

 Phoebe

# Messenger

News from Phoebe Ministries

Volume 106, Issue 1 | Spring/Summer 2025



# Digging In

What's Taking Root at Phoebe Organic Farm?

**Plus:** Enhancing Our Memory Support Program

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**On the cover:** Left to right: Chestnut Ridge residents Nancy Kramer-Moyer, Allan Kramer-Moyer, and Christine Widgren (far right), with Jenni Smith at the Rodale Institute in Kutztown, PA.

*Phoebe-Devitt Homes is the official name of the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation doing business as Phoebe Ministries. Founded in 1903 and incorporated as such in 1984, Phoebe-Devitt Homes is responsible for the supervision of communities, long-range planning, development, and fundraising for a network of retirement communities, affordable housing, pharmacies, and a continuing care at home program, which combined serve thousands of seniors annually.*

Phoebe Ministries is affiliated with the United Church of Christ and is a member of LeadingAge, LeadingAge PA, the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and the Pennsylvania Assisted Living Association.

The official registration and financial information of Phoebe-Devitt Homes may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania at 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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Mission Statement:

*A community of faith, called by God, to enrich the lives of our seniors, their families, and the communities we serve.*

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Dear friends,*

The first half of 2025 has been a monumental year for Phoebe Ministries. Between expanding ongoing programs and breaking new ground, the future remains bright for our Phoebe community.

In this issue of the *Messenger*, you will find exciting updates on our partnership with the Rodale Institute. You'll also learn about our newly purchased memory table, made possible by our Phoebe Institute on Aging (PIA) Gala event, and how it marks an innovative step forward in memory care. These modernized expansion efforts enable us to continue delivering state-of-the-art services for our residents.

A common theme connecting many of the stories in this issue is **selflessness**.

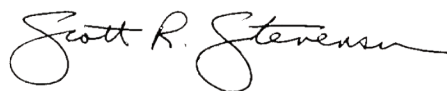
From our feature story highlighting residents who give back to their communities, to the generations of nurses who care for our aging population, these articles embody the caring and compassionate spirit of Phoebe.

With a full year of Chestnut Ridge at Rodale behind us, you'll read about the vibrant community taking shape in Emmaus. Residents are living active lifestyles at Chestnut Ridge, and we look forward to continuing to make it the premier retirement destination in the Lehigh Valley.

It is an honor to lead Phoebe Ministries during this exciting time. None of this would be possible without the generosity, dedication, and passion of our donors, staff, and residents.

We hope these stories warm your heart just as they have ours. Thank you for being an integral part of the Phoebe family and helping us continue to thrive.

Peace,



Scott R. Stevenson

President & CEO



Stevenson with Jeff Tkach, CEO of Rodale Institute, at the groundbreaking for the Phoebe Organic Farm at Founders Farm. Photo by the Rodale Institute.

JOIN  
US

### PHOEBE'S ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Supports Charity Care for residents in need

Monday, August 11, 2025

Saucon Valley Country Club

[phoebe.org/golf](http://phoebe.org/golf)

### PHOEBE INSTITUTE ON AGING GALA

Supports Educational Opportunities through the PIA

Thursday, October 16, 2025

Lehigh Country Club

[phoebe.org/pia-gala](http://phoebe.org/pia-gala)



*Members of the Phoebe Tappers (left to right): Dick Miller, Vivien Aulenbach, June Becker, Renee Long, Sylvia Snyder, and Philomena Huesgen. Photo by Ramon Madrid.*

# Neighborly Love at Phoebe

*“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

— Mark 12:31

**O**ur residents are at the core of everything we do at Phoebe Ministries. From the food we serve to the care we provide, our incredible staff do everything they can to ensure residents are always treated with love and respect.

What sets us apart from other continuing care retirement communities is that charitable care is at the core of our mission. In fiscal year 2024, our we provided over \$17.2 million of support to eligible residents in need.

We love serving our aging community, which makes it even more inspiring when our residents share the same passion for service. Across each of our campuses, members of the Phoebe community are taking meaningful action, both big and small, to give back to their peers. It’s a large reason why the atmosphere at Phoebe is often characterized by warm, neighborly love.

## SHARING THE JOYS OF DANCE

One such individual is Phoebe Berks resident Philomena Huesgen. Huesgen began formally dancing at just three years old out of an innate love for the act. With a particular affinity for ballet and musical theater, she danced her way through many programs in her early life.

Huesgen earned her degree in Physical Education at Penn State University and her Master’s in Dance at Texas Women’s University. She then opened a dance studio in Tamaqua, PA called the Pennsylvania Performing Arts Academy. While there, she taught ages three to adult, leading her most advanced class to notable venues, including Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center, the John F. Kennedy Center, and Disney World. Her top class even achieved East Coast Champions status through the Tournament Indoor Association for 10 years.

After a highly accomplished teaching career, Huesgen moved to Phoebe Berks in February 2021. Feeling that a piece of her past life was missing, it wasn’t long before she decided to step back into the role of teacher and organize a tap-dancing group on campus: The Phoebe Tappers.



*Huesgen directs her chair tappers during the annual talent show at Phoebe Berks.*

Most of the residents in the class had never formally danced before, but they’ve evolved into genuine performers over time. The ensemble practices and performs choreographed routines constructed entirely by Huesgen, with seated dancing available for those with mobility restrictions.

The ensemble made its triumphant debut at the 2022 Phoebe Berks Grand Illumination event, a large annual winter celebration. Since then, the group has attended each subsequent event, putting on rousing, holiday-themed winter shows. The show is always a highlight for the campus, guaranteed to provide holiday cheer. They also perform a yearly springtime show.

“They’re dedicated. I am so proud of how much they’ve advanced,” said Huesgen.

Beyond fostering a love for dance, Huesgen also focuses on the physical benefits of dance. The level of exercise the class

provides, combined with the need to memorize different movement sets, makes tap dancing just as much a cognitive workout as it is physical.

“Nothing hurts when I’m dancing,” says Huesgen. Thanks to her leadership, the group has found a creative, physical, and social outlet to inspire the Phoebe Berks community.

“We laugh a lot,” says Huesgen. “Oh my gosh, we have so much fun. That’s a big part of it, socializing with one another. We’re a very close-knit group.” Huesgen successfully took what was so vital to her before moving to Phoebe and passed that passion on to her peers.

“I’m surprised at my age that I would start such a thing,” says Dick Miller, a member of the Phoebe Tappers and fellow Berks resident. Miller was inspired by his friends and wife who had joined the group to start dancing.

“I’m 89 now and I’m still going strong. It’s great exercise and a lot of good teamwork,” he says.

Alicea Rodig, Phoebe Berks’ Lifestyle Assistant and Receptionist, is another one of Huesgen’s students. “I have gotten so much out of it,” says Rodig. “I’ve created great friendships with other employees and Philomena.

It is such a great mental health boost for me. The smile on the residents’ faces when we dance for them, even if I mess up, is priceless.”

Beyond the dance classes, Huesgen serves as a Phoebe Village Council Member and the Health Care Center Auxiliary Board Vice President. It’s clear from her deep involvement at Phoebe Berks that she wants to see the community prosper.

