



# ...THE NEWS!

SERVING HUNGRY AND HOMELESS LONG ISLANDERS

VOLUME XLII NO. 3

[www.the-inn.org](http://www.the-inn.org)

FALL 2025

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- November 9 – A Day of Thanks & Giving
- December 6 – Dance INN
- February 26 – Wine Tasting
- May 6 - INNkeepers' Ball

## GUEST STORY

### Bring it On

In the world of sports, being a good winner is easy. Being a good loser is not so easy. But if you do lose, you are supposed to learn that losing makes you stronger, and giving up is never acceptable. An athlete's response to all challenges is, "Bring it on!"

In life, being a good winner is easy. Being a good loser is not so easy. Like in sports, losing is supposed to make you stronger and even more determined.

Guests at The INN, in the life category of financial success, would not be considered winners. But they have learned to be resilient and refuse to give up. They demonstrate their determination in a variety of ways. Each performs to the best of their abilities, and for some, this may be collecting bottles for their deposit value. Or collecting anything that can be redeemed for income.

Isaiah is a determined street entrepreneur. He collects and redeems bottles, metal, and small furniture items that he finds on the street. When driving around The INN neighborhood I sometimes see Isaiah and his trusty shopping cart. If I have any street commodities (bottles, metal, furniture) in my car, I stop to give them to Isaiah.

After helping a neighbor clean their garage, I found myself in possession of a large bag of empty soda bottles and about 75

pounds of scrap steel. I put them in my car with the hope of soon "bumping into" Isaiah (he doesn't have a cell phone). More than a month passed, and I had not seen Isaiah. As much as I knew Isaiah would appreciate these items, I needed to empty my car. My plan was to bring them to the recycler myself and give Isaiah the five cents per bottle and the ten cents per pound for the metal. I was reluctant to do this because I knew it would be much more meaningful to Isaiah if he could bring these items to the scrap dealer himself.

There is a scrap dealer around the block from the Mary Brennan INN. I was heading there. Up ahead was a man walking in the street. As I got closer, I saw he was pushing a shopping cart. It was Isaiah. His cart was full of scrap metal and perched on top was a large, upholstered chair. The timing could not have been better. I pulled up next to him and called out, "Isaiah, would you be interested in some scrap metal?" His eyes lit up. "Absolutely!" He carefully balanced the 75 pounds of metal on the chair. Seeing this, I could not imagine how he could also manage the large bag of bottles. But I asked him anyway, "Isaiah, would you want some deposit bottles?" He smiled and said, "Bring it on!"

Isaiah walked away pushing his cart, I drove away peering in my rear-view mirror. We were both winners, happy winners.

*This guest story was written by a friend of The INN.*

TO SPONSOR A MEAL, PLEASE CALL (516) 486-8506, EXT. 115



Jean Kelly  
Executive Director

## REFLECTION

### There is a solution

We recently found there are more people choosing to sleep on the benches in front of the Mary Brennan INN. This can happen because some people believe sleeping outside on a bench is safer than

sleeping in a bed at a shelter. One guest told us he feels safe sleeping there because he knows there are security cameras “watching”.

We know sleeping outside on a bench is not a long-term solution. We know that shelters overseen and inspected by New York State, such as The INN shelters, operate at the highest standards. We work with guests to help them accept shelter. It’s a long and arduous process. A person who becomes homeless is usually dealing with complex challenges in their life, which work together to create disorder and make it even more difficult for them to act in their own best interests.

Patience, compassion and persistence are required to slowly gain each person’s trust and together we develop a plan to help them accept what’s possible. We work with them to find a future space where they can live sustainably

and peacefully.

The above requires resources. We are fortunate to have a small group of donors who specifically help cover some of the costs of crisis housing. In order to help these homeless individuals, we strive to learn as much as possible about their personal history. While doing this, we provide transportation to doctor appointments, Social Security offices, the Department of Social Services and more. No two cases are ever alike. It is a difficult problem to solve, but it is solvable.

We are glad to let you know we recently completed a long, successful journey with two guests who had been sleeping outside – first getting them to accept crisis housing and ultimately getting them to a room of their own. We thank all who made this possible.

We are able to complete journeys such as this because you care about helping people in need. Your empathy and financial support really do make a difference in the lives of guests who have nowhere else to turn. Thank you.

May you and your families be forever blessed for your endless kindness and compassion.

Love,  
Jean

## THANK YOU SUMMER INTERNS



*Our 2025 interns spent the summer giving the guests the best service possible — at the MBI soup kitchen, the CTC and the main office. We thank them. Shown left to right are staff members Vincent Santiago, Jean C. Victor, Jr., interns James, Zefeniah, Tyler, Brigid, Lia and Zaccai, staff members Donna Buccellato and Jason Tessler.*

# FORWARD TOGETHER UPDATE

## Boutique Volunteers 'Go with the Flow' to Help Guests

As major construction proceeds in the new building at 88-92 Madison Avenue, there is one group who has had to move, change and adapt the most – the volunteers in the free clothing (and housewares) boutique.

