

2022
BUSINESS

&

CITIZEN
OF
THE
YEAR

NEW LIFE MISSION INN the 2022 Business of the Year

By Crystal Lyerla

RM Publisher • RMPublisher63@gmail.com

New Life Mission Inn is the recipient of the 2022 Business of the Year award.

New Life Mission Inn is an outpatient recovery counseling and support center.

Their mission is to promote and sustain spiritual growth in individuals with substance use concerns including outreach to local spiritual leaders; as well as providing structured recovery services in a stable environment and accountability for people affected by addictions. They strive to serve the Perry County area by providing access to outpatient addiction counseling as well as life skill classes for individuals and their families.

Ms. Candace Fair, LCSW and clinical social worker at Perry County Memorial Hospital was the founder and longtime President of the Board at New Life Mission Inn. Candace started New Life Mission Inn in 2008 with a small group of individuals who were dedicated to helping those struggling with substance use and mental health challenges.

Some of the founding and longtime members of the board were Ms. Kay Robertson, Ms. Kelly McKerrow, Ms. Winnie Sifford, Ms. Sidney Schnurbusch, and Mr. Ralph Morton.

The board has recently grown to a group of six and boasts two LCSWs and a former New Life client. The current Board President is Ms. Sarah Elfrink, a local attorney, and the current Board Treasurer is Ms. Judy Laurentius. The other current board members are Ms. Candace Fair, Mr. Ralph Morton, Ms. Nicola Wissler and Ms. Nicole Klassen.

The skilled team at New Life Mission Inn who rally every day to help Perry County citizens impacted by mental health conditions and substance abuse issues include: Director Patricia Courtois-LMSW, Assistant Director Denise Waller, Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor Charles Duval, Cindy Blackledge-LCSW, and Peer Support Specialist Mickey Glaub.

"As a Board, we are so incredibly proud of our New Life team," Board President Sarah Elfrink said. "They change lives! And, for those not ready to change, they plant the seed of hope."

A devastating fact is that one in five adults suffers from a mental health condition or substance use disorder. If you apply the national statistic to Perry County census numbers, 3,800 of our nearly 19,000 friends, family members, and neighbors are affected.

Mental health affects how we think, feel, and act as we cope with life. When a mental health problem goes un-



Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop
New Life Mission Inn Director Patricia Courtois, accepted the 2022 Business of the Year award from Perry County Republic Monitor newspaper Publisher Crystal Lyerla. The ceremony took place during the Annual Chamber of Commerce Dinner on Thursday, January 27th at the American Legion.

CONGRATULATIONS BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

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Perry County Health System

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treated, it can lead to or exasperate a substance abuse problem.

Substance abuse can have a devastating social impact upon community life.

It affects violence and crime rates, child abuse and neglect, and homelessness and vagrancy.

The fact is, it affects us all.

New Life Mission Inn helps by offering mental health counseling services to all uninsured or under-insured Perry County residents at no cost.

They have certified peer support specialists, people with first-hand experience with addiction that can easily relate to those seeking help, and develop one on one coaching that meets the individual's needs.

They offer anger management, life management and employment skills courses.

They have a recovery maintenance program and offer parenting classes.

They operate a drop-in center that is equipped with a computer and printer to aid with job searching.

They have shower and laundry facilities

for those who are homeless

The drop-in center is also a place to come and relax. There is a large TV, a pool table, foosball, ping pong table, and art supplies to draw or paint with.

They always have snacks, frozen meals, sandwiches and drinks on hand.

New Life Mission Inn offers a Blessings Box for Perry County residents in need. It is located outside the drop-in clinic and has a variety of small snack items, canned goods, landlord lists and hot hands.

These are just a few of the services and programs New Life Mission Inn offers Perry County residents who are in need.

They partner with a multitude of local and national agencies to provide the best resources possible. Some of those partners include: Coalition for Heroin and Opioid Prevention (CHOP), Missouri Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), Regional Family Crisis Center, Options for Women (Perryville), Perry County Community Task Force, Empowering Dads to Gain Employment (EDGE), Southeast Prevention Resource Center, and



Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop

New Life Mission Inn was chosen as the 2022 Republic-Monitor Business of the Year at the Jan. 27 Perryville Area Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting held at the American Legion. From left, are Jill Glaub, Mickey Glaub (peer support specialist), Denise Waller (assistant director), Todd Waller, Patricia Courtois (director), Albert Courtois and Nicole Klasson (board member).

United Way of Southeast Missouri among others.

They are a great asset to our community and I was honored to present the 2022 Business of the Year Award to Director Pa-

tricia Courtois on behalf of the New Life Mission Inn during the Annual Chamber of Commerce dinner held at the American Legion on Thursday, January 27th. Congratulations.

