

Storylines

A bi-monthly publication from AuthoraCare Collective

April/May 2020

Virtual Patient Care in the Time of COVID-19

How AuthoraCare Collective is servicing a changed world

By Charity Apple

Due to this unprecedented time in our world, AuthoraCare Collective is utilizing virtual patient visits to connect patients with caregivers, including physicians, nurses, social workers and chaplains.

While face-to-face interaction must be limited during this pandemic, the goal remains the same – to provide the best patient care possible.

“It is forcing us to be creative,” said Stacie Wilkinson, Director of Patient Care. “Our patient population is at a terribly high risk of contracting this virus. Through virtual visits, we are able to continue the personal feel. It keeps us connected.”

Teresa Griffin, a hospice home care nurse, said the telehealth visits have been a blessing both to the staff and patients alike.



“We’re saying, ‘we’re still here, if you need us.’ In this time of sheltering in place, many of them already can’t venture out and they look forward to our visits. And we look forward to visiting them. It’s giving us a much-needed connection,” she said.

One of Griffin’s patients is unable to go outside and look at her flowers, like she used to, due to the risk of falling.

So, Griffin decided to bring the view from her own yard to the patient.

“I took the iPad outside and took video all around my house,” she said. “She has a Rose of Sharon outside her porch and I have one as well, so I showed her what mine looks like right now. It did her a world of good.”

The Zoom application, which is being used by churches, schools and businesses throughout the country, has become popular with some caregivers, too.

Hannah Boyd, a hospice home care social worker, has a patient whose father is already using Zoom to attend church meetings.

“He is very familiar with it. He taught me a few tips like how the audio works better on my phone than my iPad,” she said.



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CEO Reflection

Core Beliefs Guide Us Through the Storm

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Storylines, a newsletter for friends and supporters of AuthoraCare Collective.

The initial plan for my remarks in this issue included a recap of the past year's merger activities and the introduction of our new brand identity and name. However, as our cover story illustrates, much more has changed than our name and logo.

Every day since the COVID-19 pandemic touched our community, our team has been working to do our part in minimizing the spread of this virus while delivering uninterrupted services to our patients and families in the safest way possible.

It hasn't been easy, but "success stories" like those featured in our cover article demonstrate that we can adapt and continue to provide expert care even when social distancing is the norm. After all, as I recently read, "Social distancing is staying away from people, not from your purpose."

I am incredibly proud of the creativity and resilience shown by our patients, their families and our team. And I am grateful for the community's continued support of our work.

Over the past year, as we merged our two organizations to become AuthoraCare Collective, staff came together to manifest a new culture. This work, guided by an outside consultant, was very much intentional as we strived to start our new organization on a strong foundation. One tangible outcome from this effort was the development of a set of commitments to those we serve. We call them our "Core Promises:"

- Each story is unique.
- Your voice matters.
- Your story will be honored.
- Stories unfold and evolve.
- Your story will be supported.
- Understanding comes from knowing.

These beliefs are meant to illuminate our mission: to empower individuals to be active participants in their care journey. They also serve as a compass to guide our work and decisions. They apply to our patients and families, our supporters, our volunteers and our staff.

While the current pandemic has challenged "how" we deliver care, our "why" continues on unchanged. Our Core Promises remind us all of what we believe, how our work impacts the community and why we remain unfalteringly committed to our mission.

This unprecedented chapter of history is still being written, and we don't yet know when or how it will end. However, AuthoraCare Collective is strong, and our unified team will continue serving our mission with pride, compassion and grace.



Kristen Wither Yntema, MBA, MHSA

President and CEO

AuthoraCare Collective



Kristen Yntema



Virtual Patient Care

(cont. from cover)

"I was so excited to see my patients over Zoom because I haven't seen them in several weeks. The patient isn't verbal, so the fact he can see me is so much more meaningful than a phone call would be."

The beauty of telehealth communication, Boyd said, "is it reminds us we are all human and we are all going through this together. Our patients are typically feeling isolated, anyway, so the power of human connection is important now more than ever. A familiar face is so comforting during difficult times."

Suzanna Kidd, a hospice social worker, said that the virtual visits make a difference not only in the patients' lives, but their caregivers as well by referencing a recent virtual visit at Blakey Hall Memory Care Unit in Elon.