## MUSIC TO BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Ruth Johnson, who moved into Phoebe Richland in late 2023, has found similar ways of harnessing music to give back to the community. Inspired by her mother’s church performances, Johnson fell in love with the piano as a teenager. She fondly remembers attending religious services and performing duets with her brother. By 18, she was teaching formal piano lessons.

Johnson worked on a dairy farm with her husband in the 1950s, teaching when she wasn’t tending to the property. Her husband was diagnosed with polio in 1952 and,

*Ruth Johnson performs for a Monday morning worship at Phoebe Richland.*





*Johnson smiles at her cozy apartment at Phoebe Richland.*

despite recovering, continued to experience health issues that would affect his legs for the remainder of his life. This made farmwork notably more difficult for him.

After realizing that the farm may not be sustainable due to her husband's ailments, Johnson decided to pursue a degree and attend Temple University. She earned her Music Education Degree and, after graduation, taught at Southern Lehigh School District for 20 years. Upon retirement, her involvement at Phoebe Richland came naturally.

Without realizing the impact and frequency with which she would be involved, Johnson became a staple of the campus's weekly Monday Morning Worship after volunteering her musical skills. She provides piano accompaniment to religious hymns at these meetings, which the group is encouraged to sing along to.

Johnson also hosts a weekly Hymn Sing with Community Life staff member Nick Unger. Together, the two of them perform hymns with the goal of getting residents to participate. It's a great way for residents who are hesitant about singing to join a group where they can express themselves without judgment.

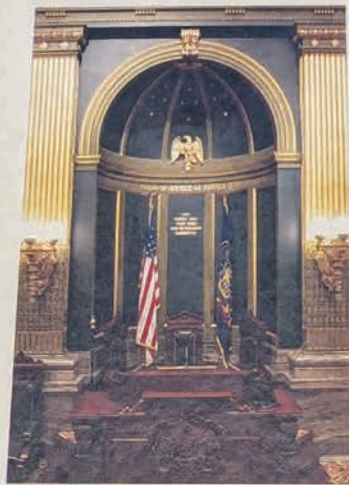
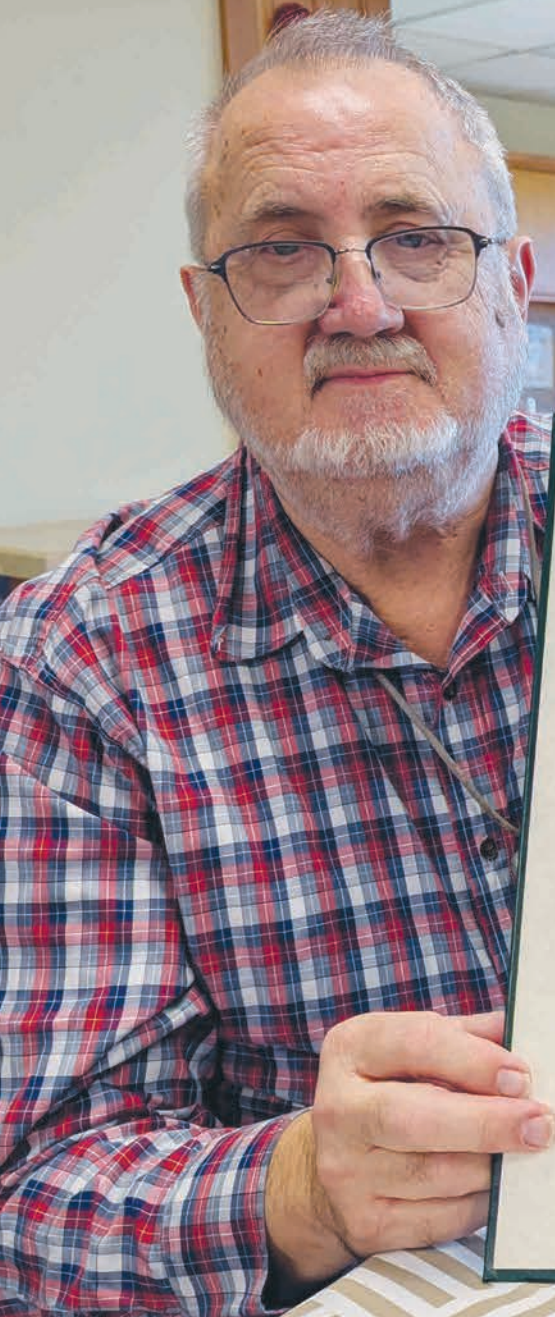
The Richland community has since formed a strong attachment to Johnson's playing. She recalls one instance when she had to cancel a Hymn Sing and was asked by multiple eager residents when it would return.

Johnson firmly believes in the power of music. "There's something calming about it," she says. She believes that the arts should have a greater focus in the larger education system to expose more people to its value.

Had her mother not been a pianist, Johnson says there's no knowing whether she would be one today. Thankfully, her early exposure to the instrument has allowed Johnson to combine her love of music and faith to enhance the lives of her fellow residents at Phoebe Richland.

## AN INVISIBLE HELPING HAND

At the Phoebe Apartments in Allentown, resident Dale Serfass enhances the lives of his fellow residents, but prefers to stay behind the scenes. Serfass moved to Phoebe in January 2021 after working at Dun & Bradstreet for 32 years. Since then, he has become a notoriously gracious figure on campus.



Senate of Pennsylvania



Congratulations

In the month of April, 2022

Whereas, The Senate of Pennsylvania is always pleased to recognize those citizens who have contributed to the enrichment and betterment of their communities;

Whereas, Dale H. Serfass is being honored with a 2022 Giving Hero Award by the Allegheny County Office of Aging and Adult Services; and

Whereas, in residence of Maple Apartments since February 2022, Mr. Serfass immediately joined the maintenance team to help clear the parking lot of snow, set up for worship services and assist in any other way that he is needed. During the complete clerical resignation, he collected "The Morning Call" newspaper and delivered them to the corresponding doors before the offices had even opened for the day. Additionally, Mr. Serfass has volunteered his time and services with the "Silent Auction Fair" for more than 10 years. He has brought honor upon himself, his family and his community, and helped to make our world a better place in which to live.

Now therefore, the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania congratulates Dale H. Serfass upon the prestigious honor which is being bestowed upon him, affirmatively states that the exemplary citizenship and community service which he has displayed are worthy of emulation, extends best wishes for a continuation of his success and excellence in all future endeavors;

And directs that a copy of this document, prepared by Senator Patrick M. Brown, be transmitted to Dale H. Serfass, 1001 West Linden Street, Allegheny, Pennsylvania.



Patrick M. Brown  
Senator Patrick M. Brown

James O. Coyner III  
State Clerksman, President Pro Tempore

Attest:  
Meg Martin  
Jan Martin, Secretary

As a way to give back to Phoebe staff, Serfass prepares the rooms in which programs, activities, worship services, and other events take place. Doing so entirely on his own accord and often without staff knowing, Serfass has given activity coordinators some day-to-day relief.

On another occasion, when Serfass noticed that the *Morning Call* newspapers weren't being delivered due to elevator servicing, he took it upon himself to hand-deliver them to the appropriate residents.

"It's just something I like to do," says Serfass. Although staff never expect his help, he continues to do so out of the kindness of his heart.

