

# Storylines

A bi-monthly publication from AuthoraCare Collective

August/September 2020

## Tapping into Resilience

### Finding Meaningful Connection in Virtual Chaplain Visits

By Jane Gibson

If you had asked AuthoraCare chaplain Kimberly Skeen six months ago if she could offer meaningful spiritual care using technology, she would have been doubtful.

But that was before Skeen discovered new ways to tap into her own resilience.

When Skeen learned that COVID-19 restrictions would temporarily exclude in-person chaplain visits, she was concerned. Skeen's role is to assess spiritual needs and explore patients' beliefs as it relates to death, dying and end of life. These are sacred, intimate conversations about what gives life meaning, purpose and interest as expressed through spirituality. She wondered if all that would be lost using Zoom and Face Time.

"This is holy work," Skeen explained. "And for me, I find God through conversation and community."

After a few weeks of working from home and connecting with patients using technology, Skeen felt emotionally exhausted. Realizing that she needed to make some changes, Skeen began re-reading some of her favorite books about resilience.

A quote by James Baldwin really resonated with her - "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

The relevance of that quote echoed in Skeen's ears a few short days later as she and a fellow social worker made plans to meet virtually with a patient. Previously this patient had been minimally responsive during Zoom



*Chaplain Kimberly Skeen was unsure how COVID-19 would affect her ability to connect with patients. But she has found that this pandemic, as well as opportunities we have been given through technology, mean tapping into our own resilience. [Kimberly Skeen]*

meetings. Skeen later learned that the patient was a music lover so the team decided they would play a piece of music during the visit.

The AuthoraCare nurse was at the patient's bedside holding the iPad while Skeen and the other team members joined the Zoom meeting from their homes. As soon as "Amazing Grace" began to play, the social worker spontaneously broke into song.

"Not being a singer, I was reluctant to join in," Skeen said. "But when the patient's eyes began to dance and he started singing some of the phrases, we all sang - and a few shed tears."

"I could have missed the significance of that moment so easily," Skeen reflected. "I just needed to face my pessimistic feelings about the loss of in-person visits and open up to what could be possible."

continued on pg 3

## In This Issue

Tapping into Resilience .....	1-3
CEO Reflection .....	2
We Honor Veterans .....	4-5
Thrift Store Reopening .....	5
Calendar Highlights .....	6
Supporter Spotlight .....	7
A Sense of Freedom .....	8
Thinking Outside the Box .....	9
A New Instagram Page .....	10

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## CEO Reflection

### Remaining Grateful During this Pandemic

Things feel extremely busy right now because they are. And I am grateful.

This past month, we returned to a pre-COVID-19 peak in patient care. We are now providing hospice care to more than 600 people on any given day!

Last winter, we achieved this milestone census for a few days, but as the pandemic slowed referrals and impacted the way we deliver care, reaching it again almost seemed impossible.

We have always known that members of our community continue to require our services despite COVID-19. In addition to those under hospice care on any given day, there are also more than 800 individuals receiving palliative care, 1,195 receiving grief counseling and 102 children receiving services from Kids Path. These numbers represent people. Each has an individual story of need that is met by our expert care. This makes me grateful.

We never forget that those we serve have choices when seeking care. Our success is not an entitlement or a guarantee, but something we need to earn, every day. The AuthoraCare staff are committed to quality care, which makes me grateful.

Our growth is the result of a lot of hard work, resiliency and innovation. There is not a program or staff member within AuthoraCare that hasn't felt the impact. I am grateful for each member of our team.

We are working hard to fill positions to ensure we have the proper staffing for growth. We continue to invest in resources to ensure everyone stays safe and healthy. We need to keep everyone strong, so we can continue to serve. We are able to invest in these things because of generous community support for which I am grateful.

Over the past 40 years, we have weathered many different types of storms. And despite the many challenges facing our community, our mission and purpose have never been stronger or more relevant.

So, I am grateful.



### Kristen Wither Yntema, MBA, MHSA

President and CEO

AuthoraCare Collective



Kristen Yntema



# Tapping into Resilience

(cont. from cover)

As more patients experience the isolation created by Covid 19, Skeen recognizes that patients continue to be more open to using technology. They are also more willing to look for meaning in activities that might otherwise seem ordinary like coloring, drumming, birdwatching and meditating. Using active listening skills, Skeen gathers clues from what comes up in conversation and connects it back to the spiritual needs and beliefs shared earlier.

