



# ST. CHRISTOPHER'S INN

Temporary Shelter & Substance Use Disorder Treatment Center

St. Christopher's Inn

21 Franciscan Way

P.O. Box 150

Garrison, NY 10524

[www.stchristophersinn.org](http://www.stchristophersinn.org)

## the INN sight

### HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY, ED TIERNEY!

Happy 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Mr. Ed Tierney, a longtime St. Christopher's Inn donor who knows how to celebrate! On Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr.



Ed Tierney, Grace Poling, and Brian Meagher

Tierney invited more than 100 of his closest friends and family to join him at Patricia's of Tremont for a delicious lunch and to celebrate his special birthday, with one special caveat. In lieu of gifts, he asked that everyone make a donation to St. Christopher's Inn in honor of his birthday! From his cousin in Ireland to his nephew in California, so many of Ed's friends and family heard the call and responded with such generosity. A total of nearly \$9,000.00 was raised to benefit the men of St. Christopher's Inn who are working towards a better life in Recovery! We are so grateful to Mr. Tierney for remembering the Inn on this special occasion, and for



Ed Tierney & Ed Walsh

encouraging others to join in his support. The food and the conversation flowed, and everyone enjoyed a wonderful time celebrating a lovely and generous man, while making a difference in the lives of so many. Thank you, Mr. Tierney!

We welcome anyone interested in hosting an event to benefit St. Christopher's Inn—call us to discuss.

### Spotlight on the SCI Board: VALERIE MASTRONARDI

Valerie and her late husband Nick first became involved with the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement in 1996, where they helped found the Sharing Hope Celebration Dinner. During a visit to St. Christopher's Inn with Fr. Bernie Palka, SA, then Director and CEO of the Inn, Valerie became very interested in its mission of hope. Minister General Fr. Art Johnson, SA encouraged Valerie to join the first lay Board of Directors, which she did in September of 2000. Valerie says that the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way," greatly influenced her decision to join the board as it is exactly what the Inn seeks to do for men in crisis due to homelessness and addiction.



"It is so moving to attend Sunday Mass and experience the Inn's beautiful choir" says Valerie. "Without fail, I am always brought to tears when I hear the men singing. I am blessed to see the men on their road to recovery, perfectly groomed and dressed conservatively through the generosity of the benefactors who replenish our shop. You can see peace and contentment in their eyes."

Valerie was born and raised in the Parkchester section of the Bronx. She attended the College of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale, where she received a B.S. in Business. She also attended the New York School of Interior Design. After Nick and Valerie were married, they made their home in Parkchester. In 1967, they moved their growing family to Mamaroneck in Westchester County. Nick and Valerie were members of the Winged Foot Country Club for 40 years.

As an avid reader, and due to her deep Catholic faith, Valerie enjoys reading literature that is based on religious philosophy and insights written by both clergy and lay authors. She is also a fan and personal friend of the prolific author, Mary Higgins Clark, who is also active in the same circuit of charitable Catholic causes in the metro NY area as Valerie.

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#### amazon wishlist UPDATE

Since we first created and shared the Amazon Wish list, here is a list of what we have received:

- Over 1,000 composition notebooks
- 150 pairs of socks and underwear
- 30 pairs of reading glasses
- Nearly 200 pocket folders
- A dozen grooming kits
- Bench sander
- Drill/driver kit
- Reciprocating saw kit
- 2 lawn mowers

We are amazed at the response from everyone who took the time to check out our Wish List and respond! Every time a package arrives from Amazon, it feels like Christmas!

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Inn with your purchases. As requested we will update the Wish List soon with items for the winter.

## CLINICAL UPDATE: MAT LATEST

by Stephen Shapiro, MD  
SCI Medical Director



There is much discussion today regarding the heroin crisis in New York State and across our country. The epidemic of deaths from opioid medications is climbing to new heights. More than 28,000 people died in 2014 from narcotic overdoses. Here at St. Christopher's, we too often see the "sad news" of a brother who has succumbed and left us forever.

New York State is acutely aware of the problem. It has proposed a 3 pronged plan: stop the supply and the dealers; educate the medical community, and provide more money for treatment. The state and the American Board of Addiction Medicine advocate the use of "MAT"—medication-assisted treatment.

For the treatment of opiate dependence, methadone is the prototype medication. There are many years of success and vast studies of its effectiveness.

More recently, buprenorphine, alone and in combination with naltrexone (suboxone), have been shown to be effective treatments. We use suboxone for detoxification here at SCI with great success. Many of our patients come to us from detox units or home on suboxone maintenance.

The problem with these narcotic treatment medications is that they are very addictive. Tolerance develops, and there is a certain euphoria associated with their use. There is a street market value for these drugs. Often they only substitute for heroin when a supply runs out. On the other hand, when the supply of suboxone or methadone runs out, the addict has only one choice—to restart their heroin dependence.

A newer, more clever, treatment for maintenance is the monthly injection of naltrexone. This opiate blocker (Vivitrol) floods the narcotic receptors in the brain. It takes away the craving to use; any attempted use would be totally blocked. Thus, no "high". Naltrexone is not a narcotic, so there is no withdrawal. Along with counseling and 12-Step program, Vivitrol has been shown to be an effective aid in early recovery. Vivitrol is given as an intramuscular injection every 28 days. There is also a pill form of naltrexone called ReVia, useful in opiate and alcohol addiction.

We are getting very positive feedback from our men here. The follow-up letters from them are encouraging. They have no craving to use, and are pursuing treatment successfully.

Campral and antabuse are further medications available for the treatment of alcohol dependence.

Medication Assisted Treatment is an important part of the future of addiction treatment. It is not a cure, but plays an important role. We are in the forefront here at St. Christopher's in helping our men to succeed.

*(Spotlight on the Board - continued from previous page)*

Valerie plays an active role in many organizations. She is a Trustee Emeritus of the College of St. Vincent in Riverdale, Honorary Chair of FOA's Sharing Hope Celebration Dinner; serves on the Advisory Board of the Little Sisters of the Poor (Jeanne Jugan Residence), Committee Member of the Sisters of Life Dinner; serves with the Archdiocese of New York as Campaign Secretary for Renew + Rebuild, and is Honorary Chair of the Catholic Guardian Society Dinner. Valerie is a Dame of Malta and a Lady of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem.

Valerie was awarded the Medal of the Venerable Cross Pro Ecclesia at Pontifice for outstanding and noble works by Pope John Paul II. She is also a recipient of the Graymoor Award for Community Service, the College of Mount Saint Vincent's St. Vincent de Paul Award, The St. Nicholas Award at the Cardinal's Annual Christmas Luncheon, and the Child of Peace Award from the Catholic Guardian Society.

After several years' hiatus, Valerie rejoined the St. Christopher's Inn Board in 2015 and is pleased to now work with Fr. Bill Drobach, SA, President & CEO, and Marianne Taylor-Rhoades, COO, who she says have taken the Inn to new levels, while maintaining its time-honored traditions both of high clinical standards of healing, as well as healing the human spirit.

Valerie has four children, two of whom live in the area and two live in Colorado. She has ten grandchildren. She and her family are deeply involved in philanthropy through the Charles A. Mastronardi Foundation. Valerie currently serves as Vice-President of the Foundation, which supports good works in the metro New York area and beyond.

St. Christopher's Inn is pleased and honored to feature Valerie Mastronardi in its new "Spotlight on the SCI Board" section.

## PEEKSKILL ROTARY CLUB: TRUE COMPASSION

by Marianne Taylor-Rhoades, COO

As the Heroin Crisis continues to grow in the Hudson Valley and throughout our nation, the Peekskill Rotary Club reached out to St. Christopher's Inn for information, and to see how they could help. I was honored to be invited to speak at their meeting to talk about The Inn, who we are, what we do, and our successes and challenges. Here are some of the basic facts shared.

