

January 2019

# CHATHAM

An exclusive magazine serving  
the residents of Chatham, New Jersey  
[www.ChathamLivingNJ.com](http://www.ChathamLivingNJ.com)

## LIVING



**The Flemming Family:  
Three Generations of Kindness and Compassion**



Best Version Media®

Cover photo by Christine Loy Photography





## Best Version Media®

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## Dear Residents,

Our feature family the Flemmings from both Chatham and Madison, with business interests in both towns, is our second family to be on both *Chatham Living* and *Madison Living* covers. Their 50+ year history in the area includes the establishment of their businesses Garden Terrace Nursing Home in Chatham and the new Bottle Hill Tavern in Madison. Truly a family effort, their work in the community has built things that have helped and changed the lives of so many people in Madison, Chatham and beyond.

Great news from the Chatham Community Partnership! The Chathams earned awards for sustainability. 400+ municipalities in New Jersey participate in the "Sustainable Community" certification program. Every three years, towns earn points for actions including: protecting natural resources, reducing waste and sustaining local economies. The Chathams have been certified in this program for many years, and in 2018, Chatham Borough was re-certified at the Silver level - one of only 11 municipalities in the state! Read all about it on page 12.

We have two Expert Contributor articles this month. Dr. Barbara Fodero of Chatham Orthodontics explains the advantages and disadvantages of Invisalign and braces on page 10 in "Invisalign vs. Braces—Which One Should You Choose?"

Our second Expert Contributor article is from the Madison Area YMCA, which I am happy to announce is a new contributor to *Chatham Living*. "How Do You Set Smart Goals for Exercise?" by Christian Esola, the Madison Area YMCA's health & wellness director, seems quite appropriate for a January issue. No doubt we all should check this article out! See page 6.



Enjoy the snow and all the fun activities that come with winter weather!

**John White,**  
**Publisher**



# THE FLEMMING FAMILY: THREE GENERATIONS OF KINDNESS AND COMPASSION

By Rachel Barry

Photos by Christine Loy Photography and courtesy of the Flemming family

When the oldest resident of the Garden Terrace Nursing Home was born, William Taft was president and the world was reeling from the Triangle Factory Shirtwaist Factory Fire.

"At 107 she deserves whatever she wants," says Laura Collins, a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator, Licensed Geriatric Social Worker and granddaughter of the facility's founder. "She's the kind of lady who eats dessert first, and we make sure that happens every day."

For three generations, the Flemming



John Flemming, 1964



Peter Sr. and Phyllis with the grandkids in NYC

family has dedicated itself to serving every resident in their care with that important blend of individualized attention, dignity, respect, grace, and love.

It all began back in 1964 when John and Johanna Flemming purchased a home in Chatham with a plan to help elderly people in poor health. John worked diligently with the state of New Jersey to have the home updated and formally licensed as a Skilled Nursing Facility, and a new family business, Garden Terrace Nursing Home, was born.

In 1968 their son, Peter, and his wife, Phyllis, moved into the small apartment on the third floor of the nursing home. During Peter's service in Vietnam from 1969-1970, Phyllis and her dog Pepper resided there, and after his return, they brought their first child, Laura, home to that same apartment. Together, they lived there until moving to their first home on Brooklake Road in Madison in 1973. Five years later, the couple and their young family (with the addition of a son, Peter Jr.) moved to Noe Avenue in Madison, the home where Peter and Phyllis continue to live today with their shit-tzu puppy, Zoe.

Soon after their move to Noe Avenue, Peter and Phyllis Flemming, bought the Garden Terrace Nursing Home from Peter's parents so they could continue the family's legacy. As a school teacher,

Phyllis was especially suited to run the therapeutic recreation programs, so critical to their residents. Peter was also prepared for the challenges of the business as a Registered Nurse and Licensed Nursing Home Administrator. Their young family had literally lived in the same building, and the work, the residents, the commitment to serve was deeply embedded into their family life. Peter comments, "It's so much more than a business, it's our life. Everything we do, every day, for the whole family." Phyllis adds "It's the work we were put here to do." The family additionally opened the Victorian Garden Adult Day Center in 1995. Phyllis was the Executive Director of this innovative community resource.

Today, Peter and Phyllis's children, Laura Collins and Peter Flemming Jr., continue



John and Peter Sr., 1978



the legacy that their grandparents began over fifty years ago at Garden Terrace. And in our current climate, it's deeply important to the whole family that they provide top-notch communication to each and every family. "We recognize the limitations of healthcare options today," says Peter Jr., who is also a Registered Nurse and Licensed Nursing Home Administrator "and we personally guide residents and their families through the challenging maze of today's depersonalized and bureaucratic healthcare industry."

This work has never been easy. "If we can help a family through very hard times, if we can make it the best that it can be—that's what gets us all members who all deeply understand the highs and lows of the work. "We support each other, in some way, every single day," says Peter Flemming Jr.

Perhaps it's not surprise that the whole family lives within walking distance from each other. Just steps from his parent's home, Peter, his wife, Gina, and their three children Hudson, Sienna, and Tristan along with their dog, Luna, have a home. And in a home around the corner, Laura, her husband, Matt, and their two girls, Megan and Grace along with their dog, Murphy, reside.

It's no surprise that on holidays, after celebrating with the residents at the facility, the family takes turns hosting each other. This past Thanksgiving, Peter Sr., part owner of downtown Madison's Bottle Hill Tavern, set a delicious precedent. "He brought the famous cream of mushroom soup from the restaurant—and I'm thinking that we might have to have them cook the whole meal next time!" says Laura.

Together, the family has built something that has changed the lives of so many people in Madison, Chatham and beyond.

Residents are surrounded by a team of people who are committed to making their time at the facility the best it can be. "We encourage the residents and the families to focus on their good memories, to reminisce with us and each other," says Phyllis. "And if we can get them to experience even a fleeting moment of joy from that, in the middle of illness and pain, it's worth the effort." Peter Sr. wholeheartedly agrees, "People deserve dignity at the end of their lives, that's at the heart of the business my parents built—and it's the heart of the business today. That will never change.

As for the next generation? They still have time to decide. "They're all amazing kids, and we're hoping that one or more, will go into this field," says their proud grandparents. The grandchildren are already talking about possibly going into medicine and healthcare at their young ages. "Whatever the kids do in life, they have a much greater understanding of the realities of life," says Peter Jr. "They're not afraid to see someone who's sick or looks different. They have a compassion for others that they'll all carry with them forever." ♦

*We would like to thank Salerno Duane Inc. in Summit for bringing you this month's cover story.*



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