For example, one of Skeen's patients who had been very discouraged decided to plant some tomatoes for the first time in years. With careful nurturing, the plants flourished, providing enough tasty tomatoes to share with neighbors - folks she barely knew but is now seeing more often. Skeen helped the patient see that when she focused less on what she couldn't do, she found a new way to add meaning to her life.

As Skeen helps patients find interest and meaning in the moment at hand, she is trying to do the same for

"I just needed to face my pessimistic feelings about the loss of in-person visits and open up to **what could be possible.**"

herself. Like all those in the helping profession, Skeen has seen how important it is to build resilience in a time of widespread change and uncertainty. Her resilience has helped her to make peace with the slower, less-populated pace of COVID-19.

"I've actually been still long enough to notice the universe in diverse ways," Skeen reflected. "And last week, I spotted a beautiful bright yellow bird in my backyard, which I later learned was a yellow finch. What wonderful affirmation of being focused and living in the moment at hand."



*This pandemic has given all of us a chance to pause and notice things we would not have before. Skeen spotted a bright yellow bird, like this one, in her backyard recently. [Debra Montgomery]*

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENT

## The 2020 Greensboro Elks Golf Classic

benefiting AuthoraCare Collective

Friday, September 18, 2020

The Players Course at Bryan Park  
6275 Bryan Park Rd, Browns Summit, NC



To learn more, register or become a sponsor, email [elks602nc@gmail.com](mailto:elks602nc@gmail.com) or call 336.288.5100



# We Honor Veterans



## Fulfilling a Veteran's Request

AuthoraCare Volunteer Reassembles Patient's Motorcycle

By Charity Apple

Larry Singer's 2007 CTX Honda 1300 motorcycle was "his pride and joy."

"He loved that bike," his widow, Lennie Singer, said. "When he bought it, it had one mile on it. He put close to 80,000 miles on it. He rode it all over the country."

Larry rode the bike from the couple's home in Colorado to Greensboro and was so enamored with the area that he purchased a house in 2007.

"Larry was in his late 60s when he decided he wanted a motorcycle," Lennie said. "I rode with him a lot. We got to see a lot of North Carolina on the back of that bike. And I got to share something with him that he loved."

Larry was diagnosed with, and battled cancer, for 18 months. He died on May 19 at the age of 82.



*Larry Singer's motorcycle was his "pride and joy." It was featured in his memorial service held outside in his neighborhood on May 25. Family and friends were able to participate through Zoom. [Lennie Singer]*

"He would try to make light of the situation," Lennie said. "That's just who he was. We even drove to Connecticut to see our grandson graduate high school. He couldn't drive at that time, but he wanted to be there."

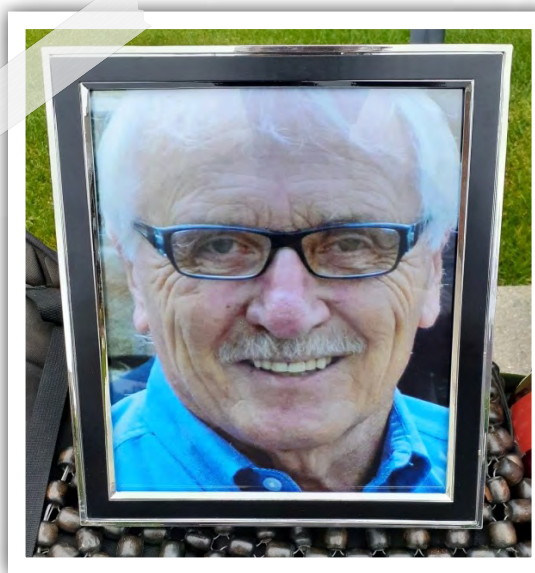
Larry, a veteran in the National Guard, had planned to travel to Normandy but due to his failing health, the trip was canceled.

"Larry enjoyed talking with fellow veterans," Lennie said. "He didn't see combat, but he so appreciated what veterans have done in their service."

Lennie said that's why Larry and AuthoraCare Collective volunteer Mike Edwards seemed to hit it off so well.

