



Spring 2023

INN *sight*

Our Healing Community Newsletter

A holistic and integrated approach to recovery with Franciscan hospitality

Continuing the Struggle against Substance Abuse

In, New York State, New York City and in our own back yard of the Hudson Valley there has been a 68% increase in opioid deaths alone, across all socioeconomic groups and demographics; the death toll rises significantly when including alcohol and other substance use data. Many of those using drugs face a double whammy, in that opioid use/misuse can often contribute to homelessness and homelessness exacerbates opioid use/misuse. Both take a tremendous personal toll on the individuals, families, and communities we serve. Since 2020, we have felt the force of COVID firsthand. Despite the need to manage and successfully control large outbreaks, community, client and staff illness, and already stretched resources, the Inn has remained open, providing a high-quality level of care for the men we serve.

It is only because of the generosity of the Friars, the staff who give their time at great personal risk, the Alumni who spread the word of the loving care they have received, and our generous benefactors, that we succeed. Recognizing our success in moving men from chaos to sobriety, in 2021 and 2022 OASAS and the NYS Dept. of Health provided the Inn with much needed (but limited) support, allowing us to keep our doors open when others have closed. While the dual battle (against substance abuse and COVID) continues to rage, I cannot resist recalling the image of St. Michael wielding his sword against the forces of darkness. Through it all, the Friars and the dedicated staff of the Inn will continue to welcome those in need but only with the generosity of you—our benefactors and friends. Thank you!



Dr. James Schiller, Ph.D.
Executive Director

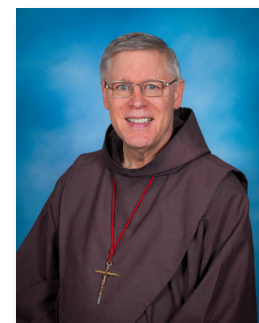
Message from Our Spiritual Director

Spring always reminds me that God is about making all things new. "...God comes to us like the spring rains that water the earth." (Hosea 6:3). More than anything, "God wants to create in each of us a pure heart and renew a steadfast spirit within us." (Psalm 51). This is the meaning of Lent that begins during February: a Springtime for the Spirit!

My spirits were lifted today when a letter arrived from a Brother Christopher who recently moved on from the Inn and is now following the program of recovery where he lives. He wrote: "Today marks 5 months sober and free. How grateful I am to be a Brother Christopher. Thank you for everything. God works through people, and I thank you and them for the clothes on my back, the food in my stomach, and the love from the many acts of kindness. For once in my life, I felt accepted. I felt like a man worthy of love and respect. You and the staff are saving many lives...With love and gratitude, Thank you!"

It can take a cold dark winter to bring on a glorious spring. Much the same can be said for our Brothers Christopher, the men we are privileged to serve. Men come to us at the darkest times of their lives, but just like seeds buried deep in the ground gathering nutrients and strength, they begin the intense work of recovery day by day. If they are honest, willing and open, then they have their own springtime – a life of sobriety, freedom, fellowship and new life.

In this issue of *INNSight*, I hope you see how great an impact your help has on the lives of our Brothers Christopher. Whether its residential treatment or telehealth, spiritual direction or art therapy, sober homes or vocational opportunities, with your help we can continue the vital work being done here at St. Christopher's Inn. We are grateful to all who support the lifesaving and life-giving ministry of St. Christopher's Inn. Together, may we continue to provide a holistic approach to recovery that enables more men to live in freedom.



Fr. Dennis Polanco, SA
President and
Spiritual Director



RECENT CELEBRATIONS

Walking For Recovery

In September, St. Christopher's Inn held its first **Be the Bridge: Walk for Recovery** at the Walkway Over the Hudson in Poughkeepsie, NY in honor of National Recovery Month and all those struggling with addiction and their continued recovery journey. Nearly 300 people gathered to raise awareness and greatly needed funds for the Inn.



SAVE THE DATE: October 1, 2023 11 AM

Be the Bridge: Walk for Recovery



An Autumn Night on the Hudson to Celebrate St. Christopher's Inn

The Annual Board of Director's Reception for St. Christopher's Inn this year, was held October 27th at Xaviars X2O in Yonkers, NY. In support of the fight against addiction, friends and benefactors gathered to honor Peter Pritchard (posthumously). A loyal friend of the Inn, Pritchard's legacy of caring and compassion advanced the mission in profound ways. The Benevolent Order of Elks was also honored for its national drug abuse prevention and education programs. Tribute was paid to Frs. Bill Drobach, SA and Bernie Palka, SA whom we lost in 2021 and 2022. They tirelessly gave of themselves to walk with men along the recovery journey, and their loss is deeply felt.



Sober Lounge—Recreation and Rehabilitation

The Sober Lounge, a space for recreation, relaxation, and creative expression, opened in November, to much excitement. Formerly a game room, the Lounge now serves the holistic purpose of providing not only "downtime" but therapeutic structure. The art therapy and creative writing programs are held there, and the work of the Brothers Christopher is displayed gallery-style throughout the room. A large television screen plays virtual 12-step meetings throughout the day and in the late afternoon men also come to watch their favorite shows. Spiritual Director and Art Therapist Joy Pellegrino praised the space and stressed the importance of the activities that take place there. "To see their work displayed publicly is affirming for the men." Creating is never about the final product, but the process; it allows a man to see himself as more than his illness," says Pellegrino, "the men learn to affirm each other and themselves and that affirmation is powerful." Kevin Douglas, Director of Counseling and Shelter Services also stressed the therapeutic importance of the Sober Lounge, "The men can express deep feelings that are often difficult to express in conversation, which ultimately promotes healing and wellness."



