

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



**TURNING ADVERSITY  
INTO OPPORTUNITY  
TO CHANGE LIVES**



ST. CHRISTOPHER'S, INC.



# ADVERSITY INTRODUCES AN ORGANIZATION TO ITSELF



IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY AND CHANGE, WE REALLY DISCOVER WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE'RE MADE OF.

- HOWARD SCHULTZ

ADVERSITY DOES NOT BUILD CHARACTER, IT REVEALS IT.

- JAMES LANE ALLEN

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY NOT ONLY MAKES YOU STRONGER, IT MAKES YOU MORE HOPEFUL.

- VALERIE JARRETT



STAND UP STRAIGHT AND REALIZE WHO YOU ARE... THAT YOU TOWER OVER YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.

- MAYA ANGELOU

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# MIRACLES COME IN MOMENTS: THE AMAZING BIRTH OF REECE THE DONKEY



“Mornings at Seven” is more than a Tony Award-winning play at Jennie’s Farm—it’s a *lifestyle* for our donkeys, goats and chickens since it marks their *official-wake-up-for-breakfast-time* each day. But on one particular morning, when our campus farmer entered the donkey pen at 7:00 a.m., he couldn’t believe his eyes.

On Friday, August 9, 2019 at 7:00 p.m., our **two donkeys**—the mother and daughter dynamic duo of *Buttercup* and *Peanut*—readied for a good night’s sleep. But 12 hours later on Saturday, August 10, our farmer discovered we now had **three donkeys**—the third being 31 pounds of absolute adorableness—a bouncing baby boy our residents named *Reece*.

But there’s more to the story of *Reece*’s surprise birth, and it begins in the fall of 2018, when our Jennie Clarkson Campus Farm Manager, AnnMarie Sasso, was starting an equine program and sought to acquire one or two donkeys. She found a donkey sanctuary in upstate New York that had rescued a six-year-old mare and her still-nursing, four-month-old foal. At the sanctuary, they were separated from the other donkeys to prevent the mare from getting pregnant again.

Then in October 2018, *Buttercup* and *Peanut* journeyed to their new home at the Jennie Clarkson Campus. The donkeys quickly adapted to their new surroundings, our goats and chickens, and especially to our residents, becoming an integral and much-loved part of our animal-assisted therapy program.

Sometime around July 2019, Ms. Sasso started noticing some changes in *Buttercup*’s behavior and weight gain, but there were no true tell-tale signs she was pregnant. Then on the night before *Reece*’s birth, she noted that *Buttercup* had an utter and was nursing *Peanut* again. To this day, we’re not sure how and when *Buttercup* became pregnant with *Reece*. However, since the gestation period for donkeys is between 11 and 14.5 months, it could have occurred immediately prior to or after she arrived at the sanctuary.

Bottom line is *Reece* is flourishing as part of our farm family. He has a very sweet temperament, loves attention and back scratches, and has an especially strong bond with his sister *Peanut*. Together with their mom, they comprise our donkey trio, affectionately known as *Reece’s Peanut Buttercup*!



Snacktime for (clockwise) *Buttercup*, *Peanut* & *Reece*!

# DESPITE PANDEMIC-DRIVEN DISRUPTION, WE STAYED TRUE TO OUR PURPOSE



The current and two former Mayors of Dobbs Ferry, NY, attended our 12/6/19 *Friendraiser*. Pictured, left to right: Bob and Kathy McLoughlin; Dr. Donald Antonecchia, CEO; Mayor Vincent and Fran Rossillo; and Donald and Gena Marra.

## Dear Family & Friends of St. Christopher's,

On December 6, 2019—the halfway mark of fiscal year 2020—we held our first-ever *Friendraiser* for 100 current and new Friends at Sleepy Hollow Country Club. That evening, we shared inspiring stories of how our staff members' humanity, integrity and professionalism advances the lives of the youth and families we serve. The joy in the room carried us through the holidays. But a month later, with the January 9, 2020 discovery of a mysterious coronavirus-related pneumonia, the world began to turn upside down and inside out. Then reports of the first COVID-19 case in the U.S. 12 days later underlined the reality that disease knows no borders.