"They did a wonderful match," Lennie said. "Larry was a good judge of character and Mike was totally authentic. He was just a special soul. I felt honored that I got to meet him and know him."

Prior to his death, Larry wrote Lennie a note asking her to reach out to Mike about putting his motorcycle back together.



*A recent photo of Larry Singer. [Mike Edwards]*

"There were pieces all over the garage," she said. "Mike took all of those pieces and put the bike back together. It was the centerpiece for Larry's memorial service on Memorial Day (May 25) – with flowers and photos around it."

Mike doesn't have a motorcycle, but he has a plane – a 1946 Aeronca.

"It's an oldie, but a goodie," he said. "It's a two-seat tandem plane."

Mike said his knowledge of airplanes assisted in the reassembling of the bike.

"It took an hour, maybe a little more, to put it back together," he said. "And I looked at the manual, which had pictures, to help some, too."

The 650-pound bike was assembled for the memorial service only, Mike said if anyone wanted to ride it, "a professional would need to make sure it was safe."

A socially distanced memorial service was held in Larry and Lennie's cul-de-sac and a Zoom meeting included about 90 friends and family from around the country.

Lennie said that Mike's gesture would've meant the world to Larry.

"He knew, I think, that Mike would be willing to do this for him," she said.

Mike has been volunteering with AuthoraCare Collective for a few years now – with veterans.



*Lennie Singer created this painting of Larry in his riding gear. Lennie said that "he always made sure he wore a safety suit and helmet."*

*[Mike Edwards]*

It was during a DAV (Disabled American Veterans) meeting that Mike learned about AuthoraCare Collective's volunteer program.

"I felt like I was led to do this," Mike said. "I felt a real closeness with Larry. It was absolutely an honor for me to be able to help in this way."

## THRIFT STORE REOPENING A BIG SUCCESS

### Store Now in Need of Furniture Donations

#### By Charity Apple

When the Hospice Thrift Store in Burlington reopened to the public on July 9, thrift store manager Karen Harris Clark was pleasantly surprised.

"They were standing all the way to the road," Clark said. "They were out there – in masks and socially distancing – and ready to shop."

Following the reopening, "we netted almost \$80,000 in 11 days," Clark said. "The four weekends we were open in July, we sold over 8,000 pieces of clothing and 3,000 books. We have sold a total of 27,000 items since then."

The thrift store, which generates funds for AuthoraCare Collective's hospice programs and services, has been closed since early March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During that time, Clark along with staff and volunteers, rearranged the store and began implementing precautions to keep the staff and shoppers safe.

Plexiglass partitions were installed at the cash registers. In keeping with the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines, areas are thoroughly sanitized every day. Staff and shoppers are required to wear masks and the dressing rooms remain closed to the public.

Store hours (during the pandemic) are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays only and donations can be accepted between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays.

"Everyone has been cleaning out their closets during COVID-19 so we have gotten a lot of clothes and we're thankful, but we really need some furniture as well," Clark said.

Pickup for larger items is currently on Tuesdays only and can be arranged by calling 336-532-0164.

For more details, call 336.229.0490 or [visit the Hospice Thrift Store's Facebook page.](#)





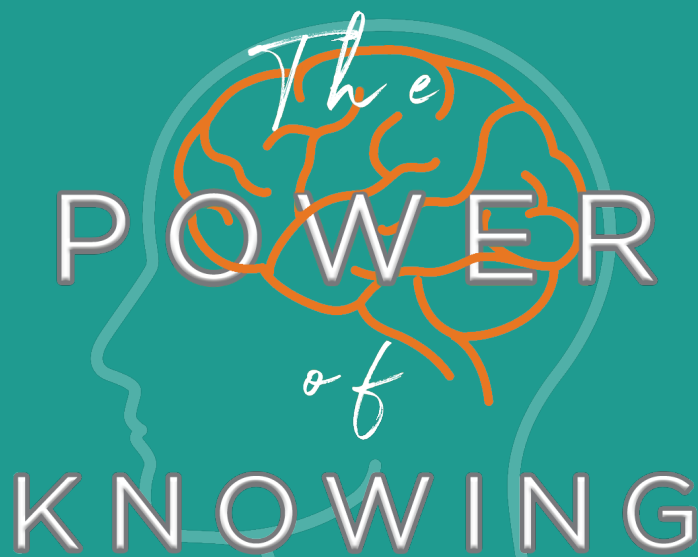
# What's Happening?

