



Sweet Charity

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A Good Shepherd Publication



**A Hold
on Healing**

A Legacy of Love

Dear Friends,

Do you believe in miracles? Here at Good Shepherd, it's a word that our patients and staff use time and again when celebrating a milestone in someone's healing journey. A couple of months ago, we experienced a different kind of miracle from a man none of us had ever met before.

That man is Charles "Chuck" Pliskatt, a resident of North Carolina where he and his late wife, Emily, retired many years ago. Chuck and Emily are originally from Wilkes-Barre. They have no children of their own but Emily volunteered much of her time to helping children. The Pliskatts gave a lot of thought about what to do with their estate but Emily passed away before a decision was made. Chuck sought guidance from his former pastor in Wilkes-Barre, The Rev. Peter Kuritz. Of greatest importance to Chuck was finding an organization that would honor Emily's life.

It so happened that the pastor had a copy of *Sweet Charity* which he sent to Chuck. Chuck read that issue and his heart was moved by our mission. And so began a conversation between Chuck and Good Shepherd that led Chuck to make a most generous gift now and name Good Shepherd as the beneficiary of his estate.

It is nothing short of miraculous to reflect on how Chuck was led to Good Shepherd, an organization he knew nothing about until his pastor introduced him to us. Chuck Pliskatt's gift to our Pediatrics Program will keep giving over the years to come in ways that will outlast us all. This is his legacy of love.

Bequests like Chuck's really do play a vital role in sustaining our mission and securing our future. You can be a part of that future by taking The Legacy Challenge. Thanks to the generosity of a loyal donor, a matching donation will be made when you inform us of your planned gift commitment through a will, or as a beneficiary of your retirement account or other asset. Call Jeannette Edwards in our Development Department at 610-776-3386, and she'll be happy to work with you to create your own legacy of love.

Sincerely,



John Kristel, MBA, MPT
President & CEO



A Hold on Healing

An innovative therapy known as myofascial release complements more traditional therapies in bringing pain relief and energy to residents of The Good Shepherd Home.

On the cover: Bethlehem resident George Hack with Tammy Kissel, certified occupational therapist assistant.

Cover photograph: Randy Monceaux



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Our Mission

Motivated by the divine Good Shepherd and the physical and cognitive rehabilitation needs of our communities, our mission is to enhance lives, maximize function, inspire hope, and promote dignity and well-being with expertise and compassion.



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A HOLD on Healing

Ten years ago, a brutal assault left Jose Perez with a devastating brain injury. Since then, pain has been a near constant companion for the 47-year-old resident of the Good Shepherd Home at Conrad W. Raker Center who now speaks in halted sentences and relies on a wheelchair for mobility. But for one hour each week, Jose escapes from his pain with a progressive hands-on therapy called myofascial release (MFR).

The technique, performed by Good Shepherd long term care therapists trained in MFR, is a gentle sustained pressure that releases restrictions of the fascia, a three-dimensional, web-like connective tissue covering and interpenetrating every muscle, bone, nerve, artery and vein, as well as internal organs including the heart, lungs, brain and spinal cord.

In its normal healthy state, the fascia is relaxed and wavy in configuration, able to stretch and move without restriction, according to the website of John F. Barnes, a physical therapist regarded as the guru of MFR who has trained more than 100,000 therapists and physicians. The fascia loses its pliability when the body experiences physical or emotional trauma, scarring or inflammation, becoming tight, restricted and a source of tension to the rest of the body. Trauma, such as a fall, car accident, whiplash, surgery or just habitual poor posture and repetitive stress injuries all have cumulative effects on the body.

“The fascia is like a spider web, that runs from the top of the head to the feet,” explains Tammy Kissel, a certified occupational therapist assistant and one of three long term care therapists at Good Shepherd who have been trained in the Barnes technique. “Fluid runs through it but when there’s trauma to the body, the fluid gets trapped causing restrictions. The key with MFR is to focus on each part of the body for an extended period of time where these restrictions occur, applying pressure for up to 5 minutes or longer for the release to happen. It actually feels like the fascia is melting beneath your hands, and our residents can feel it too.”

Not every long term care resident is a candidate for MFR, says Tammy. Jose was selected because despite being involved in a comprehensive rehabilitation program, he started to show postural changes that were causing pain and loss of function. The changes were the result of his abnormal body alignment which was affecting his ability to function.

Tammy Kissel, a certified occupational therapist assistant for long term care, practices myofascial release therapy on Raker resident Jose Perez.

