

Brian Baker, a Remembrance

By Bernie Michel

Why it took so long for us to meet, I'll never know, but it was through a Farmington Sai Center service project that I met Brian Baker earlier this year. They chose the Plimpton House as a worthy project site and asked me to meet with the person in charge to help organize it, and that's when I first met Brian. As the Assistant Director of South Park Inn, overseeing Plimpton house was one of his duties. It didn't take long for us to find out our many connections, That he had been a part of Plimpton House management for many years and was always intending to reach out to the Asylum Hill neighborhood more, and that I as Staff Administrator for AHNA had been meaning to make a connection to Plimpton House but had never gotten around to it. These were our silos, and we both felt exhilarated to break free.

That we had both studied in Catholic seminaries and used that training afterward to form our approach to the world meant we'd found a brother neither knew we had. The prospect of future collaborations was just beginning to unfold when I saw the email forward telling of his sudden and tragic death.

I haven't been so stunned in a very long time. My sense of loss was deep enough and I had only known him for a few months. I can only imagine what those at South Park Inn and Plimpton House who had come to rely on him for so many years must feel.

That I was scheduled to be out of state during the funeral just made the feeling of helplessness all the greater.

What remains will be a greater commitment to Plimpton House, South Park Inn and all the people whose lives have been changed by their efforts. We will all need to work together to fill the gap that his passing is leaving. Hopefully his life and his memory will inspire us to continue this work in his absence.