



Year End 2024

# INN *sight*

**Our Healing Community Newsletter**

*A holistic and integrated approach to recovery with Franciscan hospitality*

## A Message from Our Spiritual Director



Fr. Dennis Polanco, SA  
President and  
Spiritual Director

St. Christopher's Inn is the one place that remains constant in an ever-changing world. The Friars, Sisters and Staff at St. Christopher's Inn provide the care, the compassion and the treatment that is necessary to turn lives around. It is because of the forward thinking of friends like you that the Inn continues to invest in hope and lifesaving recovery.

The words of St. Francis bring to life both our Mission and our Challenge: "We have been called to: Heal Wounds, Unite what has fallen apart and, Bring home those who have lost their way."

One of our Brothers Christopher who successfully completed his program here had this to say in a letter to me about our mission of healing at St. Christopher's Inn:

"I found out that I am a good man worthy of love and respect at St. Christopher's Inn. I drew three pictures to represent where I was when I was homeless (drew a bridge), where I am (drew a mountain), where I will be in a year (drew a beautiful women with children) and...it all came true.

This is the Yankee Stadium of rehabs!"

This "year-in-review" newsletter celebrates the "miracles of recovery" that take place on Graymoor's "Holy Mountain" – named by our Brothers Christopher. We are so blessed by your generosity and continued support. Thank you!

May the joy of Christmas bring you peace, joy and renewed hope.

Peace and all good,  
Fr. Dennis Polanco, SA  
President & Spiritual Director





# The Importance of Vocational Therapeutic Opportunities in Recovery

Vocational therapeutic service is critical in the healing process of recovery. These vocational service opportunities enhance connections with others, build self-esteem, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, and aid stress management. Along with these benefits comes self-worth and community building. St. Christopher’s Inn is a recovery community that recognizes that we are all part of each other’s stories.

From the first day a Brother Christopher enters St. Christopher’s Inn, a personalized treatment plan is established, incorporating vocational activities that will be part of their treatment experience during their stay at St. Christopher’s Inn. Brothers Christopher vocational activity can be placed anywhere on the Holy Mountain such as in the kitchens of the Inn, the Friary and the Convent; in facilities maintenance and groundskeeping, on the San Damiano Farm, in the That Nothing Be Lost Thrift Shop and even in the Admissions Department greeting new Brothers Christopher. Vocational therapeutic services such as these restore a sense of purpose and most importantly, restore the basic human need of belonging and being a positive contributor to one’s community.

Brothers Christopher have the option of receiving a completion certificate when they are ready to leave the Inn, listing their completed vocational services and skills they may have obtained. The therapeutic vocational program is a critical piece of our continuum of care helping our Brothers Christopher build a solid foundation of recovery along with meaning and purpose.



# Foundations Help Enhance the Overall Healing Program

Maintaining a robust healing program that is open to all men seeking recovery requires a lot of assistance. As an independent non-profit ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, we rely on support from many sources. Recently, St. Christopher’s Inn received support from several family and community foundations including the *Koch Foundation*, the *Peter and Henry Block Foundation*, the *Theresa and Edward O’Toole Foundation*, *The Hyde and Watson Foundation* and the *Sexauer Foundation*. The support of these foundations has helped us tremendously. Through their generosity, we have purchased a new vehicle to transport Brothers Christopher to various appointments and experiences that further their recovery. We are refurbishing an on-site bakery where men can learn culinary skills. We installed an irrigation system at San Damiano Farm where water now flows freely from the top of the hill by the Friary, down to the farm. Before, water was supplied by laboriously trucking the water down the hill in large vats. This new water system eliminated this exhausting method of transporting water. Further farm enhancements and planning of increased vocational and educational programs are being planned. If you know of a Foundation that would like to partner with us, please let us know.



# SCIAA—Vital to the St. Christopher’s Inn Community

Anyone who has spent one full day in treatment at the Inn or has successfully completed our Outpatient Program can become a member of the St. Christopher’s Inn Alumni Association (SCIAA). SCIAA serves the mission of the Inn in many ways including: recovery-focused meetings, hosting both fellowship and fundraising events, offering retreats and even financial support. The Annual SCIAA Picnic brings close to 400 people back to the Holy Mountain for a day of fellowship, support, and a special remembrance of those Brothers we have lost to substance use, both alcohol and drugs. Residents at the Inn join in the Alumni Picnic that includes a softball game, great food and recovery meetings.



