

The Heartbeat

United Church of Christ Homes

A place to be yourself and celebrate your life

Special Interest Articles:

- Annual Corporation Meeting Held
- 29th Annual Helping Hands Event a Success!

Individual Highlights:

- Annual Meeting 2
- Resident Spotlight 3
- Staff Focus 4
- Meet A Resident 5
- Mission Support 6

“In the Spirit of Christ’s love, the ministry of United Church of Christ Homes is to provide care and service to elders through acts of love and compassion.”

UCC Homes invites you to visit our new website at www.ucc-homes.org or scan the QR Code below and please share with friends!



A Message from UCC Homes President and CEO Meredith Schell Fields

As I settle in as President and CEO, I recognize the great responsibility of upholding the mission statement that I believe in and value. My goal is to provide leadership worthy of our mission and be present in our communities, reinforcing the foundation of why UCC Homes is a well-respected and successful provider in aging services.

For the past 15 years, I’ve been fortunate to work with amazing professionals who serve our residents through acts of love and compassion at all levels of our organization. I’ve witnessed our mission at work through the exceptional care our staff provide not only to our residents, but also to their families and to each other as co-workers. I’m grateful that our staff choose to work here and proudly serve those who have chosen to call our communities their home.

We celebrated many of these staff members during our Annual Corporation Meeting in April. Years of Service pins were presented to nine employees who reached the milestones of 25, 30, and 40 years of dedicated service with UCC Homes. Additionally, five employees received awards for distinguished service. UCC Homes’ Distinguished Service awards spotlight the amazing work of our staff members across each of our communities and feature Lifetime Achievement, Manager of the Year, Clinical and Direct Caregivers of the Year, and Staff Member of the Year. Each recipient was nominated by their peers or supervisor for demonstrating exceptional dedication, compassion, and leadership in serving residents within their community. I am proud to work with these dedicated team members.

Another recent celebration was the wonderful turnout for our 29th Annual Helping Hands event, to benefit UCC Homes Benevolent Endowment Trust Fund. The day was filled with fellowship, generosity, and smiles. I was honored to meet so many people who are genuinely dedicated to being partners in our mission.

I am looking forward to the journey we take through the second half of 2025. On behalf of UCC Homes and the residents we serve, I thank you for being part of our ministry and pray for your continued support in years to come.

To donate now to UCC Homes, please visit our website at www.ucc-homes.org and click on the Make a Donation button at the bottom of the home page.

UCC Homes' 62nd Annual Corporation Meeting Held

The 62nd Annual Corporation meeting of United Church of Christ Homes was held on April 24, 2025 in the Willow Community Room at the Giant Food Store in Camp Hill, PA. Pastors, lay delegates, Board members and staff gathered for refreshments and fellowship prior to the business meeting.

Chair Mr. Kenneth Womack called the meeting to order and Rev. John Reiker offered the invocation. The minutes of the 2024 Corporation Meeting were approved as presented. Mr. James Lyons, Treasurer, presented an overview of the current financial position of the corporation and the audited 2024 financial statements, which showed that the organization's financial strength increased and remains stable.

President/CEO Mrs. Meredith Schell Fields recognized employees with significant anniversaries, who work selflessly and tirelessly to provide care and service for the residents, including Patricia Bowman for 40 years and Victoria Velez for 30 years. The following employees were recognized for 25 years: Jason Binkley, Heather Brand, Dianne Fichthorn, Teresa Harper, Michele Klusman, Dena Stringer, and Carol Weaver.

Mrs. Fields announced the winners of UCC Homes' Distinguished Awards program and provided a brief description of the qualifications for each award. The following employees were nominated by their peers in each category and winners received an acrylic award and framed certificate:

Desiree Cruz, The Lebanon Valley Home – Staff Member of the Year
Bobbi Seyfert, The Lebanon Valley Home – Direct Caregiver of the Year
Angelique Danisa, Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home – Licensed Caregiver of the Year
Ryanne Houser, Thornwald Home – Manager of the Year
Heather Brand, Ephrata Manor – Kay Price Lifetime Achievement Award

Several UCC Homes' employees were also nominated for various LeadingAge PA awards. Chosen from many applicants from across the state, Ms. Lauren Clark, Kindred Place, was awarded Leader of the Year and was recognized during the LeadingAge PA Annual Conference in June.

With much gratitude, the following outgoing Board members were uplifted for their years of service and received a certificate of appreciation along with a handmade bowl and towel, traditional Christian symbols of service: Mr. Dennis Plymette, Rev. Barry Smock, and Mr. Greg Young.

Rev. Dr. Christopher Rankin facilitated the election and installation of nominees to the Board of Directors of UCC Homes, who have agreed to serve a three-year term. Volunteers elected to Board of Directors and installed included Rev. Dwight Hein, Mr. Craig Kern, Mr. Emerson Paul, and Mr. Kenneth Womack. After Rev. Dr. Rankin offered an inspiring and thoughtful benediction, the business meeting adjourned.

UCC Homes Helping Hands Event a Success!

