

# THE LEO HOUSE

A Catholic Guesthouse for Travelers



332 WEST 23RD STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10011 212.929.1010

*A heart in New York City*

**Spring 2019**

## **New Administration and Staff at The Leo House**



**Ashley Bryant**  
*Acting Executive Director of The Leo House*

The President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr. Michael Coneys, and Vice President, Mr. Mark Houlihan, announce new leadership at The Leo House. Ms. Ashley Bryant, who has been employed since 2012 as Manager of Reservations and Front Desk Operations, is now the new Acting Director. We applaud this decision and wish Ashley much success in her new role.

Ms. Katherine Obrien, hired in 2012, became new Executive Housekeeper in January 2019. Joining the dedicated housekeeping staff of ten, is new employee, Erica Yearwood.

Mr. Michael Morgan is a new employee, working with Front Desk Operations. Also starting at the front desk on Monday, March 18th, was Ms. Destinee Vargas.



**Erica Yearwood (L) and new  
Executive Housekeeper,  
Katherine Obrien (R)**



**Destinee Vargas, new  
employee at the  
Front Desk**



**New employee, Michael Morgan, working at the front desk**

# Introducing *ISH*

Home for Ismaila Jarju, simply known as 'Ish', and his mother Fatou, is Gambia West Africa.

In 2012 the Jarju family encountered two new next-door-neighbors, Justin and Sara Jewett; both US Peace Corps workers. The families became very close quickly, thanks to the Jewett's newly formed 501(c)(3) organization called "*Ascend Kids*" and Ish's goal of "someday being able to kick a soccer ball." He had been born with a congenital spinal deformity and *Ascend* strives to advance opportunities for the disabled and others to have access to resources that enable them to live a normal and healthy life.



Thanks to a very strong set of connections and perseverance the Jewetts' made dozens of phone calls, and in turn dozens of consultations were made in Africa with doctors and surgeons. Other invaluable information was uncovered as well.

The first surgery performed allowed Ish to place his feet flat on the ground, but serious considerations remained. The spinal column was seriously compromised and he was losing all ability to walk.



Complex networking across continents brought word that Ish's condition was repairable and should be addressed to prevent further neurologic loss. A neurosurgeon or a surgeon versed in orthopedics was required. Thanks to prayers and persistence, operations did take place. But before they did, the Jarjus' spent some time in NY and stayed at The Leo House,

thanks to the special rate for those with medical needs. They had consultations here in the city, but Ish's bright eyes, high energy, and constant curiosity had us captivated. The business center was never busier, and drawing paper was in high demand; he felt right at home during their brief stay, and his art work was outstanding!

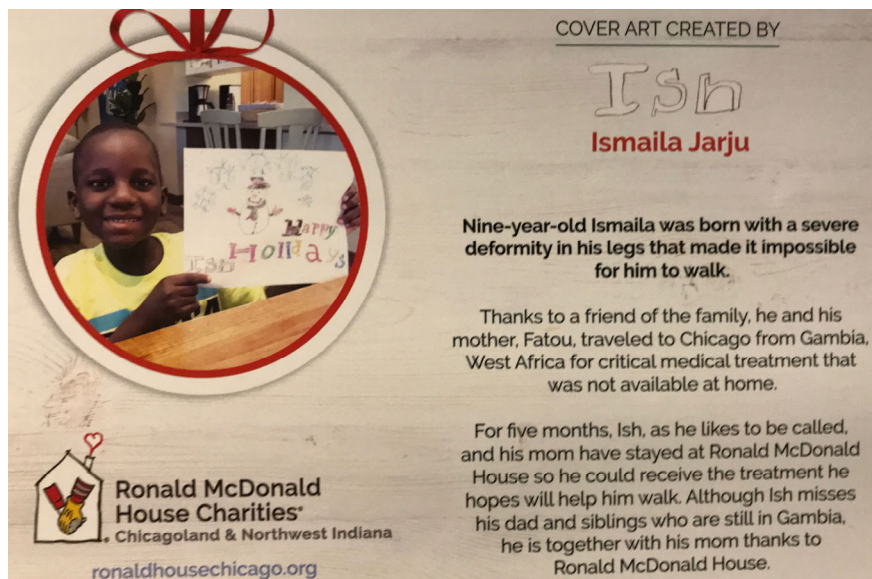
The Leo House provided a 'Go-Green' car for the drive to NJ to pick up the car-rental for further travel. The car journey to Chicago took them to the Ronald McDonald House, located on the Loyola campus where they are guests, and to Shriner's Hospital where the needed specialized surgeries would take place. A one-sentence note of gratitude sent recently by a Leo House Friend sums up the gratitude for the work of these three generous helpers:

"Great gratitude for your kind presence in our world."

To date we have learned that Ish has had more surgeries at Shriners, he is learning to walk and is benefiting most from work on parallel bars over a walker!

And his love of and high energy for art continues; it follows Ish wherever he goes. This past December the hospital featured Ish and his artwork in Shriner's Christmas mailings to the wider world.

Thank you, Justin and Sara Jewett, for sharing Ish and Fatou with The Leo House community, and for being part of the Leo House Spring mailing.





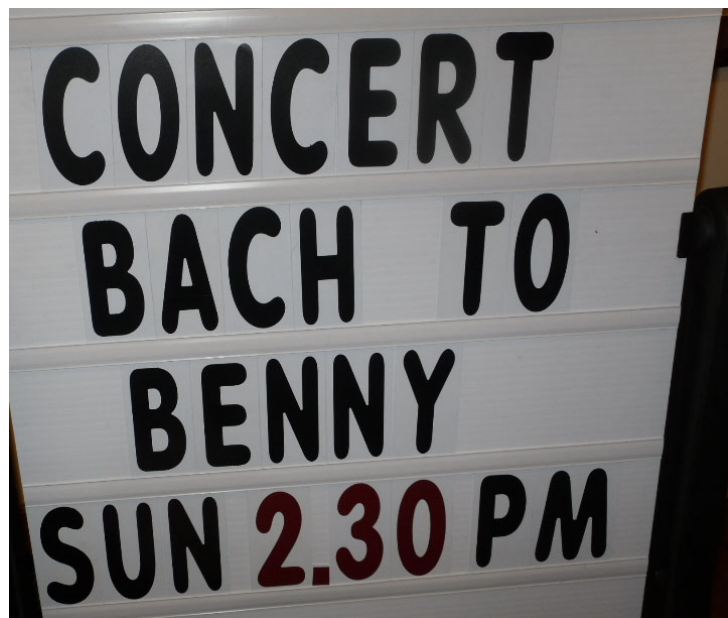
## Another *Note* of Thanks

Past President of UNANIMA, Sister Michele Morek OSU, sent this note expressing gratitude for the availability of 'clergy rates' for Priests and Religious.

"This thank-you is to The Leo House staff for arranging a special rate for our UNANIMA Board Members. Our board members appreciate a way to save \$\$\$ after a long flight around the world to get there."

UNANIMA is a collaboration of 22 Religious Congregations from around the globe that send members to serve on the UNANIMA Board. The Board meets twice a year here in NY and are an NGO at the United Nations. These 22 Communities of Sisters are in over 80 countries and combined membership is nearly 20,000 Sisters. Board members bring to the UN meetings the concerns and voices of these 20,000 who are educators, healthcare providers, social workers and development workers.

The website for UNANIMA is:  
[www.unanima-international.org](http://www.unanima-international.org)



A new sidewalk sign-board was put to good use on Sunday January 6th, 2019 announcing a concert and again on Sunday, March 9th and 10 for an Art Show.

The last Leo House Newsletter announced a concert being performed by Kornel Wolak and Michael Bridge on Jan. 6th, 2019. The Concert by these two Canadians did take place in neighboring St Columba Church. Adding elegance to the performed selections of baroque, classical jazz, folk,

and contemporary pieces, were the near perfect acoustics in the church. Built and designed in the 1850s by Irish shipbuilders who lived in *Hell's Kitchen* near the Hudson River, it features rafters and a ceiling resembling the hull of a ship, allowing sound to rise and float easily, unencumbered by obstacles.

Professional performances by *Wolak and Bridge* can be viewed at [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and at [www.bridgewolak.com](http://www.bridgewolak.com).

*WOLAK & BRIDGE*



*Highline Open Studios 2019* was held on March 9th and 10th. The self-guided art tour was free and open to the public. Artists' studios located in the iconic West Chelsea Art Gallery district were featured. The Leo House collection was also featured in the event and on display were works by Marc Potosky, Aileen Fields, Clebe Martins, Charlotte Lichblau, and others. The event was well attended.



## *Celebrating 130 years*

The doors of The Leo House opened in 1889 to immigrants who were arriving in waves from Germany. That was 130 years ago, and The Leo House is proud to be one of the only original businesses still operating in the city today as a guesthouse.

The Sisters of Saint Agnes, likewise, acknowledge the 130th Anniversary of The Leo House and take pride in having been its caretakers all these years and for engaging in its mission of hospitality.

CSA presence in NY was significant prior to 1980. Besides members staffing The Leo House, teachers staffed the high school at Sacred Heart Parish in Yonkers, and its grammar school, Holy Family School on Castle Hill Avenue in the Bronx, and starting in 1885, Our Lady Queen of Angles School in East Harlem.

Currently four Sisters reside at The Leo House and they are: Sisters Vicki Wuolle, Pat Hayes, Marilyn Ellickson, and Joann Sambs.



## **Announcing the 2019 Pope Leo XIII Fundraising Gala**

The Third Annual Pope Leo XIII Fundraising Gala will take place on Monday Evening, December 9th, again at the Yale Club.

Mother Dolores Hart, O.S.B. is the main honoree and will receive the *Pope Leo XIII Award*. Introducing her will be her dear friend from Hollywood days, Ms. Maria Cooper Janis, daughter of the late Gary Cooper. Bestowing the award on Mother Dolores Hart will be Mr. Michael Coneys, Chairman and President of the Board of Directors. Previous Awardees of the *Pope Leo XIII Award* have been Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, and Cardinal Seán O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Boston.

Receiving the 2019 Mission Partner Award will be Ms. Patricia Scanlan, for her work with the publication, *Catholic New York*, in publishing ads and news about The Leo House. Introducing her and presenting the award will be last year's honoree, Mr. Will Oweleen, founder and owner of the O-Ney-Da Winery located in the Finger Lake Wine region, here in New York State.

Information about the *Saint Raphael Award* and other Gala news will be announced as it becomes available.

## *Thank you, Donors*

The Leo House is again grateful for the thoughtful contributions from Donors during 2018 and now into 2019.

The mission of The Leo House is to offer Christian hospitality to international travelers at affordable rates. It is practiced on a daily basis and at this time in world history, the economy is fragile for everyone. To continue the mission of The Leo House into the future, we need continued support. Mail back the response envelope or use the handy "Donate" tab on The Leo House website: [www.leohousenyc.org](http://www.leohousenyc.org). Thank you.