"The patient's daughter was able to join us on the Zoom call. They hadn't seen each other face-to-face in over two weeks due to the visitor restrictions. Our patient has minimal speech at baseline and doesn't always recognize her daughter or say her daughter's name," Kidd said. "When the patient saw her daughter on the screen, she said her daughter's name with excitement and said 'pretty, pretty, pretty.' It brought tears to the daughter's eyes because the patient rarely says her name."

Virgie Jollay, a palliative care nurse, admits that "I'm not computer savvy at all, but I am now comfortable with using the Zoom. I'm very comfortable with it and am so thankful to have it during this pandemic."



Since virtual visits are the way people are staying in contact now, Katie Wangelin, Director of Social Work, said the app could possibly be used for virtual support and to provide workshops in the coming weeks.

"Historically, it is difficult to get caregivers to come to a support group so in that case, video conferences could be held for a group of people," she said. "A lot of these changes may carry over past COVID-19. And for caregivers who are out of state, this provides an invaluable tool."

"The power of human connection is important now more than ever."

Wangelin shared an instance in which a long-term care patient was approaching death and the social worker and chaplain were there and the caregiver was out of state.

"The caregiver was able to be there, virtually, in those last moments of life," Wangelin said. "It was a really special moment."

For those who are unable to do virtual visits, Wangelin said "we are still able to provide great support through phone calls. And there's something about a simple phone call. We're maintaining that connection."



Julie Lopez, a hospice home care nurse, said it has been a learning process, but "all of the families have been very understanding and positive about it."



We Honor Veterans



Veteran-to-Veteran Volunteer Organizes a “Buddy Check”

Virtual Meeting for Veterans Held During Quarantine Period

By Linda Ann Fitts

A “buddy check” – that’s how Hank Williams, a volunteer for AuthoraCare Collective’s We Honor Veterans program in Burlington, refers to the “Zoom Room” Veteran Connect he set up for the month of April.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the monthly coffee gathering for veterans became a virtual experience on April 1. Normally, the group meets at the Golden Corral in Burlington. Despite the shelter in place directive, Williams was pleased to “connect” with some of the regular attendees virtually.

“I moved the start time from 9 to 10 a.m., hoping that I could get those folks who are getting used to ‘sleeping in’ time to connect,” he said. “We had seven participate and it was good to see everyone’s face and to make sure all were OK! We didn’t really have a formal meeting as much as just discussed how and what we were doing during our quarantine period.”



Vet Connect is a chance for veterans to learn more about the benefits, resources and services that are available to them.

Williams shared that one of the biggest challenges to meet virtually was to get participants to try it out, especially those who were unfamiliar with the technology.

The first few minutes of the meeting, Williams said, were used for people to get dialed in the camera/audio. Once that was done, it went well.

With COVID-19, not being able to get out and attend these gatherings can be challenging for veterans. Williams is doing what he can to encourage everyone to talk it up with their buddies. He

plans to continue the virtual meetings and hopes participation will grow.

These events are free and open to veterans of all ages and military service. It is an opportunity to meet and socialize with fellow veterans in the community as they relax and enjoy a cup of coffee, breakfast item and conversation. It also is a place to learn more about the benefits, resources and services that are available to veterans.

AuthoraCare Collective has been an enthusiastic We Honor Veterans (WHV) Hospice Partner since the Veterans Administration (VA) and National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) launched the program in August 2010. Our approach to providing support, education, recognition and services to veterans is well-known for its creativity and impact. Our agency has strong community partnerships to advance the delivery of care and service to veterans.

For information about the schedule for upcoming virtual Vet Connect meetings, email Hank Williams at hankret2018@gmail.com.

Caring Like Family Crumley Roberts Staff Contributes to Caring Cabinet

By Jane Gibson

The staff of Crumley Roberts, Attorneys at Law, recently delivered items donated by fellow employees during their “Caring Like Family” campaign. Employees were guided by a Caring Cabinet “wish list” created by social workers at AuthoraCare. These items will be shared with patients in need.

“Our staff are so excited about these resources,” said Katie Wangelin, Director of Social Work.

“We serve patients and families from all walks of life. Often there is a simple need that may not be affordable. It may represent a simple gesture of kindness or provide a tool to make life easier.”

Included in this generous donation were items to address safety needs, like socks with walking treads and small belts or cross body bags for carrying cell phones and TV channel changers. Other items like chocolate candy, CDs and gift cards will offer encouragement and recognition for birthdays or other special occasions.

