

Reflections

A magazine for family, friends, and supporters of The Camphill School

FALL + WINTER 2023



The Camphill School
1963 - 2023

Reflections

Cover & Below:
Community celebrations have been an essential part of school life for sixty years.

Contents

3 Editor's Letter / 4 Six Decades of The Camphill School / 12 Turn your Pennsylvania personal or business tax dollars into tuition assistance! / 13 Summer Adventures / 14 Are you 70½ or older with an IRA? Then this article is for you! / 15 Board of Directors: Gratitude and Welcome / 16 Beaver Farm Christmas Market / 17 #GivingTuesday 2023 / 18 In Search of the Miraculous: 60th Anniversary Gala / 19 Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice



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Editor Courtney Coffman

Contributors Norene Benton* / Amy Gleicher / David Leighton / Barbara Rodger / Susan White

*in memory

Editor's Letter



Eighteen years ago, I stepped into the living room of Whitestone. Students and coworkers sat relaxed on couches and chairs in the comfortable, homey space. I had been working at the school for about a month, but this was the first time I was joining a house community for lunch.

I wasn't sure what to expect. I took a seat adjacent to Stephen, a high school student. With a hearty hello Stephen asked if I had seen *Oh Brother Where Art Thou?*, the 2000 Coen Brothers movie. "Yes," I responded, "but it has been a while." Stephen then spoke with me about the film and asked me if I knew it was based on Homer's *The Odyssey*. I told him that I did not. Stephen then recalled scenes from the movie and made the comparison to the epic poem. We had a lively discussion about how the directors had chosen to adapt the perils faced by Odysseus and his ill-fated crew and the trio of escaped convicts attempting to reconnect with their families and find treasure.

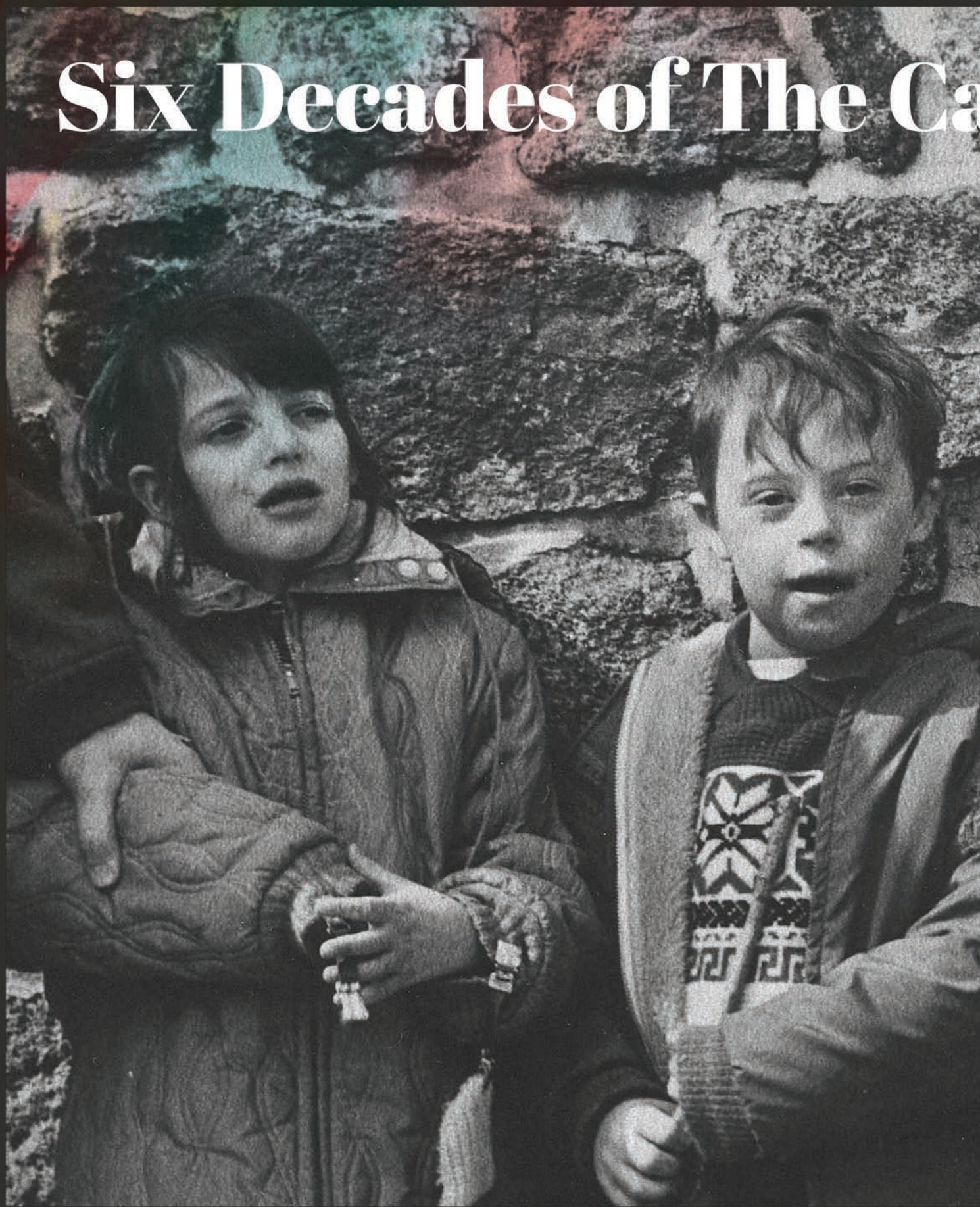
After my first of countless lunches around the dining table at Whitestone, I went back to the office. I was still thinking about my conversation with Stephen. It was wonderful and surprising. I had simply applied for a job at a school for students with special needs a month before. This conversation was the first of many experiences I have had over the years that cemented me to this place and to the people who are part of it.

