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# Save THE Dates:

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- May 7 – 2025  
INNkeepers' Ball
- June X – 2025

## GUEST STORY – It's Spring and Time to Bloom

Children are a big part of The INN.

20% of the meals served at the Mary Brennan INN are for children and 60% percent of the guests at the Edna Moran INN family shelter are children. Isabella is one of the children at the Edna Moran INN.

I first met Isabella last summer at the EMI's annual barbecue. She was looking forward to being a sixth grader in September. She was there with her mom and her older brother. She had been at the shelter for just a few weeks and was adapting to her new living situation. Families placed at the Edna Moran INN are homeless and at serious risk.

Isabella's mom is a petite woman, very graceful and possessing a dignified bearing. She is also very quiet. I imagine she had been through quite a lot in her lifetime. Isabella's brother seemed like a typical eighth grade boy — interested in sports, not yet interested in girls. And quiet like his mom. Isabella had a "shot out of a cannon" personality. She was full of energy and playfulness.

I next saw Isabella's family the week before Christmas. Santa was making an early stop at the shelter to say hello to the children. The families were enjoying each other's company, as well as home baked cookies and hot chocolate. When I had the chance to talk with mom and family, Isabella, as expected, was the most engaging.



We spoke mostly about school. She loved it and had joined several clubs. She told me she wanted to be a veterinarian. She was beginning to

excel, and refreshingly, had no sense of self-importance and often laughed at her own growing pains.

The most recent time I saw Isabella and family was at the start of Spring. Her mom was so proud of Isabella's ever-improving grades. Her brother seemed to recognize he was already, at the age of 12, the man of the family. Isabella was bubbly as usual. The three of them had learned a lot while at the Edna Moran INN. It was gratifying to see a family sticking together and growing together. They were ready to move on to their own "home".

When I first met Isabella, I could see she had potential. I also knew that for young people who had lived through a traumatic childhood, reaching that potential can be extremely difficult. Isabella was clearly up to the challenge.

Fortunately for Isabella, and many others, The INN recognizes the importance of rescuing a child's education, and puts maximum effort into guiding, mentoring and encouraging. As I anticipate tulips blooming this spring, I like to think Isabella will also be blooming, and hopefully she will continue to bloom.



Jean Kelly  
Executive Director

## REFLECTION

### I Just Need Money to Wash My Clothes

Friday, March 14, 2025

Today I had the opportunity to speak with John, a long-time guest of The INN who was waiting to pick up a to-go lunch. He was hoping to get to work in

the afternoon and didn't have time to sit in the dining room.

He told me he needed petty cash to help him do his laundry over the weekend. He had once been homeless, but was now living in a room that was safe and secure. Unfortunately, it cost the bulk of his social security benefits, and he had to work odd jobs and often come to the Mary Brennan INN for lunch. He rarely asks for anything but was hopeful we could help him out. I suggested he go to the Center for Transformative Change after picking up lunch. He did and was given laundry soap and the few dollars he needed for the washer and dryer. He was happy and thankful.

This is an example of what The INN is able to do every day — fill in the gaps in people's lives.

Most of us are fortunate enough to be able to provide for ourselves. Many of us take for granted our instant access to a washing machine and dryer. But for someone who has to count their every dollar, they must be sure they can cover the essentials. Sometimes laundry doesn't make the cut. That's when we can step in and fill a gap.

Filling in the gaps can make a surprisingly large difference in someone's life.

A seemingly little thing like a stop at the laundromat made a big difference to John's self-esteem. (Sometimes the gap can be more severe, such as in February when a family needed emergency shelter over the weekend.)

It is important for you to know how much everyone at The INN appreciates your understanding and support. Thank you for making it possible for us to be there with laundry soap and much more. May you and your family be forever blessed.

Love,  
Jean

## HAPPY MEALS

You can have a Happy Meal at McDonalds ... or at the Mary Brennan INN.

They are both "happy" but for very different reasons.

At McDonalds you get fast food and a figurine. At The INN you get a meal lovingly prepared by volunteers. No figurines are included. It does include something even better. Companionship. It's a scientific fact that sharing meals with others makes people happy. At The INN you are never eating alone.