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Mayor, Ken Baer



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NEW LIFE MISSION INN Board member comes full circle

By Daniel Winningham
editor@perryvillemews.com

Nicole Klassen is one of six individuals serving on the New Life Mission Inn Board of Directors, which meets monthly.

She credits New Life with providing a relatable and welcoming environment.

"Five years ago, I became a client," Klassen said. "I started going there for the counseling, recovery services and that point they were in the basement of a church. It was just free counseling to sort of get a footing on my life. I had gotten arrested, lost jobs, and so going somewhere and being able to talk with somebody that had been through all of that stuff before and to not have to worry about paying for it, or have insurance pay for it, and just being able to walk in there and not having to make an appointment, it was more down to earth people."

Klassen said those serving with New Life at the time were very easy to talk to and personable and she believes the organization plays a "huge" role in the community.

The addiction treatment center, located at 114 West South Street in Perryville, has continued to help more and more in-



dividuals through the years, noted Klassen.

"Since then, they've grown, they have added the drop in center now so they have the laundry (area) where you can just go and sit and you don't have to be in the counseling session, it just creates a welcoming, sober environment," Klassen said. "We don't really have anywhere like that in Perryville you can go where they're not serving alcohol 24/7 and it's free to get in."

The drop-in center is a welcoming place for people to go and find community, people that may be struggling with similar addictions.

"In addition to all of that, they have the counseling services that they offer in the front half of the building," Klassen said.

Klassen understands it may be difficult for those struggling with certain addiction problems to first admit their addiction as well as seek help. The coaching specialists can help with this process, though.

"The peer coaching specialists are the ones that have been in recovery, they're the ones who have been in their shoes, that's the relatable part where they can say, 'I've been in your shoes, I know how terrible you feel right now, this is the starting point of what could be the beginning of the rest of your life,'" Klassen said.

Klassen attended the Jan. 27 Chamber annual meeting where New Life Mission Inn was announced as the 2022 Republic-Monitor Business of the Year.

"It was kind of awe-inspiring just to think about starting as a clinic vs. now I'm a board member so I get to experience full circle and now I want to try to make New Life (Mission) better, (and) see how much bigger we can become because I've seen the growth these past five years," Klassen said. "I had never heard of it before. I was told, 'Hey, maybe you should go talk to these people.' So just getting the word out there more people can experience that welcoming environment."

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ERZFELD HUMBLLED, honored with Citizen of the Year recognition

By Daniel Winningham
editor@perryvillemews.com

Creativity and ideas play a major role for Trish Erzfeld, the 2022 Republic-Monitor Citizen of the Year.

"I'm very humbled and honored, and a bit speechless," Erzfeld said in a Jan. 18 interview.

A brief visit to Erzfeld's tourism office will reveal a whiteboard detailing a list of potential upcoming events, no matter what time of year.

LOVE FOR HISTORY

"I've been involved in our historical society since I was 21. I've always had an interest in the history and heritage of our community. I've just kind of grown that through the years when I worked at the county clerk's office."

Erzfeld spent 19 years at the clerk's office from about 1996-2005. Often, she spent time with individuals seeking information about family research and genealogy.

"Through working with all of our local records, I learned more and more about our community."

Erzfeld began with Perry County Heritage Tourism in May 2015, when the city of Perryville and Perry County were looking for an individual to fill a tourism decorator vacancy.

"They were looking for someone to fill the position as a director for tourism, to promote what is unique and special

about our county," she said. "My previous knowledge about a lot of the history here really helped."

Erzfeld discussed how the Perry County Heritage Tourism initiative began.

"That was a group of people that together and collectively decided to create a tourism position," she said. "We look at all of the cars going up and down the interstate nobody stopping, so how could we do a better job at promoting ourself. When you look at what you have, it becomes apparent that our biggest asset is heritage here. That is why the group wanted to make sure our tourism wasn't just a tourism (effort), it was heritage tourism."

EXPERIENCES MATTER

Erzfeld has long been a proponent of focusing on experiences for those interested in visiting the area.

"You always want to create an experience for anyone that comes here, and that's easily done with people who have a connection with the area – whether it's through their genealogy, through their art, through their history, through their interest – to make it memorable to them," Erzfeld said.

The Heritage Tourism board consists of a representative from the city, the county, two from Economic Development Authority, the Perryville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Cultural Alliance Group.

The city of Perryville and Perry County provided funding

while the Chamber of Commerce provided office space.

Initially, Erzfeld had the option of working from home but that wasn't the route she took.

"I wanted to be out where I could have access to my community and my community could have access to me," she said.

An opportunity arose to move the office to the Catalyst Center for Business, where Heritage Tourism has been housed since then.

It may be a bit of an understatement to say that 2021 was a big year for tourism in Perry County. From the Bicentennial celebration in early August, to the unveiling of Perryville's first sculpture exhibit with art on display at various spots in the city, as well as new murals (Hauck Railroad, corner of Jackson and Marie streets plus "Wings" at the splashpad) and the Charles Lindbergh historical marker.

Erzfeld also serves as the secretary for the Perry County Historical Society. Previously, she spent time as the president for eight years for the society.

"The traditional role of a tourism director is obviously the marketing and promotion of the assets that they have in their community," she said. "A lot of tourism directors would not or could not go out and create different things for their community. We've created a tour through our courthouse that we will promote to groups, organizations and bus tours."

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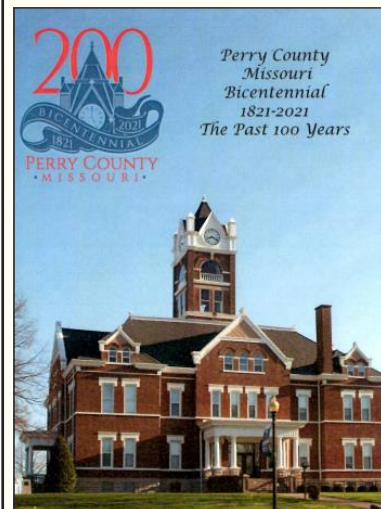
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

A couple of the more recent successes include a barn quilt trail and the Christmas Country Church Tour.

"We do things a little differently here," Erzfeld said. "I see these as all assets to our community now. We want to save as many assets as we can for future promotion. I see all these gems and diamonds in the rough and I'm grateful to the people who bring me ideas along with their passions and hobbies because then we begin to build new things for us to promote. Traditionally, a tourism director might not do all of that, but I find that exciting."

Not all of the ideas are her own. For example, Janet Koenig came to her about the possibility of a barn quilt trail. "I'd love to create a barn quilt trail but I need help," Erzfeld recalls Koenig telling her.

The ideas keep on coming.

"It's like a snowball, we just keep growing and growing and growing," Erzfeld noted. "It's such a great way to connect your community."

What began with about 20 barn quilts, is now closer to 60 over three counties.

"It's a way to connect to our agriculture and farming communities to tourism," she said. "They may have not identified with being a part of tourism until they hung a barn quilt."

"I don't always think of all these things, these are things that people bring to me," she said.



Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop
Trish Erzfeld, far left, watches the solar eclipse in August 2017 at the Perryville Airport with daughter Kaycee and husband Dave. (peer support specialist), Denise Waller (assistant director), Todd Waller, Patricia Courtois (director), Albert Courtois and Nicole Klasson (board member).

The Country Christmas Church Tour grew from six locations initially to 40 as of the most recent rendering in early December 2021.

"This event is pulled off by approximately 400 volunteers, so it's a massive event," she said. "COVID really affected our tour, as

it did everyone. But we still had 19 churches that were adamant about having it (in 2020), because they felt that this was the time through the pandemic that the church tour meant more than ever before. If at any time our people, our community, our country needed God, it was during this time. Our theme was, 'To know the reason for the season,' so we stripped away all the music, the food, the registration, basically just opening our doors, letting people come in."

The event wasn't cancelled in 2020 or 2021. Rather, it was more scaled back in 2020 and it got closer to normal when it was held a couple months ago.


"We made it COVID safe along with the blessing of our commission and leaders, but it was a very profound time during that tour to see the appreciation and humbleness of people just coming into the churches. Now that we've kind of moved past 2021, it's rewarding to see most of the churches came back. I hope all of the churches return by next year. We'll be up to our full 40 churches. People are really starting to make this our annual Christmas tradition. The church tour is in its 17th year.

Erzfeld tries to take pictures on one of the tour dates, an effort she says is part of "continuously updating" photographs of the annual event.

BICENTENNIAL

Erzfeld said the bicentennial weekend celebration, which concluded with the Chris Janson concert Sunday, Aug. 8 ex-

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PERRY COUNTY SHERIFF DEPT.



ceeded expectations.

"It was more than what I envisioned it to be," she said. "With many of the projects I have, we do collaboration and that's with the city and county, and organizations and individuals. We build our teams and we build good teams. The bicentennial was a really great team of people that could really work well together. That's what made that such a success."

The brainstorming for the bicentennial event took time and effort, noted Erzfeld.

"What do we want to do and how do we want to do it," had to be decided, she said.

