



Introducing Gemma Services

Why Gemma? The answer can be found in the dual meaning of the word.

In nature, a gemma is a young plant that grows and thrives independently, often after a disruption such as a rainstorm. In Italian, gemma means gem, or precious stone.

When considering the work we do, promoting hope and healing through mental health services, education, and specialized support for vulnerable and at-risk children and families, we feel the meaning behind our new name reaffirms our belief that those we serve are absolutely precious and nothing is more important than creating and cultivating an environment where they are given the opportunity to grow, flourish, and shine.

Introducing Kristen Gay

As we prepare for theVillage and Silver Springs to become a united organization, we introduce Kristen Gay, Ph.D., currently President and CEO of Silver Springs - Martin Luther School. When the merger is finalized, Kristen will continue in this role for the combined organization.



Q: Can you tell us about your background, what you find to be the most rewarding aspect of our work with children who are hurting and healing, and what most excites you about the upcoming merger of Silver Springs and theVillage?

After attending Franklin and Marshall College, I earned my Ph.D. in School, Community, and Clinical Child

Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. I did my clinical internship at Silver Springs and fell in love with the children and mission. My Dad ran a social service agency, so I was the kid who spent many weekends attending special agency events, talking with staff, and interacting with clients. Coming to Silver Springs felt like coming home. The mission, the employees, the kids all felt so familiar and so compelling. I knew then that I wanted to be a part of Silver Springs. I feel so passionate about helping our children know that they are loved and lovable, and that they have so many neat things to contribute to our world. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to work in many capacities at Silver Springs. I started as an administrative intern and did a lot of performance improvement work. Later I held various positions including Development Director, Vice President,

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Top five ways you can help!

- 1 Christmas at theVillage: Adopt children or families to make their holidays bright!
- 2 Confirmation/Mitzvah/School Projects are great ways for teens to help less fortunate kids and families.
- 3 Your gift of cash helps where it is most needed for our children and families.
- 4 Sponsor an event, workplace giving, corporate matching gifts or EITC grants.
- 5 Share our social media posts (sharing reaches a greater audience than liking)

For more information, contact Liz Marafino Fiola at 610.519.1657 or lfiola@village1877.org.

A Season of Change

For so many of us, fall is a special season of change. This couldn't be more true for theVillage this year! As we shared in June, theVillage is merging with Silver Springs - Martin Luther School, a 160-year old nonprofit organization based in Plymouth Meeting. We are excited to join forces because we believe that together, we will be more resilient, more creative, and better positioned to help the children and families who entrust us with their well-being.

In this issue among other things you will read about Kristen Gay, who will serve as the President and CEO of the new organization. I will serve as Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer. I have so enjoyed our partnership on this merger and I look forward to working with Kristen to create the new organization.

Silver Springs was founded as an orphanage by a group of Lutheran women in 1859; theVillage was founded by a group of Presbyterian women in 1877. Since those early days, we have both grown into thriving multi-faceted organizations. We continue to be unified in our call to serve children and their families. And so, though this is the last formal newsletter from theVillage, we remain steadfast as we move into our future. We are grateful to the countless caring partners like you who have and continue to sustain our mission. We could not do this important work without you. Thank you!

Best,



Michael F. Kellerman
President and CEO



Introducing Kristen Gay

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and then was honored to become the President/CEO in January 2014.

The children we serve are amazing and precious. By no fault of their own, they have had to deal with unbelievable challenges. We are privileged to be on the front line with them as they manage through some hard and sad times. We give them opportunities to heal and to learn. We give them normal childhood experiences so they can feel joy and have fun. Watching the children heal and grow is so rewarding. Our work changes lives! The other awesome thing about our work is the dedication and commitment of our staff. These careers are not for everyone. When someone chooses to work at Silver Springs or theVillage, they are committing to hard, emotional work. Yet they come

back every single day and stick with the children and youth through painful things. Our staff are truly amazing!

