



Fall 2023

INN *sight*

Our Healing Community Newsletter

A holistic and integrated approach to recovery with Franciscan hospitality

Continuing the Struggle against Substance Abuse

The past few months have been extremely busy here at St. Christopher's Inn (SCI) as we continue to respond to the substance use epidemic. Our treatment success rate is well above the national average for those completing residential treatment, and yet the battle rages on. I recently had the honor of speaking at a gathering in Cold Spring, NY, to announce the bipartisan FEND Off Fentanyl Act sponsored by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Fentanyl is a silent killer that cannot be detected by taste, smell, or sight when mixed with other drugs. The synthetic opioid is 50 times stronger than heroin. Last year, the DEA seized over 379,000,000 deadly doses of fentanyl across the U.S. - enough to supply a lethal dose to every American.

At St. Christopher's Inn, we see the consequences of substance use daily, impacting people across the socioeconomic spectrum and in our own backyards. It is why we are always seeking to go above and beyond in our approach to treatment, looking to further enhance the scope of services by supporting and providing supplemental mental health care, vocational training. It's what makes St. Christopher's Inn a special place, inspired by the Atonement Franciscan Mission that Nothing or No-one be Lost.

I am sincerely grateful to our courageous staff and providers who helped us and continue to persevere through the past COVID-19 challenges. It truly takes a village. I especially want to thank you, our benefactors, who give from the heart and the Friars who support our mission in their prayers and presence at the Inn, all of whom have brought us this far. With gratitude always.



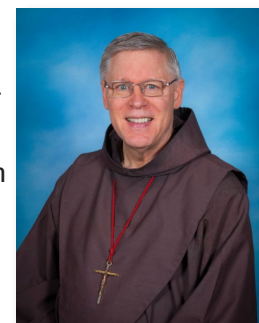
*Dr. James Schiller, Ph.D.
Executive Director*

Message from Our Spiritual Director

Good Samaritans in Action!

Did you ever meet someone for the first time and end up calling him your brother or sister?

This happens all the time among the men who come to St. Christopher's Inn. Men discover a bond of brotherhood with one another that breaks the isolation of active addiction. We have welcomed over 130 men this summer thanks to the tremendous efforts of our staff and many referring agencies.



*Fr. Dennis Polanco, SA
President and
Spiritual Director*

Franciscan hospitality is a hallmark of the Friars, Sisters and staff who serve the needs of countless men who come to us for shelter and treatment for addiction to substances.

Jesus prayed, "Do this in remembrance of me" at the Last Supper and echoes those words at every Holy Mass we attend. But just what is it we are called to "do in remembrance of Jesus?" The answer: Be a Good Samaritan like the unique parable in Luke's Gospel (Luke 10: 25-37).

A letter arrived from two good benefactors just the other day. They spoke of what this parable means to them, "as you well know, we have an obligation to help others, no matter whether you donate \$20 or \$200." They went on to quote Einstein who often said that leading a normal life is rather simple: use for yourself little but give to others much. It is this generous attitude that brings beauty and dignity to our lives.

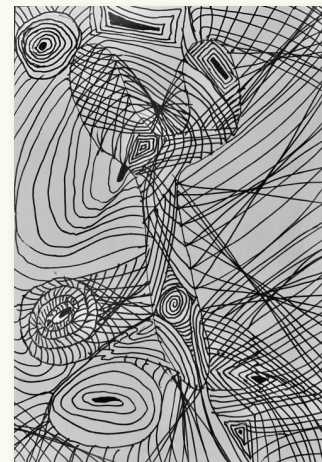
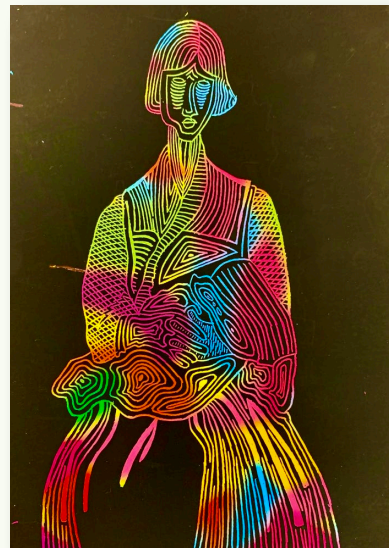
When we gather as Christians around the table, we celebrate the remembrance of Jesus who called us to show hospitality to the poor, to welcome those who have gone astray and outcasts as friends, becoming servants of the lonely and the downtrodden. In this sacred memorial we remember Jesus who told us that every time we forget the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the sick or the imprisoned we forget Him (Matt. 25: 31-46). Join us in being a Good Samaritan in action today.

