

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



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From the Executive Director, Ellen Blathers...

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I love reading the Bible because it is a beautiful piece of literature that I never grow tired of reading. One of my favorite parables is the story of the lost son. The Bible says, "He comes to himself," he realizes the bad choices, mistakes and disaster he has made of his life, and he decides to return home. His father welcomed him home with open arms. Oftentimes, men who come through the doors of Serenity Inns are like the lost son. They come to themselves and need to be fed hope, love and kindness. Serenity Inns welcomes them into a family that has been woven together by God (and it shows!). The work done at Serenity Inns is a lot like welcoming a man back home. And the role that volunteers serve is part of that Welcome. We have volunteers who bring them dinners, volunteers who bring the men clothes, and volunteers who give their time and so much more to the men.

Recently the men had a welcoming experience. Our friends at Christ The King Lutheran Church in Delafield took the residents to the Milwaukee Brewers game and tailgate party. For many of the men, this was a wonderful experience. The light in their eyes and the smile on their faces when they talked about the time at Miller Park was priceless. I always want the volunteers to know how much they are appreciated for all they do to help the men "come to themselves."

Listen to the residents:



"I loved the time outing with the men."

"It is the first time I have been to a baseball game."

"It gave me a sense of normalcy."

"It was an out of body experience, something unreal."

"It was the highlight of my stay at Serenity Inns so far and I am very thankful for the opportunity."

"Fantastic time, one of the more enjoyable Saturdays I have spent in quite a long time."

"I didn't think I could have so much fun while being sober."



Three of the residents at Miller Park with Bob Uecker and "Friend" from Christ the King, Delafield



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

(The 18th in a series of interviews with Graduates)

by Lorraine Buehler

Ozell Carson arrived at Serenity Inn in July, 2012 “not even knowing who I was. I was a wreck.”

He recalls that Robert at Genesis Detox had recommended Serenity Inn with the caveat, “the rules are very very strict” there.

Ozell was fine with this because he grew until the age of 8 in a secure home with a father who enforced the rules and had a good job at Briggs and Stratton. One day in 1974, his father was killed on the job, shot by a friend. After his father’s death, the Carson family structure broke down. His older brother got into trouble on the streets and went to jail, and one of his sisters died of an overdose.

Ozell’s foray into drugs began with marijuana, and he was introduced to crack cocaine at age 25, motivated by a desire to discover what had killed his sister. His decline followed predictably: he started stealing from work, his appearance deteriorated, he got fired, he hustled in the streets, and eventually turned to alcohol because it was cheaper than crack.



Some 20 years later, in February 2011 after his mother passed away from breast cancer, Ozell started to think seriously about recovery. He kept hearing his mother, “the best present you can get for me is to get yourself together.” Ozell was 45 years old.

The rules at Serenity Inn worked for Ozell because for him discipline is a “caring word. It defines LOVE in a different perspective.”

He has learned to turn adversity around and deal with it; in the past he would have given up. Now he smiles and realizes he has had the tools from birth to deal with adversity. The difference is that now he has access to them.

Ozell loved dinner fellowship and talking with the guests each evening. He remembers fondly how “interested they were in us, how much they cared.” The other residents made him laugh at times, cry at other times, and angry once in a while, but they “became like a family. You knew others were there for you.” He recalls his SI “family”: Clarence, Romall, Solomon, Josh, Darrick.

He came to value other aspects of the Serenity Inn Program as well, the writing component, for example. He looks back now at the 3 journals he completed at the Inn which helped him discover who he is, a positive person who knows what he wants and is happy. He knows that one of the things he wants to do in the future is to give back. The Money Management component taught him to put money aside for things he wants *after* he sets aside money for his rent.

Describing Miss Ellen, “She’s the best—a spiritual person” who helped him with that component of his life. At present he attends church and is looking for a church to join.

For the future, Ozell’s goal is job security. His present job gets slow at times when his hours can be cut back from 40 to 10 hours a week. To deal with this, he has signed up with a Temp Service so that at slow times he can use his chef skills to cook on the Terrace Level at Miller Park or to cook for banquets at the Wisconsin Center downtown.

(Ozell’s story continued next page)



(Ozell's story continued)...

He has found a sponsor with whom he talks on a regular basis, and he attends NA/AA meetings twice a week at St. Joe's Hospital.

Ozell is grateful for SI and very aware of his good fortune in finding it. His closing thought:

"You just can't find a place like this!"

What Your Dollars Buy:



\$17.50 Weekly Bus Pass

\$15 Underwear

\$30-\$50 Medication to help the body adjust after detox- for those coming off opiates

\$30 Cold meds and other Medications for First-Aid Kit



\$125-\$150 Monthly for paper products (towels, napkins, toilet tissue, cups, plates, spiral notebooks)

With the Inn at capacity (12 residents) for the last 6+ months, the need is greater than ever. Thanks for considering Serenity Inn as part of your giving.



Volunteers Make It Happen...



Serenity Inn "works" because of our volunteers.

- Volunteers bring dinner to the residents every night of the year and share fellowship with the men.
- Volunteers serve on the governing Board of Directors and on the Committees that do the work of the Board.
- Volunteers drop off gifts at Christmas, backpacks when needed, winter jackets in the Fall, and some churches and other groups furnish the "closets" with paper products, with cleaning supplies, with hygiene items and with food for the residents' breakfasts and lunches.

When the appeal went out recently for a plumber and an electrician to help the SI Handyman install a donated washer, dryer, and kitchen sink, an electrician from Mount Hope Lutheran offered his services, and a plumber from Shepherd of the Hills answered the call as well.

As a result, for minimal cost to the organization, the 12 residents will soon have a second washer and dryer—and finally—a "proper" kitchen sink.

A big THANK YOU to the donors of the washer, dryer, and sink and to the Plumber, Electrician, and the Handyman for their expertise in making the installation happen!



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.

Save the Date: Thursday, April 23, 2015



Watch your mailbox in early March for your invitation to the 5th Annual Celebration of Recovery Dinner and Silent Auction at the Italian Community Center in Milwaukee's Third Ward. This year's event is on a Thursday evening so it need not interfere with your weekend plans.



Come to the Picnic...



It's the annual Thank You Cookout/Picnic on Saturday, September 6th at the Inn, 2825 W. Brown St., from 3-6 p.m. with a program at 4.

For the first time, the Alumni Group is planning the picnic. Come and meet Serenity Inn Graduates as well as the current Residents who will be cooking the burgers and brats as a thank you to volunteers.

RSVP to Ellen Blathers by Tuesday, August 26th if you can attend: 414-873-5474, siellen@att.net.

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Check our website for past issues

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