



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 14, Issue 1, Spring 2023

Omega Psi Phi Dinner Fellowship Volunteers

Kenneth Ginlack, CEO of Serenity Inns and a Member of Omega Psi Phi, said, "It's extremely important that the men at Serenity Inns see professional black men in the community as they start their recovery process. The majority of the men in the program are black, however, they rarely see other black men come into the facility to provide Dinner Fellowship. It's more than just dinner, it's creating a space where men can be vulnerable. Statistically, black men are more likely to not seek treatment, however, the men at Serenity Inns are committed to getting the help they need."

Ruben Cotton, the current Basileus for Kappa Phi says "The Omega Psi Phi Cardinal Principles are Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift. We are hosting this dinner to provide the men at Serenity Inns with some much-needed uplift and to strengthen the spirits of one another. We are not professional therapists or counselors, but our commitment to making a difference in the community is what links us. If our presence or engagement will provide positive encouragement to men struggling with a disorder, then it's a place where we need to be".



Members of Omega Psi Phi & residents of Serenity Inns dine together

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

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What is happening at SI lately?

There is a lot going on at Serenity Inns lately! One of the things we have been focusing on is expanding our services by adding additional groups to our existing treatment services. The new groups help our residents address the root of their substance use disorder, deal with trauma, manage anger, and build financial stability. Through a collaboration with Towne Bank, residents are learning money management skills and are given the opportunity to open a bank account.

What is one challenge SI currently faces?

The demand is great. People need help. We just simply don't have the bed space or bandwidth to help everyone in our community who could benefit from our services. This reality is a challenge, but we are rising to meet this challenge by continually finding ways to increase our capacity and expand our programming.

What is one challenge the community faces?

The lack of resources and access to treatment. Many people in the community do not know where to start when looking to get help for a substance use disorder. The other side of that problem is that there are not enough beds to provide services. Residential treatment centers are operating at capacity or have some sort of waiting list. The problem with the lack of open beds and access to treatment is that time is of the essence when someone is ready to get help. Having access to treatment can be a life or death situation.

What is on the horizon for this year?

Serenity Inns is growing. As a direct response to the lack of residential beds and the rising overdose deaths plaguing our city, we are in the process of building a brand new facility that will allow us to meet the needs of the community. The new facility will increase the number of men we serve and will allow us to provide a higher level of care for our residents. We remain committed to doing everything in our power to help as many men and their families as possible.

How can someone get involved with the mission?

We love it when our community gets involved with the work we are doing at Serenity Inns. There are several ways to do this. Please consider volunteering for Dinner Fellowship, donating unused hygiene products, attending or sponsoring our Celebration of Recovery on September 14, or providing a monetary donation.



Kenneth Ginlack, Sr.,
Executive Director & CEO
of Serenity Inns

“As a direct response to the lack of residential beds and the rising overdose deaths plaguing our city, we are in the process of building a brand new facility that will allow us to meet the needs of the community.”

Become a Monthly Donor

Did you know that you can set up recurring monthly donations with Serenity Inns? Monthly giving helps us plan for revenue during the entire fiscal year, instead of just peak giving times, like the year end.

Setting up a recurring donation is easy. You can arrange for a monthly gift through your bank, like making your monthly utility payments or cell phone bill. You can also do it on the Donation link on our website: www.serenityinns.org and selecting the recurring donation box. Thank you so much for considering a monthly gift.

Graduate Spotlight: Bill Seekins

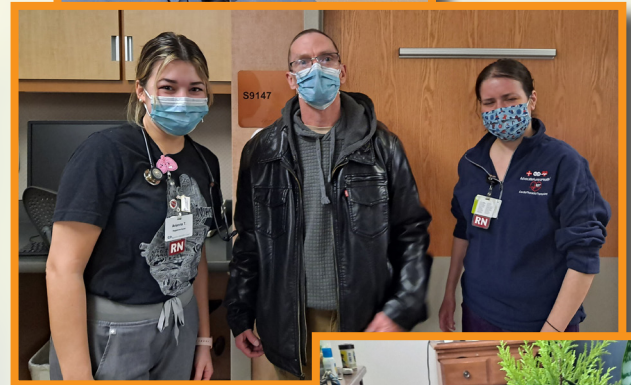
Bill came to Serenity Inns after years of substance use disorder wreaking havoc on his life. He was—in his own words—mentally insane, spiritually bankrupt, and physically deteriorating. He was separated from his wife and relapsed after 4.5 years of sobriety. Life didn't seem like it could get any worse.

And then it did.

Bill contracted an infection after injecting with a used needle and was rushed to the hospital. After seven ICU units and brain, open heart, and lung surgeries, Bill didn't have the strength to talk, sit up in bed, or even take visitors for more than 10 minutes. Rigorous courses of antibiotics didn't work, and Bill went into septic shock. Doctors gave him a 30% chance of survival but were ultimately able to treat the infection and Bill recovered.

He made steps to address his substance use disorder but relapsed on heroin and cocaine again. His relapse brought him to detox and finally to Serenity Inns. Physically weak and still very susceptible to the aftereffects of his life-saving surgeries, Bill came to Serenity Inns with a willingness to follow a program. Initially unable to attend meetings due to his health or assist in the house chores like the other residents, he became discouraged and felt embarrassed that he was not pulling his own weight. He talked about leaving and the staff encouraged him to stay just a little longer. He did and began to thrive.

Today Bill says the difference between leaving or staying came down to the compassion and kind words of staff, feeling a sense of true brotherhood, and being treated like family. Bill completed the program and plans to pursue health, wellness, and nutrition through network marketing and fundraising to give back what was so freely given to him.