At times, the meal at The INN can also include a surprise. In January, a group of artists came to the MBI and painted with the guests. In February, the

guests were entertained with live music from the INNspirations, the music being so alive that some paused their lunch to dance. In March, a friend of



Freshly baked St. Joseph's Breads

The INN donated St. Joseph's Breads for each of the guests. Bread may not sound like much of a surprise. But bread baked an hour ago, with its fresh feel, aroma and taste, was a welcome surprise.

A great meal, companionship and a surprise, we think The INN beats McDonalds when it comes to Happy Meals.

# “FORWARD TOGETHER”



Caption

**Forward Together** is the name of The INN’s Campaign to fund the development of the recently acquired 23,550 sq. ft. building at 88-92 Madison Avenue in Hempstead.

**Why this Campaign?** The INN’s model is to partner with those in need in a dignified

and respectful manner to help them achieve self-sufficiency. For more than 40 years this model has been working successfully. The INN does not turn anyone away. These facts have led to more people coming to The INN and The INN needing more space.

**An extensive search was conducted.** An early conclusion was that the space had to be near the Mary Brennan INN for The INN’s efforts to work — the space must be accessible, and for the guests that means walking distance. Nothing was available. Architects suggested the only solution was to build upward on the Mary Brennan INN, adding a second, third and fourth floor. This was both physically impractical and prohibitively expensive.

**Some say it was a miracle.** The building immediately to the right of the MBI became available. The INN purchased this building. It was basically an empty warehouse. Fortunately, it came with desperately needed parking. The purpose of this building can be summarized this way: Better serve

the guests and better serve the community.

**What is planned** for this new building? All programs will be on one floor. Relocating the Center for Transformative Change to a less congested space, adding a new food pantry, expanding the “free clothing” boutique, adding space for mental health counseling, installing new sleep pods, enhancing workforce development, redesigning the flow of donations for greater efficiency, and more.

**Goal of the Campaign** is to raise \$12.5 million. Currently, more than \$11 million has been raised.

**If you would like to participate** in the Campaign, we would be grateful. Gifts of any amount will help. Some donors participate with a five-year pledge and some make a one-time gift. Please call (516) 534-2809.

**If you would like to come see** this exciting new project, please call (516) 486-8506, ext. 111.

**There are many people to thank**, including Campaign Co-Chairs Nick Nielsen and Sunil Sani (both Board members); Board members Peter Florey and Rich Humann, who offered their expertise in architecture, engineering and construction; the Campaign planning committee; and most importantly, all those who have contributed.



Wide angle view shows rear section of building prior to beginning of construction.

## Our Wish List

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

## INN EVENTS

### 2025 INNkeepers' Ball

Wednesday, May 7, 6:00 – 8:00 pm  
Nassau Country Club, Glen Cove



The INN's signature event, this evening celebrates the people of The INN. 2025 Honorees are Rocco Campanelli, Ed Grilli and Lenny Lufrano. Honorary Chairs are Lidia Bastianich and Gary Lewi.

Sponsorship, Journal, and ticket information is available at [the-inn.org/2025ball](http://the-inn.org/2025ball). For additional information, please call (516) 732-6009.

A fun part of the Ball is the Silent Auction. If you would like to donate an item for the auction, the following are popular – Broadway show tickets, concert tickets, restaurant gift certificates, and behind-the-scenes tours of museums. Please call the above number.



Laura Hudson, and co-chairs Lisa DeVito and JoEllen McKenna at The INN's 2025 Wine Tasting. The evening at Opus Mediterranean Steakhouse featured good food, good wine, new friends and old friends. Live music provided by the INNspirations added to an already festive atmosphere.

## HELP SEND A CHILD TO SUMMER CAMP!

Last summer, through the incredible generosity of INN friends and supporters, eight children living in The INN shelter with their families, had the experience of a lifetime at summer sleepaway camp. This summer, with your help, we can give more shelter children the opportunity to visit Agassiz Village in Portland, Maine for one week of traditional camp activities including lake swimming, banana boating, arts & crafts, sports, and theatre classes. A social and emotional skills program are also offered at the facility, as 25% of the campers come from vulnerable home situations like shelters and foster care. To donate towards summer camp expenses for children living in The INN's emergency family shelter, visit <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/insummercamp25>



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### OUR VISION

To transform lives by addressing hunger, homelessness and profound poverty through awareness, action and generosity.

### 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:

