

ECHO

Winter 2023

News from Bethany Children's Home



Reflecting on 160 Years of Healing

What was Reverend Boehringer thinking when he founded “The Orphans Home of the Shepherd of the Lambs” in September 1863, which is now known as Bethany Children's Home?

The history of orphanages began in the United States, according to E. Wayne Carp (2014)* in 1607, where children during this era of colonial America became part of orphan asylums. Some children were housed with others considered paupers, mentally ill, alcoholics, lawbreakers ... essentially those known as society's rejects.

Bethany has been proudly serving children who deserve a safe, healthy, and secure environment, seeking healing from the unfortunate life circumstances of trauma and abuse over the past 160 years on this, Bethany's anniversary.

Each youth has their own story as to what brought them to Bethany Children's Home. Unfortunately society has often labeled orphans as societal rejects, creating a need for orphanages to best care for children as they grow to be productive citizens.

I believe every human being has had the misfortune of experiencing a sense or form of rejection at some point in their lifetime, from being that person who has been left out by friends or being last selected to participate in an activity. Often we may have a feeling of rejection not intended by others but still the reality for us, making us feel unworthy.

Bethany began with an intention of care, safety, and healing, offering comfort to wounded and damaged youth.

Through the decades, there has not been much change to the societal view of children who need care by organizations like Bethany. Children who receive services from Bethany continue to feel stigmatized by a community that labels them as “less than” because of their need for care or how

they have come to be at Bethany Children's Home.

Imagine being 7 years old, seeing your parents murdered as they sought refuge for their family from traffickers or the cartel. That child is grieving, lacking understanding of what happened and afraid for their life.



Dr. Joseph Birli
CEO

When Bethany receives a child, our goal is to help that child feel safe, begin to engage in the healing process and research a plan for a reunification with a familial element. Often I experience many expressing rejection of this child and others like them.

I often hear of the “Bethany kid” stigma in the local community and school system as youth may have engaged in pain-based behaviors resulting from having experienced severe abuse or human trafficking. Society simply sees a “bad kid,” not the wounded child who was entrusted to an adult.

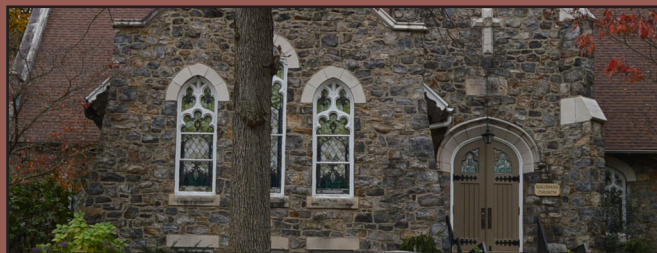
Rejection is never a good feeling, but it helps us to build perseverance, courage, and strength. Bethany may be the home that has accepted the “rejected,” but the rejected have become successful, honored, exceptional human beings through the decades, making their mark in the world, having encountered healing, feeling a sense of safety to become the human being they deserve and want to become.

Thank you for celebrating 160 years of contributing to the healing journey of children and youth who become productive adult citizens through Bethany Children's Home's care.

*Carp, E. Wayne. “The History of Orphans and Orphanages in the United States.” *Adoption & Culture*, vol. 4 no. 1, 2014, p. 43-51. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/ado.2014.0023.

Chaplain Update

Rev. Rose Shepley



I have always considered myself to be a frugal person and not overly concerned with high fashion. My wardrobe is rather pedestrian and low maintenance.

The exceptions for me are shoes and handbags, and even still, I prefer discounted shoe racks and thrifted designer bags. In the spirit of honesty, I might be obsessed with secondhand pocketbooks. We all have something, right?

So, I spend more time than I am proud of researching designers and fashion houses and the perceived value of handbags. I pay attention to their marketing campaigns and how they behave in public, on social media, and their general impacts and contributions to the world. Even at secondhand prices, I don't want to carry a handbag if the name on the bag represents a person or company whose messaging is out of alignment with my basic values.

Maybe you're wondering why the chaplain is going on about handbags and what this has to do with Bethany.

Back in November, a major name in fashion faced backlash after launching an ad campaign that featured photos of children posing with teddy bear backpacks.

A quick online search for 'Balenciaga scandal' will get you up to date if you are interested. I followed the story for two reasons.

One, my previously mentioned obsession with thrifting designer bags. Two, my interests in preventing the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

The Balenciaga case highlighted the topic of CSEC



and brought these conversations to the public, with #CSEC awareness trending on social media. While I am not certain how this will play out for Balenciaga and all the artists involved, I am glad the conversation is growing, and I am confident that Bethany is committed to this prevention work as well as serving survivors of human trafficking.

We recently received a fellowship from My Life My Choice, a leading organization in this field. A small cohort of team members, me included, is now trained to facilitate small prevention groups for female identifying youth.

CSEC is a major component of my work as chaplain, and it occurs to me that local churches could play a larger role in helping their communities identify and prevent human trafficking and CSEC.

This is an invitation for all of you and your communities of faith to grow your love of children and neighbors by learning more about how human trafficking and CSEC happens and how to prevent it.

Clergy and lay leaders who are interested in learning more about CSEC and connecting with resources can reach out to Sarah Sechrist (ssechrist@bethanyhome.org) or me (rshepley@bethanyhome.org).

We look forward to connecting with you!

Peace,
Rev. Rose Shepley

Visit our website for news and updates!
www.bethanyhome.org

Tree Lighting ... on a rainy night!

This year, we decided to try something new, but Mother Nature had other plans!

Our outdoor Tree Lighting Ceremony had to be adapted for an indoor setting due to daylong downpours. We were still able to enjoy a wonderful evening of fellowship in Bauman Chapel!

Carolers from First Baptist Church of Lebanon helped us to welcome everyone with cheerful song.

Our youth enjoyed hot cocoa and cookies, and Bethany Chaplain Rev. Rose Shepley held a thoughtful multifaith service.

The evening served as the official kickoff to the holiday season here at Bethany!

Thank you to everyone who was able to join us, and a very special thank you to Josh Till and the youth group from First Baptist Church of Lebanon, as well as our amazing Ladies Committee for the beautiful cookie trays they made for the youth!



Keep up with Bethany on social media

Meet our team members, get the latest updates and see pictures of our events!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bethanyhome1863/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/bch_1863/



Bethany celebrates 160 years of serving youth!

By Jennifer M. Koch
Archivist

The Shepherd of the Lambs Orphanage, Bethany Orphans' Home, Bethany Children's Home ... the name may have changed over the years, but the mission has remained the same. And 160 years later, we continue to do the good work of caring for youth.

On Sept. 21, 1863, the first child of Bethany walked through the doors of the humble Philadelphia home of Emmanuel and Christiane Boehringer. Caroline Engle would find peace, solace, and much-needed care to enable her eventual return to her own family setting.

Thanks to two generous donations, we have been able to honor the founding family's legacy with the addition of the Boehringer Education Center and Archives, which will be appropriately housed in the oldest building on our campus.

At the entrance to our campus stands the Gate House or Bricker Lodge, as it has since at least 1865. Now home to the Education Center, it will be used to hold meetings as well as our museum displays and our research center for genealogy purposes.

On Jan. 28, we celebrated with a ribbon cutting and dedication of the Boehringer Education Center &

Archives. We then continued the kickoff to our 160th with a reception and tours of the center.

Joining us for this special day were Sen. Judy Schwank, Berks County Commissioner Michael Rivera, the great-great-granddaughter of our founder Emmanuel Boehringer Barbara McConnell, and archivist emeritus Carl Bloss.



Archivist Emeritus Carl Bloss cuts the ribbon on the new Boehringer Education Center & Archives. Mr. Bloss was joined by (clockwise from left): Ms. Barbara McConnell, Sen. Schwank, Commissioner Rivera, Bethany CEO Dr. Joseph Birli, and archivist Ms. Jennifer Koch.



