ECHO

SPRING EDITION - MAY 2015

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM

BETHANY CHILDREN'S HOME

Bethany's Arts & Rec. Department Growing

– Thanks to donors who support these valuable programs

Bethany Children's Home is thankful to have an Arts and Recreation Department that aims to provide individual and group services to our youth. The department works to meet the specific needs of each individual and provide them with experiences that they may have never been offered. With budget cuts in our local schools, arts and recreation are the first programs to go.

Bethany youth roller skating with the Recreation Dept.

Thanks to our donors, youth living at Bethany have access to an assortment of physical and creative outlets that can be used for therapeutic purposes, to develop talents, and to build relationships. A strong Arts and Recreation Department helps our youth do better in school and accomplish more of their individual service goals so that they might be reunited with family or find their forever home.

Arts and Recreation is led by three dedicated Bethany employees, each of whom runs specified groups, individual sessions, and special events. These groups vary from sports, physical fitness, visual arts, and one-on-one sessions. Groups such as volleyball, softball, badminton, basketball, soccer, tennis, wallyball, and flag football are offered to our youth on a weekly basis.

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Bethany's Arts & Rec. Department *Continued*

The arts have flourished in the past year with new activities such as pottery, fused glass, and mosaics. Youth are creating unique individualized projects that they can be proud of and take with them.

The department manages a library for youth and cottages to check out books and DVD's, including a variety of fitness videos.

Rec. staff also provide off campus activities for our youth. They have organized and carried out incentive trips to movies, roller skating, ice skating, dinners, and other day trips.

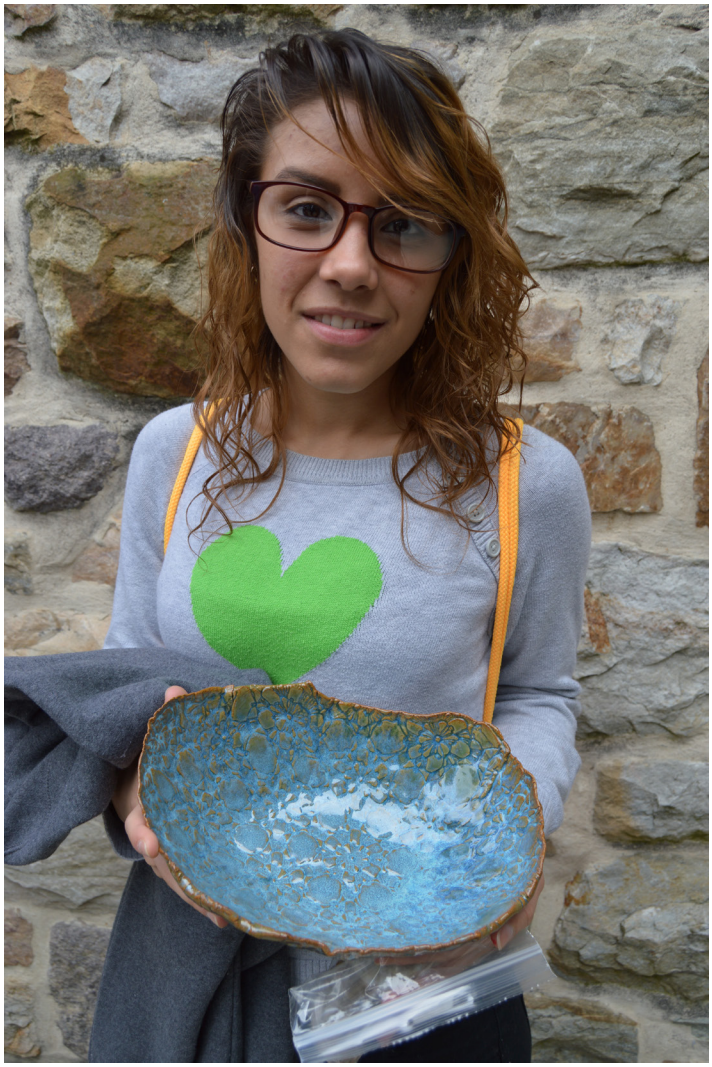
Recreation staff Sarah Palmers says, "Their enjoyment is our priority and with these trips we see those results first-hand."

The department is in the process of developing a weekend incentive trip to Ocean City, Maryland for our youth this summer.

> "There is nothing more rewarding than watching a young person see the ocean for the first time."

