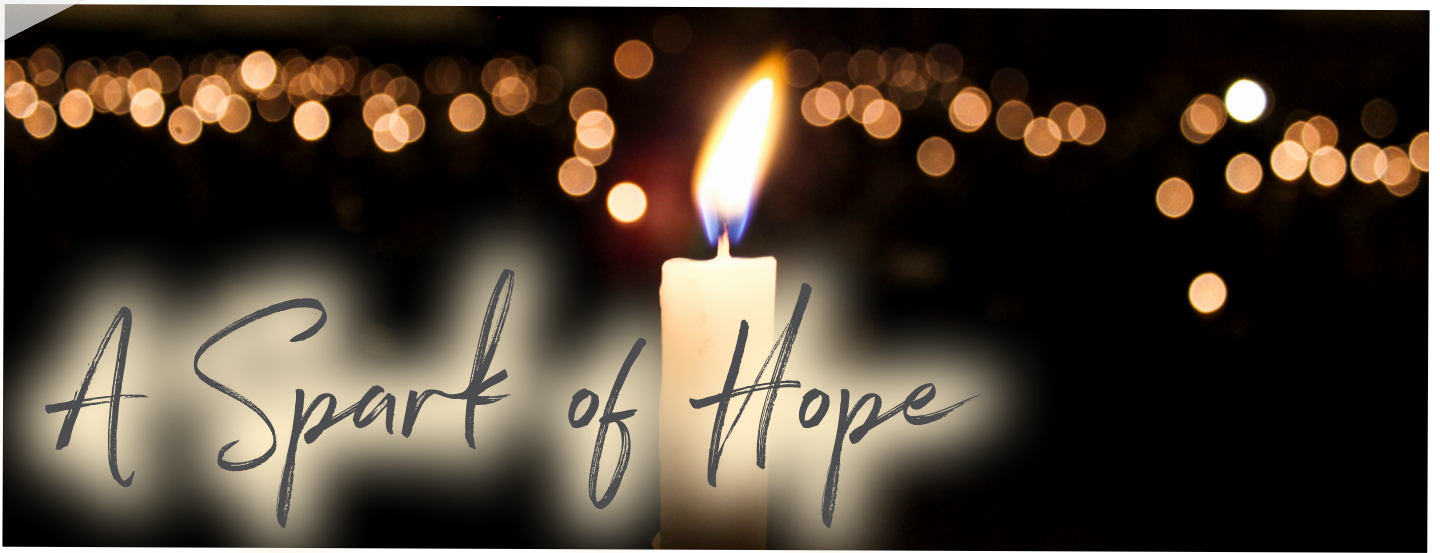


Storylines

A bi-monthly publication from AuthoraCare Collective

October/November 2020



Family Finds Healing Through Sharing Daughter's Story

By Jane Gibson

Ruthann and Mark Thoma have attended every Light Up A Life Service held in the past 23 years. This tradition was forged during a dark time in their lives, just six months after their beloved 17-year-old daughter died from injuries sustained as a passenger in a car accident. Sharon was on her way to Southwest High School with three neighborhood friends when the collision occurred. She was wearing a seat belt, and only three minutes from home.

A few months after Sharon's death, Ruthann shared, "I was having a terrible time, but there was no giving up. I had a husband and two sons who needed me."

Ruthann decided to visit a Compassionate Friends meeting for bereaved parents. There, she met Maura Barber, a mother who had recently lost her young child. Barber invited Ruthann to join her at an upcoming grief support group offered by Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro, now known as AuthoraCare Collective.

"This group of parents and the wise counsel offered by hospice grief counselor Lou Wallace became my lifeline," Ruthann said. "They taught me so much about grief and in turn, I shared my new understanding with my husband, Mark, and sons, Brian and Kevin."

The Thoma family found their way slowly, leaning on one another and on family and friends. They also found great comfort from their faith. But as that first holiday season drew near, they grew more anxious. How could their family embrace this sacred season at a time of such great sorrow?

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CEO Reflection

AuthoraCare Strong, AuthoraCare Bold

October 1st marked a milestone as we celebrated our first anniversary as AuthoraCare Collective. I want to share my reflections on the transformative year we have had.