In 2021, on a particularly stormy January morning resulting in 30 inches of snow, Serfass assisted the maintenance team in clearing snow off the sidewalks, parking lots, and cars of his fellow residents. This act of selflessness was performed mere weeks after Serfass moved in. Though the maintenance team insisted that the help wasn't necessary, Serfass refused to stand by and watch.

The following year, Serfass was recognized with the Unsung Hero Award, presented by the Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services, for his many selfless acts. He received official certificates and citations signed by State Representatives Bryan Cutler and Brooke Wheeler for his generosity.

"Dale is a great asset to our community," says Phoebe Apartments Service Coordinator Cristal Polanco, a sentiment that virtually every staff member in the building echoes.

Doubling down on his involvement in the community, Serfass serves as the Treasurer on the Resident Council Board at the Phoebe Apartments. He has also done substantial volunteer work outside of Phoebe with both the Iron Pigs and the Allentown Fair.

## MEALS TO THOSE IN NEED

Barbara Parr is a new resident at Phoebe who has donated a significant amount of time to the greater community. Living at Chestnut Ridge at Rodale for a little over a year, Parr has fully embraced the vibrant and caring community.

"We have met the nicest people [at Chestnut Ridge. My husband and I] have become friends with so many," says Parr. The two of them moved to Phoebe out of necessity when they realized that keeping up with their house of 50 years proved to be too difficult.

Since moving in, Parr has witnessed the many small acts that add up to Phoebe's loving community. She recalls when her car broke down and somebody offered her a ride, or another time when residents invited her and her husband to sit with them during lunch despite not knowing each other.



***Serfass with Melissa Dejesus, Housekeeper at Phoebe. "We call him the sheriff of the apartments," says Dejesus. "He looks out for the building."***

Parr herself has given back to the larger senior community through an astonishing 45 years of volunteer work with Meals On Wheels America, an organization that delivers food to seniors struggling financially and nutritionally.

Parr first started with the organization after her friend had asked her to substitute for a day. She immediately fell in love with it on day one and hasn't looked back since. Delivering on the same route for decades, the act of giving has become second nature to Parr. Over the years, she has fostered connections with the people she delivers to, stopping to lend a hand where she can or to chat.

"I'm going to go until I can't do it," says Parr. Meals On Wheels has officially recognized Parr for her service with a 45th-anniversary luncheon at the local operations facility.

"I just feel so lucky," says Parr. Conscious of all that she has in her life, Parr can't help but assist others in one way or another. She has also volunteered at Union Terrace Elementary School by tutoring children, and at Allentown Hospital by delivering medications to patients. Miraculously, she balanced all of this volunteer work with her family life.

It's inspiring to witness just how extraordinary our residents are. From Chestnut Ridge to Allentown, Berks, or Richland, our residents continue to be bright spots in the lives of our community. We could not be prouder to serve such an admirable group of people. 🙏

**To learn more about Phoebe, visit [phoebe.org](http://phoebe.org).**

***Serfass proudly displays his citation from the Senate of Pennsylvania for his selfless acts.***



# What's Taking

# Root

## at Phoebe Organic Farm?



November 6, 2024, marked the official unveiling of the Phoebe Organic Farm, a partnership between Phoebe Ministries and the Rodale Institute to grow fresh, farm-to-table ingredients for Phoebe residents. In 2025, the project is beginning to reap the fruits of its labor.

Located at Rodale's historic Founder's Farm in Emmaus, Phoebe Organic Farm has already seen success producing cold-weather crops such as carrots, snap peas, arugula, asparagus, lettuces, spinach, cauliflower, and more. In the ongoing summer months, the farm will expand to grow cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, and strawberries among other foods.

"It's really about the community and healthy food," says Jenni Smith, Phoebe Organic Farm Manager. Smith leads many of the day-to-day operations that take place on the farm, which include delivering the harvested crops to

Chestnut Ridge at Rodale. She evokes J.I. Rodale, founder of the Rodale Institute, in her rationale for the farm: "Healthy Soil = Healthy Food = Healthy People."

The farm's initial seedlings sprouted at Rodale's Kutztown location in one of their many greenhouses. On the first day of a series of seeding events, a small group of residents visited the greenhouse to plant the farm's first onion seeds. Smith led residents every step of the way, explaining the process and answering questions about growing food.

Residents filled trays with organic soil, created divots in each slot for the seeds, and planted them before getting the trays prepped for watering. Every resident in attendance said it was their first time seeding in this manner. The day also allowed for Smith to foster a more intimate relationship with our residents.

*Jenni Smith, Phoebe Organic Farm Manager, and Chestnut Ridge residents James Milligan and Nancy Kramer-Moyer prepare seedlings that will be transplanted into the Phoebe Organic Farm.*



*Left to right: Chestnut Ridge residents Irma Kleinsmith, Nancy Kramer-Moyer, Allan Kramer-Moyer, Christine Widgren, and James Milligan enjoyed a planting event with Jenni Smith at the Rodale Institute in Kutztown, PA.*

“I’ve learned a lot already,” said resident Ruth Powers. “It’s fun being in a greenhouse. The air smells clean. Everybody is having a good time.”

Most of the food produced by Phoebe Organic Farm goes directly to dining services at Chestnut Ridge, who coordinate with Rodale to minimize waste. Those ingredients then get incorporated into residents’ meals. Crops that aren’t used in meals are sold in the Chestnut Ridge marketplace. With Rodale’s commitment to

regenerative and organic farming, the farm will grow food untouched by chemicals, harnessing biodiversity and composting to enrich the soil.

Smith appeared at a meet-and-greet with residents of Chestnut Ridge earlier in the year to discuss the amazing opportunities that would be available for them on the farm. Among those opportunities are hands-on activities and classes meant to connect residents more deeply with the food they consume. No farming experience is required



to get involved. Residents are invited to help care for the farm on a volunteer basis, with bus transportation available for those who need it.

“This is my literal dream job,” says Smith. Her excitement for the farm can be seen at all times on her face.

The crops grown at Phoebe Organic Farm don’t stop at food. Senior Farm Manager Rick Carr is also excited about the idea of decorative plants being incorporated in the public and private spaces of Chestnut Ridge. With items such as flowers and pumpkins, Carr believes that the farm can bring a whole new life to the campus.

The scale of Phoebe Organic Farm will only grow in the coming years, with an estimated 10 acres being used by 2030. Upcoming expansion projects on the farm include the construction of hoop houses, a greenhouse, and possibly adding chickens in 2026. We are thrilled at the opportunity to continue this partnership in the name of sustainable eating. Happy farming! 🌱

**Chestnut Ridge has a limited number of units remaining. For more information and to schedule a tour, please visit [chestnutridgeatrodale.org](https://chestnutridgeatrodale.org).**

# Phoebe Ministries Welcomes Chief Operating Officer **Jason Shott**

Phoebe Ministries is pleased to welcome Jason Shott as our new Chief Operating Officer (COO). Shott is an exceptional leader whose expertise and vision align seamlessly with our mission and values.

Shott brings a wealth of experience in senior living operations, having previously served as Vice President of Operations at Atria Senior Living. Throughout his distinguished career, he has demonstrated a strong ability to drive operational excellence, foster team development, and ensure regulatory compliance—all of which are critical components to the success of Phoebe. His extensive background in revenue-growth leadership and strategic planning makes him an invaluable addition to our executive team as we continue to enhance our services and position ourselves for future success.

