



## So Much to Celebrate!

### Serenity Inns, Inc.

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Ellen Blathers  
Executive Director

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The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of Recovery, again held at the Italian Community Center, was a resounding success. A total of 207 guests, including residents, graduates and staff, gathered on April 27 to celebrate another year of fulfilling the Serenity Inns' 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.*

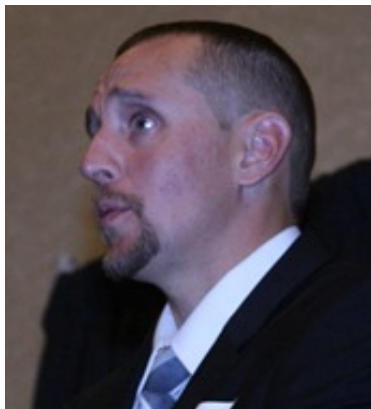
Highlights included graduate Clarence McGowan serving as Master of Ceremonies and messages from three graduates and also from Bevan Baker, Milwaukee County Health Commissioner

### The heart-grabbing stories from the graduates:

**Recent graduate Cedric** (age 24) spoke about coming to Serenity Inn when he had burned all his bridges with family and friends. With nowhere else to turn, he took his grandfather's advice and checked into detox and then SI. On April 22, Cedric moved with another graduate to Alumni House, and is focusing on a new beginning with a new job, a sponsor, and a recovery plan.



Cedric



Jonathan

**Jonathan, first graduate to move into Alumni House**, shared his story about his move to Alumni House last October. Now 34, Jonathan celebrated one year clean in early April after using drugs since he was 17. No one was more pleased than Jonathan's mother and sister who were there to celebrate Jonathan!

Stories continued next page

## So Much to Celebrate! (Continued from page one)



Dallas

Accepting the **Alumnus of the Year Award, Dallas**, age 43, spoke about coming to SI right out of jail last August after being given the choice of jail or Serenity Inn. He admits he did not want to be at SI, but after a tough week of withdrawal and a couple more weeks of feeling better, he started to weigh the pros and cons and arrived at an epiphany, "enough was enough," having used drugs since the age of 13. Watching the staff, all in recovery, Dallas decided if they can do it, I can do it! Dallas closed with a comment about dinner fellowship: "The people who bring dinner are amazing, and while I was here, I never ate a bad meal or left a table hungry!"

**Bevan K. Baker, Milwaukee County Health Commissioner:** Introduced by past chair of the Serenity Inns board of directors, Timothy McMurtry, Mr. Baker acknowledged the role that Serenity Inns can and does play in the drug/opiate crisis in our area and used the frequent refrain, "I see you," referring to the residents and grads dealing with addiction. His message was clear, that he and his staff are focused on the problem of drug addiction in the area and the startling increase in drug overdoses that are taking so many young lives.

The **Community Partner Award** was awarded to **Alumni House**, more specifically to 3 individuals who made possible the purchase of Alumni House on June 30, 2016 as well as the ongoing renovation:

- » **Dave Romoser** who as chair of the board of directors provided the vision, the inspiration, and the organizational skills to make possible the purchase of the building and the renovation,
- » **Jim Bendtsen**, general contractor by trade, who has provided invaluable technical support as well as many volunteer hours to rehab Alumni House.
- » **Bill Buehler**, who as onsite coordinator has taken the lead from Dave and Jim and, with the help of many volunteers, has managed the upgrades of 4 of the 7 2-bedroom units with a 5<sup>th</sup> unit in process now. The work on Unit 1, a one-bedroom for the House Manager, has just been completed.



If celebrating the recovery of residents and graduates was the goal of the evening—accomplished in the speeches and the shared fellowship--the financial outcome of the evening met the monetary goal and then some. Nine sponsored tables, the 50/50 raffle, lively bidding on 109 silent auction items with one \$5,000 overbid as well as other monetary donations resulted in the highest net profit in the 7 years of the event, over \$30,000!

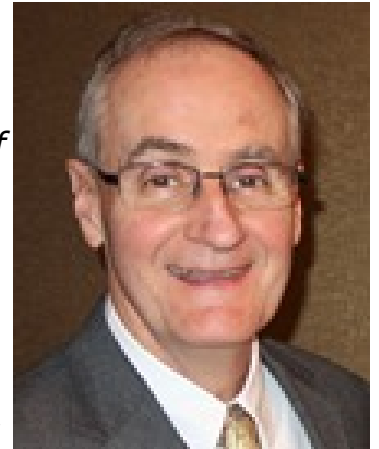
**Thanks to all for attending and for your ongoing support of Serenity Inns and Alumni House in so many ways throughout the year!**

## Inspire By Example

The Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee awarded the *Inspire by Example* (Adult Category) award to Serenity Inn volunteer Bill Buehler on April 19<sup>th</sup> at a luncheon at the Tripoli Shrine Center. Sheldon Dutes, WISN Anchor/Reporter, served as MC for the program attended by 500 guests. Nominated by Executive Director Ellen Blathers, Bill was recognized for his work for the last several years as Serenity Inns Handyman and for his ongoing lead on renovating the apartments (now named Alumni House) purchased by Serenity Inns in June 2016.

Motivated by his desire to use his skills and his tools to help others, Bill believes in the Serenity Inns' 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.*

In her nomination, Ms. Blathers, wrote, "The clients, residents at the Inn and Alumni House, frequently say to our visitors and volunteers, 'This is the nicest place I've ever lived.' Bill's efforts are in large measure the reason for those comments."



Bill Buehler

Dave Romoser, chair of the Serenity Inns board of directors says of Bill, "He is the 'good Samaritan.' He is humble, avoids the limelight, has high personal standards for himself and is apparently tireless."

**The Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee presented a check for \$500 to Bill's favorite charity, Serenity Inns!**

## SAVE THE DATE



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**The Alumni Association invites you to join them, the residents, staff and other friends of Serenity Inns for the Annual Cookout/Picnic at 2825 W. Brown St. on Saturday, September 16, 2017 from 3-5 p.m.**

# Celebration of Recovery, April 27, 2017



Thanks to those who supported the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration!

*Special thanks to Gail May (Mayflowers)*

*for the floral bouquets that graced every table.*



**GENEROUS OVERBID,  
\$5,000**

Mike Keouge

Serenity Inns Alumni  
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Pat Denning

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David & Stacia Hickey

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Jay & Beth Thorson

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**(HOPE) Table Sponsors,  
\$1,000**

Bill & Lorraine Buehler

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Dave Romoser's Friends

Dave Romoser's Friends Too

Howard & Pat Wilkins—Fox  
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**SPIRIT, \$250**

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**POTENTIAL, \$249-\$25**

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Dan Berg

Mike & Cindy Bohlen

Hymon Bradshaw Jr.

Barry & Jill Dahlgren

**OPPORTUNITY, \$500**

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