A Mother's Heartbreak

Heroin and prescription narcotics are killing young adults all over Montgomery County, leaving devastated families behind.

Renee Benzel's 28-year-old son, Alex, died of a heroin overdose in January.
Reflect ON CHRISTMAS PAST

IN DELAWARE'S HISTORIC Brandywine Valley, Winterthur is the former estate of horticulturist Henry Francis du Pont (1880-1969) - great-grandson of Éleuthère Irénée du Pont de Nemours, founder of E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. - and also home to a world-renowned collection of 90,000 antiques and decorative objects. Each year the estate is transformed for Yuletide events that recreate the family's home during holidays past, including an extravagant dinner party setup on New Year's Day in 1900, when the du Ponts celebrated their first 100 years in America. Roughly a dozen Christmas trees will grace the mansion and gardens this year, from one bejeweled in Tiffany glass, to one decorated in dried flowers, to one inspired by H.F. du Pont's boyhood collection of rocks and shells. Admission is $20 for adults, $18 for seniors and students, and $5 for children ages 2 to 11. For more, visit winterthur.org.

PHILLY'S Festive MUSIC AND LIGHTS

The City of Brotherly Love offers many seasonal celebrations for people of all faiths. Three favorites:

ELECTRICAL SPECTACLE in Franklin Square is a holiday light show that features more than 50,000 lights (including a 10-foot-tall lighted kite), a holiday train, carousel rides and miniature golf with warming stations. Nov. 12-Dec. 31 (except Thanksgiving and Christmas), visit historicphiladelphia.org for details.

Visit BLUE CROSS RIVERRINK WINTERFEST for ice-skating under the stars, roasting s'mores and lounging at "The Lodge," a 400-person warming tent that's home to plump sofas, chandeliers and live fireside music. Nov. 27-March 6, $3 entrance fee, no charge if you're a Blue Cross insurance cardholder. For more, visit www.riverrink.com.

A tradition since 1956, MACY'S CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHOW is set to symphonic music from the historic Wanamaker Organ, the world's largest operating pipe organ. Located inside the Wanamaker Building, the free daily show features more than 100,000 LED lights, recorded narration by Julie Andrews, and organ performances. Visit wanamakerorgan.com for dates and showtimes; make sure to note when the organ is played live, versus a recording.

For a full list of holiday events and hotel information, go to www.visitphilly.com.