

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



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**Ellen Blathers receives
Black Excellence Award**



Executive Director **Ellen Blathers** was honored by the *Milwaukee Times* on February 15, 2019 with a Black Excellence Award. Our heartfelt congratulations to Ellen for this recognition of the amazing work she does in the community.

Of receiving the award, Ellen said, "It was all I could do to hold back the ocean of tears when they called my name as I walked into the room. It was overwhelming and I am so grateful to God for the honor. The award was an affirmation that I stood on the shoulders of Phenomenal Women who gave me the gift of serving others. It meant that I am building a legacy of service for my children and grandchildren to follow. To receive this honor as the Executive Director of Serenity Inns is humbling because the men are the real heroes and champions. Serenity Inns is a community of people committed to empowering men to live again free of alcohol and drugs. I pray that I continue to reflect a spirit of integrity and passion while living into my purpose as a servant leader."

"Imagination, Boldness and Innovation" reads the plaque in front of Ellen. Those traits will guide us well as we celebrate Serenity Inns's 15 year anniversary and move into a new 15 year cycle. All of us, the 500 men who have been served by Serenity, the staff, the alumni, the volunteers and the staff are present in Ellen's picture.





2019: A New Beginning

2019 has begun with the graduation of 3 residents. 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.



Mike: *Serenity Inns means life to me. There's no short cuts in life worth doing, and in the seven months here, I haven't taken any short cuts. The best place for an addict to go is Serenity Inns.*

Mike, center, pictured with Lead Substance Abuse Counselor Jason Dobson and Executive Director Ellen Blathers



Cary: *This is the longest I've been sober since I was 15. I've realized that being sober is a choice. I felt the love when I first came to Serenity Inns – people accepted you and didn't even know you. That's why I stuck around. When I found myself breaking up disagreements at my job and using the things I've learned here, that's when I knew I could live sober. Otherwise, all I have left is myself and my addiction. And the addiction is always going to be there.*

Royce: *I was 5 or 6 when I remember catching a buzz from alcohol. My parents' friends would think it was funny to get me buzzed. My parents also grew a lot of pot. I remember smoking when I was 9 for the first time. This is the longest I've been clean since I was a little kid. I really feel like God is working in my life to have brought me this far. I should be in prison or dead with everything I've done.*

Royce, left, and Cary, right, with their graduation diplomas

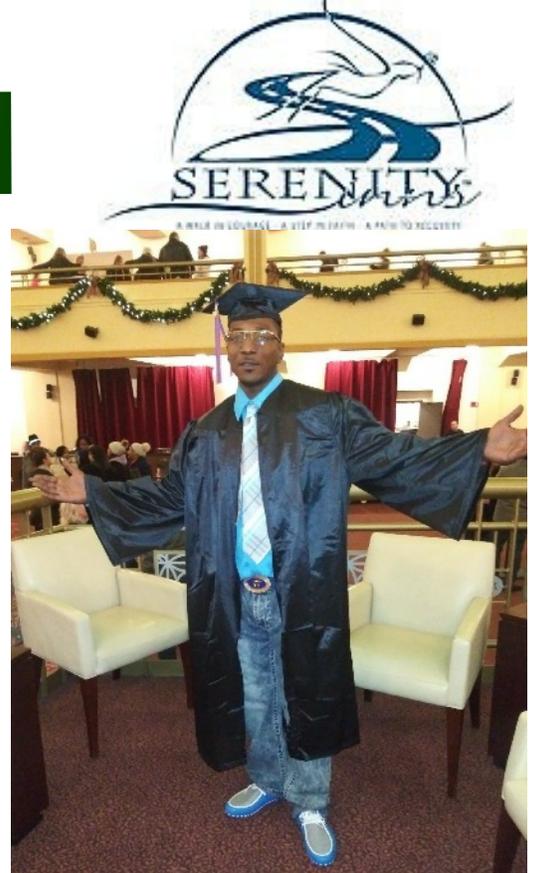
Staff Update

Jason Seney: Jason joins the staff as an Innkeeper. He is a graduate of Serenity Inns, and January 2019 marked two years clean.

Jason is excited to join the Innkeeper team and said, "I've always had a passion for helping people. I know firsthand, when I was young, I didn't have a good influence and followed my older brother into gangs. I've been through the program and it can be done, even though it's not easy. I can give people strength and hope."

James Nichols: Innkeeper James Nichols graduated from Milwaukee Area Technical College in December 2018 with his degree in Human Services and he will be taking the Substance Abuse Counselor in Training exam May 2019.

James said of his degree and graduation, "My lost dreams awakened and new possibilities have arisen. I never knew the potential I possessed until I allowed God to guide me. Going forward, education is very important to me. I am grateful I can teach my children to value education to have the life they want. Thanks Serenity!"



James Nichols

Thank You, Fox Point Lutheran

We are so deeply grateful to Fox Point Lutheran Church and its members for their continuing generosity! The residents are enjoying their new pizza oven, and tears were shed over the Christmas gifts for each resident. We felt the warmth and light of the season along with the cheer and good will of our many supporters from FPLC.



Fox Point Lutheran member Sarah Van Hul and her daughter with the residents and their Christmas gifts



Residents with the new pizza oven

Celebration of Recovery

We hope to see you all at our annual **Celebration of Recovery** that will be held at the Italian Community Center on **May 9, 2019**. Join us as we honor program graduates and connect with old and new friends.



The Celebration begins with the silent auction at 5 pm and dinner at 6:30 pm. You can sign up through our website www.SerenityInns.org or to receive a mailed invitation, please contact our Event Co-Chairs: Lorraine Buehler email lcbuehler@cs.com or call (414) 630-8933 or Virginia Zignego email vzignego@gmail.com or call (262) 370-3993.



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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