Other annual SCIAA events include: Tee Off Against Addiction Golf Outing, a Thanksgiving Dinner, and a pizza party at the Inn. This year, we were especially blessed to gather as a community to hear the songs and stories of Matt Butler, the Reckless Son, who shared a bit of his own journey and even performed a song he wrote about St. Christopher’s Inn.



SCIAA members embody what it feels like to enjoy a sober life in recovery. Current Brothers Christopher know that they are not alone along their journey and that recovery is real and possible.

# St. Christopher’s Inn In the News



## St. Christopher’s Inn Offers Recovery Through Prayer

New Evangelization Television (NET) recently featured a video and blog about St. Christopher’s Inn on their website. Hear the moving stories of the men seeking healing.



Follow QR code to the YouTube Video

YouTube Search: *St. Christopher’s Inn Offers Recovery Through Prayer*



## Be the Bridge: Walk for Recovery

Over 500 of our neighbors came out to support St. Christopher’s Inn as they once again participated in the ***Be the Bridge: Walk for Recovery Across the Walkway Over the Hudson*** in September, recognized as National Recovery Month. The full force of the community was there—Friars, Sisters, Staff, Board members, Brothers Christopher, Alumni—even some of our best canine friends! Our first Grand Marshal, virtuoso violinist Daisy Jopling performed. And, we exceeded our fundraising goal, raising over \$81,000 for the lifesaving work of the Inn!

Visit <https://bit.ly/3OguiwT> to read the Sept article in *The River Journal*.



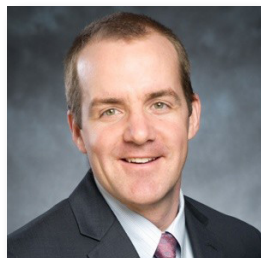
# St. Christopher's Inn In the News (Cont.)



## Plants with a Purpose

San Damiano Farm of Graymoor participated in Peekskill's Garden Club's annual plant sale selling vegetables and herbs and a variety of flowers. All the plants are grown by the Brothers Christopher, the men residing at St. Christopher's Inn and sober living home, San Damiano Farmhouse. The farm is one of the many vocational and educational therapeutic programs offered at St. Christopher's Inn.

Visit <https://bit.ly/48Y0y1q> to read more.



## SCI - Hosts Board of Directors Reception

St. Christopher's Inn celebrated the Eighteenth Board of Directors 'Autumn on the Hudson' Reception at The Abbey Inn, Peekskill. Each year, individuals and organizations that exemplify the mission of St. Christopher's Inn and share the gift of hope by serving and caring for our communities are honored at this annual celebration. The 2024 Honorees were Edward Grinnan, Editor-in-Chief and VP Strategic Content at Guideposts, and John J. Murphy, Group Director for Not-for-Profits at Dime Community Bank.

## SCI - Welcomes Br. Fabrizio

St. Christopher's Inn welcomed Br. Fabrizio this summer at Graymoor. Br. Fabrizio resides at the Atonement Friars formation house, the Our Lady of the Atonement Friary in Assisi, Italy. He completed his pastoral service project at St. Christopher's Inn. Br. Fabrizio worked side-by-side his mentor and guided our Brothers Christopher along their recovery journey. "As much as I gave during my service project this Summer, I also received. It was an enriching experience for the human spirit." The Friars, the staff of St. Christopher's Inn and our Brothers Christopher give thanks to Br. Fabrizio for his ministerial service at St. Christopher's Inn this summer.



## SUPPORT THE LIFE SAVING MINISTRIES OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S INN.

The Circle of Hope is a monthly giving program that supports the work of St. Christopher's Inn. Monthly giving provides a predictable and reliable source of income to fuel our mission of recovery by helping us plan and budget for programs and new initiatives. Circle of Hope members help to sustain the work at the Inn.

- Join the Circle of Hope with your monthly gift to support our Brothers Christopher.
- Give the gift of hope from your donor advised fund, IRA, or appreciated securities.



To get started visit Circle of Hope at [www.stchristophersinn.org/circle-of-hope](http://www.stchristophersinn.org/circle-of-hope) or call Audrey Warn, Mission Support at 845-424-2142 or email [awarn@atonementfriars.org](mailto:awarn@atonementfriars.org).