Commissioner Rivera, left, and CEO Dr. Birli, right, join archivist emeritus Carl Bloss, seated.



Chairperson of the Board Dr. Betsy Adams addresses the crowd.



Sen. Judy Schwank honored Bethany with a proclamation.



Alumni joined us to celebrate 160 years of Bethany!



Commissioner Rivera presents a certificate to Bethany for our 160th anniversary.



Thank you!

We are so very grateful for the continued support of our wonderful volunteers and donors. Youth at Bethany had a very memorable Christmas thanks to all of you!

Ms. Katie Angstadt
 Mr. and Mrs. Aulenbach
 Ms. Peggy Bachman
 Ms. Janice Barczynski
 Bausman Memorial UCC
 Ms. Lola Bell
 Bethany UCC
 Ms. Ashley Bielicki
 Brownback's UCC
 Ms. Carolyn Bryant
 Business & Profession Woman's Club
 Calvary Reformed Church of the UCC
 Carversville Christian Church UCC
 Mr. and Mrs. Randy Chapman II
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 Church of the Good Shepherd UCC
 Cocalico Sr. High School German Club
 Collenbrook United Church
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 Mrs. Janet Neel
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 Mr. and Mrs. Bill Ney
 Nonno Alby's - Brick Oven Pizza
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Old Zionsville UCC
 Olivet Schwenkfelder UCC
 One UCC
 Mrs. Susie Parks
 Mrs. Kirstin Patterson
 UCC Womens Guild
 Pennsylvania National Guard
 Perseverance Fire Company
 Mr. Joshua Pluck
 Dr. and Mrs. Priebe, DVM
 Ms. Lynn Rebuck
 Reformed Church of the Ascension
 Roechling Medical Lancaster
 Mr. Robert Rothenburg
 Zellamae Ryner
 Salem Hetzel's UCC & Lutheran
 Salem UCC (Doylestown)
 Salem UCC (Campbelltown)
 Salem UCC (Spangsville)
 Mr. and Mrs. Salter
 Ms. Lena Shade
 Andrew and Sarah Shultz
 Silverline Trailers
 Mrs. Sue Snyder
 Solomon's UCC
 St John Baptist de la Salle Catholic
 Family of Faith
 St. Andrew's UCC
 St. James UCC
 St. John's Community Church
 St. John's Evangelical Lutheran & UCC
 Church
 St. John's Hill UCC Women's Guild
 St. John's Kimmel's Church
 St. John's UCC (Denver)
 St. John's UCC (Lewisburg)
 St. John's UCC (Riegelsville)
 St. John's UCC (Orwigsburg)
 St. John's UCC (Phoenixville)

St. Mark's UCC (Cressona)
 St. Matthew's UCC (Chester Springs)
 St. Paul's UCC (Sellersville)
 St. Paul's UCC (Indianland)
 St. Peter's Church (Shumans)
 St. Peter's Pikeland UCC
 St. Peter's Tohickon UCC
 St. Peter's UCC (Aaronsburg)
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 Ms. Kate Wilkie
 Susan Wolfe
 Wyomissing UCC
 Ms. Caroline Ziemer
 Zion Church Lewistown Valley
 Zion's Union Church Maxatawny
 Debrah Zuber
 Zwingli UCC

** Please forgive any omissions or mistakes with our reporting.*





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RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED



160th Anniversary Events

MAY 20: Womelsdorf Vendor & Craft Fair

JULY 14: Summer Concert with Flamin' Dick & the Hot Rods

AUG. 19: Anniversary Day is BACK!

Noon: Jeff Krick Jr.: Elvis Tribute Artist

3 p.m.: Celtic Martins

6:30 p.m.: Greaseband

SEPT. 21: Anniversary Dinner

OCT. 8: Fall Fest with The Uptown Band

More events are being planned ... stay tuned for details!