In January, at our first combined staff meeting, we honored our founding organizations' 40-plus years of history. We revealed our new name, mission and core promises. Our team became one family as we declared, "we are AuthoraCare."

Only two months later, the COVID-19 pandemic changed our world, bringing with it a true paradigm shift. As a new organization, we had two choices: we could give in to all the barriers and hardships and drift back into how we "used to do things," or we could stand on the foundation of our mission, core beliefs and emerging culture and lean into the crisis to serve our community and one another in ways we never imagined before.

Our important work was made more difficult by the pandemic. As we faced new challenges, we were also prompted by local and national events to focus light on the harsh realities of institutional racism and implicit bias that impact persons of color each day. We have heard stories of experiences from our own team members, and as a result, have formalized a staff committee focused on diversity and inclusion work.

I am proud to share that AuthoraCare Collective is committed to fostering and sustaining a diverse, inclusive, anti-racist, just and equitable organizational culture that honors the unique stories of staff, volunteers, patients and families; that proactively engages and respectfully confronts bias, disparity, discrimination and injustice; and that affirms, respects, and celebrates human difference.

Through all of this, we have declared: We are AuthoraCare Strong.

Today, what comes to my mind is - we are AuthoraCare Bold.

We are bold in not allowing any barrier to stop us from living our mission. We are bold in working so incredibly hard to show up each day even though this year has sometimes made us want run away and hide. We have boldly stepped up and supported others in their stories. We are bold in saying we want to change the conversation. We are boldly creating our future.



Kristen Yntema

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristen Wither Yntema". The script is fluid and cursive.

Kristen Wither Yntema, MBA, MHSA

President and CEO

AuthoraCare Collective



A Spark of Hope

(cont. from cover)

Once again, the hospice grief support group offered her something to consider. She could attend Hospice's upcoming Light Up A Life Service. As painful as she imagined attendance would be, Ruthann felt drawn to an opportunity to celebrate Sharon's life and the love they would hold forever. "Sharon was such a joy ... such an easy child," Ruthann reflected. "She had a strong faith and was so loving and kind. I wanted to have her goodness remembered."

For those who are grieving this holiday season, Ruthann hopes they will consider attending this year's Light Up A Life Service, which will be held virtually this year at 5 p.m. Dec. 6. See below and the article on page 9 for more details.

"I know that great sorrow creates a darkness that is so dark and an emptiness that is so empty. But just like the light that shines from the small candle held during the Light Up A Life Service, I recognize how important it is to find the light again ... to interact with someone who can offer encouragement," she said.

When the Thoma family attended that first Light Up A Life service in December of 1997, they could have never imagined it would inspire a 23-year tradition, a tradition that now includes daughters-in-law and precious grandchildren.

"Our family continues to find healing with every story we share about Sharon," Ruthann added. "And we honor her best when we serve as a spark of light for someone else who is experiencing the darkness of grief."



The Light Up A Life Service has historically been held at First Lutheran Church in Greensboro. This year's service will be held virtually due to the pandemic.

UPCOMING VIRTUAL EVENT

Light Up A Life

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2020 | 5 P.M.

An Interfaith Service of Remembrance
Event to be held virtually on Zoom

Visit authoracare.org/light to register, view the program and learn more.



We Honor Veterans



Virtual Recognition

Pinning Ceremony Held for World War II Veteran

By Charity Apple

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, James “Pete” Murray’s AuthoraCare Collective care team was unable to be present during a pinning ceremony to recognize the World War II veteran.

So a virtual pinning was held for the Gibsonville resident who served aboard the battleship, the USS Texas.

Chaplain Eddie Self sang the Navy Hymn (“Eternal Father Strong to Save”) and read Isaiah 2:2-4 from the Bible.

“Mr. Murray was unresponsive at the time, but his son (Steven “Steve” Murray) was there and appreciated us doing it,” Self said. “When we were able to be in the same room together, before the pandemic, we would talk about his service. He enjoyed talking about it.”

