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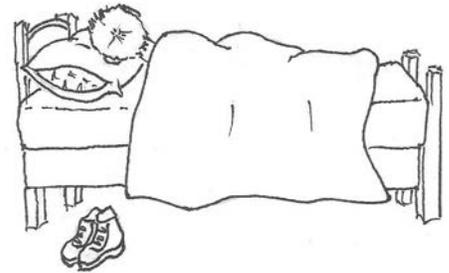
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## TALES OF GOOD SOLES (AND SOULS)

The people who come to The INN don't need treadmills and don't count their steps. But they do walk a lot. Walking is their main mode of transportation. Of course, shoes are very important to them.

Thinking of shoes (or sneakers) for the guests is one of the many things The INN thinks about.

For many years the New York Jets practiced at Hofstra University, just down the road from The INN. Many players, and their wives, volunteered at The INN. One of the wives (her husband was the starting quarterback) had a special interest in obtaining new sneakers for the guests. She had a clever way of doing this. Her husband, like his teammates, had a sneaker contract. In exchange for wearing cleats from company "x", the players would receive an annual credit



for sneakers from company "x" — for way more pairs than they could ever use. Robin collected the credits from all the players and used these credits to "purchase" brand new sneakers for the guests. Everyone had happy feet.

What would you do if you found \$5,000 in cash, no one saw you find it, and you had no idea who it belonged to? Would you keep it? In February one of The INN volunteers made such a discovery. While organizing shoe donations she

*(continued pg. 4)*

**Save THE Dates:**

(see page 5)

- May 8 – INNkeepers' Ball
- September 30 – INN Golf Classic



## JOHN V. BRENNAN

### The INN's Best Friend

It is with much sadness we announce the passing of John V. Brennan. John was the

only son (he had two sisters) of Mary Brennan, in whose memory the Mary Brennan INN is named.

John did amazing things to help many people and many groups, but here we reflect on John and The INN. For the magnitude, longevity and impact of his support, John could rightfully be called the "Father of The INN". He always smiled and deflected attention when this was mentioned to him.

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Jean Kelly  
Executive Director

## REFLECTION Surprises

While recently visiting the Center for Transformative Change (CTC), I had a surprise when I saw a young couple ... with two infant-carriers, in the

waiting area. Their lives had just been turned upside down, in a good way, with the birth of twin boys, then only three weeks old.

They were at the CTC because their lives had also been turned upside down in not such a good way.

They had been living in a small basement room in an apartment building, paying what rent they could afford for what was actually a "large closet". There was neither a bathroom nor a kitchen. Just after the birth of the twins, they learned the person who rented them the closet was not really the landlord. He was an impostor. And on top of that, the building was being sold. With a fraudulent lease for an illegal "apartment" they were forced to leave. In a normal situation, they could have declared themselves homeless, and been placed in a county shelter. But now they were homeless with newborns. That is why they came to The INN.

Fortunately, we had a room available in one of our shelters. It is a homelike setting with a community kitchen, living room and a backyard. Staff is working with this couple to place them in a stable and family-friendly setting.

The same week I met the new parents, I learned a mother and her adult son received an unwelcome surprise after driving to Long Island from Delaware. They had both lost their jobs in Delaware as well as losing their home basement rental after flooding. They were two of the many people who live "paycheck to paycheck" and

now they had no paycheck. A supposed good friend encouraged them to come up to Long Island to live with her. She told them they could stay with her while they looked for new jobs.

This turned out to be untrue. She would not let them stay with her. For the first few nights they slept in their car. They went to the Department of Social Services (DSS) to declare themselves homeless, but since they were non-residents, the only assistance offered was the cost of the return trip to Delaware. There was nothing for them in Delaware and they were originally from New York. They decided to stay. Someone told them about the Center for Transformative Change.

They arrived at the CTC needing food, a shower and clothing for job interviews. The son at FedEx and the mom at a Red Roof INN (no connection to The INN). They were both hired, and while they await a few paychecks needed to establish credit for an apartment, they are staying at the same INN shelter as the new parents.

Each day we help people who find themselves in jams that may be hard for us to imagine. We are fortunate to help them be like the rest of us — living independent and productive lives. Your generosity allows this to happen.

Thank you for your kindness and compassion. Please continue to take the best of care.

With love and gratitude,  
Jean

P.S. The families I mention above are two of the 8,710 families who have come to the Center for Transformative Change in the past five years. There were an additional 5,564 single people who came to the CTC in that time. All are welcome at the Center for Transformative Change.

## CAROL SILVA ENCOURAGES GIFT OF JOY



L to R: Carol Silva, Dana Lopez

Carol Silva, former News 12 Long Island anchor and long-time friend of The INN has a question for you. Do your belongings bring you joy? If not, they could bring joy to an INN guest in need of essential items.