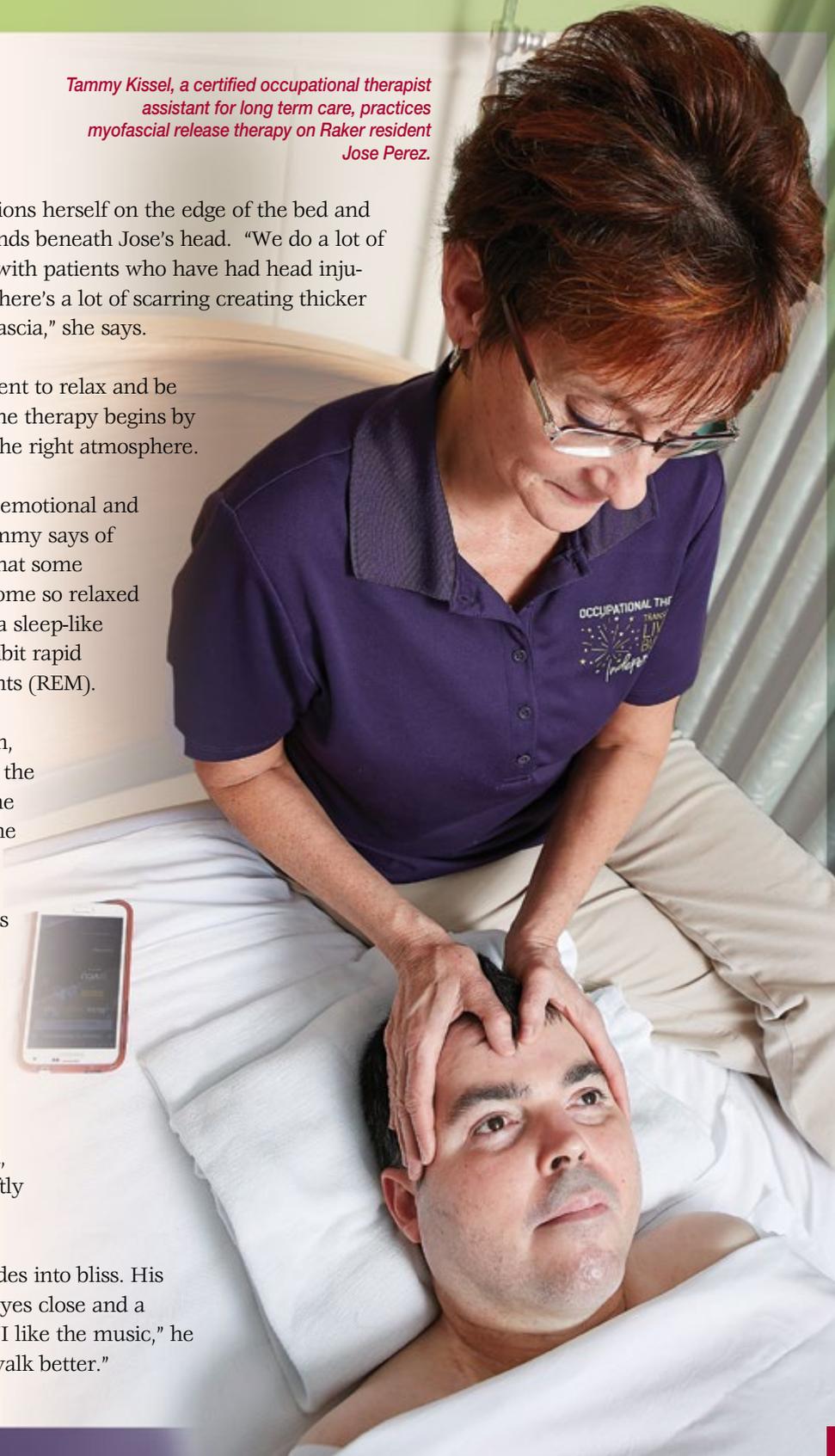
Tammy positions herself on the edge of the bed and places her hands beneath Jose's head. "We do a lot of cranial work with patients who have had head injuries because there's a lot of scarring creating thicker fibers in the fascia," she says.

Getting a patient to relax and be receptive to the therapy begins by creating just the right atmosphere.

"It's physical, emotional and spiritual," Tammy says of MFR noting that some residents become so relaxed they fall into a sleep-like state and exhibit rapid eye movements (REM).

In Jose's room, Tammy dims the lights. Near the windowsill, she places a glass infuser that changes colors as it silently spews lemon-grass and peppermint scented steam. On the bed next to Jose's head, an iPhone softly plays music.

Jose's face slides into bliss. His large brown eyes close and a smile forms. "I like the music," he says. "And I walk better."



Tammy Kissel gently works to help release tension in Bethlehem resident Ryan Savage's right arm and hand.



And in fact, since Jose has been getting MFR treatments, his mobility has improved.

“This type of treatment has been a wonderful complement to his more traditional flexibility and strengthening programs,” says Ingrid Baruch Lande, director of rehabilitation services for long-term care. “It has helped him work on his postural challenges which affects his ability to balance in an upright position and he has more endurance for walking.”

Ingrid has supported integrating MFR into the long-term care therapy program after Tammy, Lisa Fisher, a physical therapist assistant, and Adrienne Grier, a physical therapist, attended an MFR course. “I was encouraged to support this type of education after seeing their passion and excitement,” says Ingrid. “They came back to work with a renewed sense of enthusiasm to heal. They quickly used their newfound skills on many residents and now teach those skills to any colleague who is interested.”

Exploring new therapies that complement traditional therapies adds another dimension of care to Good Shepherd's 159 residents, many of whom are medically complex and live with chronic pain and disability. It is just one of many specialized techniques in which long term care therapists at Good Shepherd have been trained and certified.

