



United in Philanthropy

Summer 2021 • Volume 4 • Issue 2

*Invested in
Making a
Difference*



I Give Because...

THE WECHT FAMILY

Pastor Kim felt called to support UMC's ministry long before she began working at UMC at Pitman six and a half years ago. When she served as the pastor of various United Methodist churches in Monmouth County, she encouraged her congregations to support benevolent care for UMC residents who had outlived their resources and often participated in the former Walk for All Ages.

"It was a natural continuum that I'd carry on supporting the mission once I came to work at Pitman," Pastor Kim explains. "My role as director of mission and pastoral care is so much more than a 'job' and I want to do anything I can to continue helping the residents I see everyday at Pitman, and the residents of our other communities, as well."

When Pastor Kim's son, Joshua, turned 16 and began looking for a part time job, she encouraged him to consider UMC at Collingswood. The community was conveniently located for Pastor Kim's husband (also a United Methodist pastor) to help with drop off and pick up, but has the same warm, family environment she had come to know at Pitman. Josh started at Collingswood as a utility worker and has since worked his way up to be a cook.

You'll often see us collectively refer to our residents, associates, and donors as our UMC Family, but for some members of the team, that description is literal! In recognition of July's Associate Campaign, we met with Pastor Kim Wecht, UMC at Pitman's director of mission and pastoral care, and her children Joshua and Hannah, both members of UMC at Collingswood's dining services team, to learn why and how they find meaning in working with seniors, and why they've chosen to take their commitment to UMC's mission a step further by supporting the Foundation's work.





He is enrolled in culinary school and credits his experience at Collingswood with helping him discover his love of cooking and preparing him for his future vocation.

Knowing that both her mother and her brother love working at UMC, Hannah decided to join the Collingswood team in 2019. She values interacting with the residents and hearing their stories. "I see abundant life as bringing light into the residents' situations," Hannah shares. "Especially during the pandemic, I try to make the residents happy when I bring them their meals. I'll be silly or write notes on their meal containers to cheer them up."

For Joshua and Hannah, their support for the Gift of Care Circle has grown out of this deep respect and appreciation they've formed for their residents. "It's like I've been adopted by a bunch of extra grandparents," Hannah jokes. Her brother agrees, and points out that other residents and associates really do become family. "That's why I think Gift of Care is important," he says. "There are residents who don't have any living family or kids close by, and they've found a second family here. It's important that they not be forced to leave that family because they've outlived their money."

Pastor Kim sums it up this way: "The homelike, compassionate atmosphere at our communities is exceptional. I want to invest in things that make a difference in peoples' lives, and we can see the positive impact UMC has on seniors lives every single day."

In their words...

Pastor Kim:

One particular resident, Ernestine Thomas, was very inspirational to me. She was one of the first residents I got to know at Pitman, and she passed away last year at the age of 107. She was like a living history book and was so influential at Mt. Zion UMC in Lawnside, a very important church in our denomination's African American history. She lived an extraordinary, faith filled life.

Joshua:

I have a good relationship with a lot of the residents and enjoy finding common interests. There's one resident at Collingswood who I've bonded with who really likes birds, so we like to sit and talk and watch Collingswood's pet birds together.

Hannah:

There was a resident I was close to who sadly passed away recently. I sent a note to her family to let them know the impact she made on me, and they actually wrote back to say how happy they were to hear about our relationship. Her sister sent me a small memento to remember the resident by, and that was very special.

Great
Place
To
Work.®

Certified

MAY 2021–MAY 2022

USA



UMC has done it *again*

For the fourth year in a row, United Methodist Communities has been certified as a Great Place to Work. Survey responses from every UMC campus and department were analyzed and scored across 60 specific areas, including associates' feelings surrounding organizational culture, professional development, and compensation, as well as perceptions of the difference their work makes and how UMC contributes to the community at large.

UMC associates' deep connection to their organization's mission was reflected in the survey results. This year, 89% of UMC respondents asserted that they feel their work has special meaning and is more than 'just a job' to them and 86% reported that they are proud to tell others they work at a UMC location.

"When associates are happy to come to work each day and share a sense of ownership in UMC's mission, it creates a positive experience for staff, residents, and family members alike," explains David Glenn, vice president of human resources.

That's what we call a win, win, win. Congratulations, team!

For our associates, UMC is not just a Great Place to Work – it's also an organization with heart!