Palmer says, "There is nothing more rewarding than watching a young person see the ocean or put their feet into the warm sand for the first time. This was an annual summer incentive trip for Bethany youth, and we were not able to take the trip last summer, so we are dedicated to providing our youth with this experience again."

While Bethany hopes to provide youth memorable experiences, Rec. also teaches team building and life skills. They have partnered with the Schuylkill River Heritage Foundation to provide a summer education program focused on earth sciences.



The department organizes several campus events throughout the year. Bethany's Annual Fall Fest has become a great success. We have hayrides, pumpkin decorating, and crafts. During the summer, we bring our community together each Wednesday evening for dinner and games at the pool.

These events allow us to bring our staff and youth together in a relaxed social setting where plenty of fellowship, friendship, and playfulness can occur. Some of these events have been traditions for decades and we hope to continue those legacies and expand upon them with our growing population.

Arts and rec programs are not included in the per diem local agencies pay for youth in care, so Bethany relies on the generosity of donors like you to provide these important opportunities for our kids. Give us a call today to learn more about how to get involved with our growing Arts and Recreation Department.

Bethany to Host 1st Summer Concert Series Beginning Friday July 10th!

Bethany is set to host the first Summer Concert Series on our Womelsdorf campus, beginning Friday July 10, 2015.

Concerts will be held each Friday in July and August, ending with our Annual Anniversary Day and Community Festival on August 14th. The two-hour shows begin at 7:00 PM.

We are excited to kick off this new entertainment series with local artist Stephanie Grace, who was recently featured in the Reading Eagle, along with Haley Sheeler who will play on Anniversary Day. Bethany will also play host to The Dave Mell Band, Wallace Brothers Band, Caroline Reese, Cloud Party, Matt Miske, and the Keystone Band. Burning House Band will close our A-Day festivities and concert series on Friday night, August 14th.

The concerts are free to the public, and Bethany will accept a freewill offering with proceeds to benefit Bethany's mission of providing brighter futures for at risk youth. The shows are all rain or shine on the Anniversary Stage, so we are asking the audience to bring chairs or blankets.

We will have concessions available in addition to miscellaneous vendors. As always, no tobacco, alcohol, pets, or firearms are allowed on our campus.

ABOUT BETHANY CHILDREN'S HOME

Founded in 1863, Bethany Children's Home has provided a safe place of nurture, protection, and supportive care to aid youth in their own self awareness, growth, and healing for a brighter healthier future. Each year, more than 300 youth who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned are taking back their lives with the help of Bethany.

Residential Programs:

Residential Treatment Program is intended for youth who require support and services to obtain skills in order to move to a less structured setting or return home.

Short Term Intensive Treatment Program is a 90-day program intended for youth whose permanency goal is reunification or for youth who require intensive initial treatment services before Residential Treatment Services begin.

Shelter Care / Emergency Services provides emergency services, crisis intervention, and immediate housing for a co-ed population.

Independent Living is geared towards youth age 16-20 who have maintained satisfactory educational progress, and focuses on advanced life skills to prepare youth to live on their own.

Supervised Independent Living is a post highschool program providing youth housing and community support to succeed in continuing education and beginning employment.

Services:

Music Therapy, spiritual services, arts & recreation, Safe Spaces, anger managment, social services, and more are provided to every youth at Bethany.

We are excited to announce that our resident population is up to 90, and by July all 10 of our residential cottages will be open and serving youth from our local communities. Thanks to your support, Bethany is creating brighter futures for hundreds of youth this year!

Campus Facilities - youth enjoy access to areas that promote therapeutic and leisure activities, including the following:

Haas Learning Center	Hiking trails
In-ground pool	Fishing pond
Full gymnasium	Church
Fitness Center	Softball field
Multi-purpose room	Infirmary
Racquetball courts	Working dairy farm
Basketball	Art studio
Volleyball	Ceramic studio
Tennis courts	Musical instruments
Low ropes course	Recording studio

To learn more, visit www.bethanyhome.org and follow us on:

Bethany Children's Home
Sanctuary® Accredited

May 2015 Wish List Items For Youth Ages 11 to 16

We kindly ask for the items to be NEW for immedate distribution.
We are unable to provide our youth with used clothing and garments.

