

Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I'd like you to think about the one or two special adults who positively influenced you as a young person. You know, the people who always had your back – but didn't let you off the hook too easily; the people who always expected the best from you, who made you want to look and be your best. Perhaps it was a teacher who taught you that true learning happens in the context of relationships; or the coach who taught you how to change a life, not just how to change a game. They may have been aunts and uncles who supported your interests so they could become passions, or neighbors who made time to listen.

These simple acts of kindness, borne of generous spirits, show that there are many ways adults can support children and young adults. As young people move through normal developmental crises, or as they deal with the risks that all teens are exposed to, these unconditionally supportive relationships can help to keep them safe – either by helping them avoid risks altogether, or by helping them to bounce back and learn when they make mistakes.

Your support of Children's Beach House makes it possible for CBH staff and volunteers to unconditionally stand by the kids we serve and to keep them safe. Thank you for that.

Every adult can find their own unique ways to be supportive of the young people in their families, neighborhoods, communities, workplaces, and churches. Find your own special way to be "that person" for a child or youth in your world.

Sincerely,



Richard T. Garrett
Executive Director

A Mom Looks to Her Past to Give Her Son a Brighter Future

Photo Credit:
Julianne Pisacane



Christian (with the beaming smile on the right) enjoys a game of Uno with fellow campers and counselors Josiah and Najha.

When Veronica Bynum was looking for a bit of support for her son, Christian, she knew exactly where to turn. For many years, starting when she was eight-years-old, Veronica, who is deaf, spent her summers playing, swimming, reading, sailing, and making friends at Children's Beach House. In remembering her time at CBH and thinking about what she wanted for her son, Veronica's thoughts repeatedly brought her back to the people. "We had quality time with the staff," she recalls. "They took time to hang out with us, to listen to us." She also remembers her fellow campers fondly. "There were five or six deaf kids but no interpreter," she recalls, "but no one panicked. We just blended in. The hearing kids gestured and learned a few signs. We made it work. We had a lot of fun."

"I also loved story time. They often acted out the stories and made a way for the deaf people to understand. I think my current love for reading comes from story time here."

"I learned how to swim at Children's Beach House," Veronica says proudly, echoing a statement CBH staffers often hear from adults who attended CBH camp. "We also learned how to sail. One counselor pretended we were trying to sail away from a shark," she laughingly remembers. "We knew it wasn't real, but it was still kind of scary and lots of fun. It sure got us moving."

Veronica laughs at the memories of the boys' dorm and the girls' dorm engaging in an ongoing contest over who could scare the other dorm the most. She tells a story about a fellow camper who went missing from her bed and was found hiding in a closet because she had been tricked by the boys into believing she had seen a ghost. In spite of that once incident, Veronica believes that the girls held the upper hand when it came to scaring the boys.

Several years later, when discussing her son's needs with his school speech therapist, Veronica's thoughts returned to those memories and she asked, "Do you know about the Children's Beach House?" The speech therapist did and took things from there. It was only a matter of time before Christian started forming his own collection of happy camp memories.

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CBH Mission Statement

The mission of Children's Beach House is to improve the lives of children, youth, families and communities by helping them to identify, understand and utilize their own strengths, talents and resources.

CBH Campers Take to Open Water with Freedom Boat Club

Two of the most exciting, initially scary, and ultimately thrilling days recently spent by CBH campers were thanks to members of Freedom Boat Club. With locations in the US, Canada, and Europe, Freedom Boat Club is like a country club or gym membership for boaters. Freedom Boat Club owns and maintains fleets of various power boats at its 300+ locations and it makes them available for the use of its members. On two recent mornings (a third is planned), Freedom Boat Club took Children’s Beach House summer campers out on the water for a few hours of high seas adventure. The club provided the boats, fuel, and life jackets; Freedom Boat Club members volunteered their time and boat piloting skills.

On the mornings of their boating adventure, CBH campers happily tromped their way down FBC’s dock near the Lewes-Cape May Ferry Terminal and were greeted by Kloe Thompson, FBC’s Lewes Membership Director, along with three FBC members who volunteered their time and nautical know-how.

After being fitted with life vests, the campers formed three groups and made their way onto three boats. “We’re going to have to spread ourselves around the boat,” said one of the volunteer boat captains. Making a downward gesture with her hands, she explained, “if everyone is at the front of the boat, the

boat will end up being like this.” The day was as much about learning physics as it was about having fun.

While some of the children were initially a bit fearful of this new adventure, their fear quickly turned to excitement. The Freedom Boat Club members were masterful in helping the kids maintain an appropriate blend of respect for safety while sharing the unbridled joy that comes from being on the water with salt-scented wind on your face. The campers were thrilled when they saw pods of dolphins swimming and surfacing nearby. Children in one of the boats witnessed a large fish leaping from the water and learned from the boat captain that it was an endangered sturgeon.

While the marine life they witnessed was thrilling to see, the kids were equally excited to see some familiar terrestrial sites. The boat captains motored the boats past CBH’s building so they could see what it looks like from the water. “It looks so much bigger from here!” they all remarked, thrilled to suddenly realize that such a large and beautiful place had been created specifically for them. They also loved looking across the surface of the

Delaware Bay and waving at the other two boats of fellow CBH campers on the water. It seems that, by seeing their friends in boats and having fun, they become more fully aware of what they themselves were doing. They saw the full extent of this new experience and a gained a deeper appreciation of their own bravery and openness to trying something new.

