

# The Heartbeat

**United Church of Christ Homes**  
*A place to be yourself and celebrate your life*

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- UCC Homes 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Corporation Meeting Notice

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*"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 website at [www.ucc-homes.org](http://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

Spring is a season of renewal and transformation – a time that beautifully reflects the mission of United Church of Christ Homes. As we witness new life around us, we are reminded of our call to provide care rooted in the selfless, sacrificial love of Christ. This spirit of compassion and service remains the cornerstone of everything we do.

The commitment to our mission is most evident through our Benevolent Fund and Benevolent Endowment Trust Fund. These resources allow us to support residents who have exhausted their financial means and are ineligible for government assistance. While not a guarantee, it remains the steadfast intention of UCC Homes that no resident ever be asked to leave due to inability to pay. This promise is a tangible expression of unconditional love.

This year holds special significance as we approach our annual **Helping Hands event on May 9, 2026**. It marks the **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of our largest fundraising initiative, benefiting the Benevolent Endowment Trust Fund.

In honor of this three-decade milestone, we are encouraging supporters to consider monetary gifts in increments of **\$30.00**. These gifts directly strengthen this fund, ensuring that the interest generated can continue to augment benevolent care for years to come.

The enduring success of Helping Hands over the last 30 years is a testament to the generosity of our sponsoring congregations, Board of Directors, team members, business partners, and friends.

Serving at United Church of Christ Homes has allowed me to see firsthand the profound impact of the Benevolent Endowment Trust Fund. I am truly humbled to witness what can be achieved when your generosity meets the spirit of Christ's love.

***We invite you to learn more about our 2026 Helping Hands event by visiting our website and clicking on the purple Helping Hands button under the Ways to Give tab.***

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

## Attention Pastors & Lay Delegates

The 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Corporation Meeting of United Church of Christ Homes will be held on **Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 10:00 AM** at the Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center, 1150 Camp Hill Bypass, Camp Hill, PA 17011. Registration begins at 9:00 am. A plated breakfast will be offered at 9:15 am. Your presence as members of the Corporation is essential as we elect new members to the Board of Directors and for you to learn about updated strategic plans for our ministry. We hope to see you there!

### Resident Spotlight on The Lebanon Valley Home

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

Serving others is not just a task to undertake but a reflection of Christ's love. For Mrs. Priscilla Gonya, resident at The Lebanon Valley Home, her lifetime of service for the benefit of others stems from her deep faith. Mrs. Gonya's daughter, Mrs. Linda Gonya Hartman, assisted her mother in sharing the incredible acts of kindness, compassion, and selflessness that spanned decades of her life.

Mrs. Gonya grew up in Kentucky and diligently focused on her studies, which earned her a scholarship to The Ohio State University. She was privileged to be the first one in her family to go to college, where she majored in Home Economics. She met her future husband Joe, who was there on the GI bill, when she stopped by the mailroom where he worked to pick up mail. In the early years of their marriage, they were called through their faith to help others, giving of themselves.

In the late 1950s, after the birth of their two eldest children, Steve and Terri, the Gonyas began fostering babies, providing a loving home to them before they were adopted or returned to their biological parents. Having a houseful of babies ignited their desire to grow their family. They decided to adopt a baby boy, David, and two years later gave birth to their daughter, Linda, and their youngest daughter, Jenni, eight years later.

Beginning in 1979, Youth for Understanding (YFU) sought host families for exchange students and once again, the Gonyas felt called to service. Their first two exchange students were from Mexico and the Philippines. Over three decades they hosted over 40 students from all over the world. Mrs. Gonya served as Regional Placement Director for YFU for 25 years, placing students in homes in addition to providing orientation and transition programs. She played a vital part to the success of the mission.

For most people, raising a family, fostering children, serving as a Director for YFU, and substituting as a Home Economics teacher would offer more than enough fulfillment in one's life. In addition to these callings, Mrs. Gonya was a dedicated Red Cross volunteer for over 40 years, receiving the honor of Volunteer of the Year award for her generous gifts that significantly impacted the mission. She loved volunteering and served as a CPR and educational instructor for the Lebanon County Chapter. She also provided disaster relief, traveling to different areas to assist with shelter placement and distribution of basic supplies.

Her daughter, Linda, had heard high praise about the loving care at The Lebanon Valley Home and was impressed by their good reputation and low employee turnover rate. Mrs. Gonya moved there when her healthcare needs changed and she and her family feel it was the best choice. "The amount of attention and genuine care given to Mom is overwhelmingly good," Linda said.

