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FREE

Diocese of Manchester honors soup kitchen and shelter founder with award for volunteer service

Dawn Longval says she felt called to serve the community of people experiencing homelessness

By **ROBERTA BAKER**
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — When Dawn Longval, founder and president of Isaiah 61 Cafe, talks about her four-year crusade to help people experiencing homelessness, she describes a road less traveled, guided by a steadfast desire to serve God.

That journey took her to the Queen City last Thursday, where the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester presented the Sanbornton resident with the Diocese of Manchester's eighth Vita et Caritas Award, which means For Life and Love. The award honors a volunteer in New Hampshire whose charitable work helps transform the lives of women, children and families, and exemplifies the Gospel message to love others, according to a statement from the diocese.

"The work that is done at Isaiah

61 Cafe is providing for the less fortunate and brokenhearted so they can find hope, healing and purpose in life," Melanie English, assistant director of development for the Diocese of Manchester, wrote Monday in an emailed statement.

Longval was nominated by Father Marc Drouin of St. Andre Bessette Parish.

"The Bishop's Charitable Foundation is designed to assist agencies, whether Catholic or not, who are assisting people in need," Drouin said. Longval "has gone above and beyond caring for those who are homeless and struggling with substance abuse by providing for their health and needs, and providing an oasis," including a cold weather shelter that opened at the beginning of this year, serving individuals and families, including those who struggle

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AG: Chocolate bars fair game for election material

By **JON DECKER**
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

ALTON — Campaign advertisements are inescapable during election season. Print ads decorate the margins of newspapers, physical yard

signs erupt from the ground in neighborhoods and intersections, while more impassioned voters become human billboards for their favored candidates with buttons, T-shirts

see **CHOCOLATE** page 14



Dawn Longval, founder of Isaiah 61 Cafe, was honored with the Vita et Caritas, or For Life and Love Award, by the Diocese of Manchester last Thursday. Longval's outreach to people experiencing homelessness in Laconia was celebrated as exemplifying the Gospel message to love others. (Roberta Baker/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

Appletree Nursery
Rt. 3 - Winnisquam, NH - 524-8031
Mon-Sat 8am-5pm • Sun 9am-4pm
Our Own X-Lg Patio Mums
\$29.98 each

LASER CAR WASH
Express \$7.00
Gilford Mobil Mart
Rte. 11 Gilford, NH • 524-8014



New Hampshire Veterans Home

Craft Fair

Saturday, September 24th, 9:30 - 3:30

85 Artisans & Vendors - 150⁺ Gift Card & Basket Raffles
Celtics Team Autographed Basketball Raffle
50/50 Raffle - Food Concessions

Proceeds benefit the NHVH Resident Benefit Fund - Outdoors under the pavilion (Colby Rd entrance) - Rain or Shine
139 Winter St, Tilton NH | 603-527-4400 | www.facebook.com/nhveteranshome | www.nh.gov/veterans



The expanded Isaiah 61 Cafe now has a cold weather, low-barrier shelter. (Roberta Baker/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

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with addiction. The shelter is manned by volunteers, many of whom are also experiencing homelessness.

"It's not the only answer but it's one of the answers to a complex problem," Drouin said. "Through prayer and inspiration, she felt called to do this. She is a shining star in our community."

"Dawn is so deserving of this award," said Mariette Facques of Gilford, a parishioner who serves on the board of Isaiah 61 Cafe, who also nominated Longval. "She is selfless in reaching out in love and patience to her beloved friends as she calls the homeless and less fortunate citizens in this town — all this despite the fact that she has a husband and six children."

"It was a huge honor," said Longval, who is an evangelical Christian. "I felt so honored that they would pick me."

Speaking of her work to the serve the homeless in Laconia, she said, "It was amazing to see that God opened the door here."

Longval was living in Merrimack when she volunteering once a month for the 1269 Cafe, a soup kitchen in Manchester, which eventually became the model for Isaiah 61 Cafe. Before she and her husband Dave started the New Salem Street soup kitchen with their own money, Longval spent over a year singing and playing the guitar every Wednesday at the gazebo in Rotary Park, serving water and sandwiches to anyone who was hungry, before moving the mission to a cemetery nearby.

"I just have to go outside, God," she said she remembers praying. "If you want me to sing on the street corners I will."

Over time, her two-hour, open-air ministry "drew more and more people. We went where they were. I felt like God was calling me to make a place where they could eat, have showers and do laundry. If you can't have basic needs met, it's difficult to get to the next step," she said.

Eventually, area businesses and churches contributed financially or by volunteering at the cafe, which currently serves 65 to 70 hot lunches daily, plus coffee and a light breakfast,

to a shifting population of roughly 200 people who come when the cafe is open Monday through Friday.

In March 2021, the Longvals purchased the building that houses Isaiah Cafe from Dick Mitchell, owner of the former Pittman's Freight Room, which enabled them to double the size of the soup kitchen and add a cold weather, low-barrier shelter. The shelter opened in January with 31 beds available from December through March, including to people who struggle with substance misuse — a population shut out of shelters that require abstinence.

"We knew there was nothing out there for them and that population needed to be kept safe," Longval said. In the offseason, the shelter section of the building still serves as a kitchen, laundry, locker, shower and storage area.

"Catholics and my faith share the same Bible," Longval said. "This award is for someone who steps out and is the hands and feet for Jesus."

Matthew 25 encourages believers to feed, clothe and shelter the poor and Isaiah 61 asks them to bring the "good news" of Jesus Christ to the poor, which helps them break out of poverty and addiction, she said.

Longval said she has witnessed success stories, including homeless "friends" who have found housing, and former addicts who are now living substance free. "We've seen many families brought back together here," she said.

Today the cafe and shelter are run by 32 volunteers, including some who are homeless.

"No one's paid," she said. "That's a huge reason why we get so much community support. Our biggest donor is individuals," including businesses and churches, which provide about 65% of the \$10,000-\$12,000 monthly cost of operating the combined outreach.

Longval's award from the Diocese of Manchester included a \$2,500 gift from the Bishop's Charitable Assistance Fund.

"This was my dream to be here in the whole building," Longval said. "I never dreamed this was possible. We wanted to give our friends a place that was not a sterile environment. We wanted to give them the best, a place that was homey and how we would want it."



A Celebration of local artists by artists!

Artists IN THE GARDEN

September 17, 2022
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Rain or Shine

Cackleberries Garden & Gift Shop
419 Daniel Webster Highway, Meredith

Enjoy the art, & stroll through the garden!

Great Art!
From over 20 local Craftsmen & Artisans!

Great Music!
Enjoy the sound from some talented young local performers!

Great Food!
Tasty treats available for purchase, provided by Boy Scout Troop 55!

FREE Admission.



Ready GOLF
TEACHING & CLUB FITTING CENTER

131 Lake Street, Unit 24,
Gilford, NH
(The Village at Paugus Bay - In the Front)

GRAND OPENING

OPEN HOUSE
from 10am-4pm
Saturday, September 17th

Open by Appointment Only
Test out the new, state of the art golf simulators!
Discounts on in-stock clubs and golf balls!
Raffles & games throughout the day!

BOOKING LESSONS NOW:
Call or email to set up a time to come in!
(603)524-2929
trollins@pga.com

If you've been watching us and wondering what it's all about then you don't want to miss this event!

Todd Rollins




DAILY CALENDAR → YOUR EVENT CAN BE IN THE SUN'S ONLINE & PRINT CALENDAR!

Go to www.laconiadailysun.com and click on Add Your Event where the upcoming events calendar is on the lower right of the page. Your event will appear in print and online!