

Storylines

A bi-monthly publication from AuthoraCare Collective

December/January 2021

Finding Care and Support

Taking the First Step

By Jane Gibson

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed these days, you are not alone. COVID-19 has upended our lives, creating financial hardships and separating us from treasured traditions and people we love. For those who, in addition, have their own chronic illness or are experiencing the illness or death of a loved one, this pandemic has created a sense of despair.

So where can you turn when you hear that little voice inside that says, “You need help?”

Contacting AuthoraCare Collective can be a good first step. Explore the website; send an email inquiry or reach out by phone. With AuthoraCare’s broad array of services, you may be surprised to see what is available.

On AuthoraCare’s website, www.authoracare.org, you will find articles on a variety of topics ranging from the importance of self-care, to ways you can support children and grandchildren who have experienced the death of a loved one. There are also opportunities to request one-on-one counseling support and to attend educational workshops, all of which are



extended virtually (during the pandemic) and are available at no charge.

AuthoraCare recognizes that providing gentle, easy-to-understand information about illness, loss and change can be powerful. It is an effective way to reduce fear and to boost self-confidence. In fact, education is the most consistent catalyst for change.

The articles posted on our website are based on questions that are fielded by AuthoraCare staff members. The following is one of the more recent ones:

“My father has dementia and his behavior has become more and more demanding. My mother is 78 and is taking care of Dad by herself. She understands he can’t control his outbursts, but she doesn’t want others to know how much he has changed. While I visit most every day, I have a full-time job and two

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CEO Reflection

Now is the Season for Reflection and Renewal

It is with mixed emotions that we close the year 2020. It was tumultuous, including social, financial, and political challenges, all experienced under the backdrop of an unprecedented health crisis. Despite these trials, our resiliency was not thwarted. We continued to serve our community in new and innovative ways. We supported our staff and volunteers. And we are forever stronger.

As "distance" proved to be an essential tool to remain safe during the pandemic, we rapidly expanded our telehealth capacity at AuthoraCare. It was necessary to protect everyone while still providing care and support. Even those "technologically challenged" adapted. As a result, I believe technology will shape health care for years to come.

In the wake of violence against Black citizens and subsequent national civil unrest, we took inventory of our own biases. And like other hospice leaders nationwide, we at AuthoraCare affirmed our commitment to end injustice where we can.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) will test new ways to support hospice care through Medicare Advantage starting in 2021. Also coming next year is a payment model for Serious Illness Populations from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation's Primary Cares initiative. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of home-based care, and the AuthoraCare board is watching these models closely.

Most exciting as we look to the new year, is the hope of multiple vaccines - a light at the end of the tunnel per se. But we know there is still a long way to go. And until the vaccines are distributed and we all do our part by taking the shot, we must remain vigilant. We must follow the three W's and wear our masks, wait 6 feet apart and wash our hands regularly.

So, again, it is with mixed emotions that we say goodbye to 2020 and welcome the New Year. Most of all, I feel gratitude and optimism. I look forward to discovering new ways for AuthoraCare to serve its mission.



Kristen Wither Yntema, MBA, MHSA

President and CEO

AuthoraCare Collective



Kristen Yntema



Finding Care and Support

(cont. from cover)

teenagers at home. I know Mom is exhausted, but she's strong-willed. Nothing I suggest seems to help. My heart is breaking. What can I do?"

If any aspect of the above question resonates with you, you may want to view the Power Of Knowing video titled "Giving Thanks," which is found on the AuthoraCare website. This video features five AuthoraCare staff members who offer explanations about basic services and the value of counseling support.

In one segment, Nurse Practitioner Christin Gusler explains how palliative care differs from hospice care, in that palliative care can be accessed at any point within the course of an illness, even during aggressive curative treatments.

The goal of palliative care is to improve quality of life through consultations offered by AuthoraCare physicians, nurse practitioners and social workers. Bothersome symptoms are addressed and facilitated discussions are offered to the patient and family members. This is the place where hard conversations take place – conversations that explore caregiving needs, financial concerns, and what matters most to the patient.

