

I am pleased to welcome Michael Peterson to the Maria House Project Board of Directors! We are excited to have a member of the Peterson family with an extensive history with MHP and first hand knowledge of the good works of Father Pete, his uncle and Tom, his father. Michael's enthusiasm and willingness to work to continue the mission and traditions of his family as a board member are greatly appreciated!



Bob Boeh

Suddenly, it is already time again to remind you of our annual Phone-A-Thon and to ask you for your prayers and financial support of Maria House Project. This year's Phone-A-Thon, one of our two major fundraisers each year, will take place on Thursday, November 8, 2018 between 6PM and 8PM. Should we be unable to contact you by phone, an envelope has been included with this newsletter for your convenience. Please remember that our program continues because of your generous support and prayers. As Father Pete once said, "It takes humility to accept God's gifts and courage to use them". We ask you to be prayerfully courageous!

Our other major fundraiser is Erie Gives which was held this year on August 14, 2018. Once again, because of your extremely generous support, Maria House Project was ranked #14 out of 381 non-profit agencies in terms of dollars and #12 in terms of the number of donors! That incredible generosity resulted in Maria House Project receiving a check for \$66,558.12 including the matching funds from the Erie Community Foundation, Erie Insurance, Presque Isle Downs & Casino, E.E. Austin & Son, ErieBank, Erie Times News, Knox Law, Little Caesars, McInnes Rolled Rings and Northwest Bank. We thank each of you who continue to keep MHP in your heart and in your prayers! We simply couldn't continue without you!



Andy Gabler

Our 5th annual Father Peterson Memorial Golf Tournament took place on September 15, 2018 and was again a sold out success! We thank volunteer chairpersons Marty & Linda Radock and their committee, our community sponsors, golfers, volunteers and our MHP residents who worked to make this a fun and successful event for all involved! As a result, MHP received the \$11,600 profit! We're sure Father Pete and Tom are smiling!

Thank You for your prayers and support!  
God Bless,  
*Bob Boeh* - Board President

November is a month set aside to be "Thankful" and to recognize the many "Blessings" which come our way. At Maria House we are grateful for the blessing of our volunteers, who are the very heart of our program. They are the hands that serve, working selflessly alongside the men who make their home at Maria House Project (MHP). The success of our program depends on their continued service.

If you are a volunteer in any capacity, please join us for a **Volunteer Appreciation Day on Sunday, November 4, 2018, at The Lodge.** Bishop Persico will offer Mass at **12:30PM** with a banquet immediately following. This is a great opportunity to sit with the men you serve, to meet other volunteers, and to socialize in a relaxed setting, enjoying the many blessings God sends our way.

Please mark your calendars and **RSVP** by calling Mary Beth at the office at 814-454-0891.

**Thank you so much for all you do!**



**MARIA HOUSE PROJECT**  
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# Maria House Project

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## House Happenings

### Joe's Thoughts.....



Newsletter  
November 2018

When I first started at MHP, Father Pete asked me to read the Book of Genesis. He wanted me to reflect on the importance of the passage which reads "Let us make man and woman in our own image and likeness". Father said that many people forget that "everyone" is a child of God and made in His image and likeness, regardless of the good or bad choices they make. He said that it was very important, especially for those in prison ministry, to tell the inmates, victims and those working in the criminal justice system, that Our Lord only sees the beauty of souls.

I was reminded of what Father said when Ginny DEHaven (a MHP volunteer), three other agency representatives and I spoke to a large group of women inmates incarcerated at SCI Cambridge Springs. The event was titled a "Day of Responsibility". It was a day when those incarcerated take responsibility for their crime(s) and examine the negative effect it had on their victim(s) and the ripple effect on their families, friends and community. The inmates also took responsibility for the effect that their crime(s) had on their own families and friends. Besides taking responsibility, they also explored ways to make amends when and wherever possible.

Ginny and I spoke about our love for our children and how we and our loved ones were affected when we were victims of crimes. We explained the emotional trauma and how our philosophy of life was affected.

After the presentations and discussions, I was touched by the women's comments, honest remorse and tears. It was obvious, that the women felt a true sense of responsibility for their crime(s) and a need to make amends to those they had hurt. I thought "what a great group of beautiful women". I guess I had a glimpse of the beauty of God's image and likeness on their souls.

As I drove home, Joe Cocker's song "You Are So Beautiful To Me" was playing. I thought of the women at the state prison and felt that Our Lord was singing to them.

*Joe Tarquinio* - Executive Director



Ginny and Joe



**Thursday, November 8, 2018**

**6:00PM to 8:00PM**

**All funds that you pledge go directly to the ministry which enables Maria House Project to continue our spiritual and therapeutic programs for over 70 residents each year.**

**God will surely bless you abundantly for your generosity to those in need!**

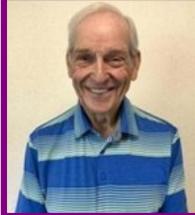
## Community Recognition

by Sandi Matts

Three members of the Maria House Board of Directors were honored during 2018, receiving accolades and awards for the service they provide to the Erie community.



*Deacon Denis Coan* was nominated by the Honorable Stephanie Domitrovich and received the Serra Club Achievement Award for Outstanding Service as he was named "*Deacon of the Year*". Denis expressed his appreciation for receiving the award and credited Fr. Peterson for starting him off on his journey to the diaconate. It was during a Metanoia in the Erie County Prison, which Fr. Pete and Denis initiated, where Denis felt a stir in his heart, and a call to the program. This past May, Denis marked his tenth year as a deacon and he is very pleased to continue his service with Maria House.



The Sisters of St. Joseph awarded *Ronald DiVecchio* with the Saint Mary's Home of Erie "*Ageless Remarkable Erieite Award*". This award is presented annually to three individuals who are seventy-five and older and still serve in the Erie community. Ron has a heart of gold and loves counting Maria House among those he serves. Ron said he became very emotional the night he received the award. It meant so much to him because he loves the Sisters of St. Joseph. He said it was a wonderful evening of celebration and he loved having his family with him. It exceeded all his expectations.



On October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Giuseppe Mazzini Civic Association awarded *Donna Carlino* with the "*Person of the Year Award*" at their Columbus Day Celebration. Donna expressed, "Service to my community brings me joy and is a way of affirming that my faith is real. I like being a part of something bigger than myself, to know that I will leave the world a better place and I will be a better person, because in one person's life, I made a difference... and they made a difference in mine."

**"But now, O LORD, You are our Father,**

**We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand."** Isaiah 64:8

We celebrate our selfless volunteers who are Your hands that serve. We give thanks Oh Lord, for your many gifts!

**From Your Deacon** ~ The more I interact with the men and volunteers of Maria House, the more I grow in my faith. Much has happened since the last newsletter. We completed a 2-month *Leisure in the Spirit* retreat, which was well-attended. We heard inspiring talks from current/former residents, along with volunteers, of their struggle with addiction and how, through the power of the Holy Spirit and MHP, they overcame all odds to turn their lives around. The retreat included a Healing Mass celebrated by Msgr. John Swoger—virtually everyone in attendance came forward to receive the healing touch of the Prayer Team and the Spirit.



Msgr. Bob Smith with attendees

Our *Day of Reflection* at Joe's camp near Ripley, NY was blessed with beautiful weather, the spiritual guidance of Bill and Pat Sproveri, powerful witnessing, and a closing Mass by Msgr. Bob Smith, whose faith-driven homily gave everyone pause. The chili cook-off—Joe T's Moose vs. Joe C's Cow—by many accounts was a deadlock. The challenge will be taken up again next year!

The Holy Spirit and the memory of Fr. Pete are alive and well with the residents and graduates of Maria House. To Him be glory and honor, as these men do Christ's work to attain God's kingdom on earth.

**Deacon Joe Cícero - Chaplain**

Deacon Joe Cícero

Matthew Moon is a grateful recovering addict. This October he will, God willing, celebrate four years of being clean. He said he can honestly say that "they've been the best years of my life." His path of destruction started when he was 18 years old. He used alcohol and pretty much every drug you could think of, ultimately ending with an addiction to heroin.

His path to recovery started in September 2014 with a visit to his pastor, Father Tom Suppa, at St. Teresa of Avila Church in Union City, PA. He had just been fired from a job of 13 years and was asked to leave his home by his then girlfriend and her son due to the devastation his addiction had caused. Through the prior 17 years of his life, he lived every day high, drunk, or both. Like every addict, he put himself first and didn't care who he hurt or took advantage of along the way. If he got high, that was all that mattered. He stole, lied and destroyed every relationship he had built in his life. It was through Father Suppa that he was introduced to Maria House Project and Joe Tarquinio.

He had never been in any type of recovery/rehab before Maria House, but he firmly believed that God lead him there at exactly the right time. While he was at MHP something happened, and he opened his heart and mind to every little piece of wisdom and recovery advice that was given to him. He slowly began to understand and accept the pain and suffering that he had caused everyone around him from his close friends to his family. They tried so hard to love and accept him through it all. While at Maria House he got a sponsor, started working the steps, began sharing and being open and honest about his addiction. This was something he had never done before, and it was working. He started to get a little bit better with each passing day! He remembered someone once said that "you don't realize how sick you are until you get a little bit better" and that's one of the truest statements he has heard in recovery.

After leaving Maria House, he got a job at a company called Intellectual Property Services Inc., where he still works today. He will celebrate four years with the company this coming January. He has since married his long-time, beautiful girlfriend Elizabeth. They have a wonderful 2 ½ year-old daughter Caroline and Elizabeth's wonderful son Miles. He says "The kids make every day worth living." He loves every aspect of his life now that he is clean. He is confident, loving and compassionate. He puts his heart and soul into everything he does. He now chairs and does service work at the very same meetings that gave him his life back. Last September he, along with a friend in recovery, started an NA meeting at his church in Union City. He put to work all the knowledge he has gained over the past three years into every aspect of his life, every day. He says "Life isn't always great but with the support I have and all the resources at my disposal, I know I can get through anything. Each passing day I learn something new about myself. While not always good, I know now that I can work on my downfalls and hopefully help others along the way. Today, life is good, and if I stay clean it will continue to be so."

On September 11, 2018 at the Mental Health Association of NWPA's Recovery Celebration, Matt received the Susan P. Esper National Recovery Award. He continues to be an inspiration to all those the Lord sends his way.



Matt and Joe

## Filled with Amazing Grace

by Sandi Matts



Father Gerald Ritchie, John and Papa Joe

In the parking lot of the County Prison in Mercer, the day John Krahnke was released, he *hit his knees* realizing that this was *the last place left for him to fall*. It was that moment of surrender which helped John to understand he was an alcoholic and how much he really needed help.

Today, John proudly states, "I needed to be incarcerated. It is where I stopped playing the victim card and stopped blaming others." He said the motto he lives by is: *Acceptance in the matter* is the growing pain which allows me to live life outside my comfort zone. By not believing everything I think, I am able to turn my biggest liability into my greatest asset. He says, "I am now aware that I want sobriety more than I want

drugs and alcohol."

John began drinking at the age of fourteen and turned to drugs one year later at the age of fifteen. Despite this, John was a good student who became an Eagle Scout and a varsity athlete who, through soccer, earned a full scholarship to college. He was a volunteer firefighter and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

John describes himself as living two-lifestyles. During the week he was the *good child* and on the weekends he became the *wild child*. He enjoyed being the *Life of the Party*, the *Class Clown* and someone who easily made people laugh.

After only three semesters at IUP, John's habits led to a full revocation of his scholarship and a downward spiral that led to expulsion and a full-blown addiction. John's family and friends began detaching themselves from him and he felt isolated and alone, like an outcast with nowhere to turn for help.

With his life in crisis, suicide appeared to be the only way out. John called his Dad, told him he loved him and that he couldn't take life anymore. He threw his cell phone out his truck window, pressed his foot down on the accelerator and attempted to end his life. His truck rolled over five times, he was extricated from the vehicle, life-starred to the hospital and revived twice but, God had other plans for John, and we are so grateful.

John has learned to channel his energy, his humor, and his many gifts to help others in need. At the age of twenty-seven John turned his life to God and now celebrates three years of sobriety. He attributes his transformation to his time with Maria House Project, where his mentor Will taught him to remain open-minded, to faithfully attend AA meetings, and faithfully believe in God who loves him. He also credits his earthly father, who celebrates thirty-six years in sobriety, for never giving up on him.

Living in a state of gratitude is the gateway to God's Grace. John is extremely grateful for the amends he has made with his family members and is working to rebuild lasting relationships. He is learning to be a father as he spends time with his three year-old nephew, praying for an opportunity to be a father to his four-year-old daughter. This December John's driver's license will be reinstated which will award him a promotion at work, and the opportunity to return as a volunteer firefighter at the Belle Valley Fire Department, where he will again work alongside his Dad.

John has God in his heart and gives back by openly sharing his story at Kairos, Bible Studies, Leisure in the Spirit, AA and with the men at the Lodge. He went through RCIA last year and is now an active member at Our Lady of Mercy Church. He keeps very busy, not allowing his mind to become idle. John is filled with *Amazing Grace* and looks forward to his whole life which lies ahead of him.



Sandi Matts