“This type of treatment has been a wonderful complement to more traditional flexibility and strengthening programs.”

— Ingrid Baruch Lande,
director of rehabilitation services for long-term care

“The older I get and the more I learn, the more complex I find the human body to be,” says Ingrid. “As a physical therapist, I am always trying to figure out what causes discomfort and what causes changes in the body that lead to chronic impairment. Many times the answer is easy, but often we have to be astute detectives to figure out what has derailed someone’s body off track. With MFR, we’ve been able to uncover some of the causes of pain, weakness, postural abnormality, and dysfunction in our residents that were not uncovered through traditional methods.”

George Hack, 23, is another resident who likes MFR therapy and has been treated for about four months. “My whole body feels good on the inside,” he says. “I move better, I get energy from it and it gets rid of my pain.”

George became disabled when he was 17, the result of uncontrolled diabetes that damaged his spinal cord. Blind in his left eye and unable to use his legs, George experiences pain and rigidity in his hips, neck and shoulders. “My body’s constantly changing,” he says. “I go back and forth between good and bad days.”

At 2 p.m. every Thursday, George rolls down to the therapy gym at the Good Shepherd Home - Bethlehem for his MFR session. He laboriously transfers himself from his wheelchair to the therapy platform and gingerly stretches out his legs. His face winces as Tammy places her hands underneath his neck and begins to apply gentle traction.

“I can feel a swooshing under my fingers,” she says after several minutes. “Do you feel anything George?”

“I feel lighter,” he says. “I also feel a little pain in my hip.”

“That’s his body telling me where to go,” says Tammy, noting that reddening of the skin is another indication of areas that need treatment.

Like other residents getting MFR therapy, George feels more relaxed, more flexible and in less pain at the end of a session. But it often takes several hours before the benefits of treatment really set in, and then the results can last for several days.

“By incorporating MFR with other traditional and nontraditional therapeutic methods, our therapists have worked magic to help our residents live life to the fullest, with less pain and more of a sense of freedom in their bodies,” says Ingrid.

Adds Tammy, “MFR complements what we already do. Long term we have to look outside the box because we do have the most medically and physically complex people, so we have to go above and beyond to provide the best quality of care. These people are our family and Ingrid encourages us to pursue the best care we can give to our family.”



• **David and Pamela DeCampli**

were twice honored in November. On Wednesday, November 11, they received the Outstanding Philanthropists Award at the National Philanthropy Day Awards Breakfast at DeSales University. The DeCampli's were also recipients, along with The Rev. Laura L. Klick, of the Raker Memorial Award on Friday, November 15 at Grace Lutheran Church in Allentown.

The DeCamplis have been deeply committed to serving the Lehigh Valley and Good Shepherd for several years, giving of themselves unselfishly as donors and volunteers. David, chief transition officer of PPL Corporation, has served on Good Shepherd's board of trustees since 2007 and been chair since 2010. Pam has been a joyful participant in the Women's Giving Circle, a group of philanthropic women whose annual membership contributions collectively have raised thousands of dollars supporting Good Shepherd programs. Both David and Pam also serve as co-chairs and steering committee members of The Raker Vision donor group. Other organizations that have benefited from the DeCampli's leadership include the United Way Tocqueville Society and the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania. Pam is an executive vice president at Kirby Bates Associates.

Giving Back

November was a busy and fulfilling month for Good Shepherd as several friends were honored at two events recognizing gifts of time, talent and treasure to both Good Shepherd and the community.



• **The Rev. Laura L. Klick's**

grandparents worked closely with Good Shepherd's founders, The Rev. John "Papa" and Estelle "Mama" Raker. John Raker and Laura's grandfather, The Rev. Ira Klick, were close friends in elementary school, college, and later as adults. Rev. Ira brought John and Estelle to Grace Lutheran Church where John served as the church's first pastor. Rev. Ira was the first secretary on the board of Good Shepherd and was considered "second in command." Years later, when Rev. Laura Klick came to serve as pastor at Grace, her family's history and personal commitment to Good Shepherd ensured that its residents would be integrated into the life of Grace. "As God has blessed us (we) are to be blessings to others," she says.

The Raker Spirit Award was given to

• **Ruth Geiger**, laundry supervisor, who supervises staff and oversees the laundry for Good Shepherd's 159 long-term care residents at both the Allentown and Bethlehem homes. This award is given to the Good Shepherd associate who best exemplifies and honors the spirit of the Raker family in his or her daily activities. All candidates are nominated by their colleagues. A 30-year employee, Ruth was praised for her quiet and deep dedication to living the Good Shepherd mission. In nominating Ruth for this prestigious award, her colleagues praised Ruth for caring for every resident's clothing as if it belongs to her own family and described her as "truly one of the 'Raker disciples' who believes 100% in our mission and vision." Ruth also is a loving mentor for Project SEARCH students and cares for animals in need in her spare time.



