



P R O J E C T
RETURN↑

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Helping Men and Women Leaving Prison Make a Positive and Permanent Return To Our Community

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You can now make online donations to Project RETURN. To make a donation, visit our website at www.projectreturnmilwaukee.org

Save the Date
41st Annual
Celebrate the RETURN
Moving Forward in Changing times

October 16, 2021
Marquette University
5 pm - Meet and Greet
6 pm - Dinner

For more information contact Amanda Smit: amanda@projectreturnmilwaukee.org or 414-418-7312



Project RETURN nominated for 2021 Trail Blazer MANDI Award

MANDI 2021

The Board of Directors and Staff of Project RETURN is honored to announce that we have been named a finalist for the Associated Bank Trail Blazer MANDI Award. It is an honor to even be nominated and an even greater honor to be selected as one of two finalists for this prestigious award.

Sponsored by U.S. Bank, in partnership with LISC Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation (known as the MANDIs) recognize excellence in community development. Finalists and winners are selected by an independent, cross-sector volunteer selection committee. The committee reviews nominations and selects two finalists in each of seven categories -- BMO Harris Cornerstone Award, Brewers Community Foundation Public Space Award, State Farm Building Blocks Award, Associated Bank Trailblazer Award, Chase Economic Development Award, Navigator Award and the Northwestern Mutual Foundation Collaboration Award.

The Associated Bank Trail Blazer Award honors an innovative approach by an organization/program to a problem that is producing demonstrative results.

1. Has demonstrated creative methods of problem solving to address complex community issues.
2. Through these creative methods, positive results have been achieved and measured.
3. Organization/program's approach demonstrates creative use of resources, (people and funds).

Finalists will be honored at the annual Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation (MANDIs), and the winners will be announced that evening. This event will take place on Thursday, August 19, 2021. **This will be a virtual event.** This milestone event will mark 22 years of the MANDIs! The award ceremony will begin at 6:30 p.m.

The Wells Fargo People's Choice Award will be given out the night of the event to recipients who receive the most votes by the public. Voting will open in August. Please check out our website and/or facebook for exactly how to cast your vote.

We would like to thank the MANDI Awards for recognizing our work in the community and Kalyani Grasso and the Siebert Lutheran Foundation for the nomination. Additionally, thank you all for your support to make our work possible for 40 plus years!

Project RETURN Welcomes Notre Dame Summer Intern

My name is Kyle Dorshorst and I am a rising senior at the University of Notre Dame. Originally from New Berlin, WI, I really appreciated this opportunity to spend the summer interning at an organization that does such important work in a community close to home. The negative impact of the pandemic over the past year and a half has only increased the challenges faced by many in our society, and has disproportionately affected groups that were already vulnerable. For that reason, when I heard about Project RETURN's mission to help people to make a positive reentry into their community after incarceration, I felt a desire to contribute to their efforts in an area which is so important but is not always talked about. Over the past few weeks I've both learned a lot in terms of the lasting challenges of incarceration, even after people are released, and have been struck by the hopefulness expressed by clients in person and in their letters to move forward and overcome the barriers that they face. As a result of this internship, I feel much more aware of the inequities within our criminal justice system, and this is something that I will take with me as I hope to pursue a career in public service going forward. I'm glad that an organization like Project RETURN exists, and thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, and donors who support their vital work.



SPOTS STILL AVAILABLE!!

Project RETURN's 12th Annual Golf Outing to be held August 17, 2021

In just a few short months Project RETURN will be hosting our 12th Annual Golf Outing. We have been blessed to see this event grow every year.

This year's event will again be held at Western Lakes Golf Club (W287 N1963 Oakton Road) in Pewaukee, WI. The event will start at 8:00 am with a shotgun start with a meal to follow catered by Saz's.

Donation of \$125/person includes:

- Golf Fees with Cart
- Catered Buffet Lunch
- Locker Room Facilities Available
- Driving Range Opens at 7:00 am
- Prizes & Golf Awards
- Par 3 events
- Continental Breakfast
- Beer & Soda sold on the Course
- Raffle Prizes to be Won

If you are interested in registering a foursome please fill out this form and send your check payable to Project RETURN in the enclosed envelope. We hope to see you there!

Golfer #1: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Golfer #2: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Golfer #3: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Golfer #4: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Blessed Savior Catholic Parish Partners with Project RETURN To Provide Circles of Support for Loved Ones



Project RETURN with partners in the community have been offering Circles of Support programming since 2019, but we have been involved with Restorative Justice Circles for over 20 years. The Circles model we incorporate today was being utilized by Blessed Savior Parish in collaboration with the Department of Corrections. Conversations started within Blessed Savior Parish Human Concerns/Multicultural Committee in 2004.



Bob Thibault, a community volunteer with Blessed Savior Parish talked about the beginning of these circles. "The work in these Circles brought out a realization in the minds of the Blessed Savior Parish volunteers. A highly significant factor in the success of the returning individuals was their family setting and support. Without a positive family setting, individuals were extremely likely to re-offend and return to the criminal justice system. But who was helping the families while the individuals were incarcerated or when they returned?"

The Blessed Savior ministry team began to reach out to other organizations in the area to see what others were doing and what resources were available for families. Through many twists and turns, which included a small grant from the Black and Indian Mission Office of the Archdiocese which is supported by the Catholic Stewardship Appeal and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Blessed Savior came to Prison Action Milwaukee and Project RETURN.

Thibault remembers, "Through that contact, Blessed Savior was introduced to Mr. Wendel Hruska of Milwaukee's Project RETURN. Project RETURN is one of the leading programs in the city, working to provide resources and support for individuals returning from incarceration to the community. With Mr. Eugene Nelson, of the Project RETURN staff, Blessed Savior began hosting programs to introduce itself to the greater neighborhood on Milwaukee's northwest side. Several resource fairs were held, and the ground was laid to begin Family Circles of Support."

"Then the COVID-19 Pandemic struck!" Thibault continues, "Holding in-person circles was no longer an option and the team was stymied by how to continue the ministry. The answer came from Project RETURN! Mr. Hruska's team had found a way to continue to offer restorative justice circles using on-line meetings, like Zoom. Knowing of the Blessed Savior team's efforts, he offered Project RETURN's support and on-going help to create an on-line meeting for Family Circles of Support."

The Blessed Savior Family Circles of Support is held every 1st Monday of the month virtually from 6:30-8:00. Blessed Saviors volunteers with Project RETURN staff are present for family members and loved ones of people who are or have been incarcerated who would like to find a place to be heard, understood, and supported while exploring topics surrounding incarceration and its impacts on the lives of you and your peers. All are welcome.

Please contact Amanda Smit at Project RETURN for more information about how to become involved in this circle. She can be reached via text/phone at 414-418-7312 or at amanda@projectreturnmilwaukee.org