Kick Balls
Volleyball Net Set & Balls
Flags for Flag Football
Whiffle Ball Set
Alarm Clocks without Radio

Umbrellas
Plastic Hangers
Gift Cards to Wal-Mart or Target
Twin Size Bed in a Bag
Bath Towels

Youth Clothing Needs:

Girls: Junior and Misses Sizes

Short Sleeve T-Shirts, Small - XL
Long Sleeve T-Shirts, Small - XL
Coats, Small - XL
Sweat Pants, Small - XL
Undergarments, Medium (14/16)
Sneakers, Sizes 6 - 9.5

Boys: Young Men's and Men's Sizes

Short Sleeve T-Shirts, Small - XL
Long Sleeve T-Shirts, Small - XL
Coats, Medium - XL
Sneakers, Sizes 6 - 9.5
Jeans, 29/30 or 29/32

Thank you for your consideration and support to help us provide a brighter future for kids and families. Questions: Please Call 610-589-6828 or email: mkerber@bethanyhome.org

The official registration and financial information of Bethany Home Inc. and Bethany Children's Home Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

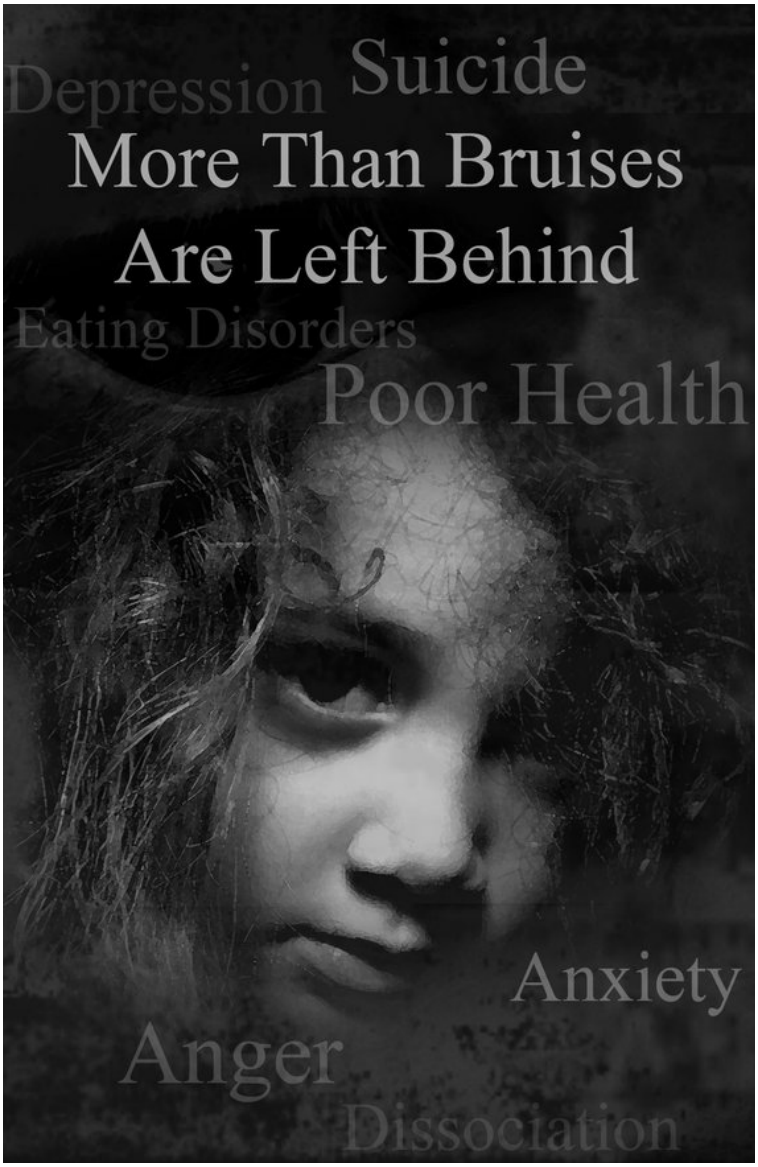
Bethany Helps Them Heal & Grow

Bethany offers healing to victims and works to prevent child abuse

April was National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Bethany Children's Home has stayed on the front lines of this battle to educate, inform, and provide protection for those who need it in our local communities.

Thanks to you - our supporters, followers, and donors - our social media campaign on Facebook has reached thousands of people in and around Berks county.

