



## Volunteers Key to Program

### Serenity Inns, Inc.

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Lead Substance Abuse  
Counselor  
Virginia Zignego  
Director of Administration & Development

*Board of Directors-  
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*Co-Vice Chairs:*  
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Rev. Rick Deines  
Rev. Joe Ellwanger  
W. David Romoser  
Craig Watson

**D**ue to our talented and tireless volunteers, we are able to offer expanded programming to residents.

Board member **Bary Morgan**, trained in trauma-informed-care principles, is leading a 10-week intensive program focusing on story groups. The primary purpose of a Story Group is personal growth and transformation by exploring how specific life experiences have shaped whom we are today.

In the Story Group program, each resident is asked to write about a specific story from his life. The Story Group Facilitator then reviews the story and asks questions that encourage deeper levels of perspective and insight. The story is then shared in a small group context led by the facilitator.

Graduate Kurt said of the story groups, "Understanding my own traumatic events, and hearing about others, has helped me understand other points of view."

**Russell Jones**, a Milwaukee-based lawyer and Dinner Fellowship attendee, facilitates a monthly legal Q&A session for residents. It is an opportunity for residents to ask any legal question they may have, ranging from past drug tickets or convictions to applying for a job to career opportunities.

We would not be where we are without our volunteers.

*Thank you, Bary and Russell!*



Serenity Inns residents with Board Member and volunteer Bary Morgan



## 2020: A New Beginning

Four residents graduated from Serenity Inns in the past couple months. 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.

**Dana:** *My life before Serenity Inns – I was in a downward spiral. I felt like death was creeping up on me. When I walked in the doors of SI, I knew my journey had started to reclaim the rest of my life. SI put me back on the path for my life – living my life, not just existing in my life.*

**Jason:** *I was 7 when I smoked weed with my older brother. I was 15 when I tried heroin and it became a daily thing. This is the only program that's worked. The love from staff and the guests let me know there's hope and not everyone judges people--and knowing that people care enough to take time out of their day and bring me a meal and eat dinner with me.*



Graduate Jason, left; Serenity Inns Development Director Virginia Zignego, center; and graduate Dana, right.



Graduate Brandon with his mom at graduation

**Brandon:** *Serenity Inns has saved my life. Anything I've been in before – outpatient or 30-day programs – was never enough. If you have a bad addiction like I did, you need to unwind and get your feelings and thoughts sorted out and figure things out. Dinner fellowship – it's a blessing that people care about addicts and come share a meal with us like that.*

**Kurt:** *I was 13 when I first started drinking and I was 15 when I tried pot. The drinking continued and escalated. One Christmas Eve I was really depressed and poured myself a drink--and never stopped for 14-15 years. For me at Serenity Inns, I had a sound place to stay. Dinner Fellowship was a huge help in my recovery. At first I didn't want to but it's been a good thing for me to talk to people.*



Lead Substance Abuse Counselor Jason Dobson, left; Serenity Inns graduate Kurt, center; and Executive Director Ellen Blathers, right.

## Quick Takes



### Green Bay Packers Foundation:

In December 2019, Executive Director Ellen Blathers and Development Director Virginia Zignego attended an event at Lambeau Field hosted by the Green Bay Packers Foundation. Thank you to the Packers Foundation for their grant to Serenity Inns!



Executive Director Ellen Blathers and Development Director Virginia Zignego at the Green Bay Packers Foundation reception.



**2019 Staff Christmas:** The Serenity Inns staff enjoyed their annual steak Christmas dinner.

**2019 Alumni Christmas Party:** Once again our wonderful group of alumni turned out for the annual Christmas party. Pictured here, graduates Mike D. and Fred Walker.



## Serenity Inns Wins "Best of Milwaukee" Award



Each year, the *Shepherd Express*' Best of Milwaukee poll gives readers an opportunity to vote on what they love about Milwaukee.

And this year, due to a surprise nomination, Serenity Inns won our first-ever "**Best of Milwaukee**" award--in the Alcohol and Drug Rehab Center category.

We would like to honor the men who have graduated from our program; their courage and desire to live in recovery makes our work possible. We would also like to thank our donors, volunteers, Board members and others who are a part of the Serenity Inns family.

## RESCHEDULED Celebration of Recovery

Unfortunately, we have had to postpone the Celebration of Recovery due to the coronavirus and the immediate uncertainty.

Please save the date for our **RESCHEDULED** Celebration of Recovery.

Join us on **Thursday, June 4 at the Italian Community Center** as we honor graduates and residents.

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](http://www.SerenityInns.org)--or to receive a mailed invitation, please contact our Event Co-Chairs: Lorraine Buehler email [lcbuehler@cs.com](mailto:lcbuehler@cs.com) or call (414) 630-8933 or Virginia Zignego email [vzignego@gmail.com](mailto: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.

#### Newsletter Staff

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Past issues available on the Newsletters link on the website.

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