The first six months of the pandemic had a profound impact on the work we do at our campuses and with our Health Homes families—but not *what we do*, rather *how*

*we do it*. Health and safety, always our top priority, became even more so as we put in place comprehensive masking, distancing, screening and deep cleaning and disinfection protocols, per CDC guidance. Our frontline team remained on the front line, while many support staff began working remotely. A number of residents went home, but our team continued providing them with the services they need, seamlessly. And due to a reduction in state funding, we had to furlough and layoff some of our staff. It was painful, but there was no other option. In FY 2021, restored funding enabled us to call back many of our colleagues, for which we are grateful.

Bottom line, between January and June 2020, the health and safety measures the St. Christopher's Team implemented suc-

ceeded in keeping COVID-19 infections to a minimum and mild. And with your support, we didn't miss a beat in helping youth with special needs rediscover their best selves, and Health Homes families access the care and services their children with chronic and serious conditions need to get well and stay healthy.

As the fiscal year was coming to a close, and the pandemic continued to surge, a terrible incident occurred on May 25, 2020 that shocked and rattled the nation and the world. That was the day George Floyd was killed. But following long, overdue reflection nationwide, that shock and rattle quickly became comprehension and acknowledgment that his death was just the latest in a seemingly intractable and unending cycle of brutality and injustice against Black Americans and other communities of color. At St. Christopher's, we commit to doing all we can to fight systemic racism and create meaningful change that fosters true diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging on our campuses and beyond. And so we will be reporting to you on our efforts to and progress in attaining these crucial goals.



**Dr. Donald Antonecchia**  
CEO

Finally, it is with deep regret and profound sadness that we note the passing on June 6, 2020 of our beloved Board Member, Anne Crudge. Anne, a military history expert, freelance writer, and documentary producer for CBS, was a tireless advocate for the youth in our care and we will forever be grateful for her service.

We thank our staff and Board for all they do to ensure St. Christopher's achieves positive and lasting impact in the lives of those we serve. We are especially grateful to you for your ongoing generosity and encouragement—and we ask you to continue your support. One of the lessons of the pandemic is that the work we do is needed, now more than ever, and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

We wish peace of mind and wellness to you and especially to all affected by the pandemic. And we grieve with the families and friends of the remarkable individuals lost to the virus. May they rest in peace and may their memories be a blessing.



**Larry Carbone**  
Chairman of the Board



Our Veteran's Day Celebration on November 8, 2019 featured an all-female JROTC Color Guard comprised of stellar scholar-athletes from James I. O'Neill High School in Highland Falls, New York.



Two Marines and current St. Christopher's Team Members, (left to right) Jet Jomlong and Jesse Pereira, were honored at the event.

# ST. CHRISTOPHER'S IS POWERED BY PURPOSE...



## OUR MISSION

St. Christopher's, Inc. is an innovative adolescent development organization dedicated to helping children with special needs and their families by delivering a seamless continuum of care. We provide quality education, therapeutic intervention and life planning skills in a safe and nurturing environment with the goal of helping each child reach their full potential.

## OUR VALUES

### WE VALUE...

**Safety & Well-being.** We instill a discipline of safety throughout the organization and in all aspects of our work. We are committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and well-being for all staff, youth and families.

**A Learning Culture.** We sustain a spirit of adventure by investing in and rewarding curiosity, creativity and ingenuity. We offer venues for information sharing, analysis, education and training that further our community's common goals. Enthusiasm and creativity are honored, respected, and encouraged; we learn from our successes as well as our challenges.

**Dedication.** We share and are committed to a common vision, and depend on one another throughout the day to further our mission. We believe that meeting a child's individual needs requires working with their family and the broader community.



Young Women's Leadership Center residents and Campus Director, Beth Hendricks

**Rich Diversity.** We treat all our partners with professionalism, dignity and respect, nurturing an environment where people can contribute, innovate and excel. We celebrate and include all persons, ideas, values and ethnicities.

**Family & Youth Involvement.** Families and youth are included in all service planning processes for increased cooperation, ownership and success. We are committed to be there when others need us, and work collaboratively to determine appropriate services or support.

**Communication.** We are proactive in communicating outcomes throughout the entire community. Planning, decision-making, and strategies rely on strengths, skills, mutual respect, and creative and flexible resources of a committed team.

# ...IN TURN, WE EMPOWER YOUTH & FAMILIES TO THRIVE



St. Christopher's is also a **Health Homes Care Management Agency**. We help families of children ages 6 to 21—who receive benefits through Medicaid and have specific, serious and/or chronic health conditions—access the healthcare, mental health and social support services their children need to get well and stay healthy. The comprehensive, better living services provided by our bilingual Care Managers ensure children and youth get the right care, at the right place, at the right time. We also assist families with important issues related to school, employment, housing, respite, access to healthy food, and beyond.

**Learn more by contacting Maria Riccobono, Director of Health Homes, at [mriccobono@sc1881.org](mailto:mriccobono@sc1881.org) or visit [stchristophersinc.org](http://stchristophersinc.org).**

St. Christopher's is a safe and nurturing, **Residential Treatment Center** for youth with special needs. We use evidence-based, therapeutic approaches to help young women and men, ages 12-21: pursue their studies, interests and passions; move beyond past traumas; and move forward with their lives as happy, healthy and connected members of their communities. We empower them with the same social-emotional coping skills and strengths we would want our own children to have to become their best selves. Our highly experienced and caring clinical and residential teams do all this and more at three, unique and inspired, New York campuses in Dobbs Ferry, North Castle and New Windsor.

**Learn more by contacting Vivian Ossowski, Assistant Executive Director, Admissions & Health Services, at [vossowski@sc1881.org](mailto:vossowski@sc1881.org) or visit [stchristophersinc.org](http://stchristophersinc.org).**



# 2020-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN: 4 TRANSFORMATIVE GOALS



“JANUARY 1, 2020 IS THE FIRST BLANK PAGE OF A 365-PAGE BOOK. SO WRITE A GOOD ONE!”

We believe our new, “1,096-page book”—St. Christopher’s, three-year Strategic Plan (2020-2022)—is a strong, mission-forward blueprint that is increasing our effectiveness in helping youth and families build better lives and succeed. And this exciting outcome resulted from an extensive strategic planning process over several months involving many Agency stakeholders to whom we are indebted, including: Board Members; staff; residents and their families; vendors and consultants; and police chiefs and community leaders. It centers on four ambitious goals summarized as follows:



## Goal 1: MANAGEMENT & STAFFING

Recruit, hire, support and retain a qualified workforce to support the Agency’s efforts to enhance outcomes. Build a leadership pipeline, accelerate staff skills-building, and develop a more culturally-competent organization by employing training and practices in which equity and diversity inform and influence our goals and decisions.

## Goal 2: BOARD & AGENCY DEVELOPMENT

Strengthen Board and Agency partnership as fundraisers and advocates. Continually assess the organization’s leadership needs and use those insights to inform Board Member recruitment, and build our leadership corps and succession plans. Expand and enhance understanding of and support for the Agency’s work and impact through stronger branding platforms (e.g., website and storytelling) and fundraising initiatives. Expand individual and corporate volunteer opportunities and recruitment.

## Goal 3: EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

Provide evidence-based, high-quality programs and services that are: person-centered and family-focused; aligned with best practices; and compliant. Strengthen the bond between the Agency and the Greenburgh-North Castle School District through greater linkage of expertise and resources. Expand joint transitional planning initiatives. Promote high-quality care through program development and integrity initiatives.

## Goal 4: SAFETY & SECURITY

Continue to enhance the safety, well-being and confidentiality of our residents, staff and visitors through state-of-the-art physical and data security upgrades. Conduct an ongoing workplace analysis and needs assessment to guide development of a capital improvement plan.



# SEEDS OF HOPE, SEEDS OF CHANGE: THE HEALING GARDEN AT JENNIE'S FARM



THE POWER OF LEARNING TO “CARE FOR SOMETHING”...  
AND LEARNING YOU’RE “GOOD AT SOMETHING,” TOO!