After watching a Netflix special about Marie

Kondo, a tidying expert, Carol decided to clean out her closets at home, and bring some joy over to the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen. The method is simple, "Keep only the things that speak to the heart, and discard items that no longer spark joy. Thank them for their service — then let them go."

Carol's donations of joy included lots of clothing from herself, her husband and son. She packed up her car and brought the items right over.

It's not the first time Carol has donated items; she has been doing it for years. After her retirement from News 12, she donated dozens of dresses she wore as an anchor on the air. "I loved the idea of sparking joy for others. The INN is a wonderful, local place to donate, and you can be sure your items will go to someone in need. So go through your closets and bring The INN some joy!"

## THE INN CELEBRATES VOLUNTEERS

As a volunteer-based organization, The INN appreciates the efforts of our precious volunteers each day. During National Volunteer Month, April, we are given the opportunity to shine a light on the priceless and selfless service that is the heart of our organization. INN volunteers are a true treasure, they give their time without asking for anything in return, other than the smiles and well-being of the guests they serve. In 2023, The INN welcomed a diverse group of over 2,300 weekly, daily, and group volunteers.

National Volunteer Week will be celebrated April 21–27, and staff members will be showing their appreciation to volunteers with special treats all week long. If you have ever graced The INN with your volunteer service, we salute you!

*If you are interested in volunteering, please visit [the-inn.org](http://the-inn.org).*



## TWO DAYS THAT WILL CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFETIME

On February 22 and 23, volunteers from "Collaboration Education" had a wonderful time visiting with the children and their families at the Edna Moran INN emergency shelter. Collaboration Education is a not-for-profit organization that provides expert tutoring, mentoring and enrichment by retired and other professional educators to economically disadvantaged children.

During the visit, the Collaboration team had the opportunity to speak privately with the children and

their parents. Children shared what their favorite subject was, as well as any subjects they thought they might need a little help with or a special interest they wanted to learn more about. Parents shared important insights into their children's learning and aspirations. Between meetings, the children and members of the team had a lively time playing board games, reading stories, talking about favorite books, doing art, and getting to know each other.

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## Soles (continued from pg. 1)

accidentally felt something in the toe of a shoe. It was 50 neatly wrapped, new \$100 bills. She quickly reported her find, and by some incredible luck, the donor was found. It is known as the case of the “Doubly Found Money” — by the volunteer and by the donor who had forgotten where he had hidden all those bills.

Every so often The INN receives a call asking, “would you be interested in a donation of \_\_\_\_\_?” One of those callers inquired about donating ten pairs of barely worn spike heel shoes. We answered with a cautious yes. Perhaps the guests coming to The INN boutique (everything is free of charge) shared the public’s fascination with spiked heels. The hunch was more than correct and very quickly ten beaming guests had a pair of heels, including one lucky guest with a \$1,200 pair from Christian Louboutin.

A pre-teen girl, with help from her mom, was shopping for much-needed shoes in the boutique.

After several, “I love these, I hope they fit”, she finally found a pair that fit. She did not surprise her mom when she kept them on but did surprise her mom when she put her old shoes down on the shelf. “I only need one pair of shoes, someone else may need my old ones.”

“Montana” was a guest with great extremes of exterior gruffness and interior softness. He would sometimes visit The INN office in downtown Hempstead for a friendly chat. Adjacent to the office is a small patch of grass shielded by some scrawny hedges. After one of his visits, we happened to look out the window and saw Montana sleeping on the grass. When a staff member went down to cover him with a blanket, they discovered he had neatly placed his shoes next to The INN’s front door. He later told us The INN reminded him of when he was a little boy, and would tuck his shoes under his bed at night. He knew he and his shoes would be safe the next morning.

## John V. Brennan (continued from pg. 1)

In the Fall of 1986, the pastor of the Hempstead church (where the young INN was renting the dining hall) told us she needed the space for her congregation. After exhaustive searching we were unable to find another dining hall. We were about to become homeless. John came to the rescue. He provided the funds for The INN to purchase a small, two-story building at 148 Front Street (in Hempstead). This became the Mary Brennan INN. The INN now had the security of a place of its own. During this process John saw that, despite the tremendous commitment of the early volunteers, we were naïve in one very important area — fundraising.

In 1987, John gave The INN another “life-changing” gift — its very first fundraising event. John invited 150 of his closest friends to purchase tickets and join him on a party boat for a cruise around Manhattan. Everyone met at the Lord & Taylor parking lot in

Garden City where three deluxe buses were waiting to transport all to Manhattan. Aboard the festive yacht, there was music, food, endless enthusiasm, and everything needed for a perfect evening. John picked up the bill for everything. All the ticket proceeds were given to The INN. At the end of the evening, John said to us, “this is what you have to do”. That evening has evolved to become the INNkeepers’ Ball.

There are many other amazing things John did for The INN. All were inspirational. That was part of John’s wisdom, the gifts he gave were not just tangible, they also produced energy.

Currently three generations of the Brennan Family are volunteers and supporters of The INN.