The past year has shown the extraordinary level of commitment our associates have to caring for our residents. What you might not know is how committed they also are to caring for each other.

Over the last **FIVE YEARS**,
the Foundation has been able to assist
28 ASSOCIATES
through the **ASSOCIATE
COMPASSION FUND**,
with distributions totaling
\$33,677!

"Chrissy has been a constant in our community for the last 19 years. She supports our residents and lives our mission every single day. It was a pleasure to be able to return the favor in her hour of need."

Jeff Lisk,
executive director,
UMC at Bristol Glen



Chrissy is one of those 28 associates. A housekeeper at Bristol Glen for nearly two decades, she shared what her job means to her and how her coworkers' support changed her life.

What is it that you love most about working at Bristol Glen?

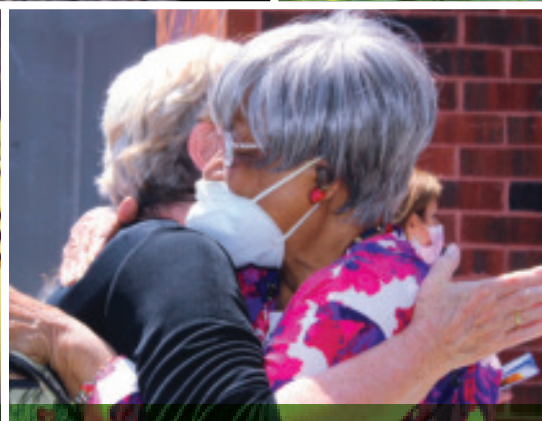
When I first started, I'd been out of a job for a year and just needed the paycheck. But it's become more than that, so much more. I love the residents. It's so hard to say goodbye to them when the time comes, but you can't help falling in love with them. I love my coworkers. We're one big family, everyone is very helpful. When you come to a point where you need support or someone to talk to, there is always someone there.

As much as you don't want to relive it, can you share a bit about your situation and how the Associate Compassion Fund was able to help?

When things got bad and my marriage ended, I could not afford our two-bedroom. I felt like a failure to my children because I didn't have a roof for us to live under... we became homeless. It was hard because everyone knew what was happening, and it's humbling to get help. My executive director, Jeff Lisk, approached me about the Associate Compassion Fund and asked if I'd be interested in applying for assistance. I said oh, definitely! He made sure all the paperwork went in and I got approved. With the money the fund granted me and almost nine months of me putting my paychecks into a savings account, I had enough for a down payment on a new home for my family.

How did receiving that support make you feel?

I'm eternally grateful for the generosity shown to me and my family. It was a good feeling to be recognized and to know they wanted to help me. I've said it before, we're really one big family. We care about each other, and when any one of us needs help, you just want to help them. I couldn't imagine not being at Bristol Glen.



Honoring the Past, with Hope for the Future

Memorial Gardens

In the last weeks of June, United Methodist Communities' senior housing communities held memorial garden dedication ceremonies to mark the closing of the past year's challenges and sorrows and to initiate the beginning of a new, hopeful chapter. "The memorial gardens are an important part of moving forward," explained Cindy Jacques, VP of housing and community initiatives. "It's a way to remember those who've passed and honor our staff's dedication...we want this to be a happy thing."

Beautiful flowers were planted, and each location marked the spot with a plaque remembering those who were lost during the COVID-19 pandemic and commemorating the dedication and selflessness of the staff who worked so hard to keep their communities and residents safe.

"The garden is a place where we can cry, laugh, reflect, and be still," Pastor Alicia Grey told the crowd gathered at UMC at Covenant Place. "We can have hope and we can have healing."

Similar sentiments were shared at UMC at The Wesleyan's ceremony, which administrator Gertrude Kehleay referred to as a Celebration of Life dedicating a garden of love. She thanked her staff, UMC leadership, the Foundation, and all of the friends and donors who ensured her residents felt safe, secure, and loved these past fourteen months. Most of all, she thanked God and urged everyone to remember that whatever comes our way, "God has our back, and God can handle anything."





A New Way to Give

We are excited to offer donors a new way to support abundant life for seniors – through EFT giving! EFT stands for Electronic Fund Transfer and is also commonly referred to as automatic bank withdrawal or direct debit. You complete an EFT transaction by using your bank account and routing number, as opposed to a debit or credit card number. Many people already use EFT to pay their monthly utilities, car payments, or credit card bills, but an increasing number of Americans are choosing to handle their charitable giving through EFT as well.