As COO, Shott will oversee key operational aspects across our organization, ensuring that we continue to provide the highest quality of care and services to our residents. His deep understanding of senior services and his ability to develop innovative strategies will play a crucial role in guiding Phoebe through an ever-evolving industry. Shott's leadership philosophy emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to excellence—values that mirror the core principles of our organization.

"Our organization is built on the foundation of a rich history that spans over a century, guided by our mission as a community of faith called by God to enrich the lives of seniors, their families, and the communities we serve," says Shott. "This enduring purpose drives everything we do, and it is the heart of our culture—a culture rooted in compassion, integrity, and service. As we look to the



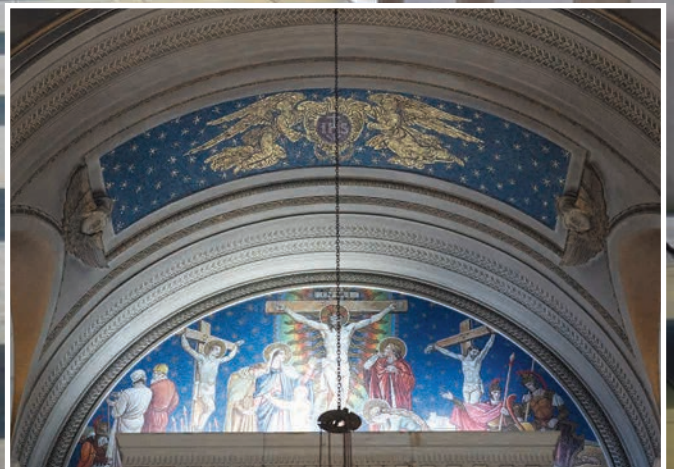
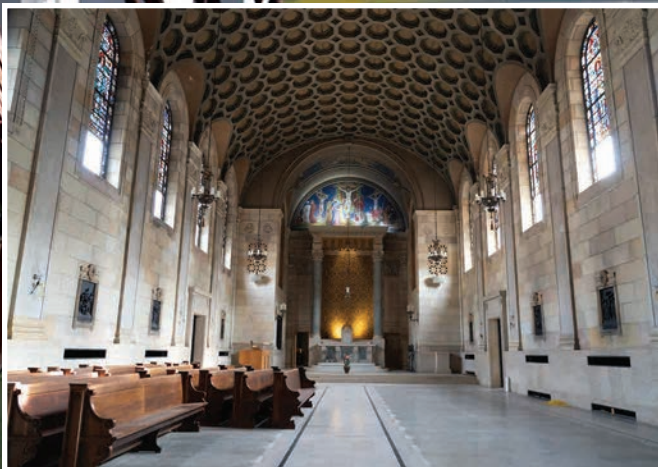
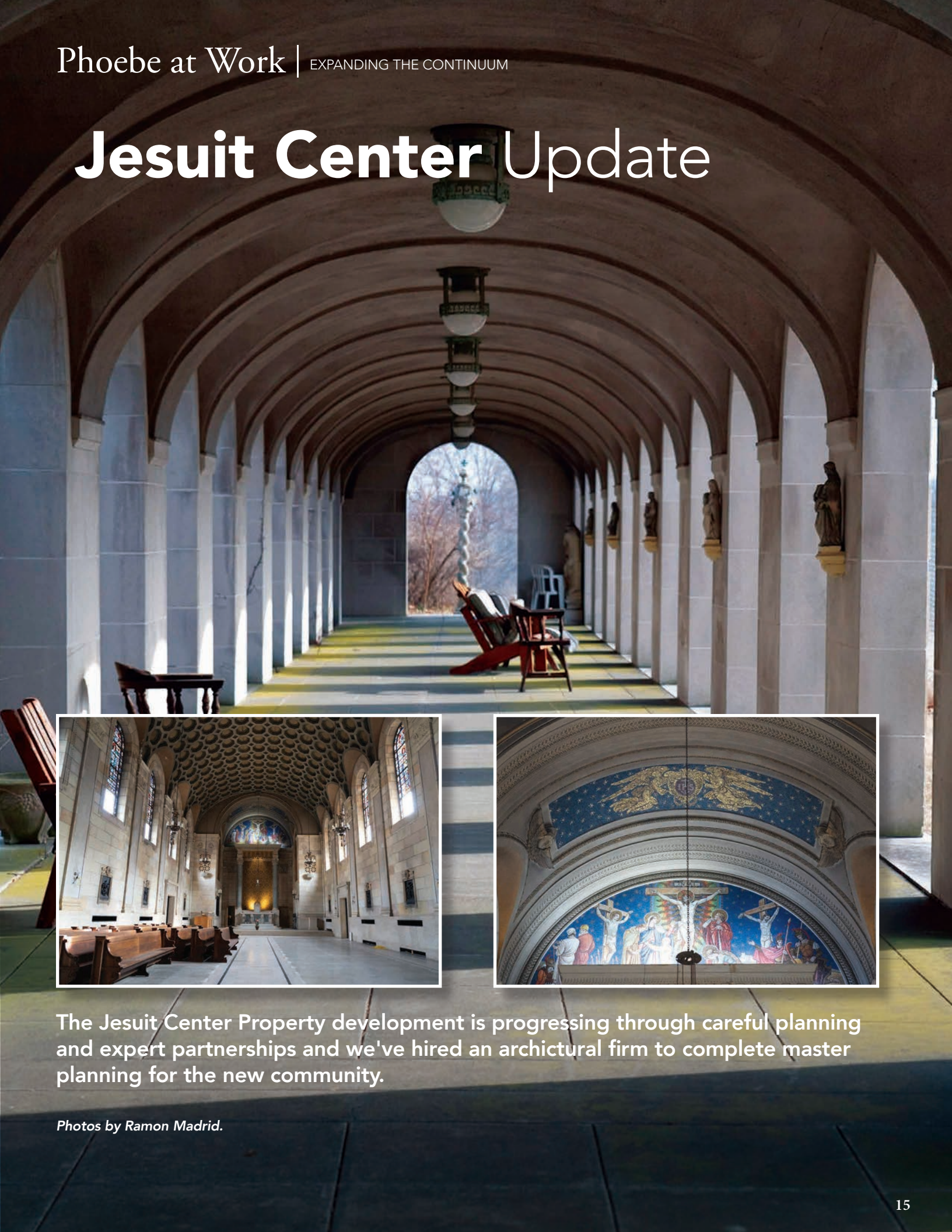
future, we are committed to realigning our services and operations through innovative approaches that ensure sustainability for generations to come. While embracing progress and change, we remain steadfast in preserving the values and spirit that have defined us since 1903. Together, we honor our legacy while boldly stepping into the future, continuing to provide exceptional care and support to those we serve."

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Jason Shott as he embarks on this new journey with Phoebe Ministries. We are excited to work alongside him as we continue to provide outstanding care and services to those who call Phoebe home. ☪

*"As we look to the future, we are committed to realigning our services and operations through innovative approaches that ensure sustainability for generations to come."*

—Jason Shott, Chief Operating Officer

# Jesuit Center Update



The Jesuit Center Property development is progressing through careful planning and expert partnerships and we've hired an architectural firm to complete master planning for the new community.

*Photos by Ramon Madrid.*

# Pathstones Member Spotlight:

## The Freedom to Travel While Aging in Place



Susan and Timothy Hinkle love to travel. It's apparent from the moment you step into their ranch house in Northampton, PA. Adorning nearly every cabinet, wall, and shelf are enchanting collections of trinkets, relics, artifacts, statues, and more from the dizzying number of countries they've visited since 1988. It's enough to give some museums a run for their money.

The Hinkles have been members of Pathstones by Phoebe for four years. The program allows active, older adults to reap the core benefits of a continuing care retirement community, or CCRC, from the comfort of their home. Pathstones also fills in the gaps of long-term care insurances. After reviewing their policy with Pathstones, the Hinkles were able to make changes to their policy which has saved them money. It has also given them the peace of mind to continue traveling to their heart's content, knowing they will be cared for if a health event occurs.

And travel they have.

"Early on, we thought, 'We have a one-car garage. We could add another garage, or we could travel.' We still have

a one-car garage,' laughs Susan. The list of roughly 50 countries they've explored so far (some more than once) includes England, Germany, Austria, Ireland, Russia, China, Italy, Zimbabwe, France, Romania, and Greece.

Driven by Tim's love of history as a former teacher and Susan's love of culture, the two embark on regularly scheduled trips. These journeys allow the Hinkles to explore the very places Tim studied and taught about. On a certain trip to Slovakia, the place where Susan's grandparents emigrated from, a tour guide was able to lead Susan and Tim to the very town where her grandparents were born.

As much as they love to get away, the Hinkles deeply love their home and community. They moved into their house in 1979, not far from the high school they both attended. The location is ideal for them, as they often enjoy walking to the local theater and grocery store. It's also the ideal place to raise their beloved cat, Gizmo.

They first learned about Pathstones through an informational seminar. Since becoming members, they've recommended the program to multiple friends.



*Left: Timothy and Susan Hinkle with a group in Peru wearing traditional garments.*

*Above: The Hinkles with one of their many collectible-filled cabinets.*

Their relationship with Mimi Leinbach, Pathstones' Senior Wellness Coordinator, has been a highlight of the program.

"It's nice to have someone interested in our wellbeing," says Tim. While the couple are good about staying on top of their health, they say that Leinbach has been a valuable resource. 🧘

Pathstones has empowered the Hinkles to stay in the home they love so dearly. As a result, they're able to keep their hobbies at the top of their mind. To see if Pathstones is the right fit for you, please visit [pathstonesbyphoebe.org/](http://pathstonesbyphoebe.org/) or call 610-794-6700.

Pathstones®  
by Phoebe

## Staff Spotlight: Mimi Leinbach

Mimi Leinbach is an integral part of the current team at Pathstones by Phoebe. As the Senior Wellness Coordinator, she oversees wellness planning and coordinates care services for Pathstones members when needed. She has a degree in psychology from Lock Haven University and extensive work experience in various health care roles, particularly mental health.



Leinbach rarely has a predictable day at Pathstones. Some days, she participates in an information seminar; on other days, she visits a hospital to check on one of her members.

"I like that I'm doing something different all the time," says Leinbach. One of her primary responsibilities is acting as the line of contact for members during a health event. She will then coordinate the necessary services to get the member the care and attention they need, remaining by their side, whether in-person or long-distance, through the entire process.

"The financial backing that Pathstones provides is certainly important; However, one of the things members value the most is having someone to help them navigate the complex health care system," says Leinbach.

A familial bond often forms because of the caring relationship between Leinbach and her members. "I can say that I have well over 100 extended family members," Leinbach jokes.

Quarterly check-ins with members are a way for her to stay in contact with the people she serves. It's not uncommon for these calls to turn into casual conversations.

Leinbach has seen firsthand the increasingly vital role of health care as one ages. "Having a plan for the future is so very important," says Leinbach. "I like that I can help people tackle a difficult part of their life."

# Celebrating Nurses Past and Present

May is National Nurses Month, a time to recognize the hard work, compassionate care, and dedication that nurses bring to patients around the country each and every day. Phoebe employs hundreds of RNs (Registered Nurses), CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants), and LPNs (Licensed Practical Nurses) across its campuses to serve personal care and skilled nursing residents. While we can never adequately thank our nurses for everything they do for our residents, Phoebe celebrates Skilled Nursing Care Week, also known as National Nursing Home Week, every second week in May with festivities and tokens of gratitude.

Volunteers from multiple departments will meet on each campus to organize the staff celebrations and plan the week's activities. Staff from all backgrounds are represented in the planning phase to ensure their respective departments have a chance to be recognized.

Human Resources says "thanks" by gifting all staff Phoebe gear during the week. This includes apparel such as shirts and sweatshirts, umbrellas, fidget toys, blankets, lunch bags, and more.

Staff also receive free food throughout the week with treats that include soft pretzels, donuts, ice cream, and hot chocolate. Phoebe hosts local food trucks to cater lunches or desserts for the staff on each shift. We also highlight nurses across our social media pages in May, capturing the vital relationships that form between residents and their caregivers.

Jonas Wilson, an LPN at Phoebe Allentown, is a prime example of a health care professional who brings love and professionalism to our residents. Working his way up to

LPN during his 23 years of experience at Phoebe, Wilson is a familiar, friendly face at Trexler Way neighborhood. From small conversations to helping with medication distribution, he aims to make residents feel their best any way he can.

"It gives me a sense of pride being a nurse and a caregiver," says Wilson. "Being able to help others in their time of need, I try to be trustworthy, honorable, and compassionate." He says that establishing trust is the key to his relationship with residents, who often become a nurse's extended family.

One such resident he has built trust with is Constance Fritz. "She's a wonderful, caring, and thoughtful resident," says Wilson. Initially, the pair had to warm up to each other, but their friendship has blossomed into something beautiful. Fritz echoed this sentiment by saying, "I think our nurses are great. I find Jonas comforting and funny. It makes the day go faster when somebody is funny."

Fritz recognizes the many hats that nurses often find themselves wearing throughout the day, and she has the utmost respect for all they do. "They're always giving extra time," says Fritz.

The comradery that nurses share with each other is often strong and unbreaking. There is a certain energy that runs through every nurse that defines their selfless character. To find proof of this, look no further than the Phoebe Retired Nurses group at Phoebe Berks.

Led by resident Barbara Esterly, the group of more than a dozen nurses meets monthly to cover one of the club's three main pillars: socialization, education, and service.



*“We’re trying to  
make a difference.”*

—Barbara Esterly  
on the importance of  
the Phoebe Retired Nurses group

**Katherine Scheese (owner of From the Heart Consignment Shop) with Esterly and handfuls of donated purses.**



At a typical meeting, they check in with each other, discussing their past nursing experiences and how nursing has evolved. A common thread unifying their nursing experiences is the overwhelming responsibility of caring for dozens of patients at a time.

The group also makes it a priority to educate themselves and the community. In 2024, they attended a presentation by Reading Hospital’s continuing education program that discussed what nurses at Pearl Harbor had to grapple with shortly after the attack in 1941.

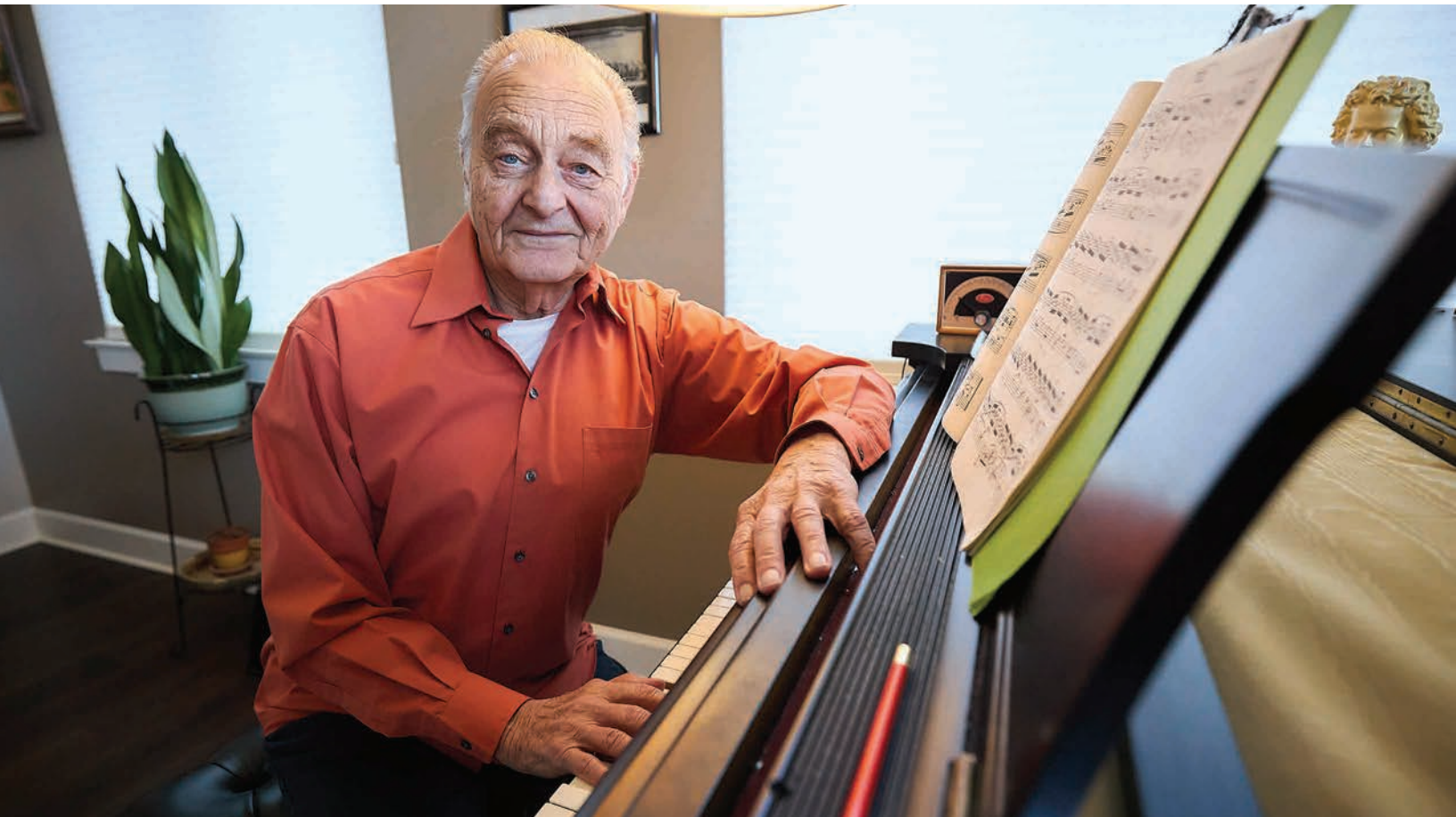
To stay in touch with their spirit of service, the club continues to donate their time and energy to help others. They have hosted blood pressure clinics, sent personalized postcards to Health Care Center residents, and are advocates for quality nursing.

In what was one of the club’s more significant ventures, they partnered with a local secondhand store, From The Heart Consignment Shop, in support of their mission to donate purses to those in need.

Together, the club acquired several purses and filled them with personal care items, food, and clothing. The purses were taken to the shop where they and hundreds of other bags with donated goods eventually made it to various women’s shelters.

It is truly magical seeing nurses of different generations doing incredible work for the Phoebe community and beyond. On behalf of Phoebe Ministries, we thank all nurses for dedicating their lives to caring for others. ☸

To read more about the Phoebe retired nurses, please visit [phoebe.org/phoiberetirednurses](https://phoebe.org/phoiberetirednurses).



*Michael Cerveris in his apartment at Chestnut Ridge with his grand piano.*

# A Room with a Tune at Chestnut Ridge

When Chestnut Ridge at Rodale resident Michael Cerveris moved to Phoebe in early 2024, among his biggest concerns were whether or not his piano would fit and if his neighbors could hear him playing.

“I couldn’t not play, it’s all I ever did,” says Cerveris, who now comfortably resides in a beautiful apartment, Steinway grand piano included. The logistics of getting the instrument into Cerveris’s new space were something he and Brandy Drago, former Chestnut Ridge Sales Associate, went over in detail (Note: Brandy is now a Sales Associate at PhoebeBerks). Together, they measured out the space with the help of early floor plans, ultimately deciding that the piano wouldn’t hinder the apartment’s spacious design.

As for the sound, his neighbors claim not to notice. Nevertheless, music is an experience that begs to be shared. In addition to acting as a permanent centerpiece in Cerveris’s life and home, his piano has become a tool for spurring moments of valuable togetherness at Chestnut Ridge.

Cerveris has started a bit of a tradition by putting on piano performances for his fellow residents. Preparing the music in advance, Cerveris has hosted up to roughly 15 people at a time to perform from the catalogs of composers that inspire him. On one occasion, he played back-to-back “sold out” shows at his apartment.

“I didn’t really consider these performance opportunities. They came about sort of accidentally,” says Cerveris. “There are people here who genuinely love to hear live music.” He has even connected with other like-minded musicians on campus, whom he is open to collaborating with.

Cerveris’s apartment is filled to the brim with art and culture, a reflection of his creative life. His father was a flute and piccolo player who played with the Pittsburgh Symphony. An immigrant with incredibly skillful hands, he also repaired instruments to help make ends meet for Cerveris and his 4 siblings during the depression.

Placed in the middle of Cerveris’s childhood home in Pittsburgh was a traditional upright piano. His siblings all played the piano to various degrees, so music was a constant presence. At eight years old, Cerveris began formal lessons, an age he feels is rather late for a musician given how often one hears stories of renowned musicians starting at ridiculously young ages.

It was a passion that Cerveris’s father warned him about from the get-go, explaining that making a living as a creative is notoriously difficult. Cerveris passed that same message on to his own children, who have thankfully seen great levels of success in their respective fields.

Cerveris attended The Juilliard School in New York, commonly considered one of the best performing arts colleges in the world. While there, he completed a 5-year program as a Piano Major. Some of the most notable names he studied under include Leon Fleischer and Edward Steuermann, the latter of whom is a disciple of Arnold Schoenberg.

