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## OUR MISSION

To provide structured housing and rehabilitative services in an environment of support and accountability that will give addicted men the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Volume 13, Issue 3, Fall/Winter 2022



## Serenity Inns Celebrates 18 Years

We had a near-capacity crowd for our annual Celebration of Recovery at the Italian Community Center. 2022 marks Serenity Inns's 18th birthday! Unity Lutheran Church of Brookfield was honored as the partner of the year, and we heard speeches from two men whose lives were each impacted by Serenity Inns.

A current resident, Marvin, spoke about his recovery journey and Serenity Inns. Marvin told the crowd about the hope shots given to him in his life, and how now, Serenity Inns is the best hope shot.

The Alumni of the Year Award was presented to Serenity Inns graduate Robert by Serenity Inns Assistant Counselor, James Nichols.

"I arrived at Serenity Inn 18 months ago with the clothes on my back and my ever increasingly rusty 2008 Jeep Cherokee. I had debt, no family, no money, no wife, no kids, no friends, no hope," Robert said.

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2022 Alumnus of the Year Robert, left, shaking hands with Marvin, the 2022 resident speaker.

## Serenity Inns Milestones

Two Serenity Inns staff have achieved significant milestones in 2022 and we wish to highlight them.

This year marks ten years as a staff member for Jason Dobson, Serenity Inns' Director of Programs and Facilities. Jason started at Serenity Inns as an Innkeeper a year after his graduation and worked as a Substance Abuse Counselor before being promoted to his current role in 2021.

After more than a two-year wait, James Nichols recently received his Substance Abuse Counselor In Training degree from the state of Wisconsin. James has worked at Serenity Inns for more than eight years as an Innkeeper and Counselor.

Of receiving his counselor license, James said, "I never imagined that I would be here, at this point of my life. Whatever the future holds for me, I'm stepping into it with principles of a working program and faith."

Jason and James work with our residents daily as they encounter the joys and trials of being in recovery. They are an inspiration to our residents with their own recovery journeys.

When you see Jason or James at the Inn for dinner fellowship, please wish them well on their accomplishments!



Serenity Inns Assistant Counselor James Nichols with his counselor license, next to the graduate wall of fame.

*"Once I made the decision to not drink anymore, Serenity Inns has given me absolutely everything I need to remain sober."*

- Robert, Alumnus of the Year 2022

A Walk in Courage, A Step in Faith, A Path in Recovery

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# Serenity Inns Celebrates 18 Years... continued



Serenity Inns residents and graduates gathered at the 2022 Celebration of Recovery.

“At Serenity Inn I was told from day one that I could stay for seven months, and after that, if I was doing well, I could transition to Alumni House for another 18 months of sober living in a healthy environment. When I heard this, I felt an amazing sense of relief come over me. I had before me, a near two year opportunity laid out.

Once I made the decision to not drink anymore, Serenity Inns has given me absolutely everything I need to remain sober,” Robert shared.

We are so grateful for the outpouring of love and support for Serenity Inns residents and graduates. Thank you to all of our donors and those who make the Celebration of Recovery possible.



## Expansion & Program Growth

At Serenity Inns, we have a constant focus on improving our recovery programs and ways to expand the number of men we serve. The decision to purchase the Buehler Alumni House at 832 N. 25th Street in 2016 and remodel it for use as a transitional living facility for Serenity Inns graduates is a prime example. Its residents enjoy quality housing at an affordable rent and their recovery is strengthened through continuous staff programming.

We are planning for another phase in our growth. We are proposing the construction of a new building across Brown Street from the Inn. The two vacant lots owned by the City of Milwaukee will be the site for this building, which will become the home to the residential treatment program. It will accommodate 16 residents (an increase from our current 12), create better offices, add counseling and conference space, and provide improved facilities for the Dinner Fellowship Program.

Working with Groth Design Group, architectural plans are coming together. Estimates of the cost to build are being requested, checklists and timelines for approval by the Board of Directors, City of Milwaukee and other governmental approvals, as well as additional meetings with neighboring residents, will be secured, scheduled and worked out.

We plan to repurpose the existing Inn as an Outpatient Clinic and provide space to meet with and assist the families of men in recovery. The “Old Inn” will also serve as a meeting place for members of the Alumni Association to socialize, interact with the Staff and support each other.

More information on this exciting next step will be coming to you in the months ahead.

# 2022: A New Beginning

Three residents graduated from Serenity Inns in the past couple months. Each of the men spent 5-7 months at the Inn, finding employment after the first month and saving money for life after Serenity Inn. All graduates have moved to Alumni House where they pay rent, live with other Serenity Inn graduates, and have the support of the Serenity Inns staff.

Below are excerpts from each graduate’s exit interview where he reflects on his recovery journey.

**Gary:** Serenity Inns means family to me. Serenity Inns is a second home to me. There’s been good times, hard times, and we all sit down for dinner every night.

**Michael:** I’m grateful for the opportunity to be here. Serenity Inns taught me to love myself again. I appreciate that I had the support, encouragement and tough love to tackle my responsibilities as a grown man.

**Mike:** Serenity Inns is the best decision I ever made.



Left to right: Dinner Fellowship guest Jim Bahr; Serenity Inns graduate Gary; Lorraine Bahr; and Serenity Inns graduate Michael. Jim and Lorraine Bahr are monthly dinner regulars with Shepherd of the Hills church.



Graduate Mike outside Serenity Inns.

## Serenity Inns Hosts Community Awareness Event

On August 6, Serenity Inns hosted a community event to bring awareness of the rate of overdose deaths in the black community. Free food and narcan trainings were provided.

Serenity Inns Executive Director Kenneth Ginlack said of the event, “We are holding this event to bring attention and educate the community on how the opioid epidemic is affecting the community here in Milwaukee. We need to get in front of the problem to save lives!”

African-Americans had the largest percentage increase in overdose deaths, at 48.8%, according to the study, rising from 24.7 deaths per 100,000 people in 2019 to 36.8 in 2020.

The event was sponsored by Milwaukee County, Molina Healthcare, First Step Community Recovery Center, the City of Milwaukee Health Department, Community Medical Services, Paradise Memorial Funeral & Cremation Services, and Vin Baker Recovery.