The main benefits of EFT giving include:

- **Simplified recurring giving** – Monthly donors can set a giving schedule and have their gift automatically sent from their account. Setup is easy, and there's no need to worry about updating credit card numbers or expiration dates. Donors can stop their donations at any time.
- **Highest level of security** – Credit card donations are quick and secure, but since EFTs are processed through the donor and the charity's financial institutions, they offer that extra layer of bank encryption to protect your information.
- **Lower fees** – EFT processing fees tend to be slightly lower than credit card processing fees, maximizing the impact of your donation.

If you'd like to make a one-time EFT donation or set up a monthly giving schedule via EFT, please contact our philanthropy assistant, Pamela Senatore, at 732-731-2121. Recurring EFT donations can also be started on our online giving form, by checking the monthly giving box on umcommunities.org/foundation/donate.

Are You Ready for Estate Tax Changes?

There is a lot of talk these days about proposed changes to current tax laws. Despite the perception that these changes only affect the wealthiest among us, changes may impact anyone's charitable planning. Here's a look at one area up for consideration: estate taxes.

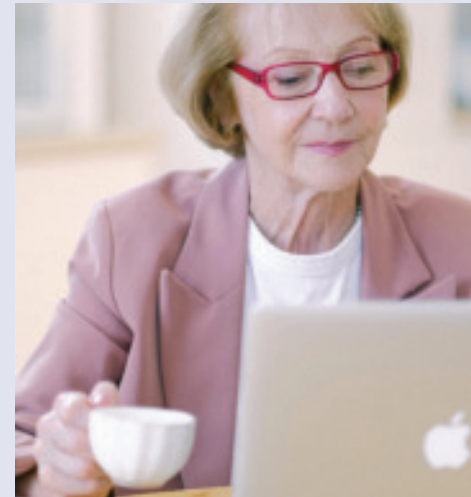
More Americans may be paying estate taxes or at least submitting an estate tax return in the future, even if they do not have to pay any taxes. There are two basic changes being proposed. The first would eliminate the step-up in basis for appreciated assets. Currently, when a person dies, any asset they own which has

grown in value over the years passes on to their heirs at the current market value, not the original cost. The heirs can then sell that asset and avoid the capital gains that have built up.

There is a proposal to eliminate this step-up-in basis, which would force every estate to pay capital gains on the accumulated value of these assets at the time of death. The legislation would allow for up to \$1 million of gains before taxes, but a return would need to be filed. This would be a major change to current law.

The second proposed change is to lower the dollar amount where estate taxes would be paid. Right now, an individual's estate must be greater than \$11.7 million before there are any taxes. One proposal would lower this estate threshold to \$3.5 million. That means that many more estates will have to pay taxes.

Will this happen? Nothing is certain. The chances are good though, that there will be some changes coming. Be sure to talk to your own advisors about what is best for your own planning.

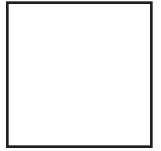




United Methodist
Communities

Foundation

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Seeing the
positive impact

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SAVE
THE DATE

OCTOBER 16, 2021



JOIN US for this live
social media event
with residents, family,
associates, and friends
across the country!

Tribute Giving – Thoughtful Gifts That Make an Impact

Supporting the UMC Foundation can be a special way to recognize someone who has made a difference in your life! Whether you are paying tribute to a loved one's memory, marking a friend's milestone birthday, or expressing gratitude for an associate or volunteer who's gone above and beyond, your thoughtful gift helps make UMC's mission of providing abundant life for seniors a reality.

In just the last three years, memorial and honor gifts have totaled over \$73,000 and benefitted UMC residents in a variety of ways! Whether the donors directed their gifts to benevolent care, memory care activities, or capital improvements, every contribution made a difference.

Tribute Lists Go Digital!

In our last ten issues of *United in Philanthropy*, we've listed the previous quarter's memorials and honorees on the last page of the newsletter. As more members of the UMC family opt to recognize their loved ones through their charitable support, we will be moving our Tribute Gifts list to our website. You can now view the quarterly lists by visiting umcommunities.org/foundation/tribute-gifts

To learn more or make a donation, visit umcommunities.org/foundation or call 732-731-2121.