Her way of life is truly faith into action, following Jesus who fed the hungry, healed the sick and reached out to the marginalized with love and respect.



Mrs. Priscilla Gonya (right) and Mrs. Linda Gonya Hartman (left)

## Staff Focus on Ephrata Manor

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

Tom Petty's 1989 song "I Won't Back Down" is about unwavering resolve and resilience...standing your ground in the face of any challenge. This could be the anthem for Kim Scott, Maintenance Assistant at Ephrata Manor. She embraces challenges, persists through difficulties, and welcomes opportunities to learn and develop new skills.

Her career at Ephrata Manor began shortly after a friend told her how well the staff at Ephrata Manor cared for the residents and that employees were well-taken care of and valued. Kim worked initially in the Housekeeping Department and when a day shift position became available, she transferred to the Laundry Department. Her love of learning new skills and seeking new goals and challenges motivated her to eventually apply for a Maintenance Assistant position, of which she assumed in October 2025. For this puzzle lover, every day brings Kim a new puzzle to solve. No two days are the same and constant shifting tasks and unexpected challenges turn work into a daily adventure rather than a routine. Understanding that there is always room for improvement, Kim is driven to fuel her curiosity and adapt as she finds new ways to contribute to the mission provided at Ephrata Manor, including adding electrical and plumbing skills to her knowledge base.

Kim's favorite part of working at Ephrata Manor is engaging with the residents, sharing kinds words of affirmation, laughter, and compassion on difficult days. She also enjoys her wonderful coworkers, who've helped her flourish and whom she feels always has her back. Her deep desire to care for others stems from the lack of compassion and care she experienced growing up. "I want to care for others in ways in which I was not cared for," she shared. "Knowledge is power and has allowed me to see my potential and strive to go above and beyond to help others."

Self-described as energetic and curious, Kim's enthusiasm is a powerful force that propels her towards success and fulfillment not only at work but also in other aspects of life. She adores her teenage son, Shawn, whom she encourages to stay true to himself and not rush to grow up. She's proud to have passed along her love of learning and reading to him. Family is important and inspires her. Her artistic nephew recently persuaded her to dabble in acrylics and now she finds painting scenic views relaxing and an outlet for her creativity.

Another outlet for relaxation is working out at the gym three to four times a week. Keeping active and fit helps Kim align her inner spirit with her true self. She's been exploring healthy recipes on Pinterest and adding her own spin on them. A book is never far from her reach, whether the genre is horror, history, fantasy, or non-fiction. She lists R.L. Stein, Dean Koontz, and Stephen King as a few of her favorite authors. Listening to music is therapeutic for Kim and on any given day R&B, HipHop, Country, Pop, Rock Classical, or hits from the 60s, 70s, and 80s may be on her playlist.

Kim lives authentically and her optimism and positive attitude is contagious. Her life goal is "to be a better person than I was the day before" and model behavior that empowers her son to advocate for himself and show love and kindness towards others.



*Ms. Kim Scott*

## Meet a Resident of Thornwald Home

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

Mr. and Mrs. Fritz, known by friends as Jerry and Rosanne, recently celebrated 60 years of marriage, an exceptional achievement of shared experiences, challenges, and joyful moments. Their paths first crossed during a fall dance at Bloomsburg University, when she was a senior and he a junior, and they have been dance partners ever since.

They both taught for the same school district in Interlaken, New York during their early years of marriage. When they decided to start a family, Mrs. Fritz pivoted to a full-time job of raising their daughter and son, a joyful calling. They moved back to Pennsylvania, first to Camp Hill, then Dillsburg, and finally landing in Mechanicsburg, where they resided for 30 years. Mr. Fritz ventured away from teaching high school math, when he took the Civil Service exam and secured a position with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, at the Central Office in Harrisburg. He eventually received a master's degree from Villanova, which enabled him to secure a Director's position until his retirement.

"Don't put off the things you really want to do. Try to do them before you reach a point when you can't," suggests Mrs. Fritz. They have lived an active and rewarding life. When their kids were young, trips to the beach provided fun family time. In their later years, Viking cruises and guided tours led them to destinations on their bucket list, including South America, Italy, and the Netherlands to name a few. When they were not traveling, Mrs. Fritz used her artistic skills scrapbooking and card making, as she finds it extremely relaxing. She created treasured scrapbooks for each of their four grandchildren and recently finished a new Diamond Art project for their new great granddaughter, who arrives this summer. Mr. Fritz created a side business of building miniatures using his creative skills. His love for miniatures was ignited after crafting a doll house for his daughter. He has sold thousands of miniatures by word of mouth and on eBay. After years of practice and skillful designing, Mr. Fritz can build a wooden miniature present, wrap it, and decorate in about 12 minutes.