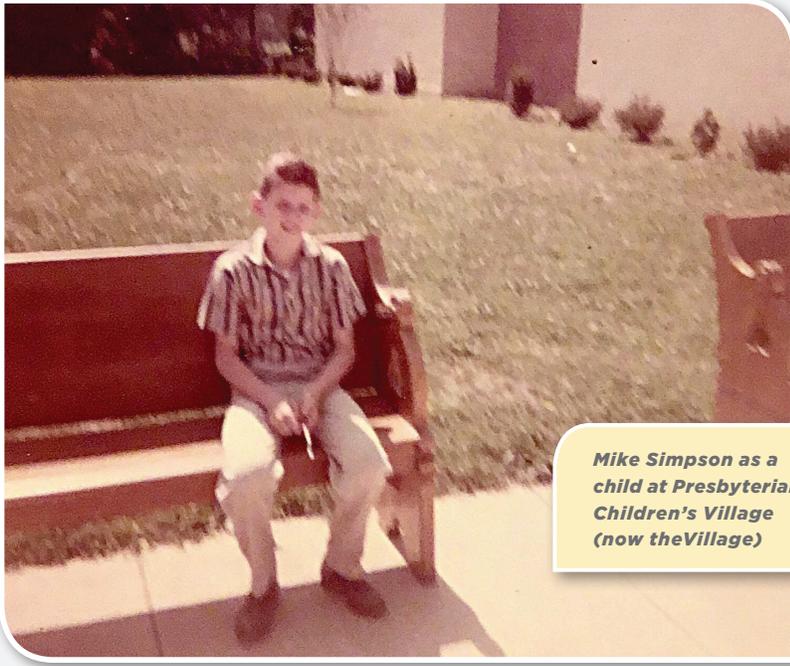
Bringing Silver Springs and theVillage together is exciting because both agencies have such talented, committed staff. This opportunity allows us to learn from the strengths of the employees within each agency so we can improve the services we provide to children, youth, and families. The children and youth we serve need us now more than ever. I get so excited when I think about all the neat ways we can pool our resources to respond even more effectively to the unique needs of the children and youth in our care, now and into the future. We truly will be better together!

You can help bring the “Spirit of Christmas” to children and families served by theVillage

Christmas and the Holidays are a special time at both theVillage and Silver Springs - Martin Luther School with many opportunities to bring joy and hope to our children and families. Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, volunteers will decorate our buildings and wrap gifts for our kids, our clients and staff will have an opportunity to gather for parties, and we all will experience the warmth the season has to offer. You can help bring the “Spirit of Christmas” to our children and families! We will help about 700 children in our programs this year with Christmas gifts. You can purchase gifts for an individual child, several children, or adopt a family or a residential cottage. Gifts are due by December 13, 2019. For more information, contact Betty Wu at 610.519.1615.



TheVillage and Silver Springs: Two Words Coming Together



Mike Simpson as a child at Presbyterian Children's Village (now theVillage)

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.



Mike and his wife today



Soon to be Gemma Services

452 S. Roberts Rd.
Rosemont, PA 19010
village1877.org

theVillage Leadership

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Paul Bergsteinson, Chair
Joseph Ragaglia, Esq., Vice Chair
Margaret Zukoski, Secretary
Nancy B. Wolcott, Treasurer
John Sundquist, Assistant Treasurer

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**Helping children and families
create a brighter future.**



**Find Wish Lists for Many Needs
at www.village1877.org**

Don't forget to "like" us and "share" our stories on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram (@Village1877)

Ways to Give

There are many ways to support theVillage. For more information, visit: <http://village1877.org/give-help>

United Way

Designate your United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey gift to theVillage with our agency number #1867

Join The Team — Fulfilling Careers at theVillage

Do you know anyone that might want to join our team? More information about careers at theVillage can be found on our website at www.village1877.org

Save the Date: Art Works 2020

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

November is Adoption Awareness Month

In the past year, theVillage's Adoption and Permanency department worked with 37 children to provide them with their forever home through adoption or permanent legal custody. Foster parents play an important role in helping these children. For more information about becoming a foster parent, please call **610.525.5400** or email fosterparent@village1877.org.

Faith in Action Council

Saturday, November 16, 2019, 9-11 am