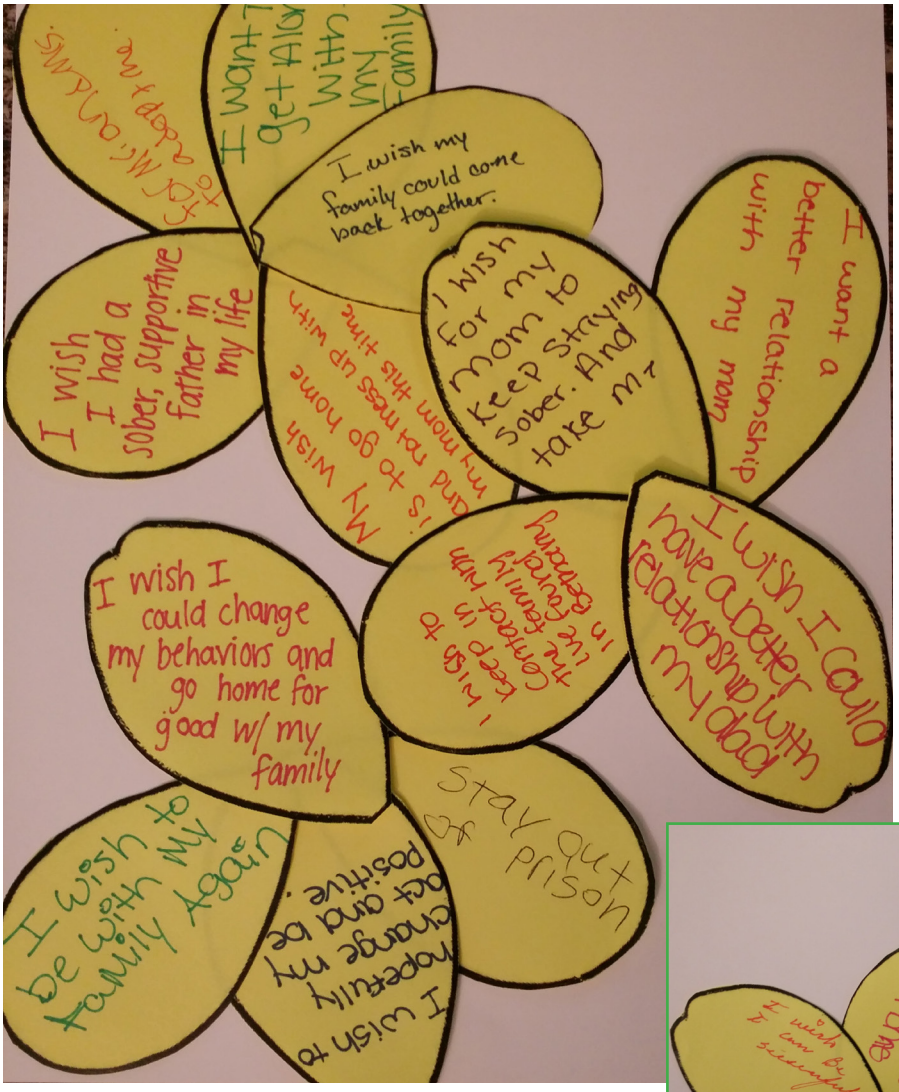
Please remember anyone can call ChildLine to report suspected abuse of a child.
You could save a life. **1-800-932-0313**



Facts from PA Chapter of Children Advocacy Centers & Multidisciplinary Teams

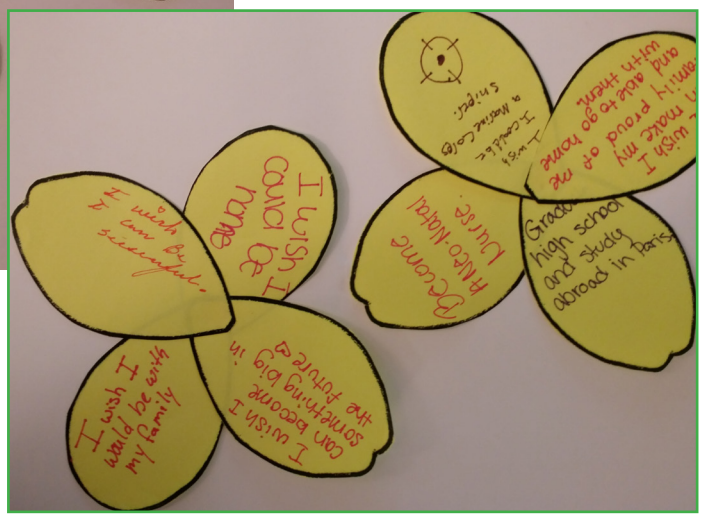
- More than 800,000 children are confirmed victims of abuse or neglect each year in the U.S.
- Neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment, followed by physical abuse
- Children ages 0-6 are the most vulnerable to abuse
- 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys will be sexually assaulted before they reach the age of 18
- 95% of victims know their perpetrators
- Only 1 in 10 child victims discloses abuse, some even keep it a secret well into their adult years
- Consequences of child sexual abuse include fear, loneliness, self-blame, poor self-esteem, anger, and mental health issues

