



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



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Ellen Blathers  
Executive Director

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## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of Recovery

The Celebrations gets better every year, and the 2018 Celebration held on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Italian Community Center was no exception; and it was made extra special by Channel 58's Mike Strehlow serving as MC!

Highlights of the evening are always the speeches from the men. A current resident, Andy, spoke of five overdoses within a 2-month period that brought him to Serenity Inn on Dec. 22, 2017. With parents who were users, Andy's path to drugs and alcohol came early, and he accepted the reality that he would die young. Now 35 and in recovery for the first time, he has come to realize that it is a beautiful thing to be clean, he has a job he enjoys, and he sees a future for himself in recovery.



The Alumnus of the Year award went to Jason Seney who spoke of being ready for recovery only during his second stay at the Inn when he was 30 years old. At that point, he began to open up and deal honestly with things. He graduated on July 1, 2017, working at a job he loved, and moved to Alumni House where he rented his first apartment ever!



Jason recognizes that living at AH means he is kept in the circle of recovery. He values the opportunity afforded at AH to rent a nice apartment, aware that his felonies and drug convictions would have made this impossible with most landlords. Serenity Inn and Alumni House are the blessings that have saved his life and given him a future. The Community Partner Award went to Marcus Mumm of Advanced Electric LLC for giving jobs and training as electricians to SI residents.



# 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of Recovery

Continued from page 1

Sam Hackbarth, Alumni Association president, proudly presented a check for \$1,000 (a donation from 12 alumni) to **Ellen Blathers**, Executive Director.

The generosity of 218 guests, especially table sponsors as well as those who shopped the silent auction and contributed to the 50/50 raffle, yielded a net profit of \$38,000, OUR BEST EVER!



**We already have the 2019 celebration on the calendar; it will be Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, again at the Italian Community Center.**



## Celebration of Recovery Donors

**We gratefully acknowledge our generous donors!**

**Special thanks to Gail May (Mayflowers) for the floral bouquets that graced every table.**

### EVENT SPONSORS, \$5,000

Baird  
David & Gael Romoser



**\$500**  
Thrivent Financial



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**Other Donors**  
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### SPECIAL MENTION DONORS, \$1,000

Christ the Servant  
Serenity Inns Alumni Association  
Mark & Gayle Stieglitz



Elyse Jaeger  
Ron Jaeger & Teri Luebbering  
Kurt & Elizabeth Kaiser  
Bruce & Shereen Kressin  
Ellen Luby



## Congratulations Jason!



Congratulations to Jason Dobson, Serenity Inns' Substance Abuse Counselor, on receiving his BS degree in Business Management from Cardinal Stritch University on May 20, 2018!



Jason with his children, Ashlyn & Jayden

## Capitol Campaign

### Protecting the Future, the GOOD SAMARITAN CAMPAIGN

Several years ago a supporter of Serenity Inns and her husband had a *vision* and made a restricted gift of \$25,000. The restriction was **"this gift can only be used toward the purchase of a transitional living facility for graduates of the program."** Shortly thereafter the board of directors engaged in *strategic planning* to continue Serenity Inns into the future. One of the elements of that plan was to expand the treatment program by the addition of transitional living for graduates. By providing the graduates quality housing, structure and continued counseling, their prospects for recovery would be enhanced. In late 2015 an Ad Hoc Committee was created to search for a property suitable for transitional living. A building located in Milwaukee's Near West Side with nine apartments was identified by the Committee, thoroughly inspected and, with the board of directors' approval, purchased on June 30, 2016. That building is now known as **Alumni House**. The restricted gift, money from the reserve fund and a bank loan were used to purchase the building.

Out of this was born the **Good Samaritan Campaign** with an ambitious **\$750,000 goal**. The campaign seeks to accomplish three things. **The first objective** is to provide funds to cover the expense of rehabilitating the apartments and eventually pay off the loan taken out to purchase the building. This objective will require \$400,000.

Article continued next page



## Capitol Campaign

Continued from page 3



Alumni House

**The second objective** is to create a fund of \$150,000 to be used over time for staff development and succession planning. **The third objective** is to create a fund of \$200,000 for future property repairs and replacement beyond typical maintenance.

To date, as a result of gifts from 35 individuals, 6 foundations and 1 church, approximately \$440,000 has been raised. These gifts have permitted the board to retire the debt on Alumni House and repay the Serenity Inns reserve fund for money advanced to purchase the building and to cover the early rehabilitation expenses.