• **Joe and Mary Pat Brake,**

who chaired the 2015 Gala in the Garden, Good Shepherd's signature fund-raising event, were Distinguished Honorees at the National Philanthropy Day Awards breakfast. Under their leadership, the 2015 gala achieved record-breaking success, raising more than \$300,000 for the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital Pediatric Unit—Bethlehem. The Brakes have also worked together to support other Lehigh Valley organizations, among them IronPigs Charities, Boy Scouts of America-Minsi Trails Council and Miracle League of the Lehigh Valley. Joe is vice president and general manager at Coca-Cola Bottling Companies of Lehigh Valley and Chester County. Mary Pat is recently retired after 20 years as a teacher's aide in private and public schools.

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A LOVE STORY

Stitched in Time

Some lives, even when ended, are never over. Emily Pliskatt was such a woman. She gave charitably of her time and talents and now, after her passing, lives on through the deep devotion and generosity of her husband, Charles (Chuck) Pliskatt, whose recent gift to Good Shepherd speaks to the very heart of philanthropy.

Good Shepherd's Pediatric Inpatient Unit in Bethlehem will be named the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital Emily Howatt Pliskatt Pediatric Unit, honoring not only her name, but standing as a tribute of her husband's love, a love that lasted through 61 years of marriage and remains as strong, perhaps stronger, as the first day they wed.

"She was my everything," says Chuck, who three years after Emily's passing at the age of 86 on October 29, 2012, remains in their spacious home nestled among towering pine trees overlooking a golf course in Foxfire Village, North Carolina. "I don't want my name on it. I wanted her name. She did it all."

With no children of their own, Emily was anything but childless. Somehow, she always

found a way to fulfill her nurturing spirit by helping children and young people. Among the most rewarding experiences in her life was her time mentoring juvenile offenders at Samarkand Manor in Eagle Springs, NC. For five years, Emily was a volunteer in charge of the Intergenerational Program aimed at bridging the generation gap with games and activities fostering friendship and a better understanding of one another. Counseling,

vocational and academic education, and interpersonal development, as well as daily living skills, were all intended to help youthful offenders become contributing members of society.

Emily had 21 children on her roll between the ages of 11 and 17. A number of them had committed crimes such as arson, larceny and assault. Chuck was constantly worried about Emily's safety and tried to convince her to seek other ways of helping a less challenging population of young people. But Emily would have none of it.

"I can't begin to describe the wonderful feeling I have as these children look to me for help and understanding in their lives," Emily wrote in an informal autobiography. "Some of them affectionately call me 'mom,' and they have told me they wish they could stay with me forever...They have told me that our Intergenerational Program was a great help to them and if it had not been for my visits, they could not have progressed sufficiently to leave (Samarkand) successfully."

“You notice I have my arms around her in every picture. Once I had her, I wasn’t going to let her go.”

Emily’s gravitation towards this kind of volunteer work was, perhaps, cathartic. In her varied career, she worked as a legal reporter in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and later served as a judicial court reporter in Parkersburg, West Virginia. In this capacity, she got an intimate glimpse of the dark side of human nature among people of all ages. Her work at Samarkand gave her a different perspective.

“Having spent most of my life in putting children and adults in places like this, I now look at the situation from the inside out,” she wrote. “It’s very different. I look for a way to help these children get on with their lives. Most of them have never had much guidance and have had very little attention at home.”

Humble Beginnings

Chuck and Emily grew up in Mountain Top, a small community south of Wilkes-Barre in the coal region. Chuck’s father, Adolph, a German immigrant, was a carpenter. His mother, Charlotte, worked as a waitress at a local gentleman’s club whose well-to-do members were doctors and lawyers, a social strata far removed from the Pliskatts. “We were very, very poor,” recalls Chuck.

Chuck’s mother died when he was young and he was raised by his late sister Jean. Chuck and Emily lived about a mile apart so it was, he says, “only natural we’d run into one another.” They began dating which typically was a trip into town to a movie. Bus fare was a nickel. “Sometimes we would have a nickel, sometimes we wouldn’t,” says Chuck.

Chuck knew from the outset that Emily was a good catch. What he couldn’t figure out was why she married him. “I practically forced her into marrying me,” he recalls. “I didn’t have a bank account. I didn’t have a nickel in the bank. When I look back I wonder what she saw in me. We didn’t have anything.”

Emily knew that Chuck was right for her though. Love prevailed. It didn’t matter that Chuck could only afford to take her to “the cheapest restaurant in town and get a hot dog or hamburger.” She just wanted to be with him.

“I decided then that any girl who would put up with me in that kind of weather, we should get married,” says Chuck, adding that Emily paid for her own engagement ring.

And so they wed in 1951. Emily had a good job as secretary to the manager of State Farm & Auto Insurance in Wilkes-Barre while Chuck did whatever he could in construction. Even then, Emily’s benevolent heart was

Chuck and Emily in the early years of their courtship.

Chuck served as a B-17 flight engineer in the Air Force during WWII.



clearly evident in her work staffing the various State Farm offices in the area. “Emily

the board of directors of the Miss West Virginia Scholarship Pageant.



Good Shepherd President & CEO John Kristel visits with Chuck in his North Carolina home where golf was a topic.

made a point of hiring the girls who others wouldn't because either they were overweight or not attractive,” says Chuck.