Accreditations Attest to the Quality of Care

St. Christopher's Inn is recognized for its outstanding quality of services and LegitScript certification, helping to ensure transparency and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



NYS Residential Redesign for the Inn

The Inn gained approval of its Part 820 Residential Redesign by the New York State Office of Addiction Support and Services (OASAS). “This redesign will widen the scope of services the Inn provides, allowing increased length of stay for those in need and enable us to continue to enhance the lifesaving work we have been providing for many years by not only treating persons challenged by chemical and substance use but instilling in them the sincere belief and confidence to say, “I am a person worthy of love and respect,” Dr. James Schiller, Executive Director of St. Christopher’s Inn.

The Part 820 was designed to seamlessly integrate the residential, stabilization and rehabilitation of the recovery process. Men will be provided with a host of services that will offer stability, treatment and re-entry resources to assist with transition and the continued path of recovery.



The Importance of Aftercare and Family Support

Solid aftercare planning improves long-term recovery. Brothers Christopher begin working on transition planning from Day 1 of their recovery journey.

St. Christopher’s Inn offers two transitional living sober homes—San Damiano Farmhouse on the grounds of Graymoor and Brothers Christopher House in White Plains, NY. Staffed by professional clinicians, both offer opportunities to grow in sobriety and prepare for transitioning back into the community.

At a November 2022 Putnam County-wide Monthly Meeting, the County Commissioner of the Social Services & Youth Bureau, Mike Piazza, noted the dire need for “Sober Housing” and “After Care” that “reflect the quality services of those provided at St. Christopher’s Inn.”

Alumni Support Critical to Long-Term Recovery

A necessary part of the recovery journey is the support the Brothers Christopher receive along the way. St. Christopher’s Inn is blessed with a strong alumni program. Lead by Guy G., Alumni Association Chairman, the group holds an annual picnic on the first Saturday in August which includes residents of the Inn, and staff along with Alumni Brothers Christopher who come from all over to reconnect and find camaraderie in their shared experience of addiction and recovery. The day includes lots of fun and games, but also time for remembering those lost to the disease of addiction, an opportunity to listen to alumni speakers, and to attend 12-step meetings on-site. Beyond the picnic, Alumni walk alongside Brothers Christopher while they are in residence at the Inn, holding weekly 12-step meetings and even fireside meetings. Guy says, “working with the Brothers Christopher is uplifting” and whether its speaking, holding meetings at the Inn or reuniting for the picnic, “coming back to the Holy Mountain allows men to be grateful for all they have received there”.

2022

DID YOU KNOW?

- 35,016 units of rehabilitative service provided at St. Christopher’s Inn.
- 92,644 meals served at St. Christopher’s Inn



Integrating professional and compassionate treatment with Franciscan Hospitality



Inpatient Treatment



Telehealth Outpatient Treatment



Medication Assisted Therapies



Family Programming



Sober-Living Opportunities



Alumni Association Support



Virtual Narcan Training

YOU ARE THE DIFFERENCE

Give the Gift of Recovery – Support a Brother Christopher



\$50 would provide supplies for a sketch class in the Sober Lounge as part of the Creative Writing and Art Therapy Program.

\$100 would provide art supplies.

\$200 provides a new mattress, as needed, for a Brother Christopher



\$1399 would provide a one-month stay at San Damiano Farmhouse, transitional living/sober home for Brothers Christopher.



\$500 would provide some of the essentials for starting a new sober life transitioning from homelessness.

\$1,775 would provide a week of care—treatment and shelter services—at St. Christopher's Inn.

\$1,438 would provide one month stay at Brother Christopher House, transitional living/sober house.

Other Ways You Can Support Life-Changing Ministries

Planned Giving	Wills and Bequests, Charitable Remainder Trusts, Life Estate Agreements.
Donor Funds	Designate a gift from your donor advised fund
Retirement Plans	Make a direct distribution from your IRA.
Matching Gifts	Double your impact with a matching gift from your employer if eligible.
Beneficiary Designations	Consider naming St. Christopher's Inn beneficiary of your retirement plans assets, life insurance, bank accounts or investments accounts.
Gift of Stock	Transfer appreciated stocks and/or securities and enjoy potential income-tax savings.

Thanks to all the people of the community who continue to support the work of recovery.



CIRCLE OF HOPE

By making a commitment to a monthly gift you are saying "I want to provide hope. I understand how important it is to make treatment available to those suffering from addiction so they can rejoin their families and be productive members of their community." Your monthly gift gives the Brothers Christopher hope and reassurance that they are not alone—that you are with them and their families on their journey to heal and recover.

Three simple ways to become a Circle of Hope member:

1. Set your monthly donation to transfer directly from your checking account to St. Christopher's Inn.
2. Provide your credit card information to be automatically charged each month.
3. Recommend a monthly gift from your donor advised fund through your fund administrator.

Visit our website: St.ChristophersInn.org/COHNews

For More Information Contact: Audrey Warn, Annual Giving & Grant Writing Manager | 1-845-424-2142