Any environment can promote healing, but gardens are particularly able to do so because humans are hard-wired to find nature engrossing and soothing. Healing comes because gardens promote: relief from symptoms; stress reduction and an improvement in one’s overall sense of well-being; and hopefulness. That is why home gardening has surged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Healing gardens” are at the core of horticultural therapy, “which combines the art and science of growing flowers, vegetables, fruits and trees with traditional counseling techniques to enhance social, cognitive and physiological functioning, with the primary goal of improving health and inspiring motivation for change.”

Engaging in healing gardens is especially beneficial for youth with special needs since it fosters essential life skills that are transferable beyond the garden. One therapist captured its impact this way: “Caring for something that’s alive is very beneficial for these kids. Here in the healing garden, they relax. They’re engaged. They can create beautiful, living things. They can be successful. They can learn they are, in their words, ‘good at something.’ And that’s empowering.”





John Parauda and NYS Supreme Court Justice Gretchen Walsh at our *Friendraiser* on December 6, 2019. In 2020, Mr. Parauda became one of the three inaugural recipients of St. Christopher's *ETTA Award*, named for our founder, Etta Angell Wheeler.

St. Christopher's first healing garden was established at our Dobbs Ferry Campus and championed by filmmaker Andrea Garbarini. The genesis of our second healing garden dates back to the Fall of 2019 when Jennie Clarkson Campus Farmer Agostino Paganini and Maintenance Supervisor Jesse Pereira began working to reclaim our then-inactive garden and orchard.

Then, after attending our December 2019 *Friendraiser* and being inspired by the impact of our animal-assisted therapy program, John Parauda stepped forward to propose a synergistic program for our youth. An attorney and avid gardener, he shared his vision for—and scale drawing of—a resident-driven “hope garden,” which inspired us! We greenlighted this project immediately. And through his generous donation, matched by his employer, but more so, his unwavering vision, dogged persistence, hard physical labor and a close, working partnership with AnnMarie Sasso and Mr. Paganini, *Jennie's Seeds of Hope Healing Garden* was born and nurtured at Jennie's Farm.

Our residents were immersed in the garden project every step of the way, beginning with the toughest part: clearing the ground, and improving and working the soil.





# THE GLORY OF GARDENING: HANDS IN THE DIRT, HEAD IN THE SUN, HEART WITH NATURE

TO NURTURE A GARDEN  
IS TO FEED NOT JUST THE  
BODY, BUT THE SOUL



Jennie's Farm Manager AnnMarie Sasso marvels at the growth spurt of our majestic sunflowers!

Residents also helped: choose the vegetables, fruit and flowers to grow; plant, care for and harvest the crops; use the produce to prepare healthy meals; hold farmer's markets; and donate to food pantries.

By taking ownership of the garden, residents' spirits were lifted, their love for the outdoors heightened, and their appreciation for and enjoyment of healthy food grew. They also experienced how planning, hard work and perseverance make great things happen.

*continued on next page* →



Our youth proudly staff *Jennie's Seeds of Hope* Farm Stand.

# ...AND ONE GARDEN BEGETS ANOTHER

For the past two years, our New Windsor Campus clinical team has partnered with The Felix Organization—a nonprofit co-founded by Darryl “D.M.C.” McDaniels of the pioneering hip hop group, RUN-DMC—to provide our young women with unforgettable summer camp experiences. The Felix Organization provides inspiring opportunities and new experiences to children growing up in the foster care system and beyond. However, since 2020’s COVID-19 pandemic made summer camp impossible, the St. Christopher’s Team brainstormed with the Felix Team on a workable alternative that would foster self-sufficiency and teamwork among our youth—and be fun, too! Inspired by the new Healing Garden at Jennie Clarkson, they created our third garden. And fueled by a generous grant from the Felix Organization, a third partner was enlisted: Land to Learn, a nonprofit that fosters food justice and community wellness through garden-based education.



Darryl “D.M.C.” McDaniels, Felix Organization Co-Founder



The St. Christopher’s-Felix Organization-Land to Learn Team then led our residents through the process of: mapping the planting plan; clearing and beautifying the space; planting, cultivating and harvesting the crops; and cooking with the garden’s yield. This experience benefited our youth in many ways, including: boosting their cognitive development; enhancing mental, social, emotional, sensory and physical health; and giving them a sense of achievement. Planning is already underway for a bigger and better garden in 2021!