Emily's dedication to community service, for which she has earned many accolades and awards, came as naturally to her as her considerable talents for sewing, interior decorating and gourmet cooking. Her first contribution was as a Girl Scout troop leader in Wilkes-Barre in the early 1940's. She later was volunteer secretary for the Sunday School at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, also in Wilkes-Barre, a position she held for 15 years. Emily was a member of the Women's Missionary Society and a Sunday School teacher for 25 years, and played B-flat clarinet in the Sunday School orchestra.

Eventually Chuck's job as a manager in the steel construction industry took the couple to Charleston, West Virginia in 1966. Emily continued to give back to her community helping to raise scholarship funds for young women through different organizations and served on

The couple moved once again to Parkersburg, West Virginia, where Emily developed lupus, a painful, chronic inflammatory disease that occurs when the body's immune system attacks its own tissues and organs. The decline in her health brought the Pliskatts to retirement in Foxfire Village in 1984. Chuck designed the sprawling house and Emily designed the bright and airy solarium that looks out upon a large garden where the couple planted hundreds of flowers and shrubs which now have languished.

“At one point we had 100 plants,” says Chuck. “It seems like the plants went with her health.”

An upstairs loft became Emily's sewing room filled with happy clutter: piles of fabric, spools of thread, garments in various stages of creation, and seven sewing machines still just as she'd left them.

There were days when Emily couldn't get out of bed. Her hands suffered, an aspect of the disease that was heart-breaking for Chuck to see. “Her hands were her number one in trade,” says Chuck. “If you didn't have your hands, you didn't have nothing.”

Still, Emily managed to sew the elegant lined drapes that adorn the house and the upholstery for the living room furniture that now is a reminder of better days when the couple entertained. On the walls are other pieces of her handiwork, embroidered slogans and images of birds and flowers.

Cooking and baking were other joys of Emily's. She had 250 cook books, and characteristic of her generous nature, she loved giving what she made to others. "You can't imagine the hundreds and hundreds of cookies she would bake during the holidays," says Chuck. Nearly all were given away. Chuck smiles remembering that he got "the broken ones."

"She gave of herself and everything else," he says.

Emily's cooking prowess was legendary. On many occasions, when the Pliskatts needed legal advice, payment was requested in the form of cookies or Emily's meatloaf. Chuck was especially fond of Emily's traditional Pennsylvania German New Year's Day dinners: pork and sauerkraut with mashed potatoes and gravy, and lima beans. Emily would hide a dime in the sauerkraut and if it turned silver to whoever received it, then good luck was in store.

Emily's passing left Chuck with a void that he knows will never be filled. His one desire was to see Emily's name and lifetime of caring honored in a way that she would want. The couple had spent time thinking about their estate and how best it could be used, but nothing resonated with them.

It wasn't until Chuck contacted his former pastor, The Rev. Peter Kuritz at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Wilkes-Barre that he knew what he wanted do.

Providentially, Rev. Kuritz immediately thought that Chuck and Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network might be a good match, given not only the mission, but the organization's Lutheran roots. So he sent Chuck a copy of *Sweet Charity* with a story about how Good Shepherd's pediatrics program helped a child make a remarkable recovery.

As soon as Chuck read the story, he knew his long search was over.

"Emily and I looked a long time to find just the right match," says Chuck. "I think this is a perfect place we found to donate to. I know Emily would be very happy with it."

Gardening, cooking, sewing, and travel were all among Emily's many joys.



GOLF & TENNIS Invitational *a Record Breaker!*

Good Shepherd's 2015 Golf & Tennis Invitational on Monday, September 21, went down on the books as another record-breaking success, raising nearly \$155,000 for the Pediatrics Program. The event brought together dozens of golfers, a group of tennis devotees (thanks to Ray Federici for once again handling the tennis portion), volunteers, and sponsors at the Lehigh Country Club. The day began with breakfast and ended with a sumptuous buffet and awards ceremony. Carl Wolter, two-time long-drive champion was also on hand to help give foursomes a competitive edge for an additional donation.

Jaime Mendes, vice president of operations at PenTeleData, chaired the event for the second consecutive year and received the Bob Ford Volunteer of the Year Award for his continued dedication to Good Shepherd's mission of service to children with disabilities. John Kristel, president & CEO (pictured in the red shirt), presented the award along with Bob Ford, who has been a key organizer and supporter for many years.

Read more about the winners and check out the photo albums at goodshepherdrehab.org/sweetcharity/good-news-great-gifts.



*Read inspiring donor stories,
donor and volunteer lists, and financials at
SweetCharityOnline.org*

2015

H O N O R R O L L O F D O N O R S

Giving Back

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• **Richard (Dick) Fleming** was given the

Lifetime Achievement Award at the Association of Fundraising Professionals Eastern Pennsylvania National Philanthropy Day Awards Breakfast. Dick was unable to attend the awards breakfast. His son Bob accepted the award on his father's behalf. Dick learned about philanthropy through his mother who taught her children that it was important to give time, talent or treasure whenever possible. Dick and his late wife Peggy have been generous supporters of several Lehigh Valley organizations, Good Shepherd among them. Their gifts established the Fleming Family Endowment Program for Assistive Technology and have also supported Good Shepherd's Beyond Limits Neurorehabilitation and Nursing Scholarship Endowment. Dick, a chemical engineer, worked for Air Products as executive vice president. "If you are going to make a difference, do it with your heart and your head," says Dick.