According to The Journal News, opioid deaths increased in the lower Hudson Valley as young people are turning to heroin as a cheaper alternative to other drugs. Indeed, the heroin deaths among people under age 35 hit 313 in 2013 — nearly triple the number in 2009. Among those deaths, 103 of them were people aged 15-24. Westchester County had 460 opioid deaths from 2003 through 2014, up 61 percent between 2009 and 2014; the records showed, Rockland County — had a 56 percent increase to a total of 98 opioid-related deaths since 2003.

At St. Christopher's Inn, our unique approach to holistic treatment and housing for our men is what makes us so successful, but is also our biggest challenge. The men live here in the shelter completely free of charge at the generosity of the Franciscan Friars of Atonement, while they are receiving chemical dependency treatment and primary health care.

I shared that one of the most compelling facts about St. Christopher's Inn in recent years is that our clients are young. Staying active and working on becoming healthy is an important part of recovery for these young men, but providing opportunities for physical exercise in limited space is a challenge. After visiting the Inn and speaking with some of our clients, then president, Ron Worth, presented Fr. Bill Drobach, SA, and me with a check to purchase four exercise bicycles on behalf of the Peekskill Rotary Club! Our men were so grateful and make use of these bikes every day, but the support did not end there.

On June 9, 2016, Fr. Bill and I were invited back to the Peekskill Rotary meeting. This time the group presented us with a \$15,000.00 check to pay for scholarships for men with no other resources for treatment. Their commitment to support St. Christopher's Inn, the men we serve, and to help fight the disease of addiction demonstrates true compassion.

## RECOVERY ADVOCACY

by Lisa E. Gladwell, Esq  
lisagladwell@newjerseyrecoveryadvocates.org

On a Saturday morning in September of 2004, I walked out of the shadows of the Liberty State Park train terminal into unobstructed daylight. The brightness of the sun forced me to squint my eyes. What I saw transformed me much like the movement from darkness into light. Before me were thousands of people of all colors, ethnicities, ages, and sizes. They were smiling, laughing, talking, and dancing to the same theme ... celebrating RECOVERY from addiction.



Although sober since November 2001, I had felt shamed and isolated by this disease which relegated me to church basements where I met and shared my most personal feelings with others who had no last names. I was taught anonymity is the cornerstone of 12-Step programs; the programs that saved my life. My sponsor, who had over thirty years of sobriety, suggested I not talk about my addiction with others who did not share my affliction as the outside world judges us harshly. I had already known that from my experience with the "child welfare" system where I was torn apart, degraded and told my family was better off if I were dead. I had been sober long enough to know the consequences of my addiction, and taking full responsibility. Unfortunately, that was not sufficient, since many demanded "a pound of flesh" as well.

Since getting sober, I've worked hard on myself. I've examined my life through identifying rather than comparing. With a smaller group of individuals, I was able to look at my role in various situations, unravel resentments and clear some of the muck from my soul. With intention, I labored to change my behavior and redirect my thinking. Slowly, more slowly than I would have liked, I began to change. My actions and thoughts became less mechanical, positive affirmations and gratitude flowed naturally. My relationship with God changed as I felt His loving omnipresence. I was becoming the best Lisa I could be, one day at a time.

Why then, now that I am actively becoming the person I was created to be, do I have to hide the reason for the change? Honesty and authenticity are a significant part of maintaining sobriety. Why keep it a secret? I am no longer ashamed of who I am. As the strength of my recovery grew, I became less comfortable with my anonymity. Intuitively, I understood the reason why. I have known people who have lost their jobs when their employer discovered they were in recovery from addiction due to a belief that addicts are a liability. How can such narrow, biased thinking be changed? I knew if I was not part of the solution, then I was part of the problem. So, I forged my path forward.