Thank you to John for the vision of seeing where The INN needed to go, and for being the wind beneath our wings to help us get there.

## INN EVENTS

### 2024 INNkeepers' Ball

Wednesday, May 8, 6:00 – 8:00 pm  
Nassau Country Club, Glen Cove



The 2024 Ball Kickoff Reception took place at Hofstra University on January 30. Pictured, left to right: Alan Kennemer, Jean Kelly, Lois Fricke, Joel Sikowitz, Rob Kammerer, Peter Florey, John Ratto, and Phil Sorrentino.

Honorary Chair, Peter Florey, invites all to attend the 2024 INNkeepers' Ball — an annual tradition celebrating the people who make The INN come alive. The Honorees this year are Lois Fricke, Operations Director, Long Island Builders Institute; Long Island Home Builders Care; and Joel Sikowitz, musician, attorney, and dedicated INN supporter. We hope you will be able to join us.

Ticket, Journal and Sponsorship information is available at [the-inn.org/2024ball](https://the-inn.org/2024ball). For additional information, or if you would like to receive an invitation, please call (516) 732-6009.

### 2024 INN Golf Classic\*

Monday, September 30  
Nassau Country Club, Glen Cove

\*Pickleball and tennis are also available

Start your week with a day of outdoor fun! The 2024 Golf Classic will be honoring Brett Schneider, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, NFP, with the Joseph & Laurel Anne Mancino Community Service Award. Brett, Co-Chairs Eric Kramer and Mike Watson, and the event committee look forward to welcoming you.



Brett Schneider

To reserve your spot for golf, pickleball or tennis, or to answer any questions, please visit [the-inn.org/2024golf](https://the-inn.org/2024golf) or call (516) 486-8506, ext. 108.

## 2024 WINE TASTING



L to R: Felicia Tucker, Ann Leslie, Jim Leslie, Annie Potts

The INN held its very first "in-person" Wine Tasting on February 8 at Opus Mediterranean Steakhouse in Jericho. Co-Chairs Lisa DeVito and JoEllen McKenna led the way to a sold-out, "a-great-time-was-had-by-all" evening.

Thank you to the wine donors – Chuck, Scott, Kerrin, Stephen, Ray and Lou; musicians – Debbie, Rich and Gary; graphic designer – Kim; and the very helpful Opus staff.



L to R: Rob Kammerer, JoEllen McKenna, Sarah and Stephen Scarnato, Jean Kelly, Lisa DeVito

## Two Days That Will Change a Child's Lifetime (continued from pg. 3)

Each day's visit ended with a group activity. On Thursday, the children experimented with being engineers, mathematicians, and scientists through hands-on STEM activities. On Friday, all participated in a drama activity where children worked on building important focus skills, and explored their creative side as they enacted a story themed on the importance of kindness.

With the parents' permission, the volunteers are presently reaching out to each child's school to identify specific areas where the child may need extra support or enrichment. Collaboration Education's volunteers are unique in that all are experienced educators who can easily communicate with schools and address specific skill areas when working with children. In addition to weekly visits



Collaboration Education volunteers and INN staff

to the Edna Moran INN, next steps are being planned for a school holiday and/or weekend enrichment activity. There may even be a field trip for the children and their families to one of Nassau County's wide range of cultural and learning experiences.

The Collaboration volunteers wish to thank the staff at the Edna Moran INN, the inspirational children, and parents for a great launch of what will hopefully be an exciting and ongoing partnership. And in return, we wish to thank the Collaboration team.

**Editor's Note:** *The Collaboration volunteers were so warmly received that we were told by staff that the children asked if these volunteers would be their friends. Rarely do new visitors make such an enduring impression. Unconditional kindness is truly magical!*

## Our Wish List

- Non-perishable food – **no glass please**
- New underwear (men, women & children)
- Gift Cards (supermarket and Visa) – preferred amounts, \$10, \$25 and \$50
- Diapers/wipes – larger sizes (4, 5, 6 & pull-ups)
- Toiletry items – lotion, shaving cream, deodorant, and toilet paper (personal and family sizes)
- Auction items for upcoming events – concert tickets, sports tickets, restaurant gift certificates, experiences, etc. Please call Nora White at (516) 486-8506, ext. 108.

*Please bring your donations to the Mary Brennan INN, 100 Madison Avenue, Hempstead, M-F, 9 am – 2 pm, or one Saturday each month at the monthly Food Drive (see website for date). Questions, call (516) 486-8506, ext. 114. Thank you.*



"Serving Hungry and Homeless Long Islanders"

211 Fulton Avenue Hempstead, NY 11550  
(516) 486-8506 • [www.the-inn.org](http://www.the-inn.org)

### OUR MISSION

As a not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization, The INN provides a broad variety of essential services to assist those challenged by hunger, homelessness and profound poverty. We partner with those in need in a dignified and respectful manner to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

Follow us on:

