

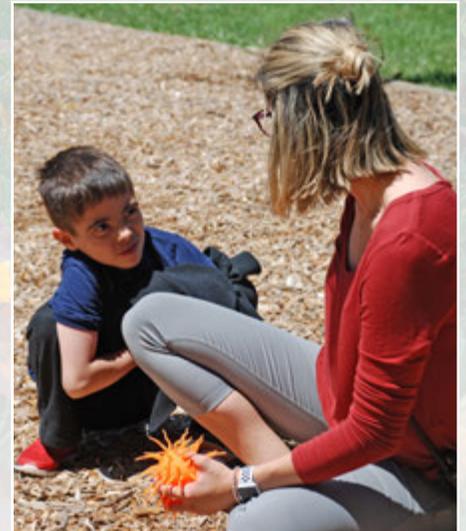


THE LATEST NEWS FROM

SILVER SPRINGS – MARTIN LUTHER SCHOOL

We love therefore we serve
(AGAPOMEN DIAKONOMEN)

Fall 2019



Since 1859...

...and Into the Future

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President's Message



Dear friends,

Fall has always been one of my favorite seasons. It is a time of transitions as the days get shorter, the weather cools, the trees start to show their amazing colors, and the new school year begins. I love seeing the many buses lined up at Martin Luther School and hearing the children's excited voices filling our school buildings once again.

This fall represents a huge transition for Silver Springs too. As we shared in June, this fall Silver Springs will merge with theVillage, a nonprofit organization based primarily in Rosemont that provides many of the same services we do for children, youth, and families in our shared community. We are excited to join forces with theVillage because we believe that together we will be a better, stronger organization.

On the eve of our planned merger and in the year of our 160th anniversary, we believe it is important to remember our past even as we keep watch over the present and envision our future. Our founder, Elizabeth Schafer, had a core vision over 160 years ago that all children matter and deserve to feel safe and have hope, and it was her vision that laid the groundwork for the work we do today. We look back humbly and gratefully on all we have been able to accomplish with the help of many talented, dedicated employees and partners, and we look ahead with excitement and steadfast commitment to improving the lives of the children and families we serve.

Work to finalize the merger continues, and we will provide updates along the way. When we combine our legacies, our services, and most importantly, the expertise and dedication of the people at theVillage with those at Silver Springs, we will be more resilient, more creative, and better positioned to help the children and families who need us most and entrust us daily with their well-being. On the next page, we introduce Michael Kellerman, the President and CEO of theVillage who after the merger will serve as Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer of the combined organization. After the merger is finalized, all programs will continue to operate at all locations. We look forward to introducing theVillage's programs to our Silver Springs community.

Elizabeth, our founder, was called to serve the destitute and needy children she saw on the streets of Philadelphia, and so an orphanage was born, which has grown into the thriving multi-program organization that Silver Springs is today. Like Elizabeth, we continue to be called to serve and work to improve the lives of children and their families and to help them reach for their brightest futures. And so, in this anniversary year and in this time of transition, we honor our past, celebrate our present, and remain steadfast as we move into our future. We are grateful to the countless caring partners who have and continue to sustain our mission. We could not do this important work without you.

In gratitude,

Kristen E.M. Gay, Ph.D.
President and CEO



AGAPOMEN DIAKONOMEN: "WE LOVE THEREFORE WE SERVE"

Silver Springs - Martin Luther School is a Social Ministry Organization affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and its Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, a member of Lutheran Services in America, and accredited by The Joint Commission. Please direct inquiries about the newsletter to Lynn Nipan, Development Director, Silver Springs - Martin Luther School, 512 West Township Line Road, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462-1001; Tel: (610) 825-4440, ext. 206; Fax: (610) 825-3839; e-mail: Lunipan@silver-springs.org.

Visit us on the web at www.silver-springs.org



Introducing Michael Kellerman, President and CEO of theVillage

As we prepare for Silver Springs and theVillage to become a united organization, we introduce Michael Kellerman, currently President and CEO of theVillage. Once the merger is finalized, Michael will serve as Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer for the combined organization. In this role, Michael will oversee all clinical service areas and play an instrumental role in finding new and creative ways to enhance and expand how we deliver services to our children, youth, and families.

Q: What background did you bring to theVillage?

MK: After originally pursuing a career in music, I discovered that I was more passionate about the dynamics of working in a non-profit setting than I was about performing. Starting in fundraising, I soon held positions in marketing and program management. Outside of work, I became more involved in community

and political projects, including building Habitat for Humanity homes in Austin, TX. Working alongside struggling but courageous families who yearned for a simple, stable home was another turning point for me, and I switched from the arts to human services by becoming a Vice President for Habitat. This was the first introduction to the deep collaboration many nonprofits have with governments, and the unique challenge of balancing public and private funding to carry out a critical mission.

I then earned a Master's degree at the LBJ School of Public Affairs and studied public finance and statistics to better understand how human services organizations can achieve success. When my spouse and I moved to Philadelphia, I knew I wanted to continue my commitment to human services nonprofit organizations. After working at the Pew Trusts and with nonprofits as a consultant, I had the opportunity to become the Interim President and CEO at theVillage. I was thrilled to take on

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Two Worlds Coming Together

When Mike Simpson's wife opened the mail one morning recently, she became misty-eyed as she read the announcement of Silver Springs – Martin Luther School's and theVillage's plans to merge into one organization. Mike's wife, a lifelong Lutheran, has supported Silver Springs for many years through her church, and she and Mike are supportive of Silver Springs' children throughout the year. "Over the years," Christine said, "we've done collections at my church for the children at Silver Springs." For Mike, his connection is a little different. "I was a handful," he said of himself as a young child. In 1958, Mike was seven years old when his mother decided he could benefit from the discipline that a home for children could provide. Mike spent eight years at Presbyterian Children's Village, which is now known as theVillage. "It was all for the greater good," Mike explained when asked about his stay at "the home."

Reminiscing about his time at theVillage, Mike shared that he first lived at "the home's location on 58th and Kingsessing" in Southwest Philadelphia, and later moved with the program to their current Rosemont location. There, Mike learned to play the piano, became a practicing Christian, and picked apples with his mother when she visited him on the expansive property. "I was there for eight years and it was very strict. It was obvious that it did well for me," Mike says of his time there, pointing to his successful 33-year career working in the financial services industry at Thrivent Financial (formerly Thrivent Financial for Lutherans).

When Mike read of Silver Springs' plans to merge with theVillage, Mike shared, "We were touched to see the coming together of my two worlds." Mike's story shows in living color the ways in which Silver Springs and theVillage align around their histories. Also shared is a strong sense of mission and belief in the potential for greatness among the children and youth we serve – a natural connection that sparks great anticipation for our future.



Introducing Michael Kellerman (continued from page 3)

the challenge of managing a period of profound change for an organization whose mission was so firmly aligned with my passion. In 2018, I became the permanent President and CEO. During this period, Kristen Gay and I, supported by a team of Board members, began exploring the ways in which we might be better by merging our organizations into one. My experiences at theVillage, and at the organizations I served earlier, are a reminder of the importance of embracing growth and change as a constant force in mission-focused organizations.

Q: What do you find the most rewarding aspect of our work with children who are hurting and healing?

MK: When I think of the missions of both of our organizations, I believe that grit and audacity power us forward. Supported by strong, dedicated staff and the best evidence-based practices, we have the opportunity every day to change lives by helping children and families set bold and courageous goals and believe they can

achieve a brighter future. Seeing a child put courage into action in turn motivates me to work harder, and I know this virtuous cycle is a big part of why my colleagues choose to do this difficult work.

Q: What most excites you about the upcoming merger of Silver Springs and theVillage?

MK: People are the most precious asset of both organizations. From the onset of talk about merging, Kristen and I have been so excited to bring together the strengths of theVillage with the strengths of Silver Springs, and that starts with staff excellence. We at theVillage can't wait to learn more about programs that are new to us, such as the Martin Luther School model, how BHRS (Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services) serves communities, and much more. I know the same is true from the Silver Springs perspective. The more we can empower our committed staff to provide the best in service to the children and families we serve, the stronger we will be. I am excited for what lies ahead.

The Seed

A tiny seed

Soon to be

In the ground

Bloomed to be

Rising and rising

Little by little...

Two little leaves

Blooming green and healthy I see

Little seed waiting to bloom

A little rain a little sun

Sprouting from the Earth

Beautiful and radiant

Little seed is bloomed

Now... Little seed

Is a flower bloomed and beautiful

Ready to take off!

~8th Grader, Martin Luther School

Learning Through Peer Mentorship

We are excited for the return of the Peer Mentor Program at Martin Luther School after its successful trial run last school year. The Peer Mentor Program was developed to give older students an opportunity to serve in leadership roles and as an extension of the WORC (Work Orientation Readiness Center) Program. The WORC Program focuses on teaching students "soft skills" such as nonverbal communication, working well in a team, and how to successfully break bigger projects down into smaller tasks. All skills that will help students to succeed as they move forward in school and later on in their work life.

"A lot of children come to Martin Luther School feeling like they have nothing to contribute because that's the message they have repeatedly received," explains Anne Duncan, Harrison Centre WORC Program and Peer Mentor Program Coordinator. "We've seen the mentor program really help them grow and gain confidence and valuable insight."

To be selected as a mentor, students must demonstrate the school's core values of being safe, respectful, and responsible. Last year, peer mentors assisted in the WORC classroom by greeting incoming students, making sure they clock in and out, and helping faculty and staff to "catch" and reward students' positive behaviors. This year, the program is expanding to include peer mentors who will help in the Library and during Gym and Art classes.

"The Peer Mentor Program provides a great opportunity for our students to practice leadership skills," says Eva Morrison, Martin Luther School Director. "They also serve as role models for younger students who really look up to the mentors."

We are proud of our peer mentors for setting a great example for their fellow students!



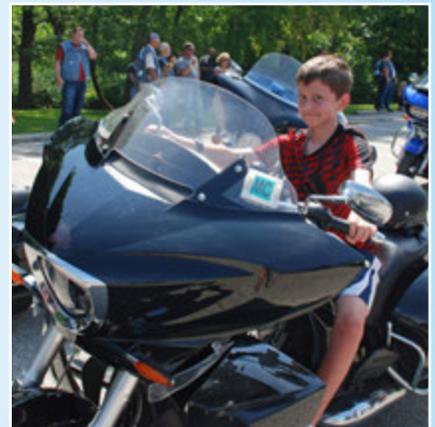
Summer Fun



The children at Silver Springs – Martin Luther School had a busy summer learning through fun activities! Trips to explore the Marvel Exhibit at the Franklin Institute and a day of skating at Rolling Thunder were favorites. “The best part of this year’s summer programming was having so much variety for the students,” says Kristyn Waters, Extended School Year Coordinator at Martin Luther School. “It is important for our students to be exposed to new places and things as they continue to grow both academically and socially.”

In the Residential Treatment Program, a similar variety of enjoyable and enriching activities filled the calendar. “We make sure that activities help the children meet their treatment and personal goals,” says Amanda Duani, Therapeutic Activities Coordinator. “We deliver fun and safe activities while simultaneously working on social, life, and coping skills and other aspects that will enhance their treatment.” Activities that fit the bill this summer for the children included splashing around at Water Day, displaying their unique talents at the yearly Talent Show, and practicing culinary skills by making their own personal pizzas.

Trips off campus rounded out the summer and included cheering on the WNBA’s Philadelphia Reign, visiting Presby’s Inspired Life at Spring Mill to make their own tie-dye t-shirts, and a trip to the Adventure Aquarium for some hands on learning about marine wildlife. The annual “Christmas in July” motorcycle ride was a favorite when more than 100 riders from the Hogs and Honeys Foundation for Kids and fellow riders roared onto campus with a gift for each of the children. This summer was surely one to remember!



Caring for Caregivers

Silver Springs – Martin Luther School has many caring professionals that comprise the team that works each day to help children and families heal, learn, and reach their personal goals. Many of the children we serve have experienced traumas, significant losses, very difficult family circumstances, and other challenges that have led them to us. They share their stories of hardship, talk of their feelings of sadness, anger, and frustration, and verbalize their dreams for their futures. According to Dr. Barbara Trout, Clinical Services Director in the Residential Treatment Program, sometimes hearing these stories can weigh on the caring professionals themselves.



“Our caregivers can sometimes begin to feel hopeless, helpless, and exhausted from the work they do,” Trout explains. “Watching and listening to children talk about horrible experiences they have lived through can be heartbreaking, emotionally exhausting, as well as incredibly inspiring. When a child is in pain, we say to him or her ‘I am here with you.’ Sometimes we go home, hug our loved ones and cry. We may even have dreams about the children’s pain.”

“This is important, life-changing work, but it can be hard,” states Kristen Gay, Ph.D., President and CEO explaining the rationale for the initiative Silver Springs has embraced to provide opportunities for staff members to engage in self-care and bond with one another. Shelley Spear, Director of Foster Family Care and Host Home, adds, “We’re taking steps to say that, as an agency, our greatest asset is our employees, and whatever we can do to give them the tools to handle their emotions and the emotions of the children relying on them, the better work they can do.”

These activities have looked different across the organization. Recently, the Community Based Programs held a day for staff to gather in Fort Washington State Park to enjoy casual time together playing frisbee, relaxing over a potluck lunch, and practicing relaxation with a yoga session. Other activities have included

outings such as Painting with a Twist and escape rooms. “We want our staff to support one another and make sure they do not feel alone,” says Michelle Ruppert, Director of Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services. “We have tried to find unique activities because seeing your co-workers in a different light is important for your work life.” As an example, Ruppert encouraged staff to join her in celebrating National Wear Your Jammies to Work Day as a fun way to lighten a day often full of conversations about difficult topics.

Residential Treatment Program Unit Supervisor, Randi Gerencser, also found meaningful ways to promote team unity and self-care among her staff. “Taking time for self-care is important. Sometimes we don’t realize the impacts of all that we experience each day because we’re often in ‘go mode.’” Gerencser continues, “These activities are a good way for all of us to learn more about each other and share our thoughts.” She pointed to a recent axe throwing outing where her team let their competitive sides shine. The two top scorers left with prizes and bragging rights. Catered lunches for staff also have been a welcomed way to check in with one another and uplift a work day.



“I’ve appreciated the focus on self-care this past year,” says Stacy Chamberlin, Foster Family Care Case Worker. “We have been able to participate in activities like bowling, going to the park, and learning about meditation, which have helped us take time away from our hectic schedules and get to know our coworkers better. I’m glad that Silver Springs is supporting us and encouraging us to take care of ourselves.”

Celebrating 160 Years of Service!

2019 is a milestone year for Silver Springs – Martin Luther School! Founded in 1859 as an orphanage, this year marks 160 years of uninterrupted service for children and families. On June 6th, more than 300 dedicated friends, staff members, children, and families gathered on our Plymouth Meeting campus on a lovely summer evening to celebrate Silver Springs' 160th anniversary. The evening began with a program that included the story of our organization's founding as told by Kristen Gay, Ph.D., President and CEO, with the assistance of two of "our" wonderful children; a musical performance by the Silver Springs Residential Children's Choir; inspiring speeches by two of our outstanding alumni, and greetings brought by Tracy

Beasley on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod and David Jones, Commissioner of Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities. We also were thrilled to recognize five of our most faithful friends for their dedicated partnership in our work to help children and families: Joseph Lawrence, Plymouth Township Chief of Police (retired); St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Springfield; Messiah Lutheran Church, Downingtown; Hogs and Honeys Foundation for Kids, and The W.W. Smith Charitable Trust. The evening concluded with a delicious picnic dinner enjoyed by all in attendance. We are humbled to be able to carry on this mission and organization and thank all who were able to join us in celebration!



What I Love About Silver Springs...

"What I love about working at Silver Springs is making a difference to the children and in their lives. Over the years, the children have had a big impact on me, to where I treat them as if they were my own."

~ Brenda Pone, Child Care/Mental Health Worker, Residential Treatment Program, 35+ year employee

"When I arrived at Silver Springs, I immediately felt at home. Everyone I met was welcoming and genuinely cares about the children and families we work with. My immediate supervisors also demonstrate great concern for the welfare of their staff. My only regret is that I didn't apply sooner. Working here has reminded me why I choose to work in this field."

~ Shawn Granberry, Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Service (BHRS) Case Manager, 7 month employee

"I love teaching at Silver Springs - Martin Luther School because not only do I enjoy seeing the students succeed, but I am also continually amazed by how much I learn from them."

~ Virginia Tornetta, Reading Specialist, Martin Luther School, 7 year employee





SILVER SPRINGS
MARTIN LUTHER SCHOOL

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Help make Christmas joyful for the Silver Springs children!

Here are some of the many ways you can help bring Christmas cheer to the children this year!

- **Make a financial gift** to Silver Springs in the spirit of Christmas.
- **Suggest friends or family members make a financial gift** to Silver Springs in your honor.
- **Donate gift cards** to help children and families enjoy holiday celebrations at home.
- **Bring an unwrapped present** for a child to Silver Springs between 10 AM and 4 PM, December 2 through December 6.



Questions? Contact Amanda Bryant at (610) 825-4440 x307 or abryant@silver-springs.org.