Murray was present at D-Day, helping ground troops in the battle to establish a beachhead at Normandy.

After the Normandy beachhead was secure, the crew of the USS Texas participated in the Battle of Cherbourg, supporting the Army and Marines as they battled to drive deeper into France, Self said.

“That day, his ship saw 65 near-misses and was hit twice by enemy shore batteries. Not everyone survived, but Murray and his shipmates kept the good ship Texas in the fight,” Self added.

Murray saw combat in the Mediterranean, supporting landings in the south of France and also fought in the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

“Dad was the one who would load the shells into the guns. He lost his hearing because it was so loud,” Steve Murray said.

Self said he is still in awe of “The Greatest Generation.”

“He was this young man from Gibsonville, 18 years old, and he put himself in harm’s way because he felt it was the right thing to do,” Self said. “He had never seen anything outside of Gibsonville, but here he was, halfway around the world – fighting for our freedom. He was a sweet man. I miss him.”

In addition to Self, the AuthoraCare team included Toni Fellows, RN and Hospice Case Manager; Lori Welch, social worker; and Beverly Herring, Hospice Aide.



Allied Troops approach Normandy Beach on D-Day during World War II, June 6, 1944.

Welch described Murray as “being quite the character with a great sense of humor. We have these bone-shaped pillows that we put behind patients’ necks and one day, before the pandemic, he asked if we were going to have a pillow fight.”

After serving in the Navy, Murray went on to work at and retire from Engineered Plastics Inc. in Gibsonville. Following retirement, he opened a lawn mower shop.

Steve Murray said his dad was active and drove until he was in his early 90s.

“He loved to go to Pete’s Grill and the Quickie Mart in Gibsonville and exchange stories,” Steve said. “He loved to talk and would talk to you for hours.”

Steve said that his dad really enjoyed spending time with the AuthoraCare team, especially Self.

“The care they gave him was just incredible,” Steve said. “Beverly would come and bathe him three times a week. That sounds like a little thing, but it meant so much to all of us.”

James “Pete” Murray died on July 7. He was 95 years old. He is survived by his son, seven



Chaplain Eddie Self was an active member of Murray's care team.

grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren (with one on the way).

“He told me the week before, ‘I’m leaving here on Saturday,’” Steve Murray said. “He died at home that following Tuesday. We were with him when he died and there was such a sense of peace. I sure miss him.”

ANNUAL KIDS PATH HOLIDAY CHEER FUNDRAISER WILL LOOK DIFFERENT THIS YEAR

By Charity Apple

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, AuthoraCare Collective would collect items to help patients and families with limited financial resources during the holiday season.

This year, things will look a bit different, but we will still support our patients and families.

In an effort to protect volunteers, donors and our community from the risks of in-person shopping, we are encouraging donations in the form of gift cards.

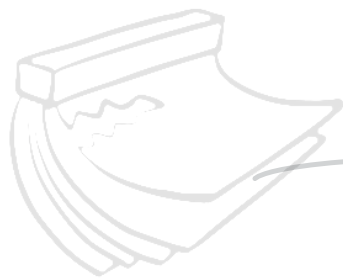
If your family, community group, business or church is interested in supporting patients and their families this holiday season, we are requesting gift cards: VISA/Mastercard; Wal-Mart; Target; and Amazon. These will be distributed to those in need. It also will give Kids Path families the opportunity to purchase the items needed or requested by kids and teens.

In addition, these gift cards can help our adult patients who may have little or no family members in the area to support them.

Gift cards can be mailed or dropped off at the two AuthoraCare Collective locations: 2500 Summit Ave., Greensboro, or 914 Chapel Hill Rd., Burlington. Call 336.621.2500 or 336.532.0100 to learn more.

Donations for Sam’s Wish Fund Holiday Cheer can also be sent to Maple View Ice Cream, 6900 Rocky Ridge Rd., Hillsborough, N.C. 27278 or Muffin’s Ice Cream Shoppe, 109 N. Fourth St., Mebane, N.C. 27302 or contact Allison Nichols at allison@mapleviewfarm.com.

