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Discovering Chestnut Hill: Center for Enrichment

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One of the Chestnut Hill Center for Enrichment's most well-known activities was its annual bazaar, which included a quilt raffle. Started in 1983, this raffle continued as an annual tradition for over 25 years. Shown here are Center for Enrichment board members Sandy Drinker (left) and Meredith Sonderskov selling raffle tickets in front of the state store at the Top of the Hill Plaza, 2008.

(Photo courtesy of Chestnut Hill Conservancy)

**by Alex Bartlett, Archivist
Chestnut Hill Conservancy**

Forty-two years ago, the Chestnut Hill Center for Enrichment opened its doors as the Chestnut Hill Senior Center and remained a vibrant community resource until it closed in 2017. Founded in 1978, the organization was first located at Disston Hall/the Disston House at 8840 Norwood Avenue. A press release published at the time of founding noted that "...the Center is open five days a week. Programs are planned to provide socialization and intellectual growth and to meet some of the practical and medical needs of the elderly. ... The Chestnut Hill Senior Center hopes to grow in its ability to develop programs that will realize this potential."

And grow it did. By 1982, the Center had relocated to a more central location at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church at 8700 Germantown Avenue, and it expanded its programs. Those listed on the Center's 1984 calendar included but were not limited to oil painting, traditional American crafts, weaving, Italian, poetry, cooking, and writing classes;

chess, bridge, blood pressure screenings, and group book discussions were also offered. Through the 1990s, the Center continued to expand, and trips became a frequent activity, including those to regional theaters including the Media, Bristol Riverfront, and Sellersville theaters.

In 2007, the Center was briefly renamed the Chestnut Hill Adult Activities Center, but by 2009 it was renamed again to the Chestnut Hill Center for Enrichment, a name the organization retained until it closed its doors at 8431 Germantown Ave. on June 30, 2017. A primary reason for the closing, as noted by the Board in an April 24, 2017 letter to its friends and supporters, was that many area retirement facilities—Cathedral Village and the Hill at Whitemarsh among them—had expanded to offer their own activities, making those of the Center redundant.

Upon closing, the Center's archival materials were donated to the Chestnut Hill Conservancy, along with the generous donation of \$1,000 to ensure these materials — including more than 100 photographs — would survive and be accessible to the public for decades to come. All of us at the Conservancy thank the former board, staff, and volunteers at the Chestnut Hill Center for Enrichment for caring so much about the preservation of our history!

To make an appointment, please contact Archivist Alex Bartlett at (215) 247-9329 #206, or email him at alex@chconservancy.org. Photographs from the Chestnut Hill Center for Enrichment are available for review on the Chestnut Hill Conservancy's online photograph collection, at chconservancy.pastperfectonline.com (<http://chconservancy.pastperfectonline.com>)

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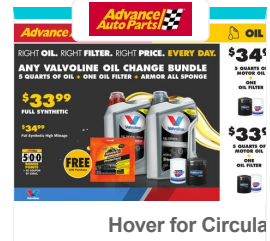
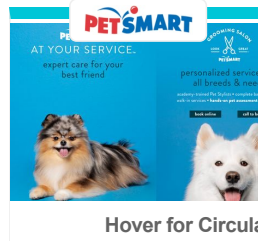
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