With the construction, the boutique was displaced from its location. Now, for the guests to receive needed clothing and other items, the volunteers and staff had to quickly come up with a temporary location, which they did (the building behind the Mary Brennan INN), and the real work began. It was no small feat to move all the boutique contents. Summer heat waves, construction plan changes, and communication with the guests posed difficult challenges. Sandra Williams, a long-time volunteer, reported, "We had to shut down, clear out all the donations, move to a temporary location, and set up again, all in about three weeks. About 250 guests who had boutique appointments had to be contacted and rescheduled. Some days were uncomfortable and hot, and sometimes our plans changed from one day to the next. But we did it because we feel we must be there for the guests ... so they are able to get



*L to R, Diana Castillo, Sandra Williams, Robin Kaufman, and Arlene Manson are some of the dedicated boutique volunteers*

the clothing and other things they need. The guests need us. We can't just pack up and go home."

They did a beautiful job setting up a temporary boutique. There is a children's section, a women's section, a men's section, and a housewares section. Each area is neatly organized with plenty of aisle space. The room is clean and brightly lit. Everyone feels welcome.

After construction is complete, the boutique will return to 88-92 Madison Avenue. There a new space will be awaiting the volunteers, soon to be followed by the guests. The wait will have been worth it.

Jason Tessler, Director of Warehousing and Distribution, is grateful to his volunteer team for their hard work and looks forward to organizing the new boutique. "We have some of the most dedicated and loving volunteers," Jason said. "They give their time and effort freely, and care so much about the guests' needs. I can't wait to see what the team does with the new space and how excited the guests will be to use it."

## BAGELS DONATED WITH 'LOVE AND CARE'

Every week for the past five years, a volunteer group from *Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care* has dropped off 300 to 500 bagels at the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen. That's a lot of bagels. Vikram Gandhi, along with his six-member team, travel to local bagel stores picking up left over bagels for delivery to The INN. He is proud of their efforts, "Our spiritual leader says you should make a difference in people's lives. If you have blessings in abundance and you can't give these to someone else to use, what good are they?" Jean C. Victor, Jr., Director of the MBI added this, "Guests love receiving a bag of bagels

with their meal. Bagels in New York are always something to look forward to."



*Volunteer Sherry Fitzgerald accepts bagel donation from Vikram Gandhi*

## OUR 'REPORT CARD'

Charitable giving is something most of us in the United States do, it is one of our finer qualities.

There are several groups that study and grade charitable organizations with the intent of helping people make wise giving decisions.



Widely considered to be the most respected of these groups is **Charity Navigator**. Charity Navigator rates charities based on more than 30 criteria, including accounting, finance, adaptability, culture and responsiveness to the community. The INN has received its highest rating — four stars.



The **Better Business Bureau** is another group that reviews not-for-profits; they analyze not-for-profits using their 20 Standards for Charity Accountability, in areas such as governance, finance and truthfulness.

A charity that meets all 20 standards becomes a BBB Accredited Charity. The INN is a BBB Accredited Charity.



**Candid** (formerly GuideStar) has also awarded The INN its highest rating — the Platinum Seal. This seal means a charity has “demonstrated a deep commitment to accountability by providing detailed financial information and quantitative metrics that show the real-world difference they are making”.

The INN is grateful to receive the above recognitions. (Please note: In some reviews The INN may be referred to by its original name — The Interfaith Nutrition Network.)

If you would like to come see The INN, please call Jean Kelly at (516) 486-8506, ext. 111.

## END OF YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

### You May Find This Helpful

There are a number of giving opportunities that become time sensitive as the end of the calendar year nears.

#### Planned Giving

- **Legacy Gifts/Bequests** – Many individuals set aside time at the end of the year to review their financial affairs. A donor may wish to make a charitable bequest via a trust, will or estate plan. These gifts can be of any size and do not cost you anything during your lifetime. You can select a charity, such as The INN, to receive a set amount or a percentage from your estate.
- **Qualified Charitable Distribution.** If charitable giving is part of your financial plan, a Qualified Charitable Distribution can be a game changer. It's a tax-efficient way to support the causes you care about, while at the same time reducing your taxable income.

For 2025, the maximum amount for a Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA has increased

to \$108,000. This allows individuals over the age of 70½ to make tax-free donations directly from their IRA to The INN, or any qualified charity. This donation would have to be completed by December 31, 2025, and could satisfy all, or part, of your required minimum distributions.