At AuthoraCare Collective, our goal is to help patients and their families write chapters in their life story. We appreciate your support and help during these difficult times.



What's Happening?

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

When Grief and the Holidays Collide

A Virtual Program for Grieving Adults

Choose the date and time that works best for you:

Evening | Monday, November 9, 6 - 7 p.m.

Daytime | Tuesday, November 10, 1 - 2 p.m.

Registration is required by November 6. To register and receive information on how to join by Zoom, contact 336.621.5565 or email griefsupport@authoracare.org.

Holding the Light

A Virtual Expressive Arts Workshop for Grieving Adults

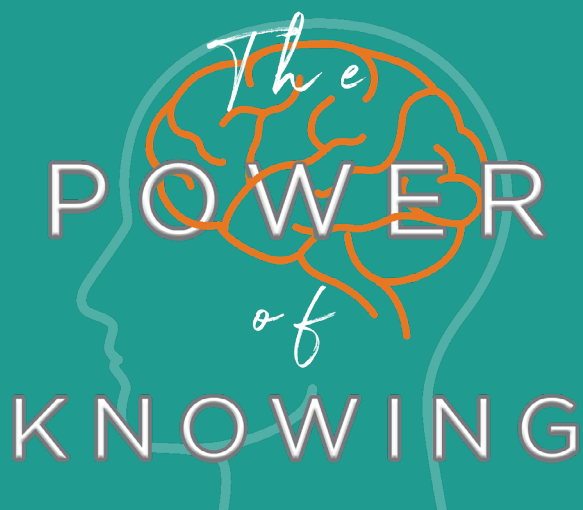
Thursday, November 19, 3 - 4:30 p.m.

Registration is required by November 6. To register and receive information on how to join by Zoom, email holly.lux-sullivan@authoracare.org.

Light Up A Life Service

Visit authoracare.org/light to learn more and register.

Sunday, December 6, 5 - 6 p.m.



A Free Webinar Series

**Now Streaming On Demand
at authoracare.org/knowning**

Grief and Loss During COVID-19 | Parts 1 & 2
The Benefits of Palliative Care During COVID-19
Advance Care Planning During COVID-19
Diversity & Inclusion Series
The Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Teens

WEDDING GIFTS SUPPORT HOSPICE HOME

Couple Honors Loved Ones

By Jane Gibson

When Tracey Johnson and Lynn Woodruff began making wedding plans, they decided to find a way to honor those loved ones who had shaped each of their lives but were no longer living.

A second marriage for both, the couple realized that hospice services had been used by several of these family members. Johnson had been particularly appreciative of the care her father had received at the Hospice Home in Burlington. As a nurse herself, Tracey witnessed her dad's outstanding care, which allowed Johnson to lay down her own nursing and caregiving skills and be by his side as his daughter.

"While dad was only there a few days, it made all the difference in the world," she said. "Of course, I had wished he had been willing to go to there sooner, but I came to realize everything unfolded just the way dad needed it to be."

**"(The Hospice Home)
made all the difference
in the world."**



Lynn Woodruff and Tracey Johnson were married Saturday, September 13, 2020 at Mt. Hermon United Methodist Church in Graham.

When the wedding date was set and invitations mailed, a card was included. For those wishing to honor the couple's marriage, contributions to AuthoraCare's Hospice Home in Burlington would be appreciated. Gifts totaling more than \$1,100 were received.

Thank you to all who celebrated Woodruff and Johnson in a way that helps others in need!

Showing Appreciation for Mom's Care With Wreath Fundraiser

By Charity Apple

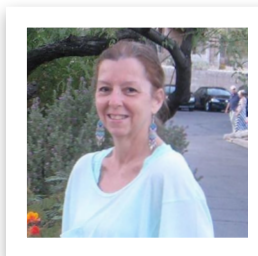
Joshua Walker wanted to do something to thank the dedicated staff at the Hospice Home in Burlington for caring for his late mother, Denise "Neecy" Jackson Gunter (picture below) last November.

Walker said he and his three siblings experienced such warmth and kindness from the entire staff, but there was one nurse in particular that the family remembers fondly – Dawn Childress.