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020

### ASSETS

#### CURRENT ASSETS:

• Cash & cash equivalents	\$	5,083,898
• Investments	\$	1,870,449
• Accounts receivable, net	\$	3,359,575
• Due from related parties	\$	14,931
• Prepaid expenses & other assets	\$	237,475
Total current assets	\$	10,556,328
ASSETS WHOSE USE IS LIMITED	\$	1,433,984
PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT, net	\$	9,936,306
	\$	21,936,618

#### LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

#### CURRENT LIABILITIES:

• Current portion of notes payable	\$	1,513,765
• Current portion of bonds payable	\$	580,000
• Accounts payable	\$	680,172
• Accrued payroll & related benefits	\$	1,017,823
• Current portion of due to funding sources	\$	475,567
Total current liabilities	\$	4,267,327
NOTES PAYABLE, net of current portion	\$	1,076,917
BONDS PAYABLE, net of current portion	\$	3,111,943
DUE TO FUNDING SOURCES, net of current portion	\$	368,770
Total liabilities	\$	8,824,957

#### NET ASSETS:

• Without donor restrictions	\$	12,831,929
• With donor restrictions	\$	279,732
Total net assets	\$	13,111,661
	\$	21,936,618

- Rockland County Committee on Special Education
- Schenectady County Committee on Special Education
- Suffolk County Committee on Special Education
- Sullivan County Committee on Special Education
- Sullivan County Department of Social Services
- Westchester County Committee on Special Education
- Westchester County Department of Social Services

- Arlington Central School District
- Bay Shore Union Free School District
- Beacon School District
- Bedford Central School District
- Brewster Central School District
- Cairo-Durham Central School District
- Central Islip Union Free School District
- City School District of Albany Committee on Special Education
- Eastchester Union Free School District
- Greenburgh Central School District
- Guilderland Central School District
- Harborfield Central School District
- Monticello Central School District
- Nanuet Union Free School District
- NYC Administration for Children's Services Committee on Special Education
- New York City Board of Education
- Pine Bush Central School District
- Pleasantville Union Free School District
- Port Jervis City School District
- Rhineback Central School District
- Riverhead Central School District
- Schenectady Central School District
- Sewanhaka Central School District
- Smithtown Central School District
- Springs Union Free School District
- Valley Central Montgomery School District
- Valley Stream Central School District
- Washingtonville Central School District
- West Islip Union Free School District
- White Plains Public Schools
- William Floyd Union Free School District
- Yonkers City School District

## WE WISH TO THANK OUR PUBLIC FUNDING PARTNERS FOR HELPING US ADVANCE OUR MISSION:

- Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
- New York State Department of Health, Medicaid Program
- New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

- Dutchess County Committee on Special Education
- Greene County Committee on Special Education
- Nassau County Committee on Special Education
- Orange County Committee on Special Education
- Orange County Department of Social Services
- Putnam County Committee on Special Education

The generosity of our donors—including those whose names follow\*—enabled us to create and sustain innovative programs to help youth and families build better futures. And so we are grateful, as are those we serve, and hopeful your support will continue.

## INDIVIDUALS

Dakshi Agrawal  
Lee Allen  
Dr. Donald Antonecchia  
Dr. Frank & Maggie Belloni  
Larry Carbone  
Krushanaben A. Dhru  
John Dimling  
Sheryl Dolan  
Ellwood Bibko Trust  
Georgette Geller  
Dr. Robert Hendrickson  
Carol Intner  
Joseph Johnson  
Dr. Rachelle Karmin  
Pam Kelly-Day & Wayne Day  
Michael Linehan  
David Lipson  
Tom Liehbacher  
Leonard Lindros  
Dr. Robert Maher  
Jeff Maron  
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Lisa & David McCullagh  
Dr. Carolyn McGuffog  
Jeff & Lisa Miller  
Colin Nguyen  
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John Parauda  
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Dr. Robert Siebert  
David Smith  
Nick Tedesco  
Dr. Carl Towbin  
Lyle Walter  
Peter Ward  
Larry Weiss  
Alan Wilensky  
Jack Wilk  
David Wurf  
Rachel Zepernick

