

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



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Merry Christmas from Serenity Inns

From the Desk of Serenity Inns



Christmas is my favorite time of the year.

People give love, show kindness, and share hope. Despite the negative news stories and personal tragedies, hope still prevails. Hope is the fuel that drives the team of Serenity Inns to work hard for men who are without hope.

Hope is in endless supply at Serenity Inns. God has so graciously sent us volunteers from all walks of life to help us carry out the mission of Serenity Inns with hope.

It is the volunteers that support us with their prayers, commitment, and hope. It is with this hope and a heart full of gratitude that I say,

"Thank You."

Ellen Blathers
Executive Director



Thank you to Fox Point Lutheran Church for the generous donation of shower caddies filled with toiletries for each of the residents! The residents were deeply touched by the gesture and couldn't wait to unpack them. Fox Point Lutheran volunteers truly live out the church's goal of infusing life and God's love into people and families!



2018, A Remarkable Year

It's been a remarkable year at Serenity Inns in so many ways. We were blessed to celebrate the graduations of 8 men in the last 4 months of the year. Each of the men spent 5-7 months at the Inn, finding employment after the first month and saving money for life after Serenity Inn. Most of the graduates have moved to Alumni House where they pay rent, live with other Serenity Inn graduates, and have the support of the Serenity Inns staff.

Below are excerpts from each graduate's exit interview where he reflects on his recovery journey.

Alfonso: Before Serenity Inns, I had lost everything but my life. I spent my last \$5 for a cab to take me to detox, and that was the best \$5 I've ever spent, because after detox, I came to Serenity. I've gotten so much of my life back since I've been here. Serenity has been a blessing for my family. At the end, it got to the point where I wasn't showing up for my family. I know in my heart that I need to stay connected to Serenity.

Andrew: I'm a family-oriented person and I'm a mama's boy. When I realized my mom was scared to be around me, I realized I needed to get help. I learned a lot about myself being here. Biggest thing, being honest and I have to put my trust in others. I could never trust men before this, and I learned I have to open up and trust men. Knowing I never have to use again really impacted me.

Daniel: The first time I used drugs, I was 12 years old. I smoked pot with my mom and my brother. Serenity has taught me to open up and express my feelings. Having the Alumni House as an option has definitely made the transition easier. I know it's a controlled environment. I know I'm not just going out the door on my own.

Bob: This is my 11th time in a treatment program. I don't remember the first time I took a drink; I remember drinking champagne with my parents when I was 5 or 6. I feel good where I'm at now. I haven't had a job I enjoy in ages. I like my job and that's important to me. I feel like God put Serenity in my path for a reason.



Left: Daniel and his mother
Right: Andrew and his mother



Alphonso



Bob

2018, A Remarkable Year (continued)



Javon



Scott



Fred



Joe

Fred: I knew I was killing myself slowly on crack cocaine, but I wasn't ready to stop getting high. The night I got clean, this May, I stole some important things from my mom and dad, and it hurt them real bad. In detox the counselor referred me to Serenity Inns. He told me it was a 7-month program, with the Alumni House. When I saw people living in recovery, I knew that's what I wanted. I've never looked back. It's been a blessing to be here with the support system and the team of people I've got behind me.

Javon: Alfonso and myself came in on the same day. I tell him he's my little brother. I didn't know what to expect because it was my first time in a recovery facility. Going to the 12-step program opened my eyes to where I wanted to go spiritually. I finally started to share during Dinner Fellowship. Getting to know Ellen and Jason, I felt at home and they had my best interests at heart in terms of my recovery.

Joe: Before Serenity Inns, I was living out of motels and in my girlfriend's car. Dinner Fellowship was instrumental. After about three months, one of the guests told me, "You're opening up more and talking more." That made me feel good about myself. The Dinner Fellowship experience has changed how I relate to my family – before I would just sit in a corner and eat. Now when I see my family, I see and talk to them more than I have in a long time. Serenity has helped me so much.

Scott: I've spent thousands and thousands of dollars on cocaine. I've been homeless, living on the streets, since 2003. I know the dope isn't going anywhere. I'd like to give this sober clean life a shot. I know what it's like to live the other life. From day one at Serenity, it's almost like you're being prepared to leave. You're going to meetings, meeting people, getting a sponsor, getting a job. Not many people make it out of where I've been. I feel like God has to have a plan for me.

Thank You Milwaukee Ballet

The residents and staff were blessed to attend the Milwaukee Ballet's production of Dracula, due to the generous donation of tickets from the Milwaukee Ballet. For the majority of the residents, it was their first time at the ballet and Dracula won everyone over as fans! Thank you to the Milwaukee Ballet for the tickets and the backstage tour!



Volunteers from Christ the King Lutheran Church, located in Delafield, have been Dinner Fellowship regulars for the past 14 years. We cherish their support and involvement. Christ the King brought dinner the night of Alfonso's graduation. Below is a reflection from Vicky Jaeger, Christ the King volunteer, on the experience.

The Christ the King volunteers were blessed in August to participate in a graduation celebration for Alfonso. It was exhilarating to hear his co-residents talk about how they have seen him grow, how he has helped them to move forward and the way he has now become a leader among them. They told funny stories about how he talks and talks until the others beg him to stop. They talked about his work ethic and the way he uses his time for positive endeavors now. Their respect rang out loud and clear. Ellen [Blathers] spoke about how she was not sure he would make it when he first arrived and how proud she is now that he has succeeded. Words are powerful and everyone was happy to share kind words. The best words, however, came from Alfonso! He stood to thank his friends, the staff and the meal volunteers stating that he would not have been able to persevere without the help of each. He talked about being responsible for his actions and moving forward. He reflected on the day he decided to change his life. It was the day that he spent his last five dollars to get the referral to Serenity Inns program. He choked out the words, "That was the best five dollars I have ever spent!" as we clapped and struggled to keep our eyes dry!

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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Past issues available on the Newsletters link on the website.

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