Just over two years ago Mrs. Fritz suffered a fall which resulted in a broken hip. That was not on her bucket list. After hip surgery, her rehab journey began at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home. When a spot became available at Thornwald Home, she transferred there and shortly after, Mr. Fritz moved into a double room in Personal Care. As soon as her rehab was completed, Mrs. Fritz joined him in Personal Care. Not to be outdone by his wife, Mr. Fritz recently broke his hip. They are thankful to be at Thornwald Home, where they can receive assistance as needed. They have made a lovely home here and have fostered many new relationships, both with other residents and staff.

The Fritz's go out for activities in the local community, including breakfast with family and friends and to basketball games at Northern High School, where their daughter is the head coach of the girls' basketball team. Their daughter visits several times a week and assists them on planned outings. They shared that they do participate in many of the activities offered at Thornwald Home. Mrs. Fritz attends chair exercise classes and they both enjoy the movies on the big screen, bingo, and musical entertainment.

Mr. & Mrs. Fritz's journey of enduring love, resilience, and mutual growth over six decades is as strong as the diamond that symbolizes 60 years of marriage. Their beautiful life dance continues together.



Mr. & Mrs. Fritz

## New Dietary Guidelines for 2025 to 2030

By Tempest Gagnon, Director of Clinical Services and Education



The Department of Health and Human Services released new dietary guidelines in 2026. The new guidelines prioritize whole nutrient-dense foods – more protein, less grains, and reducing highly processed foods.

Diets should be individualized, based on each person's age, height, weight, and physical activity. Guidelines include protein at each meal, three servings of full-fat dairy, three servings of vegetables, two servings of fruit, and incorporating whole grains. Older adults may need fewer calories but require equal or greater amounts of key nutrients such as protein, vitamin B12, vitamin D, and calcium.

The following recommendations of food types and helpful tips make it easy to build a healthy diet:

- **Proteins** from animal sources such as eggs, poultry, seafood, and red meat and/or plant based, including beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, and soy.
- **Vegetables, fruit**, fermented foods, and high fiber foods help maintain a healthy digestive system. Whole vegetables and fruits if possible but frozen, dried, or canned vegetables or fruit with no or very limited added sugar are good options.
- **Limit deep fried foods.** Choose baked, broiled, roasted, stir-fried, or grilled items.
- **Full-fat dairy** with no added sugars is a good source of protein, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals.
- **Stay hydrated** with water or sparkling water. Drink less alcohol for overall better health. Avoid sugar sweetened beverages such as sodas, fruit drinks, and energy drinks.
- **Use oils** with essential fatty acids such as olive oil, butter, or beef tallow when cooking.
- **Reduce** your consumption of highly processed refined carbohydrates such as white bread and ready-to-eat items, including packaged breakfast options, flour tortillas, and crackers. Chips, cookies, and candy are also highly processed foods that you should limit.
- **Be aware** of added sugars labeled as high-fructose corn syrup, agave syrup, corn syrup, rice syrup, fructose, glucose, dextrose, sucrose, cane sugar, beet sugar, turbinado syrup, maltose, lactose, fruit juice concentrate, honey, or molasses. Non-nutritive sweeteners include aspartame, sucralose, saccharin, xylitol, and acesulfame K.

These recommendations help you meet your nutrient needs through balanced, health eating, assisting your body to function at its best, supporting disease prevention, and promoting overall wellness.

Eat well, feel better, and build healthy habits to last a lifetime!





# United Church of Christ Homes

30 N. 31<sup>st</sup> Street  
Camp Hill, PA 17011



## UCC Homes

30 N. 31<sup>st</sup> Street  
Camp Hill, PA 17011  
(717) 303-1502  
(717) 303-1607 FAX  
[www.ucc-homes.org](http://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

## Yes, I want to support UCC Homes' Mission!

Here is my check made payable to UCC Homes for:

\$250  \$100  \$50  \$25  \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please designate my contribution for the following fund:

Benevolent  Endowment  Benevolent Endowment Trust

**TRIBUTE**  Memorial (or)  In Honor Of

(Person's Name) \_\_\_\_\_

### DONOR INFORMATION

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send your check to:** UCC Homes, Attn: Development Office  
30 N. 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011

To make a donation to UCC Homes, please visit our website at  
[www.ucc-homes.org](http://www.ucc-homes.org) and click on the "Click Here to Make a Donation!"  
button on the home page.

**Thank you for your support!**

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