Armed with that appreciation, the campers more fully settled into the experience. They took turns testing out



Photo Credit: Julianne Pisacane

different seats and different vantage points on the boat. Some kids helped the captains steer. And others put their feet up, folded their hands behind their heads, and chilled out.

These boating days are the most recent manifestation of an ongoing relationship between Freedom Boat Club that started over a year ago, when CBH’s Executive Director, Rich Garrett, met Freedom Boat Club owners Tom and Bev Rosella. The Rosella’s were immediately drawn to CBH’s work and wanted to get involved. In spite of all



Photo Credit: Julianne Pisacane

the challenges presented by the pandemic, including the suspension of the 2021 summer camp season, Freedom Boat Club hosted a day on the water in August 2021 for families involved in CBH’s Youth Development Program. They also hosted Hope Floats, a fundraiser to support CBH programs. This year, Tom and Bev Rosella have also generously become Gold Sponsors of CBH’s Beach Barbecue, Carnivale! and FBC’s Kloe Thompson is serving as one of the event’s co-chairs.

We are so grateful to Tom and Bev Rosella, Kloe Thompson, the volunteer captains, and Freedom Boat Club for their generosity to the children we serve. By helping them experience new (and perhaps a bit scary) things, they show these young people that they have the power to expand their worlds and the confidence to try. We (and the kids) are deeply grateful.

Brighter Future, continued from page 1

Like most kids at CBH, when asked what he likes most about Children’s Beach House, Christian immediately responds, “I have lots of friends here.” This is a universal response when CBH kids are asked about the Beach House. Because of their speech and language challenges, children who come to CBH often find themselves isolated at school or the targets of bullying. This isn’t because they lack the desire or capacity for friendships; it means they aren’t given the opportunities to develop them. At Children’s Beach House, though, these kids are given the time, space, and opportunities to connect with other children, to engage in activities together and learn more about one another – and they walk away rewarded with a network of close friends. The CBH staff may see our summer camp and our year-round programming as a carefully designed web of programs and activities carefully designed to identify and develop interests and talents and build confidence, but the kids see CBH as the place they have lots of friends.

Christian also likes the camp counselors. Echoing his mother’s experience, Christian says the counselors take time to talk with and listen to the kids. Eventually, after talking about his friends and the counselors, Christian turns his attention to the things they do together. “I like all the activities – swimming in the bay, playing Uno, playing basketball. The trip to the Delaware State Fair was really fun. So was Killens Pond (State Park).” Of course, those were also places and activities Christian shared with his friends.

When asked if her hopes for her son’s time with Children’s Beach House have been met, if he is as happy and supported as she felt when she was at Children’s Beach House many years ago, Veronica Bynum smiles. “It’s the perfect place for Christian.”

Volunteer Spotlight: Brian Mengel

Amidst all the variety on display at Children’s Beach House – the myriad activities of the preschool kids, the ever-changing mood of the water on the bay, and the host of community organizations with whom we partner, there is also a reliably strong backbone of consistency here – Chef Paula’s annual village of gingerbread houses, the sound of preschoolers playing each day on our playground, and the sight of volunteer Brian Mengel helping out with set-your-calendar regularity every Thursday.

Brian is CBH’s Facility Manager John Eyclesheimer’s go-to guy for help on any number of maintenance and repair projects at CBH’s Lewes facility. He has helped replace shower heads in the boys’ and girls’ dormitories, repaired our outdoor ropes course, painted several rooms, helped rebuild a wooden walkway to our dunes, torn out drywall after we discovered water damage, hung holiday decorations, helped convert an outmoded bathhouse into much needed storage space, and renovated our second-floor resource room. Thanks to Brian’s generosity with his time (he often comes in when needed in addition to his regular weekly Thursday commitment) and his many skills, CBH has saved thousands of dollars in contractors fees. We are deeply grateful to Brian for making sure our facility is a safe and pleasant place for the children and families we serve and the volunteers and staff who do that work. We’re also grateful for his good humor, kindness, and generosity of spirit. He’s a great guy.



Photo Credit: Julianne Pisacane

**Children's Beach House honors
the memories of the following
people whose families and
friends made gifts to support
our work in their names:**

Mary Brockson
Stanley John Chincheck
Richard Dobbs
Mary Donahue
Martha Emerling Garrett
James V. Hake
Joel Hansen
Mary Helms
T. Rowland Marshall
Gwynne McDevitt
Audrey McMeekins
Nancy Meadows
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Dr. John Rooney
Rodman Teeple
Florence Turner

**Children's Beach House gratefully
acknowledges gifts to support
our work made in honor of:**

The Christopher Family
Shawn Culley's birthday
Dorothy Damegyer
Barry Goodinson
Lee Mussoff's 95th birthday
Kellie Nixon & Kyle Quatermus
Bill Rudisill's 90th birthday
Ray & Elaine Welnicki's
50th wedding anniversary
Dave White

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Children's Beach House.**

Visit [cbhinc.org/
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ptosi@cbhinc.org for more
information.

**CBH relies on the support
of volunteers for a wide
range of activities.**

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