While living in New York, the musical theatre scene rubbed off on Cerveris, and he would later musically direct summer stock companies. All the while, he worked part-time at the Museum of Modern Art to keep himself afloat financially.

“I don’t think I could teach pianists if I didn’t have some sense of movement or visualization,” says Cerveris. For him, music can be just as visual as it is auditory.

Shortly after leaving Juilliard, Cerveris was drafted into the Navy where he played piano, both as a soloist and in a chamber ensemble. He then got his Master’s Degree in Musicology from Catholic University of America and his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Piano Performance from West Virginia University.

His subsequent work experience makes up a combined total of 35 years at the University level. Across his teaching career, he became increasingly involved in administration, helping to streamline and develop programs where they could use improvement. At



***Cerveris unwinds with a game of pool at Chestnut Ridge.***

Arizona State University, Cerveris developed an interdisciplinary program inspired by the way Juilliard had combined academics with the arts.

Cerveris taught in many different places around the country, but he landed back in Pittsburgh for his retirement to be closer to his children. At first, he was reluctant to give up his home after the passing of his wife, but he soon realized it would be better for him to get out of a big house.

An early investor of Chestnut Ridge, Cerveris first caught wind of the new independent living facility from his daughter. Emmaus ended up being an ideal location for Cerveris’s retirement, not only because he is closer to his daughter in Bethlehem and his sons in New York, but because he believes “Emmaus is very culturally healthy.”

Cerveris’s apartment is decorated with a staggering amount of artwork from his late wife, who was a painter. Virtually everywhere you look you’ll find striking, colorful images. In the spare bedroom stands a tall armoire filled with books upon books of piano repertoire.

Cerveris’s daily routine typically starts with going to the gym or pool to exercise. Then, he’ll practice piano for 4-5 hours a day, enjoy freshly cooked meals by the dining staff, and otherwise relax. He says that Chestnut Ridge has offered him the tools to take care of himself with great ease.

“It worked out really well. For my particular needs, it couldn’t be better,” says Cerveris.

For the foreseeable future, Michael Cerveris will continue to tickle the ivories for the benefit of himself and his peers. Chestnut Ridge is all the better for having talented individuals like Cerveris bringing vibrancy to the community.

To learn more about Chestnut Ridge, please visit <https://chestnutridgeatrodale.org/>.

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: BSI and Dun & Bradstreet

## THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS AT PHOEBE MINISTRIES

At Phoebe Ministries, volunteers play a vital role in enriching the lives of our seniors. Among our most dedicated supporters are corporate volunteers, whose generosity and commitment make a profound impact on the residents at our three Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs). Companies like BSI Corporate Benefits (BSI) and Dun & Bradstreet have consistently demonstrated their dedication by supporting our programs and events, fostering a culture of giving and service that enhances the quality of life for our seniors and their families.

## BSI CORPORATE BENEFITS: A PARTNER IN CARING

BSI, a nationally recognized employee benefits consulting firm located in Bethlehem, PA, has been a key partner in Phoebe Ministries' volunteer initiatives. Their Chief Growth Officer, Nick Tranguch, serves on Phoebe's Governing Board and the planning committee for the annual Phoebe Golf Tournament. BSI employees also lend volunteer support to Phoebe by participating in the United Way Day of Caring at Phoebe Allentown, where they helped coordinate the annual summer picnic and spent time visiting our residents.

BSI also provides volunteer support for the Phoebe Golf Tournament at Saucon Valley Country Club. This prestigious event raises over \$200,000 annually for charitable care at Phoebe Ministries, ensuring that eligible



***BSI employees volunteer at a number of events for Phoebe, including the United Way Day of Caring and the annual Golf Tournament at Saucon Valley Country Club.***

seniors who have outlived their financial resources can continue to receive the high-quality care they deserve. In addition, BSI staff lend their expertise to the Phoebe Institute on Aging (PIA) Gala planning committee, helping to organize the event and the accompanying silent auction. The PIA supports educational programs for families and professional caregivers.

*“BSI’s brand is synonymous with being among the best in our industry. Phoebe is no different. You won’t find a better, high-quality, high-value provider that holds true to their mission and values. BSI is proud to have our brand aligned with Phoebe and to support them both as a business and community partner!”*

—Nick Tranguch, Chief Growth Officer, BSI

## DUN & BRADSTREET: SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER AND YEAR-ROUND SUPPORT

For many years, Lehigh Valley employees of Dun & Bradstreet, a leading global provider of business decision-making data and analytics, have supported two special initiatives at Phoebe: Operation Santa and the Phoebe Golf Tournament. Dun & Bradstreet’s global giving and volunteer program, “Do Good,” encourages employees to have a positive impact in their local communities. Employees receive 16 hours of paid volunteer time off annually to volunteer independently in their communities.

For years, Dun & Bradstreet staff have supported Phoebe Allentown’s Operation Santa program, which sees the distribution of holiday gifts to our residents. Each year, they work with our community life staff to fulfill Christmas wishes for our seniors. Their commitment to making the holiday season special for our community at Phoebe Allentown’s Health Care Center is truly heartwarming. In the most recent holiday season, volunteers from Dun & Bradstreet provided more than 30 holiday gifts, ensuring that our residents felt remembered and celebrated. Dun & Bradstreet employees also volunteer alongside the BSI staff at the annual Phoebe Golf Tournament, assisting with check-in, distributing golfer giveaways,

and managing contests across the three courses. Their enthusiasm and dedication contribute to the event’s success and help secure vital funding for Phoebe’s charitable care initiatives.

## WHY CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

Corporate volunteers bring energy, resources, and a spirit of service to our mission at Phoebe Ministries. Their involvement fosters community engagement and strengthens the bonds between businesses and the people they serve. These partnerships not only enhance the lives of our residents but also provide employees with meaningful opportunities to give back, building a workplace culture centered on compassion and social responsibility.

We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support of BSI Corporate Benefits, Dun & Bradstreet, and all our corporate partners. Their dedication to volunteering helps us continue our mission of providing compassionate, quality care for seniors. As we look ahead, we invite more businesses to join us in making a difference in the lives of those who call Phoebe home. 🙏

**If you would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities at Phoebe Ministries, please contact the Office of Philanthropy at 610-794-5132 or [philanthropy@phoebe.org](mailto:philanthropy@phoebe.org).**

**Lehigh Valley employees of Dun & Bradstreet have supported two special initiatives at Phoebe over the years: Operation Santa and the Phoebe Golf Tournament.**





Seniors receiving hands-on time with a Tovertafel memory table.

# Enhancing Our Memory Support Program

Phoebe is always looking for new ways to offer the latest and greatest in memory care. With our decades of experience in caring for older adults combined with our award-winning memory care programs, we offer innovative, research-backed treatments to serve our community.

Our latest technology acquisition from Tovertafel, which we colloquially refer to as a memory table, is an interactive new way for residents with dementia to stay cognitively active. The table works by using an overhead projector that senses movement and input on the surface below. The projection then reacts to what's happening, similar to a video game but with no controller other than the person's hands or feet.

This allows for a wide assortment of interactive games and visual stimuli for residents to experience. Ranging from simple, calming activities like brushing leaves to more reflex-based games like whack-a-mole, the table has something for everybody's skill level. It can also be used in group or solo sessions, depending on the needs of the resident(s). The games have been designed with cognitive benefits in mind.