Reflections

— by Chaplain Kelly Brooks

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.”

Colossians 3:16

This is the time of the year when family and friends gather for food and fellowship. It is a time to catch up with one another and reminisce. Stories arise that bring back fond memories and pleasant feelings. We laugh with each other and remember special people, places and times.

The sharing of stories binds us together as family, friends and community. The tradition of storytelling dates back to well before the written language. It's a way of sharing not only our family history but also our culture and values. Storytelling lets us share experiences and bridge gaps between one another. Stories can enliven our souls and stir our senses. Hearing the same story over and over again grounds us in familiarity, bringing back sounds, smells and visualizations of years gone by. They give us hope and comfort during times of struggles.

Stories can also teach us life lessons and guidance, and it is in the Bible where these messages resonate the most. Every Christmas we hear the story from the Gospel of Luke about Jesus' birth. The miracle of a tiny baby born into the world to save us from sin gives us hope for a world filled with chaos.



The story invokes pictures in our mind of shepherds waiting in their fields by night as the angels of the Lord greet them with joyful news. Children gather around a makeshift manger to see the greatest gift the Lord can give us. We are brought back to childhood memories: of church bells ringing, of cookies baking and trees filled with bright ornaments. When we hear the stories of Jesus teaching and preaching to the crowds, it gives us strength and guidance for the road ahead. As Jesus speaks and shows compassion to the weak and outcast, we are inspired to be a conduit of change. Jesus heals those in need of his divine love.

These are the stories that must have motivated The Rev. John “Papa” and Estelle “Mama” Raker to start a home for disabled children more than one-hundred years ago. Motivated by their faith in God and the stories of Jesus’s servanthood, the Rakers changed the status quo of our understanding of the disabled. They heard words of hope and guidance in the stories of the Bible. They felt and understood the justice that Jesus spoke about. Now, we tell their story so that others may be inspired by their faith and guided by their compassion for others.

As one year ends and another begins, may we all remember the stories told to us about a God who is graceful and loving. We need to hear stories that not only bring us peace and joy but also ground us in the hope and mercy of God. In the words of the old hymn, “I Love to Tell the Story” by Katherine Hankey and William G. Fischer: “I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love. I love to tell the story because I know ‘tis true. It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.”

*“We need
to hear stories
that not only
bring us peace
and joy but also
ground us in the
hope and mercy
of God.”*

Bonjour BALL



F

all foliage may have been the theme outside, but inside the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center Lehigh Valley, it was springtime in Paris where the Bonjour Ball was held for residents of the Good Shepherd Home—Bethlehem and their families on Friday, October 9. The Grand Hanover Ballroom was elegantly decorated in a black and pink color scheme with artful lighting and glittering replicas of the Eiffel Tower.

The annual resident ball was heralded as one of the best ever in a new venue chosen by the recreational therapy team which organizes the event. A highlight of the evening was the chef-prepared dessert of cherries jubilee which added culinary drama and drew rave reviews. Artificial mustaches added to the fun and frivolity among the ballgoers who danced the night away. The last resident to board the van back to Good Shepherd didn't leave until 11:30 p.m.

Many thanks to all who gave of their time and talent to make this year's ball such an amazing success; and a special thanks to the Best Western team who made planning the event such a joy: Gina Martin, banquet and wedding manager; David Troxell, chef; and Marie Vega, banquet manager.

The Royal Court

Queen: Cheree Sommers

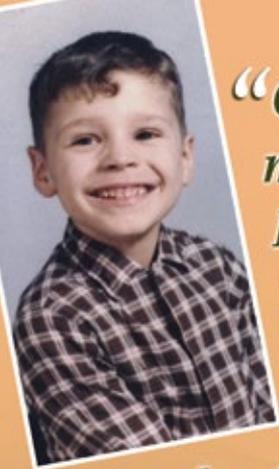
**Ladies of the Court:
Carolyn Miller & Stephanie Sofka**

King: George Hack

**Lords of the Court:
Ryan Sommers & Aaron Oleksa**

(Opposite page) Pia Rinella and her mother, Leslie; (this page, top to bottom) Judith and Jackie Nikischer; Linda Savage dancing with George Hack, king of the ball; Queen Cheree Sommers with recreational therapists Rachel Tholan, Erinn Vassallo and Jennifer Szakacs-Strohl.





“One summer morning, Ricky went to get a book to read at the nearby school library.

When he did not return, I didn't really understand what had happened because I was only

five years old...”



For **EVERYTHING** There is a Reason

So begins the story Jay Albright, manager of maintenance and construction at Good Shepherd, shared at the memorial service for his brother, Richard “Ricky” Albright, 58, who passed away on August 24 at the Good Shepherd Home at Conrad W. Raker Center where Ricky had lived for the last 35 years. Surrounded by the residents who were not only part of Ricky’s family but Jay’s as well, Jay took comfort knowing his brother was deeply loved, and given the best and most compassionate care he could have received.