Another segment of this same video is presented by Gayle Scott, Director of Family Services, who offers a powerful discussion on the impact of being a caregiver. Because caregivers are so focused on their loved one's needs, they typically overlook their own health and well-being. The counseling providing by an AuthoraCare social worker can guide and encourage self-care. Social workers can also lead family discussions around tensions and differing opinions that exist within a family unit.

AuthoraCare Collective offers many resources for those impacted by serious illness, loss and change. You just need to take that first step and connect with us. Your story. Our expert care.



AUTHORACARE'S ANNUAL WINTER FUNDRAISER

Light Up A Life

DONATE THROUGH THE END OF THE YEAR!

Visit authoracare.org/light to make a donation and view a recording of this year's virtual service!



We Honor Veterans



Saying 'Thank You' to Our Veterans

Recognition Held on Both AuthoraCare Campuses

By Charity Apple



James Ward Burch (he goes by Ward) served in the Army for two years in the Korean War.

Veteran Hospice patients on both AuthoraCare Collective campuses received recognition in honor of Veterans Day.

Thirty Guilford County commemorative coins donated by Robert Shelly, Director of Guilford County Veterans Services, were distributed to veterans on the Greensboro campus by social workers.

"We were talking about how we could say thank you to our veterans in Guilford County so I ordered 3,000 to put into gift packages for veterans," Shelly said. "I had several left over that I wanted to donate to organizations that assist veterans."

April Herring, Community Education/Outreach Coordinator for AuthoraCare Collective, and Shelly, serve on the Veteran Caregiver Support Group together.

"We were on a virtual call and Robert mentioned these beautiful, unique commemorative coins and I immediately thought, 'we need those for our veteran patients!'"

Fifty-five coins, in all, were donated for veteran patients on the Greensboro campus.

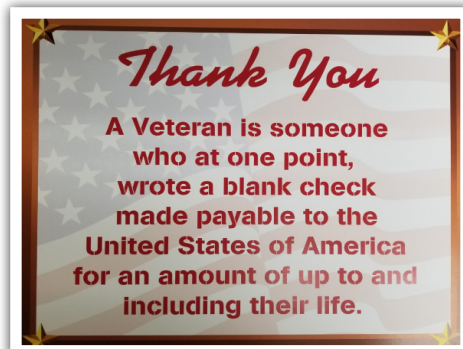
Despite the pandemic, the doors to the Guilford County Veterans Services office haven't closed.

"Some home visits continue as well," Shelly said. "What we do changes the lives of veterans."

And it has, he said, been difficult "because people can't visit with one another."

But sending out coins is a way to show veterans how important they are to the fabric of our community.

"Receiving these coins means so much to our veterans," Herring said. "It's such a great honor for them."



Volunteer Services also completed Veterans Day cards that were distributed on the Burlington and Greensboro campuses.

Hannah Boyd, Clinical Informatics on the Burlington campus, received 30 signs (pictured left) from the Alamance County Veterans Service Office to donate to veterans.

Saying 'Thank You' to Our Veterans (cont. from pg. 4)

Boyd said that oftentimes, veterans feel that if they didn't serve in combat, they didn't feel they did enough to be recognized for their service.

"But what we want them to understand is that if you were willing to do that, well, that is a life-sacrificing situation," she said.

The way of recognizing veterans on the Burlington campus, Boyd said, "is a bit different each year, but we try to give them some sort of memento."

A new system of documenting care for patients has been put into place throughout AuthoraCare and with it, the recognition of veterans is noted.

"We know that the care for our veterans needs to be unique," she said. "This gives us a way of noting the specialized care we give our veterans."



The late John Walton is shown with his Guilford County commemorative coins. Walton served more than 20 years in the Army. He served during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

UPCOMING VET CONNECT MEETINGS

The Vet Connect (Burlington meeting) will be at 10 a.m. Jan. 6 virtually. If you are interested in participating, contact Hank Williams at hankret2018@gmail.com.

The Vet Connect (Mebane meeting), is held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at the Mebane Arts & Community Center, 633 Corregidor St., Mebane. Contact is Carl Singley at 336.524.3532.

The Vet Connect (Yanceyville meeting), which is typically held at 9 a.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month, has been canceled since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The Caswell County Senior Center, where the meetings are held, has remained closed. Contact is Fred Smith at 336.514.1521 or fsmith7143@embarqmail.com.



