dignified and respectful manner to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

### Follow us on:

