

SUMMER 2025

CHRIST'S HOME Connections

Celebrating a Milestone of Life



Christ's Home
Caring. Compassion. Community.

Connections Magazine

Summer 2025

Summer at Christ's Home: More Than Just a Season

Jim McGovern, CEO



Summers are magical during childhood.

Sun-drenched days that seemed to stretch on forever during summer vacation... Riding your bike barefoot with no destination in mind, chasing lightning bugs as the streetlights came to life, or hearing the ice cream truck's jingle from blocks away and running to find spare change. Maybe you drank from the garden hose between backyard adventures, ate fresh strawberries that stained your fingers red, or took a family vacation crammed in the back of a station wagon that became the highlight of your year. These moments live in us and are stitched into the fabric of who we are.

At Christ's Home, we believe summer is more than a season. It's a feeling—of freedom, joy, wonder, and yes, even healing. Our hope is that every child in our care and every senior adult in our community gets to experience the simple, lasting beauty and warmth that summer can bring.

For the children in our Children's Services program, summer is a time to play, to grow, and to just be kids. It means day trips, sticky popsicle smiles, and the kinds of friendships that form during a game of kickball on a warm evening. For children who have come from hard places, these experiences are more than fun—they are transformative. They remind our kids that life can be good. That it can be safe. That they are deeply loved.

Summer is also a time of transition and new beginnings. This year, we are proud to celebrate eight youth graduating from high school—a tremendous milestone for any young person, but especially for those growing up in the child welfare system. Frequent school changes, missed academic ground, and limited family support can often make graduation feel out of reach. For some of our students, English is not their first language, adding another layer of challenge. Thanks to the dedication of our houseparents—who step in to help with homework, encourage perseverance, and provide stable, loving guidance, graduation becomes more than a goal. It becomes a reality.

This is no small accomplishment. For our graduates, it marks not only academic success but also resilience, courage, and a future filled with hope. Their stories, shared in the pages ahead, are worth celebrating.

"For children who've come from hard places, these moments aren't just fun—they're transformative."

For our senior adults, summer means gathering in the sunshine with friends, sharing laughter around the firepit, tending to a garden, or enjoying ice cream on the dining patio with visiting grandchildren. It's a season for reminiscing—about their own childhood summers, shared with sparkle-eyed grandchildren eager to hear stories from a different time.

At Christ's Home, summer is about more than activities and weather—it's about connection. It's about community. It's about creating meaningful moments that bring generations together and foster healing and joy.

"Summer is about connection. It's about community."

As we soak up the sunshine and all that this season brings, we are deeply grateful for the generous support of friends like you. You make these moments possible. Whether through funding a weekend ice cream social or helping us provide consistent, loving care, your partnership is behind every smile, every bike ride, every shared story.

Your gift can make a difference this summer in the life of a child.

From all of us at Christ's Home, may your summer be filled with the warmth of sweet memories, the joy of loved ones, and the peace of knowing that you've helped create something beautiful.

With gratitude,
Jim McGovern
Chief Executive Officer

Phil. 3:13 – "But this one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before."

MISSION STATEMENT

The heart of Christ's Home is to serve the Lord by providing services to senior adults and disadvantaged children in an atmosphere graced with love, dignity, compassion and respect.

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Celebrating the Resilience of Our 2025 Graduates



EIGHT STUDENTS. EIGHT JOURNEYS. **ONE INCREDIBLE ACHIEVEMENT.**

Graduation is always a milestone worth celebrating, but for the eight high school seniors at Christ's Home who stepped into their caps and gowns this year, it's a victory of remarkable strength, determination, and perseverance. These young men and women are not just crossing a stage—they're crossing a threshold into a future they have fought hard to claim.

Each of our graduates has overcome challenges that most of their peers will never fully understand. Growing up as residents at Christ's Home, they've navigated the emotional complexities of being separated from family, transitioning into a new living environment, and carrying the weight of past traumas—all while managing the everyday pressures of school, friendships, and adolescence.

But despite the obstacles, they've risen.

They've showed up—to class, to tutoring sessions, to difficult conversations. They've played on sports teams, joined clubs, and held part-time jobs. **Most importantly, they've kept going when it would've been easier to give up.**

For many of them, a high school diploma isn't just a piece of paper—it's proof that their past doesn't define them. It's a door to opportunity that, at times, felt locked. And now, it's wide open.

At Christ's Home, we are a place set apart for healing, growth, and transformation. These graduates are living testimonies of that truth. Our staff walked with them through the hard days, and is now leading them forward with purpose.

Some of our graduates are heading to college, others to trade schools or full-time employment. A few are still deciding their next steps—and that's okay. What matters most is that they've made it to this moment—with the love, encouragement, and support of our Christ's Home community.

Their stories inspire us. Their grit humbles us. And their futures give us hope.

"Congratulations, graduates. You've walked a challenging road, and now — with God by your side — you're ready to step boldly into all He has prepared for you."

Tributes

During the period of March 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025, Christ's Home was blessed to receive many contributions in memory and in honor of people who are important to the lives of our supporters. We extend thanks and appreciation to everyone who chose this avenue to support the mission and services of Christ's Home, while paying tribute to special individuals in their lives.

In Memory

BOB BORDERS

Anna Hartman

BARBARA CANTAGALLO

Andrew Cantagallo

HEINRICH DIENERT

Hedwig Denndoerfer

CHARLES FIRTH

Mary Petrachonis

GRACE GASIOR

Frank Reed

KELLY ANNE BLACKBURN HICE

Debra Grace

DANIEL KLIM

Beverly Korman

DEAN LEIB

Dennis and Marilyn Czekaj

John Graham

Ellen Link

Nancy MacMillan

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Laura Curcio

Conrad and Normandy Gack

Edith Magierowski

Michele Musumeci

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Cynthia, Tony, Eric and Nick

Prochilo

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Karen Becker

GEORGE ZAUFNIK

Judy Doherty

CHRIST'S HOME LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

Dennis and Kathleen McCann

CHRIST'S HOME TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Patricia Barren

Employee Spotlight:

JESSICA PLUNKETT



We would like to congratulate Jessica Plunkett, Administrator of Personal & Memory Care Services, for achieving the 2025 Leading Age PA Fellows in Leadership Certification.

This achievement gives recipients an opportunity to grow in their leadership journey, learn different management styles, and learn how to manage her colleagues through difficult times and changes. Jessica was encouraged by Jim McGovern, Chief Executive Officer, to apply for the program and she says it has helped her grow immensely over the past year.

An incredibly selective program, there were 600 applicants this year and only 24 people were selected. Overall, the program has only 250 alumni and was established by Leading Age PA in 2010.

Jessica was inspired to get into nursing at 14 years old when she witnessed the care her

grandmother received after she had a

brain aneurysm and recovered. This moment gave Jessica her calling and she never looked back. Since then, her career has enjoyed a steady rise as she continues providing care to senior adults here at Christ's Home.

"As a Christian, the thought of working in a faith-based community who honored the Lord in their work was paramount. When I walked in back in 2020, I was immediately welcomed," Jessica said. "The core values and mission statement of Christ's Home says it all and was what really sold me on accepting the position."

Jessica says her favorite Bible Verse is Philippians 4:13, which states, *"I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."*

Congratulations, Jessica!

Jessica joins Jim McGovern, Karen Alizzi, Vernon Morris, and Barry Little as Christ's Home leaders who have completed the "Fellows in Leadership Program."

Christ's Home is proud of our exceptional leaders.

A Day of Healing, Connection, and Joy:

WELLNESS RETREAT UPLIFTS CHRIST'S HOME YOUTH

The children at Christ's Home recently enjoyed a day filled with joy, connection, and healing during a special health and wellness retreat in partnership with the Jack & Jill Foundation. Set in a peaceful setting at Haycock Camping Ministries in Kintnersville, PA, the retreat offered our youth a much-needed break from their daily routines—an opportunity to laugh, play, and grow in a safe, supportive environment. From physical activities to moments of quiet reflection, the day was designed to nurture the whole child—body, mind, and spirit—while building stronger connections with peers and caregivers.

As Anthony Cartusciello, Administrator of Children & Family Services, reflected:

"I'm still feeling the energy & inspiration from this event. As nice as the physical site in nature was, what truly made the day special was the extraordinary young people and staff at Christ's Home being brought together at this God-ordained time for purposes of drawing us closer to Him and each other. To God be the Glory."

Thank you to the generosity of The Jack & Jill Foundation! Experiences like this give children in foster care the chance to heal, be encouraged, and build resilience for the future.



A Mother's Touch:

PAINTING HOPE AT CHRIST'S HOME

When Tammy first arrived at Christ's Home, she felt overwhelmed, isolated, and unsure of what her future held. As a teen mom, the weight of raising her daughter, Heather, felt heavy—especially in a world where judgment often speaks louder than understanding. But what began as sadness slowly turned into strength, and what once felt like the end of her story became the beginning of something transformative.

This spring, something truly beautiful unfolded on campus—not just in color and creativity, but in quiet restoration. At a recent art contest, the community room buzzed with laughter as children and teenagers leaned into the joy of creating. Tables overflowed with crayons, paints, and canvases. Among them sat Tammy and her daughter, side by side. Tammy gently encouraged Heather as she filled her paper with color and imagination.

To anyone passing by, it may have seemed like a sweet, everyday mother-daughter moment. But for those who know Tammy's journey—her perseverance, her heartbreak, her resilience—it was something much more. It was a picture of restoration in progress. A reflection of a young mother learning how to lead with love and empathy, not just for her daughter, but for the other young women she lives with and supports daily.



When the art contest ended, our Children's Chaplain shared a brief message grounded in Ephesians 2:10:

"We are God's masterpiece—created anew in Christ to do the good things He planned for us long ago." As her words settled into the room, Tammy's eyes filled with tears. In that quiet moment, she wasn't just a teen mom helping her child paint—she was reminded of her worth, her purpose, and her beauty.

Tammy still says she hasn't found her faith in God—not yet. She's searching. But she holds tightly to what she knows now: she is capable of love, leadership, and change.

With the support of her houseparent, whom Tammy says has made the most impact on her during these past two years, she's learned that she can be a leader, not a follower. She can be a steady, empathetic voice for other young moms facing the same fears she's walked through. "I just try to help the other girls like me," she shared. "I've been there. I know what it's like."

Her high school graduation was one of her proudest moments. Seeing her houseparent there, cheering her on, made the day even more special. "She's believed in me since the beginning. Having her there made me feel like I wasn't alone in this."



Looking ahead, Tammy dreams of one thing: providing a stable, loving home for Heather. And she wants others to understand something important: "Being a single teen mom doesn't make you any less of a mom. We love our kids just as much as anyone else. We're doing our best—just like every other mom out there."

At Christ's Home, it's not always the big milestones that define a journey. Sometimes, it's the quiet moments—a conversation, a painting, a prayer—that plant the seeds of transformation. For Tammy, those seeds are taking root. And though her story is still unfolding, she's already become a source of strength and inspiration for those around her.

Because here, every mother matters. Every child matters. And every life—just like Tammy's—is a masterpiece in progress.

A Night to Remember With

MOVIE PRODUCER AND FORMER CHRIST'S HOME RESIDENT NATE DEEN



Christ's Home recently welcomed nearly 300 guests to its annual Spring Fundraising Dinner, a night marked by meaningful stories, community, generosity, and the powerful return of former resident and film producer, Nate Deen. The red-carpet themed event not only celebrated Nate's inspiring journey but also raised more than \$100,000 in support of Christ's Home Children's Services.

The event was held in the Christ's Home Community Center and guests listened attentively as Nate shared his personal story—one that began in hardship but was ultimately transformed through love, faith, and the care he received while living at Christ's Home as a young boy.

Nate is the producer of *Brave the Dark*, a powerful feature film based on his own life. The film, which premiered in January at The

Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, tells the story of Nate's early struggles and the life-changing impact of his high school English teacher and theater arts director, Stan Deen, at Garden Spot High School in Lancaster County.

In a deeply moving moment during the evening, Nate spoke about how Stan Deen's unwavering support gave him not only a second chance, but a family. The teacher's kindness helped Nate find stability, hope, and the courage to pursue a career in the arts. Now, with over three decades of creative work under his belt, Nate has dedicated his life to telling meaningful stories and helping youth find healing through creative expression.

Following the success of *Brave the Dark*, Nate launched The Stan Deen Foundation. The nonprofit supports at-risk youth who, like Nate once did, face the lasting impact of trauma and need a compassionate adult to believe in them.

Originally named Nathaniel Williams, he changed his last name to Deen in honor of the man who changed his life. It's a full-circle tribute to the power of mentorship, resilience, and a perfect reflection of the mission of Christ's Home.



Pictured left to right: Jim McGovern, Jessica Deen, Nathaniel Deen, George Zauflik, John Bryant

The funds raised at the event will help offset operating costs for Christ’s Home Children’s Services. However, the night was more than a fundraiser—it was a celebration of transformation, generosity, and the enduring power of one person to change a life.

Special Thanks to the Sponsors who made this evening possible!