BNY Mellon Wealth Management  
Constellation Exelon  
Economy Energy  
Enterprise Fleet  
Equitable Advisors  
H&E Cleaning Services  
MDJ Heating & Air Conditioning  
Pharmerica  
Philadelphia Insurance Company  
ProfTech  
Remnant Man/Rubco Inc.  
RNR Systems Integrators  
Robison Oil/Original Energy  
Scarborough & Tweed  
Toshiba  
USI Insurance Services  
Westchester Bank  
Wilk Auslander

## CORPORATIONS

Affordable Enclosures  
Altium Wealth & Mitch Brill  
American Express  
Amorosa Landscaping  
ARC Advisors  
Atlantic/Tomorrow's Office  
Barrera Contracting

## NONPROFITS

John Blackman Foundation  
The Felix Organization  
FPWA  
Green Chimneys & Dr. Edward Placke  
Greenburgh-North Castle United  
Leland Trust for Charitable Purposes  
The New York Community Trust

\*Listed here are Friends of St. Christopher's whose donations totaled \$500 or more during FY 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020). If we inadvertently omitted your name or organization, or made an error, please bring it to our attention at [ddacosta@sc1881.org](mailto:ddacosta@sc1881.org). Thank you.

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S NEEDS YOU TO JOIN OUR MOVEMENT TO  
**CHANGE THE LIFE TRAJECTORY OF YOUTH  
& FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS!**

Right now, you can have a real and lasting impact on the lives of children, young adults and families. How? By making a donation at [stchristophersinc/donate](https://stchristophersinc.com/donate), you'll help us help them access the services and build the skills they need to succeed. To explore more ways to help, please contact **Dennis da Costa** at [ddacosta@sc1881.org](mailto:ddacosta@sc1881.org). Thank you for your support.

# ST. CHRISTOPHER'S LEADERSHIP TEAM



We thank our Board Members for their dedication and many contributions to our work to enhance the lives of children, youth and families with special needs.

## Board of Directors

**Larry Carbone**  
Chairman

**Lee Allen**  
President

**John Dimling**  
Treasurer

**Pamela Kelly-Day**  
Secretary

Dr. Frank Belloni  
Terry Prettyman Bowles  
Tom Leihbacher  
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David J. Lipson  
Jeff Maron  
Lisa McCullagh  
Rev. Dr. Marvin A. Moss  
Dr. Aran Ron  
Dr. Robert Siebert  
Ramon Velez, Jr.  
Larry Weiss  
Matthew R. Wesley  
Rachel Zepernick  
Dr. Donald Antonecchia  
(Ex Officio)

## Executive Staff

**Dr. Donald Antonecchia**  
CEO

**Nat Modugno**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Raschaad Hoggard**  
Assistant Executive Director,  
External Program Development & Diversity Initiatives

**Dr. Rachelle Karmin**  
Assistant Executive Director,  
HR, Quality Improvement & Professional Development

**Vivian Ossowski**  
Assistant Executive Director,  
Admissions & Health Services

**Dr. Sarah Ruback**  
Assistant Executive Director,  
Intra-Agency Programming & Residential Services



Jeff Maron & Larry Weiss



Larry Carbone & Tom Leihbacher



Lisa McCullagh, with David McCullagh & Dr. Donald Antonecchia



Dr. Frank Belloni, with Maggie Belloni



At St Christopher's 2019 Golf Classic on October 19, 2019, we presented, in partnership with Equitable Advisors (formerly AXA) and David Wurf,

our first-ever Legacy Award to Leonard Lindros, Jr., our longtime financial consultant. The award recognized Len's 55-year commitment to helping the youth in our care "reimagine their lives and live the dreams they were meant to have." Among the many individuals on hand to honor Len were (left to right), his wife, Karen, daughter, Sheryl Dolan, and David Wurf of Equitable Advisors.



**EVERY MOMENT MATTERS  
& MOMENTS LIKE THIS ARE  
WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO**

**With gratitude,  
The St. Christopher's Team**

**St. Christopher's, Inc.  
71 S. Broadway  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522**

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