UCC Homes 29th Helping Hands event raised over \$28,600 for the Benevolent Endowment Trust Fund! We are extremely grateful for the individuals, congregations, sponsors, businesses, and organizations who supported this event. Additional thanks to Special Events Committee members Kathi Blose, Kay Boyer, Melissa Cawley, Lorna Davis, Maggie Davis, Kay Deaner, Gail Havens, and Mike Webb for all the time and effort put forth to make this event so successful!

**Please mark your calendars for our 30th Helping Hands event on Saturday, May 9, 2026
at the Hershey Country Club!**

Resident Spotlight on Kindred Place at Harrisburg

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

*“Don’t put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the further you get.”
--- Michael Phelps, Olympic Gold Medalist in Swimming*

Mrs. Wilma “Willy” Richey, a resident of Kindred Place at Harrisburg, does not view age as a barrier to learning new skills. Traumatized by a near-drowning experience when she was a little girl, Mrs. Richey never gave up on her dream of learning to swim. Buoyed by her husband’s encouragement and her own determination to conquer her fear of water, she enrolled in swimming lessons at the local recreational center when she was 50 years old.

“It was hard, but I worked and worked at it. When I eventually was able to swim a full length of the Olympic-sized pool, I felt like a star athlete!”

Mrs. Richey turned that feeling of being a star athlete into a reality. She continued to craft her “front crawl” techniques and went on to win a Gold medal in the freestyle swimming event in the Senior Olympics, two years in a row! She admits that while she normally is not a competitive person, participating in the Senior Olympics ignited a bit of competitiveness in her heart, which paid off in Gold medals.

Sharing that her late husband, Stan, made the biggest impact on her life, she didn’t think too much of him initially. Before WWII, Stan was to go out on a date with her sister, but he stood her up. Mrs. Richey was a bit younger at that time. When he returned home after the war, he noticed Mrs. Richey, not her sister, and they married in June 1949. Their deep love for each other in marriage spanned 72 years.

During their life together, they moved quite a few times. Mr. Richey worked as a Naval Investigator and Special Agent, which entailed assignments that prompted the relocations. They began their life together in Chicago, IL but moved to San Diego, CA, Washington, DC, Alexandria, VA before finally landing in Harrisburg, PA. Mrs. Richey proudly shared that he was the Deputy Director when he retired. They lovingly raised two sons, Dennis and David, both who visit Mrs. Richey every Saturday.

Always up for a challenge, Mrs. Richey enjoyed working for a temp agency as a typist, as it offered different tasks each day. She often did production typing and viewed the stacks of projects as a mission to accomplish. Mrs. Richey’s kindness towards co-workers earned her many friends over the years.

Moving to Kindred Place after her husband passed away, Mrs. Richey brought a charming reminder of her husband’s love for her. When living in Alexandria, they came across an artist who painted historical parts of their neighborhood. Knowing her appreciation of the amazing architecture of that area, Mr. Richey gifted two framed paintings to Mrs. Richey for Mother’s Day that year. They are the featured artwork in her apartment.

At 95 years young, Mrs. Richey strives to embrace new experiences. At Kindred Place at Harrisburg, she has learned the benefits of Chair Yoga, a practice she never had the opportunity to try prior to moving there. She felt welcomed from day one and has made many friends at Kindred Place.

Her advice for a living a long life, “Be kind to each other and have a good sense of humor.”



Mrs. Wilma Richey

Staff Focus on The Lebanon Valley Home

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

Traveling around the world might seem like a luxury reserved for only a small percentage of the population but at The Lebanon Valley Home, it is possible to explore the globe without breaking the bank or even stepping outside. For Cheryl Frattaroli, Activities Assistant, fostering the excitement of touring new destinations for the residents is one of her favorite projects. Her genuine enthusiasm for bringing joy to the residents is apparent in all her endeavors.

Thanks to Cheryl's endless creativity, on any given day residents might have the opportunity to travel around the world as the Leisure Center is transformed into France, Italy, China, ancient Egypt, Hawaii, or even Walt Disney World. Residents can step off the beaten path for an adventure of learning about many different cultures, traditions, religions, distinctive attire, and world cuisines. Cheryl shares that the great success of these trips is due to the exceptional teamwork with her co-workers and support from Amy Tillinger, Director of Activities.

"I love and appreciate the girls in the Activities Department. We all have strengths and weaknesses, but we work well together and compliment each other's strengths and weaknesses. That is what makes our department run so efficiently...along with a fantastic boss."

One of her co-workers whom she works extremely well with is her daughter, Gianna Frattaroli. Cheryl, who attributes her love for helping others to her grandmothers and great grandmother, passed the importance of caring for others along to Gianna from a very young age.

"I used to visit Mom at work, and I would act out stories for the residents as she would read to them. Working together now makes our jobs easier, as we can read each other very well. We learn from each other, but we learn even more from the residents. Everyday brings something new," Gianna shared.