It is in these seemingly small, unremarkable moments that we find the most meaning, that we discover the true essence of why life and its path is miraculous. This is especially true at The Camphill School and has been happening for the last sixty years. Ask anyone on campus; they will tell you similar stories. Stories that define and shape lives, that bond people together and lead them to one another and The Camphill School. Here's to countless more decades and even more stories.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Coffman". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Courtney Coffman
Editor

Six Decades of The Ca



Amphill School



"I drove into Beaver Run on a hot day in late August during a light afternoon rain. My dad stopped the car, just past where the schoolhouse now stands. Before I was able to say anything, I was filled with a rush of feeling — 'This really is a community.' It is interesting that I should have had this feeling, because there was no one from Beaver Run in sight. To have community takes people. The power that had been created by the striving for community had become part of the very geography of the place".

— David Leighton, Alumni
Volunteer Coworker

1965 – Laurie

By Norene Benton (October 5, 1921 –
December 1, 2014), Alumni Parent



In 1965 I had my fifth child tested by a psychologist who told me that if he had a child like Laurie, he would look into a school in Chester County that was run by a very unusual, but wonderful group of people. We, of course, had no idea of sending a six-year-old to a boarding school; but getting rather desperate, we decided to look into it. I found Laurie and myself at the closing activities of the school that June. I had two experiences that day that assured me it was a very special place.

I came upon a student named Alan. He asked me to read a card to him. Not knowing whether it was personal, I hesitated, but upon looking at it and finding it to be a verse, I agreed. It was signed "Love, Erika." After I read it, he looked off into the distance and said, "Love, Erika," as though that was the greatest gift a person could receive. Erika was his teacher.

That same day, Laurie and I went upstairs in Whitestone to see where the children slept. I stood at the window in the large back room and saw the beautiful view up the hill (there were no other buildings at the time) and some children who were playing outside. Laurie was not tall enough to see out, so I lifted her to the wide windowsills. She relaxed against the window frame and we watched quietly that way for a few minutes. Then I said we had better go now and her answer was a resounding "No!" I was amazed because Laurie did not have a strong will at that time. In September 1965, Laurie was enrolled.

This was the beginning of a new life for my family. We witnessed the growth of the school from two buildings to the extensive campus it has become. I feel I have been truly privileged to be able to accompany Beaver Run, in a small way, on its journey. My husband served as Treasurer of the Board for many years and was an early President of the Camphill Foundation. Two of my other children went into special education and my daughter-in-law, Pam Benton, has worked at the school since 1982. Laurie has happily been living in Camphill Village in Copake since 1980.

02 / Bruce (back row, on right in dark shirt) with his class

1972 – Bruce

By Barbara Rodger, Retired Teacher

Bruce began his Camphill career at the age of eight, two months into the school year in fall of 1972. A city boy, he came to Beaver Run after surviving open-heart surgery, with a seizure condition and no possibility of expressing himself. A quiet little mouse thrown into a group of boisterous classmates, Bruce took his time to show himself.

One day, months later, out under the swings in the playground I heard an unfamiliar little voice chanting, “I heard a horseman, I heard a horseman.” My heart jumped, but I held myself back and let him go on, repeating the verse over and over. His strength increased, his speaking became more spontaneous. At first one had to listen hard to catch his soft, hesitant words, but soon these developed into a full-blown speaking voice. Although he played an unassuming role in real life, he spoke with gusto in the play *Horatio on the Bridge*. In seventh grade he spoke the long poem of Hiawatha, and at eighth grade graduation, the preamble to the UN Charter.

Bruce was not only beloved by his classmates for his calm, reassuring manner, but was reliable help to his house community. Every morning the breakfast porridge appeared on the table with a fresh-brewed pot of tea for his English house father.

Now, Bruce is happily married for over thirty years to his childhood sweetheart, Jodi. He commutes daily to his job at the



Appellate Supreme Court mailroom in New York City. He continues to quietly, but persistently, make the best out of each situation, with the expectation that “I can do it.” His limitations never get in the way for long of his moving forward into the future.

Of great importance is his family: brother Allan, mother Jill, and now deceased father Joe. Their faithfulness in supporting the school long after Bruce’s graduation is much appreciated. Of great importance was Jill’s initiative to help the teachers form a curriculum acceptable to the commonwealth in 1979. A heartfelt thank you to Bruce’s family for being friends of Camphill through thick and thin.

1988

By Susan White, Teacher

Although school is made up of many different classes, of different ages, levels of ability, streams of experience, the school itself is greater than the sum of its parts. It becomes a vessel for what one calls the School Spirit—spirit that unites the diversity into a color tapestry. It was in our beautiful Blue Room that the Spirit of the school began to shine a very particular way this year. For the first time in many years, all the colors of the paths of childhood were present from first to twelfth grade. We made it an event to meet once a week to share our thankfulness that we were a whole.

And what a surprise these events became. We began very tenderly singing a few seasonal songs together in preparation for the festivals. As the first term progressed, we had a few wonderful cultural surprises from friends—violin/piano concert, a clowning mime, a local church bell choir, but the most wonderful surprise of all was the children.

Slowly and shyly, class by class, they began to stand before us and sing a song or recite a poem. As the year unfolded, the shyness disappeared. They began to stand up straight and strong, full of confidence with the burning wish to give something away. The quality of the gatherings grew. Before our eyes the stream of the Waldorf® curriculum began to appear through demonstrations of mechanics and astronomy, dramatic Greek plays, eurythmy demonstrations, and poems composed and recited by the children.

By June, the crowning of these gatherings came when the first grade felt confident enough to share a hilarious, dramatic poem about a greedy mouse and a BIG cake! With all the classes having “given away” something of their gifts of learning, the School Spirit began to shine with a healthy glow.

Health brings generosity and openness to impulses. In Beaver Run, we have been aware of the many social changes in America but especially of our own area.

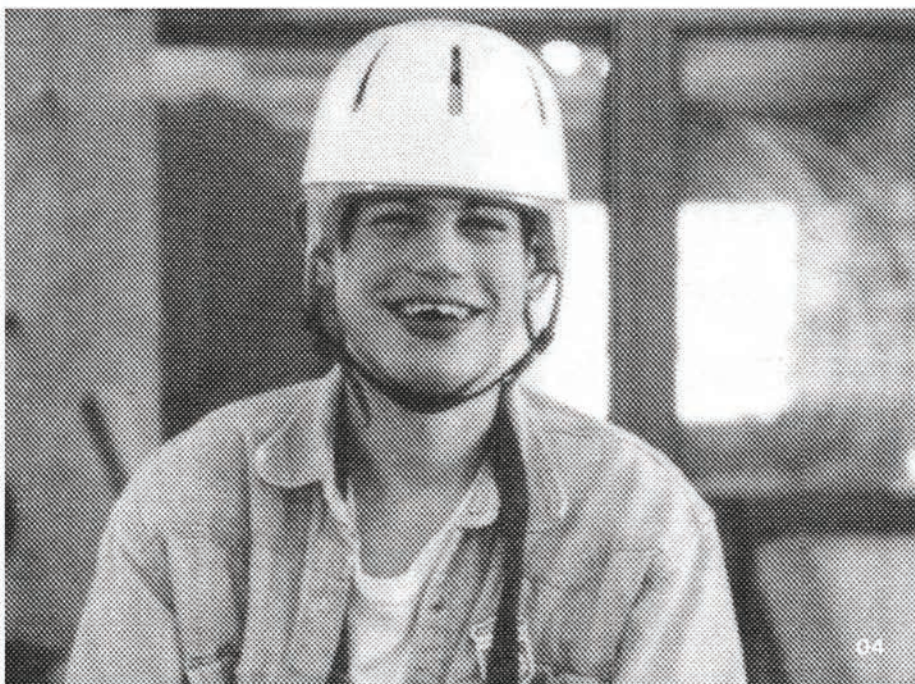
We have begun to ask ourselves: How can we meet the needs of our time? Our new imagination that came into use was the need of the special needs kindergartener, the small child whose parents both work. We hope to open an early learning program in September with day students plus some of the younger staff children. This would not only meet the need in our area, but hopefully will be a channel to our continual residential placement in our lower grades.



03

1990s – Peter

By Guy Alma



When Peter arrived at The Camphill School, a stack of therapy reports arrived with him. The reports stated the obvious: Peter was epileptic, with motor and verbal apraxia and severe ataxia. He suffered from seizures, shaking so uncontrollably that he would knock over anything he tried to pick up, and had such poor control of his legs that he could barely walk and frequently fell over. His speech was slurred and he stuttered, and as a result Peter was painfully shy.

The reports themselves were inconclusive. Most assumed his condition was degenerative and none suggested any

hope for substantial improvement. Peter's mother was concerned that he would need a wheelchair soon in addition to his walker, and believed that decline was inevitable.

Peter was a cheerful eleven-year-old boy. He always smiled and had a joke on his lips. When he fell over he apologized for the inconvenience he caused. The staff at Beaver Run immediately developed a regime of therapeutic activities and daily program of exercise. His house parents took him on walks and occupational and physical therapists worked directly with him, as did the horseback riding and eurythmy therapists. His teacher incorporated games that encouraged

motor planning and kinesthetic skills and speech therapists teased out his expressive ability.

Peter learned to throw and catch a ball. He learned to sit on a horse. Slowly, week by week, month by month, his control of his movements improved. He began to eat with a fork, pick up a glass of water, and walked up stairs instead of crawling. Short strolls turned into mile-long walks on country roads. Soon Peter was hiking through the woods with his friends. Not content to merely sit on a horse, Peter learned to ride. His gross motor skills improved so much that, with helmet and kneepads, he could use a wheelbarrow and pitchfork to muck out the barn.

Peter began to apologize less and assumed control of his own life. Friendships blossomed as a rich social life with his peers became possible. Peter lost his timidity and began to express himself without embarrassment over his slurred speech. He was proud of what he was achieving. You could see it in his eyes and in his smile. You could hear it when he pointed his thumb at his chest after leading the big draft horse in from the pasture, exclaiming "Me!" I've done it, he would tell us, for myself and by myself. Peter developed the most important ability of all: He became a contributing member of the school community.

Reports can be wrong. At The Camphill School, we don't believe everything we read.

2000 – Max

By Amy Gleicher, Alumni Parent

Max was diagnosed with Fragile X at seventeen months. This diagnosis answered a lot of questions for me, such as why Max didn't walk or talk. I was frightened, yet relieved to know why he had missed every milestone. We immediately began every therapy and education program possible, even homeschooling. These interventions were very helpful. Still, Max's behavior was challenging beyond imagination. We struggled.

We tried to give him everything but could not.

What we could not give Max was extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins) or friends. Max's world was comprised of his therapists, his father, brothers, and me. All others turned away from us. Mothers of other children did not want their children around Max. Even our own families were uncomfortable, staying away from us.

We plugged along.

Then when he was five, I suddenly became ill and landed in the hospital for three months. Hired caregivers moved into the house to care for Max. Once I was back on my feet and in full control I "saw"—in stark black and white—that without me at the helm, Max had no life.

None. I was shocked and horrified to realize this. I was frightened.

So, we sought to find Max a life and, with extraordinary luck, discovered Beaver Run. There Max found friends, companionship, love, and support—a full life. He moved there at age six and graduated at age nineteen. Beaver Run raised him. Beaver Run gave Max a full life, my family hope. It is not only Max who was given back his life—it was all of us.

Beaver Run made possible Max's opportunities for the full life he enjoys now, living and working on a farm in Vermont. They educated him, loved him, and supported him in his needs. Their love for and steady support of Max gave him a lifetime foundation for a full life. We are so fortunate.

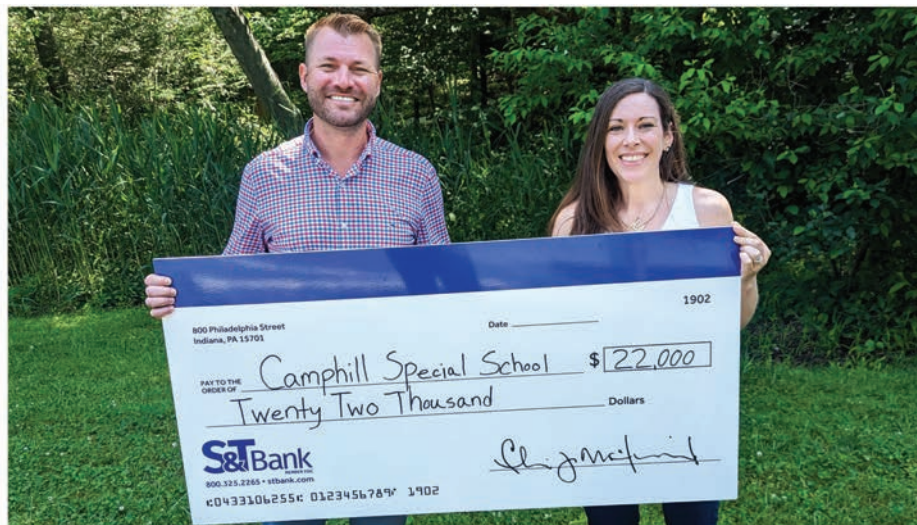
Max took us to "places" we did not know existed and his needs stretched us further than we could have imagined. I may have given him life, but Beaver Run gave Max a life. They gave the world to Max.





Turn your Pennsylvania personal or business tax dollars into tuition assistance!

Below / James Robinson, Vice President, Regional Banking Manager II Central and Eastern Pennsylvania with S&T Bank, presents The Camphill School with a \$22,000 contribution via the Pennsylvania EITC program.



Thank you to these businesses and individuals who have participated over the last year:

Craig and April Adams
Scott and Jen Althouse



The Pennsylvania Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program enables you to redirect your Pennsylvania tax dollars – almost dollar for dollar – to The Camphill School, for tuition assistance for our students from Pennsylvania.

To qualify for the program businesses must pay one of the taxes listed below. Individuals qualify if their Pennsylvania state taxes exceed \$3,500 annually. Effectively, you or your business can donate to The Camphill School instead of paying taxes to the Commonwealth of PA. Eligible businesses and individuals can receive a tax credit equal to 75% of their contribution to The Camphill School. This credit increases to 90% if you or your business commits to give the same amount for two consecutive years.

Any business authorized to do business in Pennsylvania subject to one or more of the following taxes may be eligible:

- Personal Income Tax
- Capital Stock/Foreign Franchise Tax
- Corporate Net Income Tax
- Bank Shares Tax

- Title Insurance & Trust Company Shares Tax Insurance Premium Tax (excluding surplus lines, unauthorized, domestic/foreign marine)
- Mutual Thrift Tax
- Malt Beverage Tax
- Retaliatory Fees under section 212 of the Insurance Company Law of 1921

For businesses, application deadlines apply.

If you want to support the school and make a gift directly to the school, you will get a tax deduction, yes, but the majority of that donation is still a cost to you. If you make a gift to the school through this EITC program, it can offset almost your entire PA tax bill – in other words, the donation comes at almost no additional cost to you. You are basically redirecting who gets the money when you pay your state tax bill, which you have to pay anyway.

To learn more, contact
Courtney Coffman
(ccoffman@camphillschool.org)
or visit camphillschool.org/ways-to-give.



Fran Kinniry
Liz and George F. Ohsiek, Jr.
Bill and Faith Parshall





Summer Adventures

With help from our generous donors, many of our on-campus homes were able to enjoy trips during our Extended School Year program. These trips were not only fun and memorable but allowed our students to grow in their life skills, their academics, and personal relationships. **THANK YOU** for helping our students and community recharge and refresh after an exciting school year of learning!

Are you 70½ or older with an IRA? Then this article is for you!

When you start the process of taking your Qualified Minimum Distribution (QMD) from your individual retirement account (IRA) this year and realize the taxes you'll have to pay, maybe think "The Camphill School" instead.

If you are at least 70½ years old, you can give up to \$100,000 per year directly from your IRA to The Camphill School **without it counting as taxable income.** Qualified charitable distributions (QCD) are now a permanent addition to the tax code and can benefit both you and our students.

There are some rules and processes to keep in mind:

- You must **be at least 70½ or older** at the time of the transfer.
- You may transfer **up to \$100,000 per year.**
- Your distribution must come **directly from a qualified IRA.**
- The amount transferred is excluded from your adjusted gross income (AGI).
- Each financial institution that holds IRAs has its own paperwork and processes that you must complete.
- **Always consult your financial advisor** before making any charitable gift, including a QCD.

- The Camphill School receives the funds directly from your IRA administrator and your name will not be relayed to us, so **if you plan to make a QCD to the school, please let us know** – we want to be able to thank you.
- When you donate from your IRA, you will be **welcomed into the Pietzner Legacy Society.**

Want to learn more or let us know you will send a QCD this year? Contact **Courtney Coffman** at **610.469.9236 x132** or **ccoffman@camphillschool.org.**



Board of Directors: Gratitude and Welcome

After nine years of serving on the Board of Directors, Dr. John Fish has stepped down. John has helped lead the school through his tireless service, including Chairing both the Gala and Development Committees. John will remain involved with the school moving forward in different roles. Thank you, John, for sharing your time and leadership with The Camphill School community.

Howard Herman was voted onto the Board of Directors in October. Howard will continue the tradition of service to The Camphill School set forth by his parents, Bill and Betsy. Camphill has been part of Howard's life since his sister joined the school as a student in 1977. We are thrilled that he will bring his historical perspective along with his business experience.

01/ Dr. John Fish

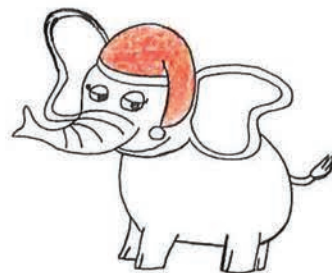
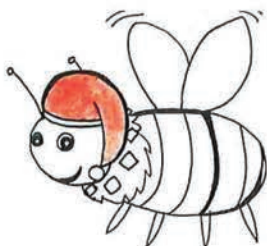
02/ Howard, Phoebe, and Vivian Herman at the Gala



01



02



BEAVER FARM CHRISTMAS MARKET

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

10AM-2PM

FOXFIELD BARN

701 WEST 7 STARS RD

PHOENIXVILLE, PA

19460



FEATURING: FOXFIELD FLOWERS

ARTISAN CRAFTS & PRODUCTS FROM THE CAMPHILL SCHOOL

MOSAIC HOUSE

FROG HOLLOW FARM

SONDER HOUSE

PEAR TREE COFFEE & HEART STONE PASTRIES

LIVE SEASONAL MUSIC

BONFIRE

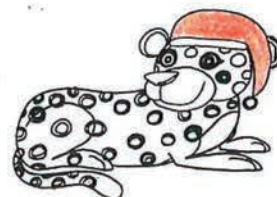


LIVING WREATHS, DRIED FLOWER WREATHS,

POTTERY, WEAVING, MOSAICS,

CANDLES, FARM PRODUCTS, HERB BLENDS,

STUDENT ART & MORE!!!



Art by Ella Skye, Transition Program Student

#GivingTuesday 2023

60 Save the Date!

Join us on **Tuesday, November 28, 2023**! The Camphill School is excited to once again take part in #GivingTuesday, kicking off the charitable season!

This year, with your help, we hope to raise \$50,000, in celebration of our 60th anniversary! Your contribution provides the gift of education to all of our students regardless of their family's ability to pay. We can't wait to partner with you to provide the life-changing experience of education, friendships, and growth students experience at The Camphill School!

For more information or questions, please contact the Development Office at ccoffman@camphillschool.org or 610.469.9236.

How can you make a difference?

1.



SCAN ME

Access bit.ly/igiveTCS to register for this event! **Start fundraising to benefit the school's #GivingTuesday Campaign.** It's simple, customizable, and shareable via social media and email.

2.

Donate on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, to create transformative educational opportunities for The Camphill School students. Join together with the Camphill community by making your gift on this national day of giving.

3.



Do you have a loved one who has everything? Give in honor of a friend, neighbor, family member, or coworker. You not only give a unique and priceless gift but are introducing The Camphill School to someone who might otherwise not know about us. You are helping us create new relationships and the potential for future supporters.

4.

Share, share, share our messages on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, email, text, and, of course, by word of mouth. Your endorsements and support are critical to the success of this one-day campaign!



In

Search

of the

Miraculous

Save the Date

60th Anniversary Gala

Thursday, May 30, 2024

6:00 p.m.

Meredith Manor,
Pottstown, PA



The Camphill School
1963 – 2023

Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice

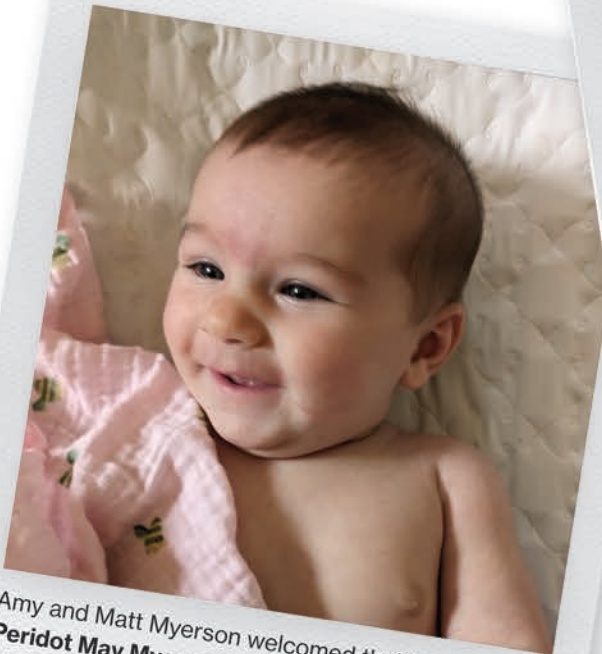
During the spring and summer of 2023, The Camphill School community has grown. We are proud to introduce you to some of our newest members.

Not Pictured:

Ruth Evelyn Lloyd was born on April 24th to Laura Knight, Special Education Administrator at Beaver Farm, and her husband, Andrew Lloyd.



Jessica Cartwright, Prevocational Instructor for Foxfield Flowers, her husband Ben, and older children Benjamin and Gwendolyn welcomed **Liliana Grace** on April 21.



Amy and Matt Myerson welcomed their baby girl, **Peridot May Myerson** on May 22. She joins her big brothers Flint and Rune as one of the stewards of Stone House.



Finley Doris Downs was born on June 3. She joins our Development Officer Sarah, dad Brendan, and sisters Moira, Ella, and Delaney.



PLEASE JOIN US

Nov. 28	#GivingTuesday (see page 17 for more information)
Dec. 2	Beaver Farm Holiday Market (see page 16 for details)
Dec. 9	The Camphill School's 60th Anniversary
May 30	60th Anniversary Gala (see page 18)

VISIT CAMPHILLSCHOOL.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT ALL EVENTS.

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HELP THE CAMPHILL SCHOOL CONSERVE RESOURCES.

Choose to receive future issues of *Reflections* via email. Send your digital subscription request to reflections@camphillschool.org.

Join the growing ranks of the Pietzner Legacy Society by naming our supporting foundation, Beaver Run Foundation, in your will or other estate plans. Call Courtney Coffman at 610.469.9236 x132 for more information.

**Save
the
Date!**
**#Giving
Tuesday**
**Nov. 28,
2023**



The Camphill School
1963 – 2023



SCAN ME

The Camphill School's mission is to create wholeness for children and youth with developmental disabilities through education, extended family living, and therapy so that they may be better understood, they may more fully unfold their potential, and they may meaningfully participate in life.

The Camphill School does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, religion, or disability.

