



A Message from the Executive Director, *Ellen Blathers*

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Serenity Inns held its 4th annual event at the Italian Community Center in April. Serenity Inns uses this to celebrate the men on their journey of recovery. We heard an inspiring speech from Judge Carl Ashley, and the music from David Nunley created an atmosphere of serenity. We heard speeches from two graduates who left the audience speechless as they described the difficulties of their journeys to discover their self-worth and how they learned to live in recovery. We heard from the senior resident about the importance of structure and the power of choices. On top of all of that was the celebrating of the men and their recovery, the main focus of the entire evening. I had the honor of preparing men for the evening's festivities. All twelve men wore a tie and dress shirt.



Ellen was all smiles at the event

Many of the men had never experienced a program of this magnitude. 2014 brought change and with that change a new staff member who says he was honored to be included in such an inspirational event. Lionel says, "It was a wonderful event. It was a first time for me attending an event of that nature."

In an effort to help them grasp the significance of the event, I asked the residents to put their thoughts into a two-page paper. During our weekly meeting, I had them read their papers.

It was fascinating to hear the range of emotions experienced by these men. They all enjoyed the event while some were taken aback by the level of love and compassion of strangers. One of the men said he almost reacted badly when a woman hugged him because people never hugged him before without wanting something from him. Some of the other guys enjoyed being celebrated and one felt super special because he got to sit with Judge Ashley and the president of the Board of Directors. I talked with event committee members and board members who shared sentiments of joy and great satisfaction about the evening. Personally, I took away four valuable thoughts.

One, people have an abundance of love and decency. **Two**, stereotypes are meant to be broken. **Three**, people helping people is the foundation of Christianity. **Four**, hope never fails. Men who choose recovery for their lives live every day in hope. In the end, I witnessed a miracle: The miracle on Brown Street. I found myself just looking around the room at the residents' interaction with others. The smiles on their faces and the glimmer in their eyes made the evening very special. I pray that everyone attending took away special memories from this evening that will inspire them to continue supporting Serenity Inns and the residents who are reclaiming their lives. The hard work continues every single day.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

(The 17th in a series of interviews with Graduates)

by Lorraine Buehler

An athlete in high school, Doug McFaul played soccer, was on the wrestling team and an active skateboarder. His path to drugs did not begin until he was eighteen, when, after breaking up with a girlfriend, he tried marijuana and liked it. Over time, his drug use led to OxyContin which soon became his drug of choice. Along the way came four felonies, all drug-related.

Court ordered treatment in 2006 led Doug to the program at the Salvation Army for 7 months where he went through the motions, but more drug use followed.

Doug arrived at Serenity Inn after detox at Genesis Detox in March of 2013 with a new resolve to get clean. This time, also seven months in treatment, he managed to put his life in order as he worked with the counselors and came to realize many things about his drug use. First and foremost, he learned that drugs took away his confidence and his sense of self worth. “Drugs make you small,” he said, and convince you that you are “not a good person.” He recalls crying about this feeling at times when he was using. And he now realizes that his negative attitude meant he tended to give up on things.

Now 34 years old and an October 2013 graduate of SI, he has been working third shift at a company in Waukesha as a Quality Control Inspector with a new sense of self-worth. He knows he is one of the best employees on his shift, and part of his job is training new employees.



The third shift job is something of a challenge for Doug because it tends to isolate him during the day when his friends and family members are working, but he tries to go to AA/NA meetings several mornings a week after he gets off work. Lots of hobbies and interests, however, help keep him busy. He enjoys deer hunting (both rifle and bow & arrow), fishing, painting, drawing, and carving driftwood and rocks, among other things.

He is realistic about the temptation to use again. It is so “easy to go back” to drugs, but Serenity Inn gave him tools that help him move forward. He says that if he had not found Serenity Inn he knows he would “not be in a good place today.”

Our **10th Anniversary Celebration** held at the Italian Community Center on 4-4-14 was the best yet. We thank all those who helped us net more than \$17,000 to continue the important programming of Serenity Inn.



Table Sponsors

Legacy Redevelopment Corporation (1/2 table)

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Milwaukee Community Business Collaborative, Inc.

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with

Matching Funds from Thrivent Financial



Thanks to these **individuals** for their donations above and beyond the dinner ticket price. Some donations were designated to cover the meal costs of residents and graduates and other donations were over bids on Silent Auction items.

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Underwriters continued on page four

Underwriters (continued from page three)

Thanks to these **Underwriters** who wrote checks to help us cover event costs.



Dan Berg	Greg & Beth Myers	Dee & Bob Schulz
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Thanks also to the 59 businesses and/or individuals who donated a total of 98 items for our Silent Auction. Additional thanks to those who solicited items from businesses, especially Pat Meyer, and also Dan Berg for his help.

Fox Point Lutheran Church Family Teaches Children about Giving

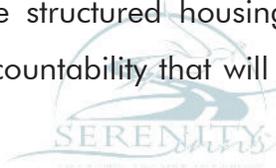
A mother called from FPLC in March to tell me that her 13-year-old daughter wanted to make a donation of \$100 to Serenity Inn. Intrigued by this generous offer from a 7th grader, I asked the mother to elaborate and later met with Elizabeth. As it turns out, at Christmas the family gave each of their 3 children \$100 to give to the charity of their choice. Elizabeth was undecided about where to donate her money until her family brought the meal for dinner fellowship at the end of March. What impressed her so much about the SI residents is that the men were people who had made “big mistakes and were trying to fix it.” Elizabeth decided she wanted to help.

In many ways, Elizabeth’s words sum up the SI mission, to help the residents “fix” the mistakes to which their addictions have led them.

Thanks, Elizabeth, for your donation to help the residents fix their mistakes!



Mission Statement: 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.



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