There really were only two options for what ended up being the signature event for the county's 200th anniversary celebration – at the Seminary picnic grounds or the East Perry fairgrounds in Altenburg.

"We just navigated our way through each detail," Erzfeld said. "We were confident that it was going to happen when we announced it because it literally came down to the wire. We knew we wanted to announce something during Mayfest weekend because we wanted to have a whole year-long experience of the bicentennial. That was going to be our finale."

"We looked at the calendar and most of all of our focus went into the bicentennial concert but then we went to other annual events and just encouraged them to help us celebrate throughout the year by making it bicentennial, red, white and blue,

so we could have that feeling throughout the year."

The Janson concert concluded with fireworks and even that detail needed worked out, according to Erzfeld.

"Fireworks were something that came to the table...we had to make sure that we could do it safely but we had a phenomenal team that worked very hard on this project," she said.

For 2022, planning is underway to start on design process for improved trails at Perryville's Legion Lake.

"The biggest project I'll have this year is the creation of the multi-use trail out at Legion Lake that will also serve as our new mountain bike trail out there," Erzfeld said. "The (multi-use) trail is very exciting. It's just another asset that we can bring to our community for our local people to enjoy. There is no better ambassador for your community than happy residents because people want to come where there are great things for them to do. To build this trail will mean a lot."

"We also are working on (solar) eclipse 2024. We're starting to work with our local task force here in Perry County but I have already been working nearly a year with our national and statewide eclipse groups."

Erzfeld chairs the Missouri eclipse task force and also serves on the American Astronomical Society in partnership with NASA on the eclipse 2024 event for all 13 states which will experience the solar eclipse in 2024. That'll be Monday April 8, 2024 for those wanting to start the countdown.

There's more work to do. More plans are in place for other exciting happenings, Erzfeld noted.

"I've got some other things up my sleeve I can't talk about them yet," she said.

She spent many years as a deputy county clerk. In her last year in that role was 2015 as she transitioned to the tourism role. There was still work to do, though.

"We created the Perry County Research office and county archive," she said. "It's for research and genealogy for our local history, so they can work through our historical society but they also have the documentation and records of the county to help document their research. That was a big deal."

More recent ventures include the opening of Caroline's Bicycle hostel on Spring Street, near the Faherty house, in 2020.

"That was a collaboration (effort) that (Perry County Heritage) Tourism did with the historical society," she said.

Trish is married to David Erzfeld. The couple have one daughter, Kaycee Erzfeld. Born and raised in Perry County, specifically Menfro, she is a 1982 graduate of Perryville High School.

Erzfeld serves on the boards for the Missouri Humanities Council, the Missouri Travel Alliance and Perry County Historical Society (25-plus years). She drove a truck for Gilster Mary Lee for about eight years, starting in the mid-1980s.

Erzfeld has lived in Perryville since 1985.

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Trish Erzfeld for being named **2022 Citizen of the Year!**
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Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop
Justin Pyland of Buchheits receives an honor from former Perryville Area Chamber of Commerce President Caitlin Pistorio recognizing him for three years on the Chamber of Commerce Board.



Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop
Caitlin Pistorio, right, receives a certificate from newly inducted Chamber President Brandie Mantz Thursday at the Perryville Area Chamber of Commerce annual meeting Thursday.



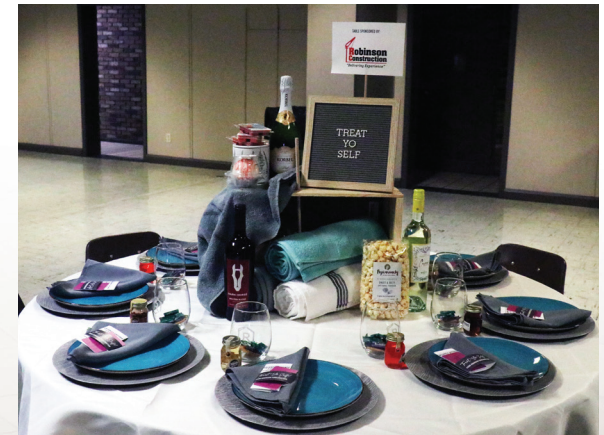
Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop
Amanda Nuyt receives the Ambassador of the Year Award from President Brandie Mantz. The award is given to a person who exemplifies support of the Chamber.



Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop
Villainous Grounds offered its guests a variety of different items from their store, including coffee, chocolate treats and other goodies.



Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop
Lakenan Insurance's colorful table at the Chamber of Commerce Dinner is complete with model cars, snacks, and lottery tickets.



Republic-Monitor/Justin Hotop
Robinson Construction allowed attendees to treat themselves to a variety of goodies if they sat at their table. The treats included popcorn and other items