"She was there during the second shift and we all got to know her. We have thought of her often and so appreciate her taking care of mom and us," Joshua said.

Room 5 was transformed into a homey, comfortable place – complete with handmade soaps and lotions. Denise owned and operated Neecy's Necessities, which was well-known for its soaps and lotions.

"We were all appreciative of how much at home we all felt. We are so glad that mom got to have that comfort in her last days," he said. Denise died on Nov. 5, 2019, from stage IV colon cancer. She is survived by her husband, children and grandchildren.



Joshua and his sister, Ashley, wanted to do something to pay tribute to their mom as well as honor the Hospice Home staff.

"With COVID-19, we weren't sure what to do," he said. "Then we started talking about wreaths – with the holidays coming up."

Joshua has handmade wreaths for friends and family throughout the years, so he decided to use that talent to create holiday wreaths.

[Neecy's Donation Drive is on Facebook.](#)

"In addition to contributions to AuthoraCare Collective, we have four handmade Christmas wreaths in two different styles as virtual door prizes," he said. "We will draw four names at the close of the donation drive and contact each person who donated \$5 or more."

The donation drive ends on Nov. 5, the date of Denise's death. And virtual door prize winners will be selected on Nov. 12. Wreaths will begin to be delivered starting Nov. 24.

"It's just amazing to me how generous people have been and how they're paying tribute to my mom and the Hospice Home," he said.

Attitude, Lifestyle & Faith

Daughter Believes These Have Helped Mom Live to 100

By Charity Apple

It was on the family farm in Stockton, Calif., where Mary Lee, now 100, learned the importance of hard work and healthy eating.

"Her father was a farmer and started his own farm before World War II. She used to talk about the 40-plus acres of tomatoes they had," said her daughter, Dorothy Tovish.

Lee also spoke of the Japanese internment camps in Rohwer, Ark., where she spent three years.

"She would talk about it when I was growing up," Tovish said. "She was in her mid-20s at the time her family (mother, father and sister) were in the internment camp."

At the age of 27, Lee went to college with aspirations of becoming a nurse.

"You have to remember that at that time, there was so much prejudice against Japanese people," Tovish said. "Most colleges wouldn't accept her but Pacific Union College, a Seventh Day Adventist college, did."

Lee, a Buddhist at the time, joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Since the religion advocated vegetarianism, she became a vegetarian and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. Lee was sent to Madison College, Tenn., for post-graduate classes as well as training to teach. She worked at various hospitals in the Los Angeles area, as well as Chicago and Washington, D.C.

"She met and married my dad in Washington, D.C. She worked at the Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Mary., retiring from there in 1988," Tovish said. "Mom has always been a very hard worker. She received accolades from doctors and her supervisors for her work ethic. She always believed that if you do something, you do it the right way - you don't take shortcuts."

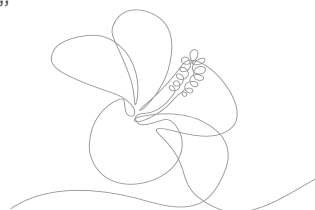
Tovish said that both of her parents were known for their community outreach.

"My parents helped in the soup kitchen every fourth Sunday of the month. They faithfully went there for



10 years - never missing a chance to serve others. My mother was head deaconess at Capital Memorial of Seventh Day Adventists in Washington, D.C. She was named Woman of the Year in 1994," Tovish said. "My parents would visit with shut-ins, organize potlucks and served as luncheon coordinators. Mom grew roses and she would make special arrangements for the church." Lee doesn't take any medication - only vitamins. She has dementia, but otherwise is healthy.

"I believe it is because of her positive attitude, lifestyle and faith in God that she has lived this long," Tovish said. "There's not one aspect of her life that she really needed to improve on. You can't say that about a lot of people."



Most Dreaded Time of the Year

How to Face the Holidays While Grieving

By Holly Lux-Sullivan, AuthoraCare Bereavement Counselor

In the last two months, many of my bereavement clients have begun to speak of their concerns about that most dreaded time of year for those who are grieving: The Holidays.