As music enthusiasts, both Cheryl and Gianna impersonate famous performers for the residents. Dressed as American pop duo Sonny and Cher, they performed the well-known song, *I Got You Babe*, to the residents' delight. Diana Ross, Liberace, and the crowd favorite Elvis also graced the halls of The Lebanon Valley Home. Their multi-talented skills also include cooking and baking. They each work every other Sunday on opposite Sundays and have begun a tradition of preparing favorite foods for residents. Gianni is known for making the best baked potatoes and burgers while Cheryl's specialty is dipped eggs. They do try new recipes to share with both residents and staff, who appreciate their skills. They noted with deep gratitude, "We couldn't pull off our special activities without the help of all the departments. Everyone's assistance is important for the success of events."

What's new for the upcoming months? Gianna will be welcoming a new addition to her family and Cheryl is thrilled to be a first-time grandmother. They'll host a gender reveal event at The Lebanon Valley Home. Cheryl plans to bake cr me-filled cupcakes to share with residents and staff, with just one bite needed to unveil pink or blue filling.

Describing herself as compassionate, Cheryl strives to always have an open ear and open heart. She is grateful for the residents and for what they teach her each day. She finds purpose uplifting and honoring them. "They have so much to give and deserve quality of life with dignity. If I can give back, knowing that I made at least one person happy or smile, I know I've done my job," Cheryl emphasized.



Gianna and Cheryl Frattaroli

Meet a Resident at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

“Listen to your parents. They can see things you can’t see when you are younger.” Mrs. Catherine Hershey heeded her own advice, which she now shares with younger people. Mrs. Hershey, resident of Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home, believes had she not listened to her parents when she was preparing to graduate from High School, her life would not have been so fulfilling.

Active in chorus, 21 Club, and intramural sports during her high school years, Mrs. Hershey was curious and appreciated learning. Her favorite subject was English, but her favorite teacher was Miss Brubaker, who taught Latin. Latin classes were difficult but what she gained complimented her English skills, since a significant portion of the English language is rooted in Latin. Despite her love of education, she wanted to graduate and get married right away. Her parents had a different perspective and did not want her to marry her boyfriend at the time. Instead, they strongly encouraged her to attend Moravian College for Women. Able to obtain a scholarship for college, she enrolled in their business program. At that time, only a small percentage of young women were seeking higher education and earning college degrees. After college, Mrs. Hershey moved to Harrisburg and worked for Pennsylvania Savings and Loan.

While she was employed by Pennsylvania Savings and Loan, a friend set her up on a blind date with Robert Hershey. Mrs. Hershey revealed that she had no idea who he was, but he apparently knew who she was from mutual friends. She grew up in New Cumberland and he was from Lemoyne. He took her to a DeMolay formal for their first date and they were both smitten with each other. They dated for a year, got engaged on Christmas, and married the following July. They moved to Philadelphia for his job. Quaker Valley Federal Savings and Loan hired Mrs. Hershey. She loved working there and delighted in meeting new people. Mr. & Mrs. Hershey raised three wonderful daughters, all who now live locally and visit Mrs. Hershey on a regular basis. Smiling, she recalls lots of good memories of living in Philadelphia, including exploring the variety of restaurants the city offered.

Their family eventually moved back to Lemoyne and then settled in Mechanicsburg. Mrs. Hershey left the Savings and Loan business and pivoted to teaching. She worked at the Mechanicsburg Middle School, where she taught vocational skills. She loved the children and helping them learn gave her a great sense of purpose. The camaraderie among teachers was extremely rewarding as well.

Her faith is very important to her. She was an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lemoyne for over 50 years, teaching Sunday School, assisting with youth activities, and serving on the Altar Guild. While she doesn’t get to Trinity Lutheran Church for worship services, she looks forward to reading the church newsletter to see how the church continues to grow.

An avid sports fan, she cheers for the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Philadelphia Phillies. Mrs. Hershey also loves nature, with plants adorning her windowsill. During mornings and early evenings her view enables her to watch entertaining antics of many squirrels and birds.

Very pleased with the care she receives at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home, she shared, “The people are wonderful, and it is very nice and clean. You won’t get bored with all the activities offered. If you have to go somewhere, this is the place to be.”



Mrs. Catherine Hershey



United Church of Christ Homes

30 N. 31st Street
Camp Hill, PA 17011



UCC Homes

30 N. 31st Street
Camp Hill, PA 17011
(717) 303-1502
(717) 303-1607 FAX
www.ucc-homes.org

Community Locations

The Lebanon Valley Home
550 East Main Street
Annville, PA 17003
(717) 867-4467

Thornwald Home
442 Walnut Bottom Road
Carlisle, PA 17013
(717) 249-4118

Ephrata Manor
99 Bethany Road
Ephrata, PA 17522
(717) 738-4940

Kindred Place at Annville
One Kindred Place
Annville, PA 17003
(717) 867-5572

Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home
1000 West South Street
Carlisle, PA 17013
(717) 245-2187

Kindred Place at Harrisburg
4700 Oakhurst Blvd.
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(717) 657-7900

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