“The Crumley Roberts Caring Cabinets empower our staff to meet the unique needs of these families,”



The Crumley Roberts team presents AuthoraCare representatives with a huge supply of items from the Caring Cabinet wish list.

Wangelin said.

Having served as the lead sponsor of Corks for Kids Path each of the past five years, Crumley Roberts has been eager to expand their support and to offer meaningful ways for their employees to be engaged.

“When we learned about AuthoraCare’s wish for revitalizing their Caring Cabinet as a resource for patients, we knew we’d found the perfect way to connect,” Kim Roberts said. “After all, Crumley Roberts promises our clients that we ‘Care Like Family.’ ”

As a result of the initial campaign’s success, quarterly collection drives will be scheduled at Crumley Roberts’ offices throughout North Carolina.

Order a Commemorative Brick for Your Loved One

Commemorative bricks create a lasting tribute to a loved one. Each fall, these engraved bricks are installed in the walkways of AuthoraCare’s Greensboro Campus gardens.

To have your commemorative brick installed in time for the annual dedication ceremony this fall, **please be sure to place your order by June 30.** For information about how you can purchase a commemorative brick, please contact Karla VanEgmond at 336.621.2500 or karla.vanegmond@authoracare.org. Information is also available on our website at authoracare.org/give.





What's Happening?

A NOTE ABOUT OUR CALENDAR

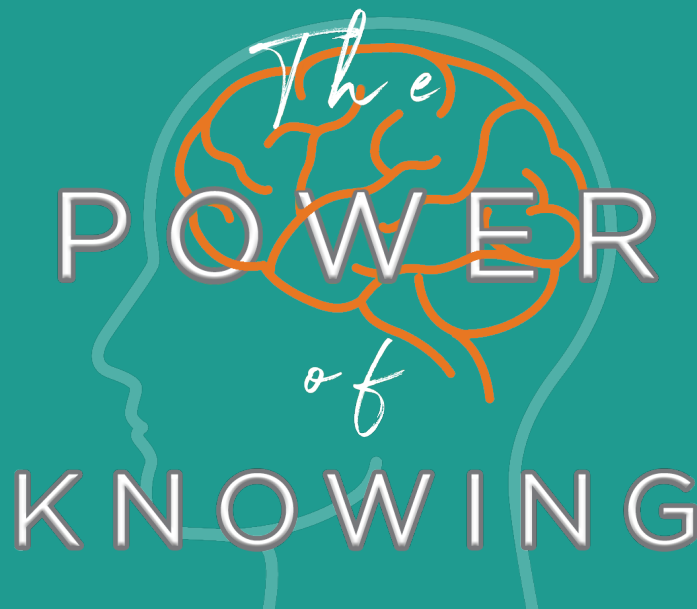
Due to COVID-19, all in-person events have been canceled until further notice.

This cancellation includes educational events, workshops and off-campus events (such as CHAMP Camp, Camp Pathfinder and bereavement retreats).

However, the AuthoraCare Collective team is working hard to create virtual alternatives to in-person events where possible and practical:

- Virtual grief support groups | Call 336.621.2500 for more information
- A new educational webinar series: The Power of Knowing

Stay tuned for more virtual events! Visit authoracare.org for our most current calendar.



Introducing a Free New
Webinar Series presented by



In Collaboration with



Advance Care Planning During COVID-19

Previously Aired: Now On Demand | Zoom Webinar

Talking about becoming sick isn't easy, but it's important. If you couldn't speak for yourself, is there someone who knows and understands how you want to be treated? Learn how to make your healthcare wishes known during the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit authoracare.org/knowning to view this webinar anytime on demand.

The Benefits of Palliative Care during COVID-19

April 27 | 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. | Zoom Webinar

Palliative Care provides expert care for people with chronic, progressive or acute illnesses with the focus goals of care conversations and symptom management. Whether this care is provided in the community or in an inpatient facility, it is increasingly important during this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Visit authoracare.org/knowning to register for The Power of Knowing webinars.

You can also view a livestream of these events on our Facebook page (facebook.com/authoracare).

A New Name for Our Next Chapter

It's Your Story. Supported by Our Expert Care.

By Paul Russ



Longtime hospice volunteer Linda Jensen was brought to tears of joy and pride when the new mission of AuthoraCare Collective was revealed.