Bethany provides our residents with an array of therapeutic services to work through any abuse they may have endured before coming into our care. We offer life skills training and education to our youth, in an effort to break family cycles of abuse and violence. Prevention is key - help us put an end to child abuse today. Call 610-589-6828 to learn more.



In celebration of spring and the season of fresh hope, Bethany youth were given daffodil petals where they wrote down what could bring renewal to their lives. Through our specialized services and excellent programs, Bethany is working to help these youth achieve their goals and live their dream lives. To learn more about how you can help us help them, call today.

610-589-6828



KidCents is a program created by The Rite Aid Foundation that allows Rite Aid customers to round up their purchases to the nearest dollar and donate their change to help support kid-focused charities. Bethany Children's Home is listed as an official KidCents charity. Through KidCents, Rite Aid customers can visit www.kidcents.com, elect to round up purchases, and donate their change to Bethany!

This means that YOU have the ability to help us reach our goals by simply shopping at Rite Aid and rounding up your purchases for our organization, as well as asking your friends and family to participate in the program. Imagine the change that your change can make!

Call Bethany or visit our website to learn more!

Alumni Feature: Bethany Youth Enjoy Visit With Past Resident Toni Miklesavage

Toni Miklesavage, SSG US Army, returned to Bethany on February 21st to share her story and provide a message of encouragement and hope to current Bethany youth.

Toni resided at Bethany from 1979-1982. She currently is employed at the Army Way College in Carlisle and serves as an active Reservist.

"Ask Yourself if What You're Doing Today is Getting You Closer to Where You Want To Be Tomorrow" was the theme of Toni's message to our youth.

Toni encouraged every youth to work towards a point of forgiveness to release the burdens that they carry. Understanding this is a difficult process, she shared how our youth can move away from living in survival mode to focusing on creating their own destiny.

Toni shared her first hand experiences on how difficult it was to let go, but once she did her life became her own. Toni concluded the program by asking each youth to love and believe in themselves.

"Take advantage of those around you at Bethany who are willing to help!"

Homecoming for all Alumni! * Sunday June 28, 2015 * 10:00AM- 6:00PM

Pool & Archives Open at Noon

Alumni Award Nominations Now Being Accepted

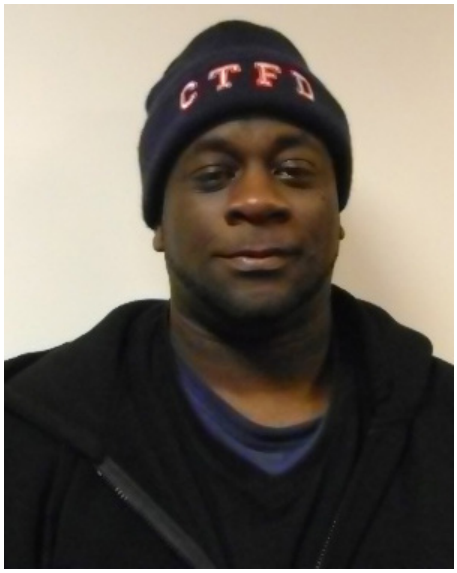
The Bethany Alumni Association is seeking award nominations to recognize an Outstanding Alum who has committed themselves to service to the community, church and/or Bethany. The nominee must have resided at Bethany. Awardee must be available to attend the Homecoming.

Nominations and a resume should be submitted to:

Mr. Leroy Gensemer
120 West 39th Street
Reading PA 19606

Staff Feature: Kevin Nelson

Bethany youth returns as employee



What made you want to work at Bethany?

I wanted to give back what Bethany has given me: a new start in life. I wanted to let the kids know that just because they're in Bethany, it does not mean they don't have a future.

When the boys in your cottage leave Bethany, what do you hope they remember?

I hope they remember what Bethany taught them about life and what they can make of themselves.

How is Bethany different from when you were a resident?