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

- Virtual grief support groups and caregiver events | Call 336.621.2500 for more information
- An educational webinar series: The Power of Knowing

Stay tuned for more virtual events! Visit [authoracare.org](https://authoracare.org) for our most current calendar.



# The POWER of KNOWING

A Free Webinar Series  
presented by

**AuthoraCare**  
COLLECTIVE

### Health Disparities, Diversity and Intentional Inclusion

**September 3 | 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. | Zoom Webinar**

Understanding comes from knowing, which is why AuthoraCare Collective has partnered with the Alamance Chamber, the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, Fox Rothschild LLP and Cone Health to explore the impact of health disparities and the opportunities for intentional inclusion in our businesses and communities.

Join us on September 3 to hear panelists Kim Gatling, Kathy Colville, and April Herring discuss health disparities, intentional inclusion and the scope of diversity.

This webinar is the first in a 3-part series and will focus on understanding and increasing our knowledge of health disparities, diversity and intentional inclusion. We will discuss what health disparities are and their impact in the Triad region and beyond. Part Two: Creating Inclusive Work Environments will air on September 10 and Part Three: Diversity at the End of Life will air on September 17.

**Now Streaming On Demand at [authoracare.org/knowning](https://authoracare.org/knowning)**

- Grief and Loss During COVID-19 | Parts One and Two
- The Benefits of Palliative Care During COVID-19
- Advance Care Planning During COVID-19

Visit [authoracare.org/knowning](https://authoracare.org/knowning) to register for webinars and view previously aired events on-demand. You can also view a livestream of these events on our Facebook page ([facebook.com/authoracare](https://facebook.com/authoracare)).

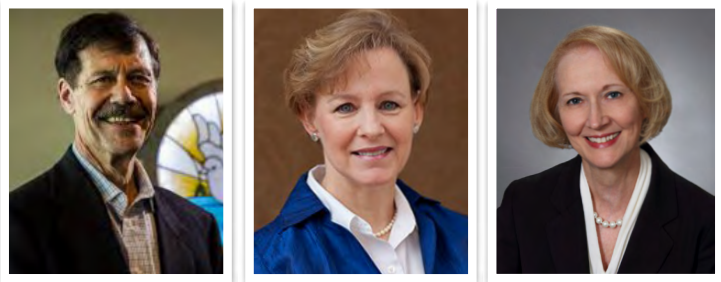
# ANNUAL CAMPAIGN GIVING MORE CRITICAL THAN EVER

## Social Distancing Does Not Affect Our Purpose

By Paul Russ

This year's Annual Giving Appeal Reminds Us:  
*"Social distancing is staying away from people, but not from one's purpose."*

In May, the AuthoraCare Foundation launched its 2020 Annual Campaign with the former leaders of Hospice & Palliative Care Center of Alamance-Caswell and Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro serving as campaign chairs. Peter Barcus, Pam Barrett and Pat Soenksen described why the fundraising effort is so vital as it generates more than \$275,000 each year to support the wide range of services offered by AuthoraCare Collective.



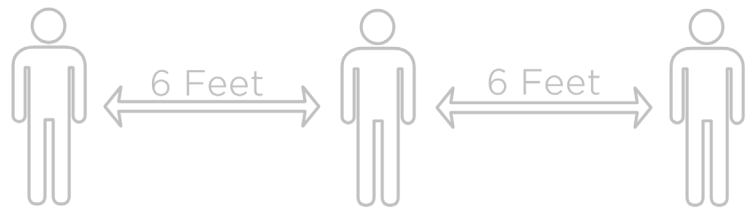
Peter Barcus, Pam Barrett and Pat Soenksen

"Social distancing is staying away from people, but not from one's purpose," reminded the former leaders. "Working together, we can stay strong and continue to empower patients to be active participants in their care journey, enabling them to live on their own terms through personalized support for mind, body and spirit."

On any given day, AuthoraCare supports more than 600 hospice patients in our community. Bereavement programs that support anyone in the community impacted by the death of a loved one have been expanded to address emerging needs like loss due to overdose and suicide.