Jensen had just heard a presentation for volunteers about how Hospice & Palliative Care Center of Alamance-Caswell and Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro united under a common goal – to empower people to be active participants in their care journey.

“My cousin, Suzanne, is like a sister to me and recently learned that she has acute leukemia. She was given a choice of chemo or supportive care,” Jensen said. “She knows exactly what she wants to do, even against the wishes of others. She chose palliative care and contacted hospice. In her own words, “it’s my life and I want to make my own choices.”

“I am so proud of Suzanne and the path she has chosen. This is her story and she is the author,” Jensen said. “Everything about the new AuthoraCare identity speaks to her journey.”

For more than 40 years, our community-based hospice organizations have provided outstanding end-of-life care and support for tens of thousands of individuals and families. As we came together as one organization, we were inspired by the idea that each person we serve can be the author of their care journey with our support. Each story is unique, and each individual deserves to live on their own terms with our expert physical, emotional and spiritual care.

“We wanted a name more approachable, not limited by geography,” said Kristen Yntema, president and CEO. “Research showed that consumers don’t really understand ‘hospice’ or ‘palliative’ services. The root of the new name, ‘author,’ reflects the desire consumers have to be the author of his or her healthcare journey.”

Having recently seen a television ad announcing the new name, Jensen commented that the new identity is more approachable and user-friendly.

“AuthoraCare will honor your choices,” she said. “You’re in control of plotting the course of your life’s journey. That’s a powerful message.”



Your Story. **Our Expert Care.**



A life well-lived



Remembering a Mother's Wisdom

Mother's Day Endowment Supports Those in Need

By Jane Gibson

During this COVID-19 pandemic, Judie Davie-Wright finds resilience by remembering her mother's wisdom.

Davie-Wright describes her mother, Ruth Keller Fields, as a woman of strong spirit, faith and work ethic. Living through the Great Depression and financially stressful times, Fields had a lot of practice "making do."

"My mother was amazing. She could get five hamburgers out of a pound of ground beef. And if there was any leftover fabric, you'd see it again in someone's Easter dress, school costume or a quilt," Davie-Wright said.

But the words of wisdom that are etched in Davie-Wright's mind and written on her heart are as follows: "When hard times come, remember, you will get through them. You may not understand at the time, but you will get through them. And you'll laugh again."

When Ruth Fields's life was coming to an end, she was widowed and living in the Florida home she and her husband had shared. She had remained healthy and active, boasting she was the oldest female golfer on their neighborhood course.

But when illness came, Fields told her family she had had a wonderful life, but she was tired now, and ready to go. Thankfully, hospice care allowed her to remain at home surrounded by her loving family, the majority of which were strong women, just like her.

Several months after her mother's death, Davie-Wright and her husband, Kieth, discovered a grief support group offered through Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro (HPCG), now known as AuthoraCare Collective.

Grateful for that support and the hospice care Fields received in Florida, Kieth made a donation in memory of Fields, a woman he had loved like a mother himself. The donation was given on the first Mother's Day following Fields's death.



Judie Davie-Wright, Ruth Keller Fields and Kieth Wright.

In the years that followed, Kieth's Mother's Day memorial giving grew to include the mothers of close friends and colleagues.

In 2010, Kieth learned his cancer had re-occurred. He told Davie-Wright that he wanted to remain active and busy; and when that changed, he wanted her to call hospice. He talked about other wishes as well, like his desire for his Mother's Day giving to continue, long after his death. He initiated an endowment for HPCG to do just that.

"I am always thankful for that little voice that reminds me to look for ways to 'make do' and to create my new normal," Davie-Wright said. "And this Mother's Day, I will celebrate endurance – my mother's enduring wisdom and a contribution that helps to ensure AuthoraCare services are available for those in need for years to come."

"When hard times come, remember, you will get through them. You may not understand at the time, but you will get through them. And you'll laugh again."