Bethany is so much different now from when I was here. The discipline was a lot harder then. This is what made me what I am today. When I look back I think to myself if I was never brought to Bethany where would I be? Would I be dead?

What do you want people unfamiliar with Bethany to know about us?

Bethany has change many young kids' lives for the good. If there is any place in this world where a young person can be to make that change in life it's here.

Share a fond or favorite memory from when you were a resident here?

I remember when I was going after a staff member that made me mad and Rev. Henning came down and put his arm around me and said "Lets go for a walk." He asked me why I was being bad when I had everything here at Bethany: sports, friends and family. He said, "I am here for you if you ever need to talk." I took what he said and embraced it in because I didn't have a father figure.

BCH Development & Archives Move to Smith Lodge

Bethany turns empty building into welcome center and meeting place, home of Development Dept.

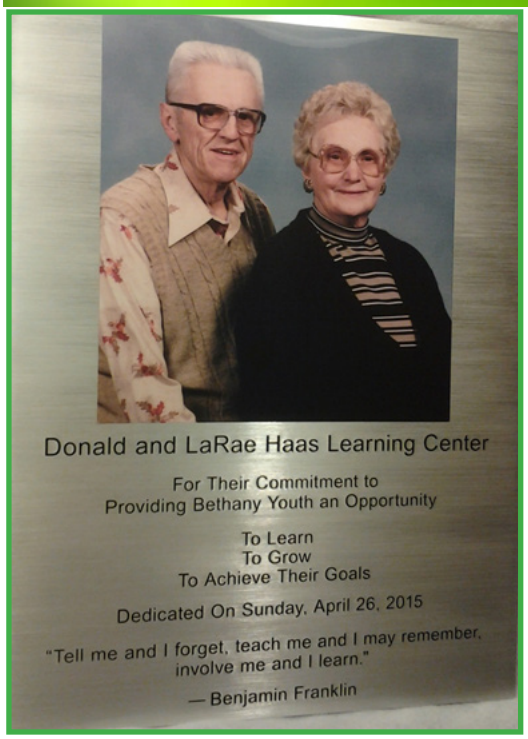
In response to organizational growth and the staff expanding in Bethany's Administration Building, the Marketing and Development team, along with Bethany's Archives moved to Smith Lodge in early March.

"The move makes sense for us since we have less staff but actually need more space to welcome our alumni and donors and hold meetings," says Meggan Kerber, Director of Development.

Now, our friends and donors have a comfortable, home like environment where they can meet with the Development team to discuss donor relations, building relationships with Bethany, outreach efforts, or just to learn more about the organization and our history.

Christmas drop offs will be at Smith this year, making it easier and more efficient for everyone.

Bethany Revamps Tutoring Lab Into State of the Art Learning Center in Honor of Haas Family



Donald and LaRae Haas Learning Center was dedicated on Sunday, April 26, 2015 with the Haas Family, Bethany Alumni, Staff and Friends.

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."
- Ben Franklin

The dedication recognized Donald and LaRae's commitment to providing youth an opportunity to reach their educational goals through academic support programs at Bethany.

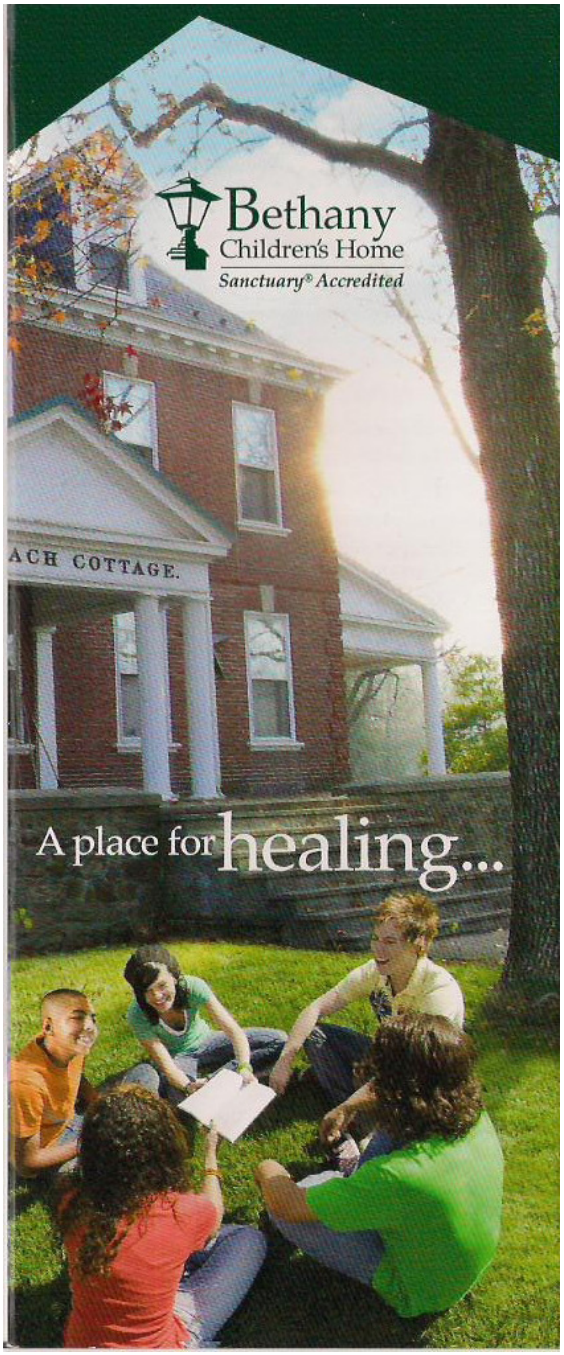
Thanks to their support, Bethany's tutoring lab was expanded to allow for more desks, computers, and general space dedicated to education and learning. The Learning Center will provide residents an opportunity to complete school projects, do research, focus on homework, and get one-on-one attention from tutors.

7 Bethany Youth In CWHS 2015 Graduating Class

Bethany Children's Home is proud to announce that seven residents will walk the stage with the 2015 graduating class at Conrad Weiser High School.

One graduating senior who is in Bethany's Independent Living program says, "Without Bethany helping me and pushing me to do better, I might not be in school at all. I am thankful for the resources on campus and in my own cottage. I have peers encouraging me to keep going. It makes a big difference."

Many of these youth will continue to reside at Bethany while they work through the Independent Living program learning valuable life skills to live on their own, while they also attend local colleges and universities.



WITH A SIMPLE GIFT,
YOU CAN HELP US
DO WHAT WE DO
TODAY
EVEN BETTER
TOMORROW.

For more information on how to make a difference, please call us at 610-589-6828

BCH: The More You Know

Bethany & Memorial Day

This holiday began after the Civil War as a way of remembering those who died in service to our country. To celebrate Memorial Day, Bethany children used to practice marching and fire drills. In later years, the children gathered at the flag pole for service, and read letters from Bethany boys serving in the military. Featured here is one letter from a Bethany youth stationed in northern France during World War II.

North France
Jan 21, 1945

Dear Friends of Bethany:

Today I thought I would stop in the midst of the war and drop a line to you. I am in Northern France and trying to do my little bit in ending this war. I know there are a lot of our boys from the Home here fighting and thinking of all of you back there in good old Bethany. And you can be sure that they are proud to say they were raised there. I know that you all complain of living there but I sure wish I could be back there and have all the fun I used to have there. Many times I have fond memories of the good old days. If you can, drop me a line and let me know how things are back there.

So I remain, a former Boy,
Willard R. Boehm

Why Lynn and Tim Kreider Support Bethany Children's Home

Bethany Children's Home is fortunate to have Lynn and Tim Kreider in their corner. Lynn owns LJ's Fitness in Womelsdorf, and for years has supported Bethany's mission of providing brighter futures for children.

As part of the Kreider's committment to Bethany wellness, certified trainers from LJ's Fitness offer Zumba, multi-fitness workouts, and more on Bethany's campus. These programs are open to youth and staff.

"I go to these free sessions because they're fun and exciting and I know I'm getting a great workout. I'm thankful Bethany can offer us this through our partnership with LJ's Fitness," says an employee.

BCH kids love the fitness programs because, "it gives me a chance to physically work out my feelings and to know that I'm getting myself healthy and taking care of my body," says one youth.

"Tim & I have been supporting the mission of Bethany Children's Home because Bethany provides hope where there often is none. We enjoy the opportunity to change lives for the future by listening, teaching and loving the children residing at Bethany. Through shared experiences, community service and fitness we encourage growth for these students and a brighter tomorrow," says Lynn.

Lynn & Tim Kreider provide Bethany youth with Christamas in July

The Kreiders sponsor Christmas in July for all Bethany youth. This special program offers youth things they might like to have but are not covered in per diem rates, allowing Bethany kids a chance to feel good about themselves.