After having some hands-on time with the memory table, Phoebe Richland Community Life Lead AnnMarie Petitto-Thomas says, "It's a remarkable resource for people with different stages of dementia. The beauty of the table is that you not only have the tactile/interactive aspect, but you get

sound. It ignites imagination, friendly competition, improves mood, and keeps residents engaged while bringing people together.”

Phoebe Berks staff met on February 17th for an in-depth training session with a Tovertafel representative where they learned how to operate the campus’s newest addition. Resident faces lit up as they tried the technology for the first time.

The memory table brings another level of activity to engage residents and that it will be helpful in decreasing stress, particularly during sundowning.

Tovertafel works with third party researchers and provides studies on its website to prove the table’s effectiveness. Their findings show that nursing home residents experienced decreased negative emotions and restlessness and an increase to their positive self-image and physical activity after using the table consistently. (source: [www.tover.care/us/research](http://www.tover.care/us/research))

The table also provides a unique method for connection between staff and residents or a resident and their peers with multiplayer games. Beyond offering new ways to help our community, we hope the memory table gets residents excited about caring for their mental health through fun and engaging acts.

The acquisition of this technology would not have been possible without the generosity of our donors. Funding for this specific table came exclusively from the PIA Gala, our yearly awards and fundraising banquet. A memory table was available at the event for guests to interact with and learn about before committing to donating.

The 2024 Gala, held at the Club at Twin Lakes in Allentown, PA, proved to be a night of decadent food, sophisticated drinks, fashion, and community. The



**The memory table’s overhead projector is similar to a video game.**

theme for the evening was “Empowered Aging: A.I. Solutions in Senior Healthcare,” complimented by an A.I. hologram of Phoebe President & CEO Scott Stevenson greeting attendees at the door and an A.I. photobooth.

Guests were treated to a presentation where words of recognition and deep gratitude were shared. Dr. Joseph Vincent was the recipient of the Reverend Doctor Grant Harrity Award for his overwhelming support of Phoebe, his advocacy work, and for being a founding member of the Phoebe Institute on Aging. Meanwhile, CarePatrol received the first William H. Hacker Business Spirit of Giving Award for their commitment to senior care and for being a trusted partner of Phoebe.

The event was a total success, raising \$20,951 to purchase a new memory table with money left over to expand Phoebe’s memory support programs even further. With more fundraising opportunities planned for the future, Phoebe Ministries remains committed to providing cutting-edge care for our residents. 🙏

**Residents can enjoy musical games, painting, and a variety of other memory stimulating options to enhance their memory care.**



# DID YOU KNOW?

## RSV AND PNEUMONIA VACCINES

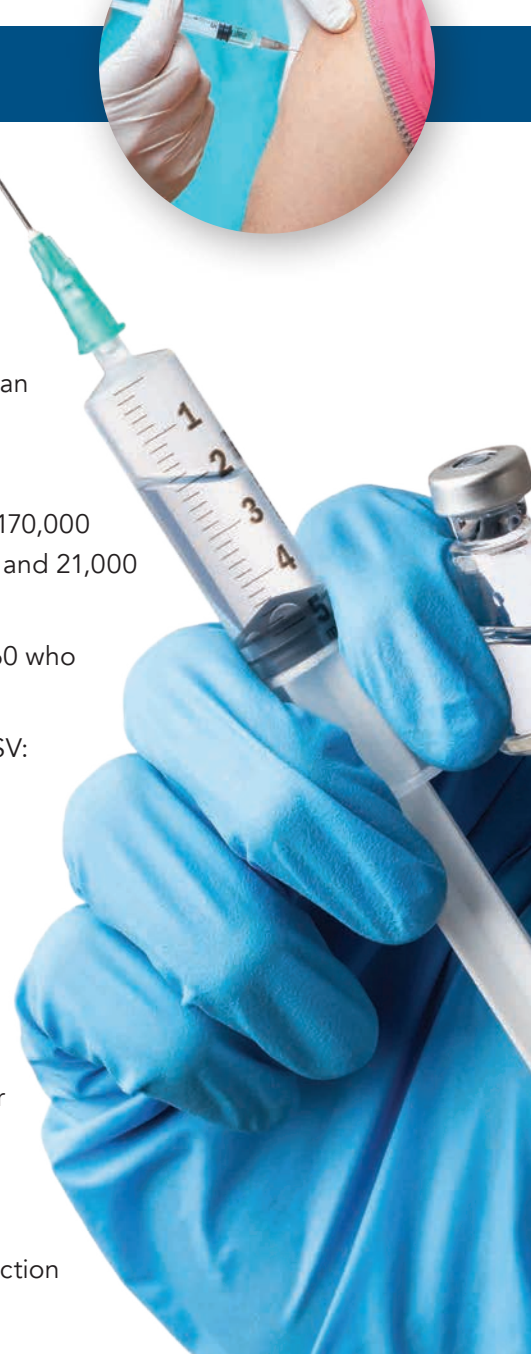
**Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)** and **pneumonia** are two distinct diseases, but both target the lungs and pose a greater risk to older adults.

**RSV** is a contagious pathogen spread through respiratory droplets. It can be contracted by air or by coming in contact with contaminated surfaces. Symptoms can be mild (runny nose, cough, fever), but more severe cases can result in difficulty breathing and pneumonia.

- Between October 1, 2024, and March 29, 2025, the CDC estimates that between 170,000 to 330,000 people were hospitalized with RSV. They also estimate between 9,400 and 21,000 RSV-related deaths in that time frame.
- RSV vaccines are recommended for all adults aged 75 and older and adults over 60 who are at an increased risk of severe RSV.
- There are three FDA-approved vaccines that decrease the risks associated with RSV: AREXVY, ABRYSVO, and mRESVIA. Side effects of the vaccine are typically mild.

**Pneumonia** is a lung infection caused by fungi, viruses, or bacteria and is spread through the air. Symptoms range from mild (cough, fever, chills) to severe (difficulty breathing).

- Pneumonia is among the most common causes of hospitalization in the U.S. and results in more than 50,000 deaths every year.
- The CDC recommends the pneumococcal vaccine for all adults aged 50 and older and those at an increased risk. With two types of pneumococcal vaccines in the U.S. (conjugate and polysaccharide), they are currently the best way to prevent serious, pneumonia-related infections.
- Pneumococcal vaccines have drastically decreased disease rates since their introduction but cannot prevent all disease cases. Side effects of the vaccine are typically mild.



**PHOEBE**   
**PHARMACY**

**Have you ordered your vaccines yet?**  
RSV and pneumonia can be administered year-round.

For more information about Phoebe Pharmacy and the services we provide, please visit [phoebepharmacy.org](http://phoebepharmacy.org).

savethedate


Harvest Moon *Masquerade*

# GALA

Thursday, October 16, 2025

Lehigh Country Club, Allentown, PA



 **Phoebe**  
Institute on  
Aging

For further information or questions, please email [events@phoebe.org](mailto:events@phoebe.org), call 610-794-5132, or visit [Phoebe.org/PIA-Gala](http://Phoebe.org/PIA-Gala).



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SAUCON VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB  
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# PHOEBE GOLF TOURNAMENT

MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2025



Saucon Valley  
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