Vet Connect meetings are a chance for veterans to socialize with each other and bond over their shared experiences.



What's Happening?

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Resiliency Amidst Grief

A Virtual Workshop for Grieving Adults

Evening | Monday, January 11, 6 – 7 p.m.

Daytime | Tuesday, January 12, noon – 1 p.m.

Grief: What to Expect and What Can Help

A Virtual Workshop for Grieving Adults

Evening | Tuesday, January 19, 6 – 7 p.m.

Daytime | Wednesday, January 20, noon – 1 p.m.

Journaling Through Grief

A Virtual Expressive Arts Workshop for Grieving Adults

Thursday, January 21, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Living After the Loss of a Spouse, Partner, or Constant Companion

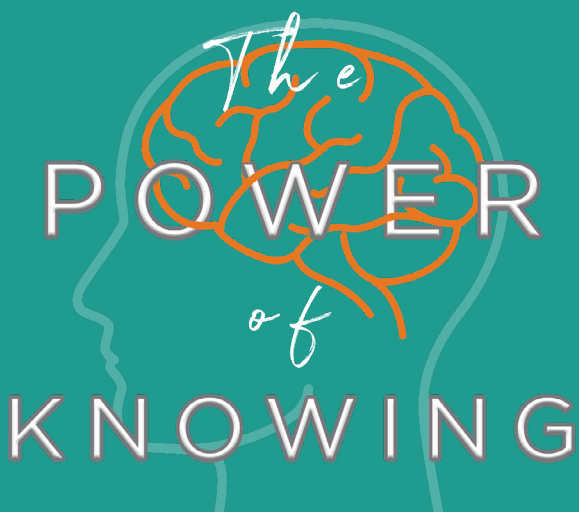
A Seven-Session Virtual Support Group for Grieving Adults

Evening Group | Tuesdays, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23, March 2 and 9 | 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Daytime Group | Thursdays, Jan. 28, Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25, March 4 and 11 | 2 – 3:30 p.m.

To register and receive information, contact 336.621.5565 or email griefsupport@authoracare.org.

Visit authoracare.org for our most current calendar.



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

Giving Thanks: An Overview of AuthoraCare's Services

AFP TRIAD CHAPTER HONORS FAYE W. BOSWELL

Award Recognizes Her Tireless Commitment to Hospice Services

By Charity Apple

Faye W. Boswell (pictured right) was named Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser – Alamance County by the Triad Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) as part of its 2020 National Philanthropy Day celebration.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the virtual ceremony was held on Nov. 23.

Boswell's 30-year history as a volunteer with the former Hospice League of Alamance-Caswell included founding and serving as Hospice League president. The Alamance Balloon Festival, Hospice Golf Tournament and the Hospice Flea Market, which evolved into The Hospice Thrift Store, were all established by Boswell.

She also proposed the idea for the Hospice Home, which is now located at 914 Chapel Hill Road in Burlington.

The inspiration for the Hospice Home began in 1988 with a terminally ill patient whom Boswell had gotten to know. The woman refused to go to a hospital, fearing that her son would be homeless.

The patient whispered to Boswell, "but if you had a home, I would go home with you."

Boswell's late husband, Bill (a realtor at the time), discovered the house that would later become known as "The Home That Love Built." The property was purchased in 1992.



The Hospice Home opened on April 11, 1994. "It started out with 6 bedrooms and now we have rooms for 22 patients. And the staff has grown from three employees to what it is today," Boswell said as she held the colorful glass award on Oct. 6. "Every time I ride by the Hospice Home, I blow it a kiss."

She was sitting inside the gazebo located behind the Hospice Home along with Peter Barcus, retired CEO of Hospice of Alamance-Caswell.

Barcus touted Boswell's organizational skills. "She had documents, notebooks and the skill of delegation," he said. "She established structure within a community and gave people authority but maintained leadership."

Barcus joked that "she was the queen of the thank-you notes, too."

"It's remarkable how a thank-you note can make people feel," she said. "It makes a big difference."

Boswell remarked how pleased she is that The Hospice Thrift Store, at 2134 Hanford Rd., Burlington, is doing well.