Funds are now going into the **Staff Development Account**, and staff members will be receiving tuition reimbursement as they pursue their addiction counseling education and accreditation. As this part of the campaign goal is met, the remaining funds will go into the **property preservation account**, and the income will be used to replace aging aspects of the properties such as furnaces, roof, windows and soffits.

Over and above your annual support of the Serenity Inns program you're asked to consider making a multi-year commitment to the **Good Samaritan Campaign**. The success of this campaign will keep Serenity Inns, the staff, Inn and Alumni House poised for years to come to provide recovery programming for men seeking freedom from addiction and a new life. When you receive a forthcoming mailing or are personally contacted by the Good Samaritan Campaign Cabinet members seeking your support, *please respond generously*.

## Where Are They Now?

the 26<sup>th</sup> in a series of interviews with Serenity Inn Graduates

by Lorraine Buehler



Sam arrived at Serenity Inn at age 45 after 30+ years of drinking and using drugs. He had reached a low point in his life and the realization that he could not continue on this path. Suicide was in the back of his mind.

When he found Serenity Inn in February 2016, it was not his first time to try recovery, but this time he felt he was ready.

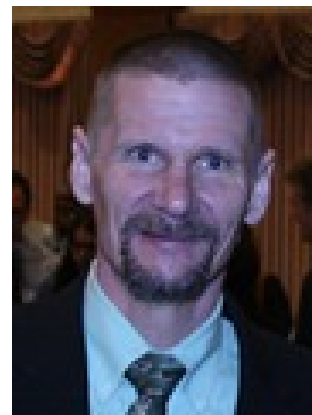
However, this time was not to work either. It turns out that even though he had come to understand certain things about how to make recovery work, his thinking had not changed. He wasn't living in the present but rather held onto regrets and resentments and felt entitled. Among other things, he felt that when he was clean, he should get the best of jobs and should be the first tenant at Alumni House that was being renovated for Serenity Inn graduates.

Sam and another graduate became the first tenants---and Sam relapsed within days—in Oct. 2016. In no time at all, he figured out what had gone wrong. The feeling of entitlement had taken over his thinking; plus he had stopped trying or caring a couple of months before leaving Serenity Inn. He saw that he was expecting more from others than from himself.

Allowed to return to the Inn on Jan. 1, 2017 was an incredible blessing and very humbling for Sam. He had to admit his mistake, but he was amazed that no one on the staff or at NA meetings focused on his fall. This helped him "let go of his past" as others modeled it for him. And he found that humility is a healthy emotion.

Now living at Alumni House again, Sam realizes that living there is one of the things that is helping his recovery. He doesn't see the other residents all that often, but finds the knowledge reassuring that his neighbors are on the same track he is.

Sam loves his job with Advanced Electric because it allows him to stay in the construction field where he feels a sense of accomplishment and purpose as well as the gratification that he is doing something to help others—not to mention that in his 9<sup>th</sup> month on the job, he will be getting his third raise! He is grateful to Dwayne for getting him the job and realizes the lesson in patience Dwayne taught him when he did not get the job when he thought he deserved it.



Sam Hackbarth

Other things are going well for Sam. He likes being president of the Alumni Association because of the chance to give back as does his new job as part-time innkeeper on weekends. He identifies with the "ministry of presence" that helps to define the role of innkeeper at the Inn.

Summing up how he feels with 17 months clean time, the longest he's been clean since he was in his early teens, Sam feels confident, successful, and knows he is still growing and learning.

## Save the Dates



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 Street on Saturday, September 15, 2018 from 3-5:30 p.m.

We would like to recognize the foundations that faithfully support our mission. Our heartfelt thanks to:

- **AO Smith Foundation**
- **Bader Philanthropies**
- **Catholic Community Foundation**
- **Evan and Marion Helfaer Foundation**
- **Forest County Potawatomi Foundation**
- **Gannett Foundation**
- **Greater Milwaukee Foundation**
- **Green Bay Packers Foundation**
- **Harley Davidson Foundation**
- **Kaztex Foundation**
- **Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation**
- **Milwaukee Brewers Foundation**
- **PPC Foundation/Pieper Electric**
- **Ralph Evinrude Foundation**
- **Siebert Lutheran Foundation**
- **Zilber Foundation**

## **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.

### **Newsletter Staff**

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Past issues available on the Newsletters link on the website.

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