When the Spoken Word is Not Enough

Recognizing that “one size does not fit all’ when it comes to healing, St. Christopher’s Inn offers holistic, person-centered care. Offering a variety of therapeutic approaches is crucial. Some men rely on the verbal expression of talk therapy while others may have a difficult time verbalizing their thoughts. Used in combination with other modalities, creative therapies can offer the insights and breakthroughs our men need to move forward.

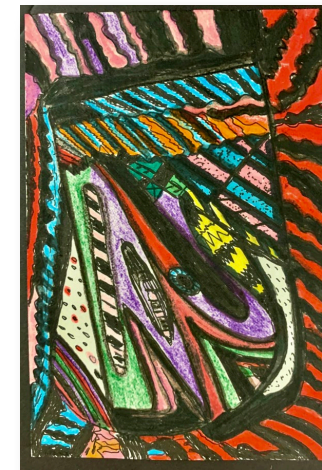


St. Christopher’s Inn has a robust creative writing and art therapy program where men express their feelings in alternative ways. Brothers Christopher can also choose to sing in the choir...no music experience necessary. Here are some samples of writing and art created by our Brothers Christopher used with their permission.



Why Writing & Art Therapy?

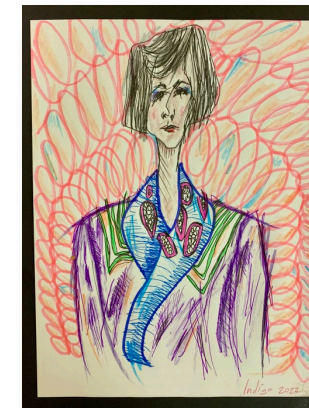
- Creativity fosters a healing environment and helps regulate emotions.
- Creative experiences help to process feelings of guilt shame and lessen their potential to trigger relapse.
- Writing therapy is known to be particularly helpful as a form of traumatic disclosure leading to decreased levels of depression and trauma symptoms—a common by-product of substance use.
- Creativity also supports playfulness which helps people feel more in control of their environment.



It was where I truly knew despair from how far that I had fallen, where I started my repair, and found a new corner to turn around. It was here I got in the car for my first rehab, which I would repeat a few dozen more times. It was where I fought to get my feet wet and leave my old way of life behind.

But beyond anything that I learned, it’s that I’m surrounded by the best family and friends that any one guy can have. It’s that I’m extraordinarily lucky, even when I feel I’m cursed. It’s that I’ve got so much more to live for but need to move on from here first. So, goodbye to my old stomping grounds, the place where I tried to make a start. Goodbye to my former life, and hello to my new art.

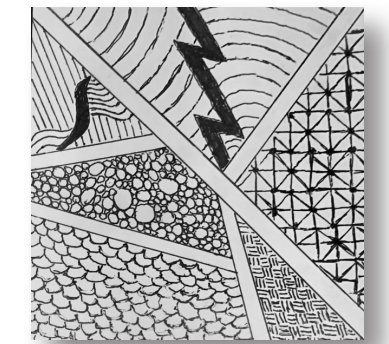
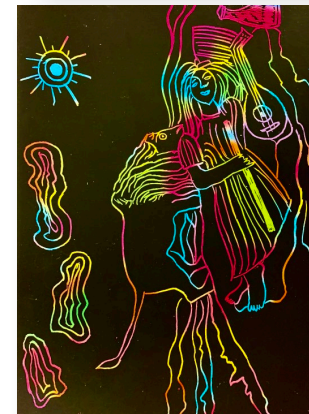
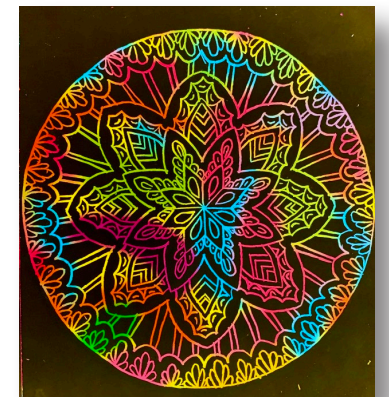
-Excerpt from “The Junk Drawer” by John B.