"I'm so proud for them," she said. The thrift store's gross earnings are about \$1 million per year. It's still mind-boggling, Boswell said, to see how far things have come since those early days with the Hospice League.

"When I would ask people to help raise funds – whether it was for the Hospice Flea Market, Balloon Festival or golf tournament, I would tell them that I was a volunteer. This money was going toward a higher purpose. I was here for the philanthropy. It was amazing to me the people who stepped forward to help," she said. "I had people who believed in me and believed in the cause. They stood behind me and worked with me to see the dream come true."



The Hospice Home's welcome center is named for Boswell.

Visit afptriadchapter.org/npd2020 to read more about the winners and watch the virtual event.

Calm & Comfort

That's What Pet Therapy Dogs Bring to Patients

By Charity Apple

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, therapy dogs and their owners/handlers supported patients and families at Beacon Place in Greensboro and the Hospice Home in Burlington on a weekly basis.

"They're very important to our organization," said Teresa Reed, Director of Volunteer Services. "Pet therapy is more than bringing a pet into a room. The dogs and trainers have an intuition about people - it is a special gift."

The Hospice Home currently has five volunteer therapy dogs - you can see their pictures at authoracare.org/dogs. Beacon Place has Ekko, who is retiring this year; Pam Gaynor is her handler.

Animals, Reed said, "are there for us and they don't expect anything in return. When it comes to our patients, I believe that pet therapy allows them to let their guard down."

Ekko, a German Shepherd therapy dog, and her owner/handler Pam Gaynor, visited Beacon Place on Tuesdays for about seven years.

Gaynor has been a volunteer with AuthoraCare Collective for 22 years. Ekko is Gaynor's third therapy dog. Elka, also a German Shepherd, served as a therapy dog for 10 years at Beacon Place. She died nine years ago.

Ekko's first visit to Beacon Place was as a puppy, but Gaynor hadn't planned for her to be a therapy dog.

"I took her to Beacon Place to see the staff," Gaynor said. "I came walking in, carrying this 10-week-old puppy when the volunteer coordinator at the time tells me about a man in Room 8. He wouldn't speak to the staff at all. I walk in with Ekko, and his face lights up. Ekko and I brought him out of his shell and he brought us back to pet therapy."

Ekko recently broke her leg and due to complications from surgery, can no longer walk the halls of Beacon Place. While Ekko is retiring as an AuthoraCare volunteer, the stories of those she's helped through the years remain. "Elka was so trained and so obedient, but Ekko had this ability to walk up to someone because she felt their grief," Gaynor said. "She has pulled me over to people so many times.



Ekko is retiring after seven years of service.

And I end up finding out their stories, thanks to Ekko." Ekko and Gaynor will become Honorary Volunteers in retirement.

Juli and Gary Hauser first learned of the pet therapy program at AuthoraCare while visiting a Dog Days of Summer event at Burlington City Park 10 years ago.

"MJ Tucci (Lead Bereavement Counselor on the Burlington campus) approached us and suggested that we bring Foxy, our dog at the time, to be trained to be a therapy dog," Juli Hauser said.

Neither Juli nor Gary had ever considered training pet therapy dogs prior to the encounter with Tucci. Juli is a retired educator and Gary is a retired CNA.

Juli and Gary would bring their dogs to the Hospice Home on Fridays. "There's just something about bringing a dog into a patient's room. The dog is wagging its tail and the patient starts petting it. There's something about a dog that calms you."

Juli said that she and Gary have a number of stories through the years of the benefits of pet therapy, but two stand out in her mind.

"I took Polly, our black-and-white Grand Pyrenees, to the Hospice Home and a gentleman was sitting with a woman. When Polly walks in, he puts both arms around her neck and sobbed. He then said, 'thank you.'"

The other story involved a teenager with a brain tumor. He was in a coma. Foxy, the Hausers' Finnish Spitz, was the therapy dog at the time.

"I asked, 'May I put Foxy on the bed?' And when I did, his fingers started moving to rub her. He never regained consciousness, but that moment meant a lot to his family," she said.

Luc, a Papillon, can be quite energetic. "When he's with patients, he is so gentle," she said. "He likes to lick elderly ladies' hands."