Services for medically fragile and grieving children continue with Kids Path. And palliative care services are available for individuals struggling with the pain and symptoms associated with chronic illness. While some services are funded through insurance, AuthoraCare must raise more than \$1 million each year in community support to provide vital programs, including patient care for the underinsured, community grief counseling and services for children.

"Social distancing is staying away from people, but not from one's **purpose.**"



Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the Annual Campaign especially vital this year. Hospice and palliative patients are medically fragile and therefore among the most vulnerable to the disease. Along with their families, they face added challenges and stress during this unprecedented time.

AuthoraCare continues to take strong measures to ensure the safety of patients, families and our team. Due to the global crisis, we have expanded the use of technology to provide support for patients and for those who are grieving. We continue to require large supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and regularly update our procedures based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines to avoid spreading the virus. While these efforts are challenging, we are successfully navigating through the pandemic. Through all of this, our patients, families and staff have demonstrated remarkable resilience as we adapt to provide uninterrupted, quality care.

These changes have incurred considerable unexpected expense. Unfortunately, individual giving is down in these uncertain times. And other fundraising efforts have been impacted. For example, our Hospice Thrift Store was closed for nearly three months and important fundraising events have been postponed or canceled.

More than ever, your support is needed! Please consider supporting our 2020 Annual Campaign. Your gift will help us continue to serve our mission, empowering patients to be active participants in their care journey. You can make a gift on our website at [authoracare.org/give](https://authoracare.org/give) or click the "donate" button below.

**Donate to AuthoraCare Collective's Annual Campaign**

# A Sense of Freedom



## CAP-C Waiver Gives Little Girl A New Lease on Life

By Charity Apple

Tracy Sylvia wasn't sure what to do.

Her 8-year-old daughter, Abby, had suffered a massive stroke due to a congenital defect on Feb. 1, 2019, and was hospitalized for five months.

"Up until this point, she was a healthy little girl," Tracy said.

The stroke affected her speech and she did not have use of her arms or legs. And since child stroke victims are rare, there wasn't a lot of information out there. Tracy had to do the research herself and she chose Kids Path for Abby's care.

"One night, Tracy called from Abby's bedside in the ICU and said, 'I have heard about CAP-C, what is it?'" Donna Schumacher, RN CAP-C Case Manager on the Greensboro campus, said. "All too often, we get calls like this because CAP-C isn't that recognizable. People usually don't know what it is or if it's available for their child's care."

Medicaid's Community Alternatives Program for Children (CAP-C) provides families, with medically fragile children like Abby, a cost-effective option. It is for children up to 20 years of age.

"It meets their needs in the home," Donna said.

With Donna's help, the Sylvias applied and were approved for the Medicaid CAP-C waiver.

"Their bathrooms were modified in that the toilets were raised so that Abby could go to the bathroom with minimal assistance," Donna said. "Hand rails were installed on the stairs leading out to the garage."

In addition to the modifications to the Sylvias' home, CAP-C provided for Pull-Ups, wipes and pads that Abby could use.

Since Abby has spasticity in her leg muscles and has foot drop in her left foot, her therapist recommended the use of a tricycle.

"Donna navigated us through everything," Tracy said.

The tricycle was modified for Abby's needs and delivered to her home.

"COVID-19 prevented me from being there," Donna said. "But I literally jumped for joy when Tracy sent me the photo of Abby on the tricycle."



*Abby Sylvia, 9, has a new lease on life thanks to the tricycle she received through the CAP-C Waiver.*

When Abby, now 9, pedals her new tricycle, she often yells, "Freedom!"

That's because being able to ride the tricycle exhibits a sense of freedom that Abby hasn't felt in a while.

"It gives her a chance to be a regular little girl," Tracy said.

Although Abby can't move like she used to, this tricycle has provided her a sense of independence.

"When kids are born with health issues, they don't know another way of life. In Abby's case, she remembers what life was like before the stroke," Tracy said. "Being able to get on a bike again, and be a normal kid, well, that has just meant the world to her."

Tracy said that she thinks back to last year and the progress Abby has made.

"This time last year, her speech was low. She was on a modified diet and it hurt her to do almost anything. She's a completely different kid. It's really amazing the strides she's made. She's a very happy little girl."

