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Michele Gannon, Mary's Place by the Sea Executive Director and Founder, Honored with Longwood University's 2025 Humanitarian Alumni Award

OCEAN GROVE, N.J., June 4, 2025 – [Mary's Place by the Sea](#) Executive Director and Founder Michele Gannon was named as the recipient of the 2025 Humanitarian Alumni Award by her alma mater, Longwood University in Farmville, Va. The Humanitarian Alumni Award honors alumni who, through their outstanding involvement and commitment, have enriched the lives of others and improved the welfare of their communities. The award, which will be presented at a ceremony on June 6, 2025, recognizes personal achievements and humanitarian ideals that reflect a selfless dedication to service for the good of others.

Since opening its doors as a retreat for women with cancer, Mary's Place by the Sea has served over 16,000 women, offering complimentary overnight stays, day visits and virtual services that include an integrated experience for the mind, body and soul at its custom-built home in Ocean Grove, N.J. Gannon was chosen as this year's recipient because of her leadership in working with women with cancer. Gannon founded Mary's Place by the Sea in 2009 after recovering from an illness and realizing how difficult it can be for women with long-term illnesses to support their own physical and emotional health while dealing with the responsibilities of daily life.

"It means so much to be to be honored with the Humanitarian Alumni Award from Longwood University," said Gannon. "My time at Longwood taught me that I can push myself to be uncomfortable and accomplish things I didn't think were possible. It laid the groundwork for starting Mary's Place from scratch with no prototype. I'm grateful for that experience and all my mentors that helped along the way."

Mary's Place first opened with two bedrooms at a bed and breakfast and has grown to its current location only two blocks from the Atlantic Ocean with 10 bedrooms, allowing more women to utilize its services. Retreats and virtual services are available to women diagnosed with any type of cancer, who are in active treatment or up to two years post-treatment or two years post-diagnosis.

As the executive director and founder, Gannon oversees all facets of the organization, from retreats to fundraising to operations. Mary's Place is run by a small team of full-time employees and dedicated volunteers and practitioners who provide personalized services, including oncology massage, health coaching, expressive writing, and yoga. All services are free of charge for guests. Virtual services are also available at no cost every day of the week.

Gannon graduated from Longwood University in 1990 with a degree in German pedagogy and was actively involved in the intramural volleyball team and the honors foreign language club. During her junior year, she received a scholarship to study abroad at the University of Heidelberg. Following

graduation from Longwood University, Gannon received a full-ride scholarship to attend West Virginia University for graduate school.

About Mary's Place by the Sea

Mary's Place by the Sea provides wellness retreats for women with a cancer diagnosis. Guests of Mary's Place are provided with unconditional care during their time of need at NO COST. During day retreats and two-night retreats, guests experience integrative services, such as oncology massage, nutritional counseling, guided meditation, yoga, expressive writing, and much more. Mary's Place by the Sea operates out of a state-of-the-art, custom-built, ten-bedroom home, located at 22 Main Avenue in Ocean Grove, New Jersey. In addition to its in-person program, virtual services are also offered. Since its founding in 2009, Mary's Place has served over 16,000 women with cancer. Mary's Place by the Sea is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization. To watch a video to learn more about Mary's Place, please go to: <https://youtu.be/JXTtz07ZoCQ>.

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