THE IMPORTANCE OF

Self-Care

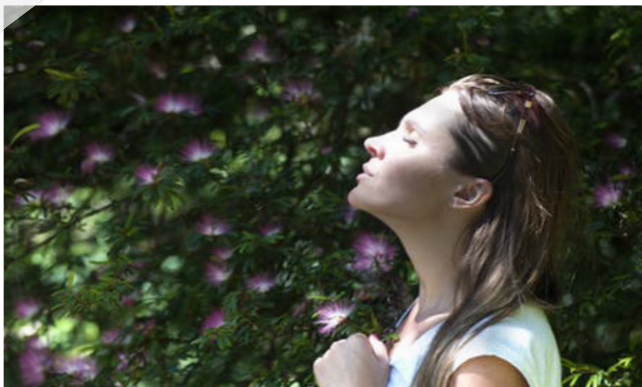
By Charity Apple

The constant COVID-19 updates can be overwhelming.

“Our minds can be overloaded with information and we can begin to worry or get anxious about whether or not it will still be this way in June or July,” said Ryan Mahler, an AuthoraCare Collective bereavement counselor. “While it is important to be mindful of what is happening, it is also important to live in the moment. Today is today. We cannot worry about what tomorrow will bring.”

With so many families now working and teaching their children at home, it also is a time to embrace what Mahler called “the lack of busyness.”

“We often say, ‘I don’t have time for X, Y and Z.’ Now is the time to tackle those things on your list. For me, it’s yardwork and washing windows.”



For others, it could be organizing their closets or rearranging furniture. Try to embrace this gift of time as much as you can.”

Exercise is so crucial during this time.

“Get outside. Go for walks. Take a bike ride,” Mahler said. “We are social distancing, but we need social connection. You can walk in your neighborhood, but keep a distance (6 feet apart is preferred). If your gym is closed, do a class on YouTube. It’s important to move your body.”



Every morning, “get ready” to go to work.

“The worst thing you can do is to be in your PJs all day,” she said. “I make a point of getting up each morning, brushing my hair and getting dressed like I would go to work.”

Stay connected to friends, family and co-workers.

“Call or text friends,” she said. “Catch up with co-workers by email or phone calls. These are people that you’re used to sharing your day with, so naturally, you’re going to miss them.”

Even in a pandemic, we have so much to be grateful for – a home, food, family and friends. During this time, start a gratitude journal.

“Each day, write down something that you are grateful for. It doesn’t have to be a big thing, either. It could be something like the fact you were able to park close to the grocery store,” Mahler said. “Practice empathy toward other people. We are all in this together. Work in support of helping others, if you can.”

Remember to breathe.

“Meditate. Allow time for stillness and quiet. Be mindful of what is happening in this moment. It’s so easy to jump ahead and wonder if it will still be like this in June or July. Today is today. And while things are changing day to day, we can control how we react to the situation,” she said.

This is our “new normal.”

“It’s OK to say I don’t know where we’re going to be in the future, but it’s going to be OK,” Mahler added. “As a bereavement counselor, I have learned that human beings have a remarkable ability to adapt to situations. There’s this natural resilience in everybody. It’s important to be gentle, kind and compassionate with yourself and others.”

Our Mission

AuthoraCare Collective empowers people to be active participants in their care journey, enabling them to live on their own terms through personalized support for mind, body and spirit.

13TH ANNUAL

Corks for Kids Path

Greensboro's Premier Wine Tasting Event Raises Vital Support for Kids Path

Greensboro's premier wine-tasting event, Corks for Kids Path, was held on March 6 and raised more than \$170,000, bringing its 13-year total to more than \$1.5 million!

A sold-out crowd of more than 600 guests sampled a collection of wines carefully selected by Su Peterson and Penny Demetriades of Zeto. And Crumley Roberts renewed their commitment as presenting sponsor.

"As a former school counselor, it has been especially meaningful to me to help raise awareness and support for this program," Lang said. "In my professional life, I saw students who were struggling with illness and loss benefit from the counseling and workshops provided by the team at Kids Path. I will never forget the amazing partnership our school had with the Kids Path team."



Led by Aphton K. Lang, the 2020 Corks volunteer planning committee included Caroline Edwards, Lindsey Greear, Mittie D. Hall, Morgan Morrisette Hood, Jessica J. Ketner, Stacy Kroustalis, Mary Lacklen, Lindsey Walsh, Ashley Watkins and Lydia Burns Whitley.

Visit our Facebook page to see more pictures from this year's Corks for Kids Path!



Getting Social

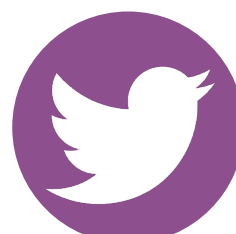
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