Donna said that she, too, has noticed how much Abby's condition has changed.

"I can't wait until she walks across the stage and graduates," Donna said. "I believe it will happen, too."

**Do you want to see more stories like this?**

**Need advice for parenting through grief, loss and COVID-19?**

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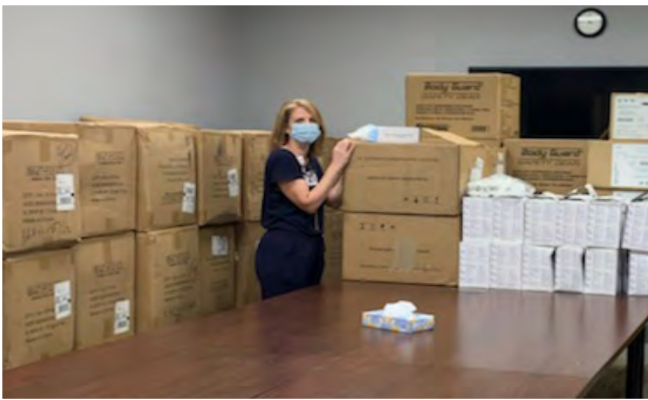
# THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

## COVID-19 has Provided Challenges, but Not Affected Care

By Linda Ann Fitts

COVID-19 has been part of our lives for six months now and AuthoraCare Collective continues to provide ongoing care to our patients, family members and clients.

With more access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), some of our clinicians can meet face-to-face with patients, while focusing on the safety for all involved in that care.



*AuthoraCare Collective CEO Kristen Yntema during the delivery of hundreds of boxes of PPE for staff.*

"It was never a question as to whether or not to wear PPE but rather exactly what to wear and how to wear it appropriately," said Donna Sams, hospice nurse. "It is necessary to protect our patients, their families, our co-workers and ourselves. We may look different, but our mission is unchanged."

Social workers also are required to wear masks, face shields and gloves when entering homes.

"Some challenges involve talking through the layers of PPE to patients and families who are hard of hearing or have dementia. The good news is that it really has been welcomed by patients and families and it gives them the understanding that we are taking their safety seriously," said Melanie Fuqua, hospice social worker.

Families and their loved ones recognize the importance of PPE during this uncertain time.

"I have patients and family members thank me for wearing PPE. I make sure to share our agency flier titled 'Keeping You Safe During COVID-19' on my visits to each home," said Debbie Garner, social worker. "This helps patients and families know how important this is to us."

We know that this pandemic has been challenging for our patients' loved ones. Hospice nurse Maura Barber shared about being with a husband at the bedside of his dying wife. He wore a mask as his wife took her last breath.

"He asked me not to leave the room when I offered and later told me that watching her at the end was the hardest thing he had ever done in his life. I did reach out and touch his shoulder with a glove-covered hand, but I could not hug him," Barber said. "I also have a tradition of kissing each patient goodbye after I pronounce them. I could not do that. I find this hard."

Many of our staff are continuing to utilize virtual tools to stay connected with patients and their families instead of in-person visits and family meetings.

"This pandemic has not stopped me from providing the compassion and care my hospice patients need. Due to the advanced technology available, it has made me think out of the box," said Lisa Smith, hospice nurse.

Bereavement counselor Andrea Summers said she likes to take a cue from writer Andrea Jones' quote in these uncertain times – "The key to great communication is being adaptable."

"During these uncertain and forever changing times, I have found that adaptation is vital," Summers said. "The way I counsel and support my clients looks quite different. However, I have been given new tools and have found the courage to make it happen!"

Using technology can have a silver lining. It can allow more interaction with family members who cannot physically be with their loved ones.

At AuthoraCare Collective, our mission is to empower 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. Social distancing doesn't separate us from that mission.

*Your Story.*  
Our Expert Care.



*Your Story.* Our Expert Care.

Palliative | Hospice | Grief Support | Kids Path

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Formerly Hospice & Palliative Care Center of Alamance-Caswell  
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## 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.

## Getting Social

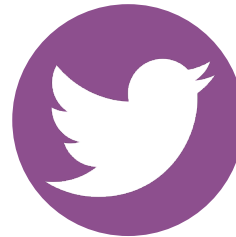
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