Recently, a friend of mine asked me how has faith changed my life? Faith has changed my life by giving me hope. Faith enables me to feel refreshed and renewed. There are so many things throughout the course of my day that I put my faith in. I am going to be going back to school soon and have faith that I will be able to do well in all my classes, especially math. I have faith that I will get married and have kids one day.

I have faith that everything that I am going through is preparing me for the person that I am destined to be. I have come to learn that you cannot have faith and fear, they simply do not mix.

- Excerpt from “Refreshed and Renewed” by Matthew C



I was grateful for my tale. How I got this way. How I ended up where I am. It’s my tale. When I spout off on gratitude, I don’t think as many people find it as relatable as I would like. But it works for me. It’s an accomplishment.

Gratitude is a practice. These aren’t just revelations due to changes in perspective. These are the results of practicing minimizing darker voices within.

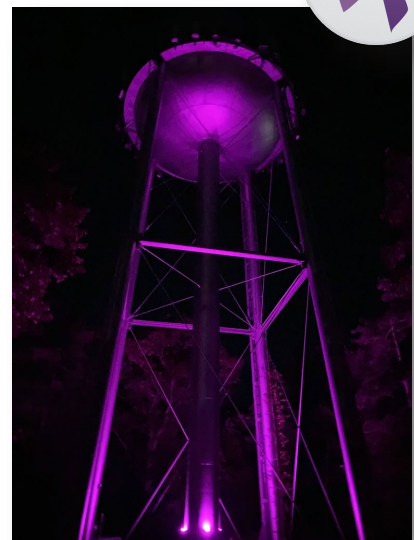
—Excerpt from “It’s Like That” by Roger C.

Going Purple For Recovery



September is National Recovery Month

National Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those in recovery from substance use. We recognize its theme; **Recovery is for Everyone. Every Person. Every Family. Every Community.** It is a reminder that recovery belongs to all of us – people in recovery and those who support them. St. Christopher's Inn empowers families and communities. Promoting healing that extends beyond one person is our priority. A month devoted to promoting recovery helps to reduce the stigma that surrounds substance use. It helps to lessen the shame and guilt that is often associated with the disease of addiction. St. Christopher's Inn is more than a healthcare facility. It is a recovery community where everyone contributes to the well-being of another. Together we transform the "I" into "we" and let those struggling know that they are not alone. Thanks to friends like you, we can consider every month recovery month—a continuous journey of healing and hope! Together we are all a part of the recovery stories of the community of men we serve.



The water tower at Graymoor goes purple during Recovery Month

Be the Bridge: Walk for Recovery

This year St. Christopher's Inn closes out the celebration of National Recovery Month with its 2nd Annual Be the Bridge: Walk for Recovery on October 1, 2023, at 11:30 am at the Walkway Over the Hudson in Poughkeepsie, NY. This year, in anticipation of the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the Society of the Atonement, in the spirit of At-One-Ment, we walk as one to support those along the recovery journey. We walk as one to remember those we've lost. We walk as one to support those dedicated to helping men break free from the disease of addiction.



This year we've added to the fun with face painting, balloon art and, of course, music! For more information and to register, visit www.stchristophersinn.org/be-the-bridge or call **Audrey Warn** at 845-424-2142.

CIRCLE OF HOPE

When you join the **Circle of Hope** monthly giving program, your gifts to St. Christopher's Inn make a difference all year long. **Circle of Hope** members know how important it is to make treatment available to those suffering from the disease of addiction. Your gift gives hope and reassurance that they are not alone – that you are with them in their journey to heal and recovery.



You can become a monthly sustainer through our **Circle of Hope** in two simple ways:

1. Set your monthly donation to transfer from your checking account or donor advised fund to St. Christopher's Inn.
2. Visit our website: www.St.ChristophersInn.org/Circle-Of-Hope.

For more information call Audrey Warn,
Annual Giving & Grant Writing Director | 1-845-424-2142