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A Legacy of Quiet Strength:

HONORING ANN K. SHIGO

Ann K. Shigo was a woman of quiet strength and steadfast generosity. As a faithful monthly donor to Christ's Home, she believed deeply in supporting a mission that cared for both children and seniors with love and dignity. Her consistent giving was a reflection of her values—providing steady, reliable support that made a lasting difference in the lives of others. Monthly donors like Ann play a vital role in sustaining the day-to-day needs of those we serve, and her legacy continues to inspire that same spirit of compassion and commitment.

Ann passed away peacefully at Christ's Home in Warminster, PA, on Saturday, February 22, 2025. She was 96.

She was the beloved wife of the late Elmer W. Shigo, with whom she shared 59 years of marriage and a large, loving home in Washington Crossing, PA.

Ann and Elmer enjoyed reconnecting with fellow veterans at Thunderbird reunions in Oklahoma, where Ann led the army wives in creating quilt squares that she sewed into commemorative quilts for raffles. She remained active in the women's ministry at Washington Crossing United Methodist Church and treasured a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with church friends.



After Elmer's passing, Ann made her home in a cottage at Christ's Home, where she lived for twelve years. Rain or shine, she walked her small dog, Sparkie, several times a day, and faithfully tackled the Sunday crossword and Sudoku puzzles. She continued sharing her gifts through music at church services and by offering friendship and encouragement to her neighbors.

Our Community Center Hosts

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE FOR A NETWORKING BREAKFAST



Pictured left to right: George Zauflik, Vice President of Corporate Relations, Christ's Home; Charles Kueney, President of Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce; Theresa Fera, President & CEO of Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce; Judy Doherty, Executive Director of Greater BucksMont Chamber of Commerce; Rick Meyers, Interim Membership Coordinator, Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce; and Brenda Greene, Director of Development, Christ's Home.

We hosted over 80 businesspersons representing four local chambers of commerce for a networking event in our multipurpose Community Center on May 19. Attendees had the opportunity to meet each other and expand their networks in a welcoming setting.

The following chambers of commerce participated in this event:

- Greater Bucks/Mont Chamber of Commerce, led by Judy Doherty, Executive Director
- Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce, led by William J. Ferrara, Executive Director
- Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce, led by Theresa Fera, President & CEO
- Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, led by Charles Kueney, President

A highlight of the morning was the featured presentation by Jay Desko, President & CEO of The Center Consulting Group, who shared powerful leadership principles centered on courage and resilience.

Independent Living Residents Have Fun

PARTICIPATING IN 42ND ANNUAL BUCKS COUNTY SENIOR GAMES



Most people think athletes are supposed to retire and hang up the cleats at some point. Those people clearly haven't met the senior adults living at Christ's Home.

At the 42nd Annual Bucks County Senior Games, 18 independent living residents participated in the event, winning 5 gold medals, 1 silver, and 1 bronze!

When the event was all said and done, **Jeff Hovis** won the gold medal in cornhole, **Gretchen Keller** won the gold medal in table tennis, and **Steve Grant** won three gold medals in cornhole, football throw, and softball throw.

Meanwhile, **Tom Davenport** won a silver medal in bocce ball and **Andy Cantagallo** won the bronze medal in bocce ball.

We are so happy our residents had fun, showed great sportsmanship, and won several medals! They also wore their own jerseys for the event, a blue and white shirt with the verse Colossians 3:23 on the front, which reminds us, ***"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart."***

"This incredible event brought out the best in our residents and showcased the spirit of our community," Wellness Nurse Alicia Ferry said.

“Beyond the medals, what stood out was the camaraderie, laughter, and genuine joy shared by our residents. It was a wonderful example of wellness, connection, and living vibrantly at any age.”

The Bucks County Senior Games kicked off at Bucks County Community College for the opening ceremony and lasted from Thursday, June 5th to Thursday, June 12th. Events at the senior games included bocce ball, a mile walkathon, bowling, trivia, cornhole, table tennis, and frisbee. The event is sponsored by the Bucks County Area Agency on Aging and anyone 50 or older is eligible to participate.

At Christ’s Home, we take great pride in building community, getting our residents involved, and promoting health and wellness to all of our residents. This wouldn’t be possible without the tireless hard work of all our wellness nurses, life enrichment staff, dining therapy staff, and our entire senior services staff.

Alicia Ferry and the senior games participants are already looking forward to next year’s senior games.

“Next year, we’re dreaming even bigger. Our goal is to double our participation to 40 residents, and we’re confident we can make it happen with continued encouragement and support,” Alicia Ferry said.



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