“This was the best home for both Ricky and our family,” says Jay, “And this is where he wanted to die.”

Ricky was eight years old when he was hit by a car crossing St. John Street in Allentown on July 8, 1965. Just moments before, Ricky and Jay were playing Tiddlywinks on a bench in the back yard of their Harrison Street home. At their mother’s suggestion, Ricky went to the library at Jefferson Elementary School to get a book.

“I can still see my brother walking out and down the street, up Sixth Street, all the way to St. John,” says Jay. “We were the best of friends. We were inseparable. When we were kids, we used to arm wrestle all the time. Nobody could beat him. Ricky loved that. It was hilarious.”

The accident happened within a few blocks of where the family lived. Ricky suffered severe head injuries, two broken legs, scrapes, and bruises. “He was in a coma for three months,” says Jay. “They did not expect him to live.”

When Ricky came home from the hospital, he could no longer walk on his own. Mentally, he

Opposite page: Ricky as a little boy; brother Jay in front of the Good Shepherd Home at Conrad W. Raker Center.

This page, from top: Through the years, Ricky and Jay were best buddies and always had something to laugh about.

would never progress beyond that of an 8 year old. Jay struggled to make sense of it. "As I became a teenager and realized Ricky would never walk again or hold a job, I became very angry," says Jay.

Ricky's family cared for him as long as they could. Eventually it became too difficult. Ricky lived at other nursing facilities before finally coming to Raker in 1980. At Raker, Ricky enjoyed Monday night musical entertainment, being read to, going on outings, and listening to music in his room. "Peter and the Wolf" was his favorite," says Jay. "And he was real big on gospel music."

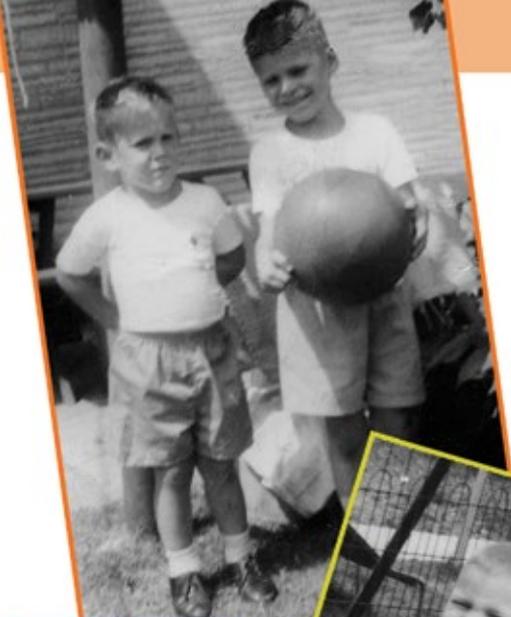
Ricky loved going to church services with other residents in the Raker multi-purpose room and he was a big Mets baseball fan. On weekends, Ricky was able to go home for visits. But over time, the nature of his injuries brought life-threatening challenges not easily overcome.

"Ricky had many brushes with death," says Jay. "One of the first was when he was found unresponsive early one morning in his room."

Ricky was rushed to the hospital where his outlook was grim. As Jay sat in the waiting room he thought that perhaps his brother had suffered enough and that maybe it was time for him to go.

Ricky wasn't ready though, and to everyone's surprise, he

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Gifts of Love

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Merritt Neeb

When Merritt Neeb was born, doctors didn't expect him to live. Merritt proved them wrong though, and during the 78 years of his life, he bravely met the challenges of spina bifida with wit and a heart that was filled with caring for others. Merritt passed away on August 24, 2015, at the Good Shepherd Home at Conrad W. Raker Center

after succumbing to an illness. His sister-in-law Dawn Neeb remembers a man who was smart and articulate, with a keen sense of humor and a strong personality. Merritt was born in Allentown, a son of the late Vernon H. and Esther M. (Weaver) Neeb. He was a member of the former Trinity EC Church, Allentown. Merritt lived at home until 1990 when he moved to Good Shepherd. At Raker, Merritt kept busy volunteering, attending special events and going on community outings. Merritt was also an avid Eagles fan but he never let his passion interfere with his devotion to his family. One of Dawn's favorite memories of Merritt was the time she called him when he was watching a game on television. She offered to call him back but Merritt told her, "I always have time for you," says Dawn. "He was interested in people beyond himself."