Each time I advocated for recovery, be it a rally, walk, forum or just a conversation, I became more comfortable with who I am and the path I was on. I was eventually invited to join the Board of The Van Ost Institute for Family Living. I was admitted to and graduated from law school, and am now a licensed attorney in two states. I also serve on the Board of Vantage Health Systems. My advocacy includes bringing 12-Step meetings to the ladies in the Bergen County Jail as well as The Ladder Project, a therapeutic halfway house for men. I am President of the Father Jim McKenna Memorial Fund, founded New Jersey Recovery Advocates, a nonprofit that produces the annual New Jersey Statewide Recovery Walk and Rally. I take my Twelfth Step very seriously.

During the past fifteen years, I have seen a change in the nature of addiction. The opioid epidemic is killing our loved ones, leaving families in shambles and spraying buckshot through the fabric of our society. Fortunately, there is hope. The Recovery Movement is growing. Each day more recovering people and those who love them, are gaining the courage to stand up, add their voices, and be counted. Heads are turning and attitudes are shifting. The fear of judgment is giving way to authenticity. The walls of isolation are coming down.

So I ask, will you join us as part of the solution?

## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS: ALUMNI PICNIC



On Saturday, August 6th, St. Christopher's Inn held our 20<sup>th</sup> annual Alumni Picnic. This picnic

was like no other. The day began with a tearful, heartfelt memorial to the Brothers Christopher who were lost to addiction over the past 2 years. Some 30 family members returned to the Inn expressing feelings of sorrow, but also gratitude for the compassion shown by the staff and Friars who chose not to forget their loved ones. A wall of bricks was unveiled in memorial for those who may have found peace at St. Christopher's Inn, but for whom the call of addiction returned. Their names were read, and flowers presented to their families.

Following the memorial service, a Mass was held in the Our Lady of the Atonement chapel, where members of our current choir joined together with alumni choir members in singing the SCL anthem **God is on This Mountain**. After an outdoor 12-Step meeting, the fun and festivities officially began. Over 1,000 hamburgers and hot dogs were consumed, and the rest of the day was filled with music, softball, volleyball, and fellowship.

Our mission was alive with vibrancy, as alumni who had recently graduated, along with those who have been sober for decades, returned with parents, wives, and children. A majority of the staff were present to bear witness to the miracles that recovery has to offer.

There is a reason why people call this the Holy Mountain!



www.stchristophersinn.org  
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*If you do not wish to receive fundraising requests supporting St. Christopher's Inn, please contact the Development Office at 845-335-1005 or email us at [info@stchristophersinn-graymoor.org](mailto:info@stchristophersinn-graymoor.org) to have your name removed from our mailing list.*

## PLANNED GIVING: THINK IT THROUGH, KEEP IT SIMPLE

In a recent survey of the Inn's donors, more than half the respondents considered the Inn among their top five giving priorities. Loyal donors are cherished because they advance the mission in a stable and predictable way.

When making your estate plans, consider those charities that are most important to you. Then consider how to keep your gift flowing to your charitable interests after you are gone. The simplest way is to designate a restricted, testamentary gift to the charity's endowment fund. For example, if you currently donate \$1,000 per year to a charity, in order to assure that at least \$1,000 per year flows to the charity, a restricted gift of at least \$20,000 is needed assuming a 5% annual payout from the endowment.

There are many ways to assure your legacy. An estate planning professional, your attorney, or a planned giving officer can help you. The important thing to consider is your long-term goals for giving in life and after you are gone. An irrevocable legal instrument is the only way to guarantee your wishes will be honored in perpetuity.

We hope you will consider the Inn in your long-term estate plans. For more information call the Development Office at 845.335.1005.

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS & EXECUTIVE TEAM



### St. Christopher's Inn Board Members:

Fr. Bill Drobach, SA	Br. Joseph O'Gara, SA (not pictured)
Don Ehman	Robert Okulski
Mark Goldberg	Fr. Charles Sharon, SA
Patricia Lennon	Mary Siri
Valerie Mastronardi	Elaine Taylor
Alan Meckler	John Torpey (not pictured)
Guy Novo (not pictured)	Kevin Verronneau

### Executive Team:

Fr. Bill Drobach, SA, President & CEO  
Jim Mickler, CFO  
Marianne Taylor-Rhoades, COO