Working with the therapy dogs has been a blessing for Juli and Gary. "It keeps us young," she said. "I'll be glad when this (the pandemic) is over so we can get back to helping people."

View pictures of AuthoraCare's current therapy dogs at authoracare.org/dogs

HOLIDAY CHEER LOOKS DIFFERENT, FEELS THE SAME

Pandemic Didn't Dampen Giving Spirit



By Charity Apple

AuthoraCare Collective's Holiday Cheer project certainly looked different, due to COVID-19.



Lynley SanGeorge, a Long Term Care social worker on the Greensboro campus, delivers Holiday Cheer gifts to adult patients along with her dog, Luna.
[Cathy Lohr]

In order to keep volunteers, staff and donors safe, gift cards, cash and checks earmarked for Sam's Wish Fund Holiday Cheer on the Burlington campus and Holiday Cheer on the Greensboro campus were requested.

"I have heard folks say, 'this doesn't feel right. I should be bringing in an armload of gifts,'" said Cathy Lohr, Kids Path Volunteer Coordinator on the Greensboro campus. "There are also others who have expressed how fortunate they feel that they're in a situation where they can help out. With so many people experiencing job losses and financial hardships, it has been amazing how generous people have been."

More than \$8,000 (in gift cards, money and check donations) was collected on the Greensboro campus for 29 Kids Path families and 36 long term care patients who may have little or no family members in the area to support them. Gift recipients included 3 Hospice patients and 3 siblings; 25 CAP-C kids; and 11 counseling kids, for a total of 42 Kids Path parents/caregivers. Nine family caregivers (of the long term care patients) also were assisted. The amount given to adult patients averaged between \$25 and \$40 per patient.

On the Burlington campus, more than \$10,000 was raised for 7 Kids Path patients as well as 2 siblings; 26 counseling kids and 15 siblings; and 33 families. And \$500 was donated for long term care patients.

The positive aspect of having gift cards donated this year, said Patti Gasparello, Director of Kids Path, "is

that parents can order what they want for their child. That's an exciting part of the holidays – shopping for your children – and this gives them that opportunity."

Sam's Wish Fund Holiday Cheer held numerous events including socially distanced photos with Santa Claus as well as family photos with a red truck. The photo shoot was part of Elon Recreation & Parks Department's "Christmas in the Park – 2020 Style" and took place on Dec. 4. That event alone raised \$1,351, said Phyllis Chambers, Elon Recreation & Parks Director. Whitney Blalock, Palliative Care social worker on the Burlington campus, volunteered her time and talents for the red truck photos and Julie Seal shot the Santa photos.



Kaley and Mason Kamenides, the children of Recreation & Parks Specialist Jennifer Kamenides, smile for the camera during Christmas in the Park. [Whitney Blalock]



Owen Parrish poses with Santa Claus during the Elon Recreation & Parks Department's "Christmas in the Park – 2020 Style." [Julie Seal]

Holiday Cheer (cont. from page 9)

Walter “Birddog” Riddle also collected more than \$1,500 from local businesses and individuals who support Kids Path.

Allison Nichols, a partner with Maple View Ice Cream in Hillsborough, has been instrumental in raising funds and distributing gifts to Kids Path patients and families in Alamance and Caswell counties for the last six years.

“I’m blown away by the generosity we have received during this pandemic,” Nichols said. “It has been really hard to be unable to do what we used to do in person, but the community has really stepped up and filled the need.”

Sam’s Wish Fund is named for Samantha “Sam” Harvell who died on Nov. 15, 2008, of cancer. She was 15 years old. Nichols never met Sam, but she became familiar with the wish fund through Doug Shambley, whose Tricky Ricky Ride raises funds for Kids Path patients and their families. “It’s amazing to me how much has been donated through the years. People are still giving back and keeping Sam’s legacy alive,” she said.

Lohr described AuthoraCare Collective’s Holiday Cheer as “absolutely a project of faith.”

“I never know what it will be until it happens. But I have never had a year that we didn’t have enough for our patients,” she said. Lohr has collected the items from donors at the front door, wearing a mask and social distancing. She assembled gift bags for the adult patients who are in need of toiletry and other items, which will be delivered by social workers to the long-term care patients.