Richard D. Holben

Every day, for many years when he was living at home, Richard Holben ate the same thing for lunch: white bread slathered with butter and apple butter, a banana, and an A-Treat Red Cream soda. This was just one cherished memory Drew Goss, Richard's friend, one-time caregiver and sandwich maker, will never forget. "He loved to laugh," says Drew, "and it was wonderful the way he would light up when I came in to see him." Richard was a resident of The Good Shepherd Home at Conrad W. Raker Center for 24 years before passing away on Tuesday, September 8, 2015 at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown. Born in Palmerton, he was the son of the late M. David and Helen C. (Esch) Holben. Drew helped care for Richard, who had cerebral palsy, when Richard lived with his mother and Drew worked for the family's small propane gas business in Neffs. When Richard moved to Good Shepherd, Drew visited him every week, keeping strong the bond of friendship that lasted for more than 40 years. "I feel blessed to have been able to offer that to him," says Drew. Richard loved riding with Drew in his car while they visited Richard's old neighborhood, recreating those trips they took many years earlier. At Good Shepherd, Richard enjoyed attending the annual resident ball and other special events, and was always up for an outing. Drew and Shana Ramage, nursing care coordinator on Richard's floor, were with Richard when he passed away, helping their friend take those final steps into eternal life with his Lord and Savior. "We held his hands, rubbed his forehead and spoke softly to him," says Drew. "We didn't want him to be afraid or go out alone. Richard made the most out of what life gave to him, and he gave back as much as he took."



IN MEM

Barbara Follmer

When Barbara “Barbie” Follmer was a little girl, her mother would bundle her up, and along with her sister, get on the bus to go into Baltimore to the movies. Perhaps that set the tone for Barbie’s life because even though she was born with cerebral palsy, Barbie always managed to get out and until passing away on October 13, 2015, at the age of 77. Born October 20, 1938, in Point Township, Northumberland County, a daughter of Hazel (Still)

and Schaeffer Follmer, Barbie came to live at the Good Shepherd Home at Conrad W. Raker Center when she was 18 years old. Barbie never walked or talked, says her sister Joanne Broome, but she always communicated by using her expressive face and eyes, and a joyful smile that never waned. “I’ll never forget it but one time I came to visit and the door to her room was closed while care givers were getting her ready,” says Joanne. “And inside I could hear them singing and she was laughing. That was just an ordinary day for her.” Barbie loved to go shopping, attend the annual resident ball (she was a Lady of the Court one year) and watch soap operas. As a long-time resident of the Good Shepherd Home, Barbie enjoyed the Conrad W. Raker days when he would visit with the residents, placing a loving hand on their shoulders, and the many famous people who visited Good Shepherd when they were honored on Good Shepherd Day. “She was grateful for the kindness and patience of her caregivers,” says Joanne. Barbie’s niece, Susan Broome, once said of her aunt, “Barbara was my teacher. Barbara taught me there is something to be happy and smile about every day.”



Vincent Maurer

Vince Maurer was the kind of man who would stop someone in the hallway or on the catwalk of the Good Shepherd Home at Conrad W. Raker Center where he lived and pray for them. And while Vince’s life ended on a grace note, when he passed away on September 27, 2015 at age 48, his life wasn’t always spiritual in nature. Growing up, Vince faced hardship and heartache. He learned to be “a survivor who could live on the street if he had to” and “spent many a night on a friend’s sofa,” as his close friend and spiritual companion Good Shepherd Chaplain Paul Xander described Vince. Early in his adulthood, Vince was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The woman

who was the love of his life left him soon afterward. “I always found that Vince’s identification wasn’t with the MS or cerebral palsy or brain injury patient but with the broken-hearted,” says Chaplain Xander. “He had a sense when someone had heartache in their life.” Vince’s personal relationship with God came later in life, and through God and his own personal challenges, Vince came to embody the “wounded healer” in his relationships with fellow residents and friends. “He’s the kind of a guy who would invest himself in other people. We all saw him do that,” says Chaplain Xander. “Somewhere along the line I told Vince that he became a pastor. He laughed. I think as he got older he realized that everyone has a broken heart over something and Vince would just jump into the void.”

Memorial gifts may be made to The Good Shepherd Home by using the envelope in this issue or online at SweetCharityOnline.org.



You can make a tribute gift to The Good Shepherd Home Raker Center honoring Ricky Albright and all those who enriched Ricky's life by using the envelope in this issue or going online to SweetCharityOnline.org.

For **EVERYTHING** There is a Reason

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recovered. "When Ricky didn't pass and I witnessed how loved he was by the people from Good Shepherd who cared for him, I came to realize we were all touched by Ricky and we were all part of his family."

With this realization, Jay began moving from anger at his brother's situation to believing that there had to be a reason for Ricky's fate. Through all the close calls and all the tears, there was also laughter and learning and love.

"Ricky had a purpose," says Jay. "He made some people better people. Some who took care of him ended up going to school to become nurses or growing as care givers. And he made me a better person too, and more caring."

Ricky and Jay had a special way of saying goodbye after every one of their visits. "I would say, 'See you later alligator,' and Ricky would answer, 'After awhile crocodile,'" recalls Jay.

During Ricky's last illness, he spent 10 days in the hospital where Jay visited him, parting each time with the familiar farewell. But Ricky never responded.

"That all changed on August 24, the evening Ricky returned home to his own bed at Raker Center," says Jay. "When I was leaving him for the evening, I said my usual, 'See you later alligator,' and for the last time, Ricky mouthed the words, 'After awhile crocodile.' I was wowed.

"Ricky passed that evening at 9:37 p.m. He is correct, I will see him after awhile."

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