#### Matching Funds

- **Matching Funds** – There are more than 24,000 companies in the U.S. that will match the charitable contributions of their employees. If you have contributed to The INN in 2025, you may want to check with your employer to see if they will match your gift. Most companies require the match be applied for in the same calendar year as your donation.

If you wish to learn more about how to donate to The INN using these opportunities you can visit our website: [the-inn.org/plannedgiving](https://www.the-inn.org/plannedgiving). Or contact David Sinclair at [dsinclair@the-inn.org](mailto:dsinclair@the-inn.org) or (516) 524-2809.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us at an upcoming fundraising event! It's a great way to get together and support The INN's programs. Please visit [the-inn.org/events](https://the-inn.org/events) or scan the QR code.



## 2025 INN Luncheon

Honoree: Tamra Postiglione  
Friday, October 24  
10:30am – 2:00pm  
Garden City Hotel, Garden City



The annual INN Luncheon will be held at the Garden City Hotel. This year, we are excited to honor Tamra Postiglione, INN Board member and Market Executive, Managing Director at Flagstar Bank.

## 2025 A Day of Thanks & Giving

Honoring Mineola Lions Club  
Sunday, November 9, 1:00 – 3:00 pm  
Mary Brennan INN, Hempstead

Enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner celebrated at the Mary Brennan INN.



Mineola Lions Club donating Thanksgiving turkeys to The INN

## 2025 Dance INN (New Date)

Saturday, December 6, 4:00 – 7:00 pm  
Mary Brennan INN, Hempstead

## 2026 Wine Tasting

Thursday, February 26, 6:00 – 8:00 pm  
Opus Mediterranean  
Steakhouse, Jericho



Chairs Lisa DeVito and JoEllen McKenna

After a "sold out" 2025 Wine Tasting, we are happy to announce the 2026 Wine Tasting returns to Opus in Jericho. This evening will include four food stations; five accompanying wines; live music; and an engaging ambiance.

## 2026 INNkeepers' Ball

Wednesday, May 6, 6:00 – 9:00 pm



Shown above are 2026 Honorees Rick Volpe and Cheri Rice, and Joseph Zangri. For tickets and all other information, please call (516) 732-6009.

# HOFSTRA 'PIPELINE' STUDENTS AT THE INN

Seven students in the College Pipeline Program at the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra University volunteered at the Mary Brennan INN during the summer; these are rising college freshmen in the "pipeline" to attend medical school at Hofstra.

After completing their volunteering, there was a group discussion with INN staff. The students expressed interest in hearing about the unique healthcare needs of the population served at The INN. Andrea Ault-Brutus, Director of Health Equity Research at Hofstra's National Center for Suburban Studies said this about the students,

"... you demonstrated a strong understanding of how social determinants of health, such as food insecurity, housing, transportation, and employment, create cycles that impact both physical and mental health ... I encourage you to continue thinking about systemic issues and how your future role in medicine can contribute to addressing health inequities ..."

The INN is thankful to contribute to the education of these future medical professionals and bring attention and understanding to the workings of the healthcare industry.



Volunteers (L to R) Olivia and Kaitlyn, with backpacks ready for distribution

The best way for students to start the school year is to be fully prepared. Thanks to a generous donor, more than 1,000 backpacks, filled with school supplies were distributed in August. Thanks also to Tracy Capece and her sons, James and Robbie, for organizing the "filling of the backpacks" and all those who assisted them.

## Thanksgiving Wish List

- Frozen Turkeys
- Canned Gravy
- Frozen Hams
- Boxed Macaroni & Cheese
- Stuffing
- Canned Vegetables (corn, peas, string beans)
- Canned Yams
- 64 oz Apple Juice
- Cranberry Sauce
- Boxed/Packaged Mashed Potatoes
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Soup

**NO GLASS ITEMS PLEASE!**

Donations may be dropped off at  
**the Mary Brennan INN soup kitchen**  
 100 Madison Avenue, Hempstead, NY 11550  
 Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm  
 or donate online at [the-inn.org](http://the-inn.org)

For additional information, please call  
 (516) 486-8506, ext. 114 or email [info@the-inn.org](mailto:info@the-inn.org)

## Help INN Guests this Holiday Season **ADOPT-A-FAMILY**

Contact Cynthia Sucich for  
 details about families in need  
 at our shelters and soup  
 kitchen, and how you can  
 make their holiday season  
 a little brighter!

[csucich@the-inn.org](mailto:csucich@the-inn.org)  
 (516) 486-8506, ext. 115



"Serving Hungry and Homeless Long Islanders"

211 Fulton Avenue Hempstead, NY 11550  
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### MISSION STATEMENT

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:

