



Winter 2021

The Door is Open!



The many months of closure starting on March 25, 2020 took a heavy toll on Leo House staffing, on its current financial picture, and the future looked grim. Possible disaster was at stake and closure was unthinkable!

Despite the dismal reality that existed here, in the city of New York, state-wide, and nationally, tiny rays of goodness and kind written notes were sent to us and were brilliant signs of Hope. It was like all the angels in heaven, starting with Saint Raphael, our patron, were hovering in our midst and watching out for us.

Following are short messages that arrived along with contributions; they inspired us greatly:

◇ Stayed at Leo House March 2019. Fabulous! Best place to stay in NYC.

◇ I stayed at Leo House on the recommendation of a dear deceased friend who said it was a special place and she was right! I'm not a religious person, but I'd say that Leo House resonates with "really good vibes." I can't wait to come back to NYC and stay there again.

◇ I do hope that someday I'll be able to visit again as I enjoyed the accommodations there at Leo House. I pray especially that visitors to NYC may continue to experience the Catholic hospitality that you offer!

◇ How is everything at Leo House? Hope your guest list is full and you are busy again as you used to be. Please know we appreciate all you do for us now and in the past.

◇ Hello Leo House! I hope that your hotel survives during the Pandemic. It is so old-school and wonderful to visit in NYC. The chapel is magical! My mum (now 89) and I have great

memories of staying there in Dec. 2019.

◇ I was blessed to be able to stay there in early March 2020 and I will certainly continue to pray that your ministry of providing affordable rooms and kind service to the weary traveler will carry on.

◇ I have enjoyed each stay I have had at The Leo House immensely! The folks at the front desk are all exceptional and always made me feel welcomed and at home.

◇ A donation for my “home-away-from-home,” The Leo House.

◇ It’s safe and clean with a fantastic breakfast.

Finally, this short gem arrived in Feb., 2021:

◇ I will count it as good news if you don’t have room for me the next time I make a reservation!

Interesting enough, it was just three months later in May 2021 that business picked up and the number of guests arriving each day increased. The feature directly below tells of the group that made all the difference.

Summer Whites & Music in the Air

The weekend of May 16-17, the shine of the white uniforms worn by a group of 30, yes 30 cadets from the Naval Academy in Annapolis was a great sign saying to The Leo House “You’re Back in Business!” And summer was still a few months away!

Navy Chaplain, Fr. Paul Kostka, from the Archdiocese for Military Services of the USA, led the group, arranged for their stay at The Leo House, and presided at Sunday

Mass for them on May 16th. The Leo House Chapel was crowded with cadets in their summer whites, and their prayerful participation exemplary.

That same weekend a young woman was a guest, bursting with high energy and flair. She was a NY resident waiting to get into an apartment being repaired, and was originally from Brazil. She possessed exceptional talent in music and



Recording on the rooftop

where she unpacked her own recording equipment: headphones, cords, cables, recorder, mics, and amps. She sang and recorded songs in Portuguese, which in turn she sent to her Dad and to DJs in Brazil to be distributed to radio stations around the country.

The Family Room

A family from a small town in the Midwest spent a weekend in New York in early spring 2021 as well. The Leo House was known to them because a number of years previous, Mom had been with a group of friends staying here; they were strong ‘harriers’ who ran and finished the New York City Marathon.

The family had traveled from their home in WI to upstate

NY, and toured the new campus where the oldest child, a high school graduate, would be a new freshman. It was not easy leaving her there, but they were so proud that she’s a new cadet at the US Military Academy at West Point.

Messy is Good!



The Little Free Library here at The Leo House grew and more shelving was needed. A shelving unit was found that fit nicely in the narrow space between the wall and the phone booths. Plus, a rolling three-tier cart was also acquired and has been placed under one of the windows in the same room. Its top shelf holds travel/tour guides, on the second are books printed in other languages, and the third holds over-sized books that weigh a lot. The ‘Take a Book—Leave a Book’ theme keeps the library fairly maintenance free, but on occasion it requires oversight. Messy shelves is a good sign that the library is being used; books are there for guests to read, enjoy, and then find more.



Remembrance

Hank Vosswinkel—Leo House Board of Directors



Mr. Henry Vosswinkel, was affectionately known as Hank. He joined The Leo House Board of Directors in 2001. He was a faithful member and served as Treasurer of the Board until 2021.

Hank passed away on Saturday, October 16, 2021. A Mass of Christian Burial took place on October 23 followed by burial in Ridgefield CT.

Sister Bertha Bumann CSA—Sister of Saint Agnes



From 1998 until 1999, Sister Bertha Bumann CSA, was a Minister of Hospitality here at The Leo House. She is remembered vividly by staff for her compassion, her thoughtful attention to others, her prayerful stance and outlook, and her funny bone!

Between 1961 and 1982 she had been a missionary presence in Nicaragua along with other Sisters of Saint Agnes. She served as a teacher, was responsible for CSA Leadership, and for assisting young Nicaraguan women in joining the Congregation of Sisters of Saint Agnes.

Sister Bertha passed away on October 4, 2021 at Saint Francis Home in Fond du Lac, WI.

The names of both Hank Vosswinkel and Sister Bertha Bumann have been inscribed in *The Book of Remembrance* here at The Leo House.

The Book of Remembrance was started last year and is located near the entrance to the Chapel. Guests and Staff are invited to add the names of family members and friends who have passed away during the year.

The deceased whose names are recorded, will be remembered all of November during all Masses and in all prayers here in the Leo House Chapel.

Also recorded in *The Book of Remembrance* are the names of those who were remembered by contributors to The Leo House. Donations were given as Memorials for them.

On-Going Improvements

Equipment in use constantly for years on end eventually needs replacement. A kitchen stove is used every day when preparing hot foods for breakfast. An ice machine is a welcome sight after a hot afternoon in the sun and a vending machine provides small snacks when hunger pains strike.

The large kitchen range located in the first floor kitchen was a good part of the reason why breakfast got to be so highly rated. Large quantities of scrambled eggs were cooked while pancakes were being prepared and bacon and sausages were being heated. Literally, ‘many irons in the fire’. After 95 years of use, it was replaced last winter in 2020. It is pictured directly below.



The ice machine was making a lot of noise, but no ice, in the middle of summer, no less, Just when its use was needed most it stopped functioning and was rapidly replaced in July 2021.

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As he was leaving the Vending Machine Room, a guest was overheard describing the experience of trying to buy a soda: “This is like Las Vegas, you put your money in a machine, sometimes you win, but the rest of the time, nothing!” Candy bars, chips, and cookies are popular all the time, so a vending machine is in use 24/7. Eventually after days, weeks, months, and even years of use and it fails to work the machine definitely needs repair or replacement. A new vending machine is on order and will soon replace the one worn out!

Another on-going project is upgrading the WiFi system. Verizon is installing wiring and cables throughout the entire Leo House. Stronger WiFi and more TV channels will be available when installation is complete.

By Spring 2022, one of the guest rooms will be compliant with the *American Disabilities Act*. Renovations for this ADA project is ongoing and quite costly. Any contributions assisting with these renovations to the guest room is greatly appreciated.

Legacy Gifts

As described above The Leo House is undergoing major improvements and renovations. A generous donor can go a step further in helping defray the costs by considering a donation made as part of family estate planning.

- * Include The Leo House as a beneficiary in a will.

- * Designate a direct donation from a RMD if one is 70 years old or more.
- * Request in funeral arrangements that memorials be a donation to The Leo House, in lieu of flowers.

The enclosed business reply envelope can be used to send a contribution or using The Leo House website is another way. A new approach is the U.S. Pontifical Society website: www.missio.org. Follow the information on the tab titled “Guest House that Welcomes the World.”

For contributions of \$5,000 or more, names of donors will be added to a special “Circle of Donors” plaque.

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***“Friends Like You are
God’s Way of Taking
Really Good Care of Us”***
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The Leo House website:

www.leohousenyc.org

Reservations:

lhreservations@332west23nyc.org

Phone:

212-929-1010 ext. 219

Thanksgiving

Advent

Christmas



The Leo House continues to sponsor a Thanksgiving Food Drive. Guests and Staff are invited to add to the collection of non-perishable food items which after being collected are given to a Food Program sponsored by a nearby parish. St. John the Baptist Church on 31st Street was most appreciative of the food collected during the food drive in 2019. When a hurricane destroyed the infrastructure of Puerto Rico, food became extremely scarce. Luckily someone traveling to PR was able to transport several large suitcases of non-perishables collected here; in turn hungry were fed.

A Blessed Advent and Christmas to All, and as the year 2021 draws to a close, a Happy, Safe and Healthy New Year to all Friends of The Leo House.