Top 2 photos:
Graduate Bill Seekins

Middle Photo:
Bill with caregivers
in the hospital

Bottom Photo:
Bill's Inspirational
items

Celebration of Recovery Save the Date

Thursday, September 14, 2023

5:00 pm – 9:00 pm ~ at the Italian Community Center

The Board of Directors and Serenity Inns invite you to join us at our annual Celebration of Recovery. Hear powerful stories of redemption and hope and celebrate our 2023 Alumnus of the Year.

Stay tuned for more details: www.serenityinns.org/events



Prefer to have your newsletter emailed? Please email development@serenityinns.org.



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Graze Magazine Article

The opposite of addiction is connection.

In his TED Talk "Everything You Think You Know About Addiction is Wrong," journalist Johann Hari states that contrary to what many believe, the opposite of addiction is not sobriety. It is connection.

Here at Serenity Inns, Hari's words ring true. One of the ways we help residents overcome the disconnectedness of addiction is through our Dinner Fellowship program. Sitting around the table and sharing a meal with one another fosters connection and is a feature that truly sets Serenity Inns apart from other programs.

This is why we couldn't be more excited that Serenity Inns' Dinner Fellowship program was recently highlighted in the Winter 2023 issue of Graze Magazine, a publication of Outpost Natural Foods Co-op. You can pick up a copy at any Outpost store or visit their website for an electronic copy.



Serenity Inns was mentioned in this Graze Magazine Article.

AROUND THE TABLE WITH Serenity Inns

story & photos by DIANA SCHMIDT

BEING PRESENT. WE HEAR THAT PHRASE A LOT IN OUR DAILY LIVES – BUT WHY IS IT IMPORTANT? BEING PRESENT HAS BEEN FOUND TO DECREASE STRESS AND LOWER ABRUPT MOOD SWINGS, ALLOWING YOU TO HAVE MORE CONTROL OVER YOUR THOUGHTS. A TRIED-AND-TRUE METHOD IS SITTING DOWN AT A TABLE FOR AT LEAST ONE MEAL A DAY, PHONES DOWN, ATTENTION GIVEN TO YOUR FOOD OR OTHER PEOPLE WITH YOU. AT SERENITY INNS RECOVERY CENTER, THE PRACTICE OF BEING PRESENT IS ESSENTIAL TO RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION.

Serenity Inns is a residential recovery housing program for men with addiction to drugs or alcohol. With space for 12, this small-scale approach to offering recovery brings focus on each individual, building brotherhood and a sense of family along the recovery journey. A small program like this is what set forth a path to recovery 18 years ago for Kenneth Gintack, LCSW, CAC, ICS, the executive director of Serenity Inns. "Recovering in a family-like environment is intimate and personal," Ken describes having meals together as part of that intimate culture, being able to share reflections without the structure of the program leading the conversation.

Serenity Inns is comprised of a home with 12 beds, as well as an alumni house with apartment units. The men are supported by full time staff, 24 hours a day. Rightly, 365 days a year, volunteers bring dinner to share with the men and inmates. I had the opportunity to join a dinner, along with Kenneth Gintack and one of the inmates, James Nichols, SACT, AS. With every intention to simply shine the light on the work Serenity Inns does to help them reclaim their life and maintain their sobriety, I left the table with a deeper understanding of humility and an appreciation for the choices we all make daily, witnessing first-hand the impact that breaking bread together has with being present. Conversations around the table focused on recovery, casual but attentive. It felt like dinner with family should feel. I was humbled by how welcome I was made to hold space with one another around the table together.

"The stigma of addiction has plagued the men throughout their lives. Sitting down to break bread with volunteers levels the playing field. The men don't feel like they are being judged, but feel a sense of togetherness which allows them to share from the heart." For as long as the men are with Serenity Inns, mighty dinner together is a practice of being present. The safe space around the table is a reminder that every day there's choices to be made to stay present in recovery.

Need help?

If you or a loved one are struggling with substance use or addiction, contact IMACT Milwaukee by dialing 311. IMACT is not affiliated with any healthcare provider; they provide referrals to help individuals take the first step towards recovery.



Serenity Inns executive director, Kenneth Gintack.

GARDEN OF EDEN KINGDOM LIVING
ALL PURPOSE SEASONING
The secret ingredient to Lovoni's soup is this Milwaukee-made seasoning mix. With heat from the cayenne and ginger, and earthiness from the turmeric and celery seed. We love it in just about any soup or sprinkled on any grillable.

SERENITY INNS FAVORITE BROWNIES

Lorraine Bahr and her husband have brought dinner and dessert once a month for the last 17 years. This recipe is her most requested dessert – and one that the men ask for when they graduate the program. When we asked her what brings her back every month, she told us, "Dinner Fellowship provides an opportunity to interact with the residents at Serenity Inns in both a group setting and individually. We provide the men with a good meal, but more importantly we want to know each man by personally listening to his story and offering hope and encouragement."

1. 1/4-cup instant chocolate pudding
2. 6 chocolate bars with toffee, crushed
3. 12 oz. whipped topping or whipped cream
4. After cooled, break brownies into small pieces. Make pudding, set aside.
5. Layer half the brownies in a large bowl or trifle bowl.
6. Pour on half the pudding.
7. Cover with a layer of whipped cream or whipped topping.
8. Sprinkle with candy bits. Repeat steps 2 - 5.



For more information about the compassionate community of Serenity Inns Inc., visit WWW.SERENITYINNS.ORG

Donate online at www.SerenityInns.org