Bethany Wellness Team Promotes Mental and Physical Health Initiatives for All Employees

In March, staff participated in Bethany's annual Maintain Your Mind program designed to help employees practice emotional and mental self-care. The 6-week program includes social events, mandala coloring pages, and puzzles.

Beginning April 23, employees kicked off their annual walking and fitness program. This year the 12-week program is called Bethany Walks, but allows staff to participate in any type of physical fitness to win prizes.

These are two examples of how the Wellness Team is supporting mental and physical well-being while providing education and affordable programing for staff.

Ladies Visiting Committee Seeking Members

Bethany's Ladies Visiting Committee held their spring quarterly meeting April 23. They enjoyed lunch with Bethany's Development team and accepted two new members to the committee. If you are interested in learning more about the Ladies, or would like to join the committee, please give us a call! 610-589-6827

St. Paul's UCC GOLF TOURNAMENT TO BENEFIT BETHANY CHILDREN'S HOME

The entry fee is $75.00 and includes dinner, greens fees, cart, hot dogs at the turn and prizes. Registration opens at 12:30 pm and tee time is 1:30 pm for a shotgun start. We will use a scramble format. A "Pot of Gold" hole is also being offered this year. You may purchase a chance when you send in your entry fee or the day of the outing.

Visit us to learn more at:
www.bethanyhome.org/events
Or call 610-589-6828

Thanks to donations from friends like you, Bethany's entire campus shuts down for one day each summer to go to Knoebels Amusement Park!

We are gearing up for the 2015 trip and need your help! Please consider sponsoring our youth for this fun, unique experience.

Give us a call today! 610-589-6828

Bethany Children's Home Maintains Strong Relationships in Berks County

Several youth and staff from Bethany participated in Immanuel UCC of Shillington's Rise N Run 5K on April 4th. Four girls placed 1st, 2nd, & 3rd in their age groups, and said they were inspired to do more 5K's for charity.

Kiwanis Club of Berks County participted in Bethany's Service Day for Volunteers on April 11 by cleaning the garden beds around Applegate Lodge and building raised beds for Bethany's Community Garden project.

On April 13th Bethany welcomed Hebron Mennonite Choir at Bausman Memorial for an evening concert. Youth and staff attended the event, in addition to a large group of supporters from our local community. Since then, Bethany has had requests for more shows!

On May 3rd 160 youth and staff from Bethany joined 100 other members of Team Cindy, the largest team at WalkMS, for the annual charity walk. This is the sixth year Bethany has participated in the walk to raise awareness for multiple sclerosis and the MS Society.

Bethany Children's Home has partnered with Texas Roadhouse in Wyomissing to bring our friends and supporters a variety of fun ways to raise awareness and funds to support our mission of providing brighter futures for children and families. Most recently, Texas Roadhouse held a School Supply Drive!

We send a huge thank you to the staff at Texas Roadhouse for their dedication to the wellbeing of their local communities!

Bethany Now Officially "Open and Affirming" Ministry of UCC

On April 28, 2015 the Board of Directors for Bethany Children's Home in Womelsdorf, PA unanimously voted to become "Open and Affirming." The vote came after over five years of discernment and discussion.

An "open and affirming" organization fully welcomes people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning into the full life and leadership of the organization.

On the same day, the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ accepted Bethany's ONA Welcoming Statement & Covenant.

As a certified ONA Ministry, Bethany will be listed with the UCC's national registry of ONA churches and organizations. This will help youth, partners, and agencies network and connect with supporters nationwide. It will also help individuals and other churches or organizations searching for health and human services through the UCC's website to find Bethany and learn about specific services.

With this vote, Bethany becomes the second organization to become an "Open and Affirming" ministry of the UCC. Marion, Ohio-based United Church Homes was the first ONA designated ministry.

Bethany Development Team Attends CHHSM Conference

Bethany found excellent resources and meaningful connections at the 2015 CHHSM (Council for Health and Human Service Ministries) meeting in Cleveland, OH. Members discussed racial diversity, LGBT concerns, and the relationship of CHHSM and local congregations. They also focused on transformative governance and how to grow and sustain an organization through difficult changes; and attended the installation of new CHHSM President Michael Readinger.

Transformation and Vision talk with Alec Pendleton of the Cleveland Play House

Bethany Children's Home
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Womelsdorf, PA 19567

www.bethanyhome.org
610-589-4501

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

Spring