Nichols, Lohr and Gasparello all commented that no matter where they are during the holidays, their thoughts are with these families and patients. “Every Christmas morning, I think of these families and adult patients and how happy they must be,” Lohr added.



The Greensboro campus assembled gift bags for long term care patients as part of its Holiday Cheer program. [Cathy Lohr]

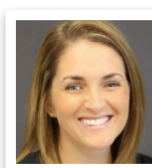
AuthoraCare Clinicians Featured on WUNC Podcast By Jane Gibson

Two AuthoraCare clinicians were invited to be guests on WUNC’s Tested podcast on Dec. 1. The podcast was created to take a hard look at how North Carolina and its neighbors face the day’s challenges.

Led by journalist Dave DeWitt, the episode titled “Departures,” focused on the more than 5,000 North Carolinians who have died from COVID-19.

Recognizing there have been hundreds of Coronavirus outbreaks in nursing homes and residential care facilities across the state, it is understandable that COVID-19 remains a constant threat in these congregant living spaces.

Facility management and their staff members work diligently to keep their residents and employees as safe as possible. Some of these safety measures have restricted and complicated the way end-of-life care can be delivered, forcing organizations like AuthoraCare Collective to be creative in the way they provide services.



Tracie Strader (left), hospice nurse and clinical case manager with AuthoraCare, described the personal protective equipment (PPE) she is required to wear while visiting patients.

While Strader acknowledges that the gloves, gown, N95 face mask and the plastic face shield are essential, it makes it harder to connect with patients who may have dementia or are hard of hearing. “When speaking loudly is not working,” shared Strader, “I resort to writing words on a white board. There’s always something to try.”

Risa Hanau (right), Clinical and Community Educator with AuthoraCare, explained that hospice clinicians have a long rich history of working in unpredictable circumstances.

It was no surprise to her that in response to the pandemic, AuthoraCare quickly invested in technology. These changes not only offered AuthoraCare a way to care for patients remotely, but to extend much-needed support to its facility partners and their staff members.



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.

HOSPICE THRIFT STORE IN NEED OF DONATIONS

By Charity Apple

Cleaning out your closets in the new year? The Hospice Thrift Store welcomes clothing (men's, women's and children's).

"Whatever you need – blouses, jackets, shirts or pants – we have it for sale year-round. We replenish the clothes every day," said Karen Clark, Thrift Store Manager.

Men's and women's clothing is \$3 each; children's clothing is 50 cents; shoes and boots range from \$4 to \$6; and coats range from \$5 to \$20. Donated clothing and shoes must be in good shape, preferably in boxes with lids for closing and stacking.

For those who like to decorate, every season can be found year-round as well. "We will take it all – Christmas, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day; you name it," Clark said.

All appliances and other items must be in working condition and able to test. These include freezers, refrigerators (not over 10 years old) and washers/dryers (not over 5 or 6 years old).

There are some items that the store will not accept, however, due to law and local ordinances.

These include: Gas appliances; built-in microwaves; vacuum cleaners; TVs; computers (only laptops accepted); copiers; scanners; fax machines; typewriters (unless they're antique); encyclopedias; Readers Digest; textbooks; building supplies; doors (screen or storm); windows; fireplace inserts; mini-blinds or venetian blinds (new ones will be accepted but



must be in packages); paint; toilets or sinks; overhead lighting fixtures; and carpet or carpet pieces (area rugs must be in good condition and not over 10 feet).

Other items the store is unable to accept include: Desks (heavy, large wooden or metal); mattresses or box springs; organs or pianos; console stereos; entertainment centers; water beds or sofa beds; sewing machines; outdated heavy model wheelchairs; hospital beds; oversized exercise equipment or free weights; large curtain rods; large, loose Christmas trees (must be in a box).

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, pickups of larger items (such as furniture) have been suspended until Jan. 5. Contactless donation drop-off is still available between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays at the thrift store, 2134 Hanford Rd., Burlington.

Hours, during the pandemic, are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays.

If you have questions, contact the thrift store at 336-229-0490 or visit the store's [Facebook page](#). For pickup of larger items (after Jan. 5), call 336.532.0164.

Getting Social

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



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