Grieving is hard every day. For seven months, bereaved people have had to deal with grieving during a pandemic. Now they have to face the holidays ... while grieving ... during a pandemic.

Sometimes life feels like a nesting doll of sorrows.

So how do you face the holidays without your beloved spouse, child, sibling, parent or friend?

- Go into the holiday season knowing this year will be different. The loss you've suffered has changed everything, including the holidays.
- Put your own needs first. You have the right to have your needs attended to, especially during the holidays. Don't feel pressured to do what others expect you to do.
- Give yourself permission to be sad. You are allowed to feel bad, even at a time when society says we should be happy.
- Change what you want to change. You don't have to hold tight to every family tradition if it isn't meaningful to you or you fear carrying on with the tradition will cause more pain.
- Keep what you want to keep. By the same token, you don't have to throw out every tradition if you don't want to. Keep what matters to you.
- Remember them how you want to. One of my favorite remembrances is that of a client whose mother had died. Her mother had dozens of pairs of earrings, and the family didn't know what to do with them. Then someone suggested decorating a Christmas tree with them – voila! A lovely tree, covered in trinkets, that honor and remind them of the deceased.
- Leave an empty chair – or don't. For some people, the idea of their person's usual seat at the table being unoccupied causes intense pain and consternation. Others find putting a photo of their person in that empty chair helps them feel the person is still present.
- If you need support, reach out. You don't have to go through this alone. Call a friend or family member.

LIGHT UP A LIFE SERVICE HAS GONE VIRTUAL

Interfaith Service of Remembrance will be Held December 6

By Jane Gibson

AuthoraCare Collective's Light Up A Life Service will be presented virtually this year.

This interfaith service of remembrance can be accessed using a smartphone, iPad or computer at **5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6.** To RSVP and to access more detailed information, visit authoracare.org/light.

The Light Up A Life Service will offer you an opportunity to honor and remember friends and family members - those who are no longer here - as well as loved ones you are unable to see because of COVID-19.

The featured speaker is The Rev. Courtney Willis, Associate Pastor of First Baptist Church in Greensboro. Willis, a graduate of Elon University, also earned a degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. She and her husband, Stephen, have one son, Berkley, who is in the sixth grade. Their family loves the outdoors and traveling to places that allow them to experience other cultures. Willis joined First Baptist in 2018.

Willis explained that participating in this year's Light Up A Life service is especially meaningful to

continued on page 10

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.

LIGHT UP A LIFE SERVICE HAS GONE VIRTUAL | continued from page 9

her. Two and a half years ago, her mother died after battling a chronic illness for many years. In the last week of life, her mother was admitted to Beacon Place where she received excellent, compassionate care. Then, earlier this year, the Willis family faced another great loss, the unexpected, tragic death of her father-in-law.

"Grief has been a very real part of our home these past few years," Willis explained. "While these losses have forever changed me, they have also challenged and inspired me to grow more fully into who I've been created to be."

In addition to our speaker, the Light Up A Life Service will include music and inspirational readings. There also will be a special time of reflection, where those watching can join together in spirit by lighting a candle in their own home.

After the service or any time throughout the month of December, we invite you to view one of AuthoraCare's two Hospice Trees of Remembrance. One stands on the front lawn of Kontoor Brands at 400 N. Elm Street in downtown Greensboro. The other is located on the Burlington campus, 918 Chapel Hill Road in Burlington.

Luminaries also will light the paths that lead around Beacon Place and the Hospice Home. Each candle recognizes patients who are currently there as well as those who received care in past years.

Please remember that a gift of \$10 or more will allow you to honor or remember someone you hold dear with a light. AuthoraCare will acknowledge your gift and notify the family of those remembered with a lovely seasonal card. All proceeds benefit the patients and families who receive care and support from AuthoraCare throughout the year.



Visit authoracare.org/light to learn more, donate and view the program.

Getting Social

Connect with us to stay informed about the latest news, upcoming events and more!



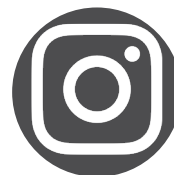
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