

# Storylines

A bi-monthly publication from AuthoraCare Collective

January/February 2022

## Carrying Hope

### Parents Keep Son's Memory Alive By Helping Others

By Jane Gibson

Conner Crossan was only 9 years old when he was diagnosed with cancer. The discovery was made when his parents, Brian and Casey Crossan, took him to Urgent Care in 2016 due to lingering flu-like symptoms and a small swollen area on his knee. Within 24 hours, Brenner Children's Hospital diagnosed Conner with an aggressive form of osteosarcoma; one that had already metastasized.

Throughout Conner's 23-month illness, he endured rounds of IV chemotherapy, radiation, transfusions and surgeries. He was a patient at three different children's hospitals and traveled to the Cleveland Clinic for treatment for more than a year.

During that time, Conner and his mom lived at the Ronald McDonald House and his dad flew in for weekend visits. Thanks to nausea medicine, Conner was still able to enjoy life. He spent time visiting sites around Cleveland and using his iPad to connect with friends and play games. Conner's noise-cancelling headphones were especially important, offering him some control over what was going on around him. It was a way he could tune into something normal and tune out cancer.

When Conner began having more bad days than good, it was clear the treatments had stopped working. It was time to take Conner home.

Casey Crossan felt overwhelmed as she imagined what was in front of them. More than anything she hoped Conner wouldn't suffer or feel afraid. She also hoped there could still be some quality time together when they returned home to Oak Ridge and their beloved pets, family members and close friends.

Conner's physician explained that care from a pediatric hospice program would help them meet these goals but cautioned that not every community had such a resource. The Crossans held their breath as resources were researched. They were relieved to learn that Greensboro was home to a nationally recognized pediatric model of hospice care known as Kids Path.



Casey Crossan and her son, Conner.  
Conner died of cancer three years ago.  
[Photo submitted]



Noise-cancelling headphones helped Conner  
"tune into something normal and tune out  
cancer". [Photo submitted]

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Charity Apple, Linda Ann Fitts, Jane Gibson,  
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## CEO Reflection

### Committed to Service

*"A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus, but a molder of consensus." - Martin Luther King, Jr.*

First, let me express my pride in our staff and volunteers. Despite the ongoing challenges posed by the public health crisis, they have all remained steadfast in their commitment to our mission, empowering 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.

In addition, I want to express my deep appreciation for our community of supporters who have given generously to support our work. Your continued funding has enabled AuthoraCare to be nimble and remain a healthy nonprofit, adjusting to meet special needs as the pandemic has altered care delivery again and again.

Each show of support, large or small, ensures that during a challenging illness, AuthoraCare Collective can help individuals author more moments that matter, regardless of the stage of their illness or condition.

At our core, hospice services, palliative care, grief support and specialized care for children remain our foundation. Every day, we focus on providing the best quality of care we can. We desire to be the best for the community because our community deserves our best.

As a leader in advancing illness services, we also have an opportunity to shape the landscape of this type of care. To that end, I encourage our staff and leadership to take active roles in state and national programs to discover and to promote best practices.

For example, I was recently appointed to the board of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. I greatly look forward to learning from the talented leaders who serve there. And I am excited to share our successes with them, hoping they may take inspiration from us to broaden their foundational offerings in their home communities.

Devin Griffith, AuthoraCare's Chief Operating Officer, is currently the board chair of the Association for Home & Hospice Care of North Carolina (AHHNC.) This trade association represents 98 percent of the home health and hospice providers in North Carolina.

Mary Manley, AuthoraCare's Director of Growth and Provider Relations, serves on the NHPCO's Diversity Advisory Council which provides information, guidance, and technical expertise to NHPCO and its members related to serving diverse populations with the goal of increasing access to universal hospice and palliative care services.

These are just a few examples of the team members who have committed to serve this work beyond this area. Many others are invested in their professional groups, working to advance their disciplines at local, state, and national levels.

We are honored by the opportunity to serve and impact the lives of local patients and families every day. We can also take pride in knowing that our years of experience and leadership are enhancing care delivery well beyond our community.



**Kristen Wither Yntema, MBA, MHSA**

President and CEO, AuthoraCare Collective



*Kristen Yntema*



# Carrying Hope

(cont. from cover)

The Cleveland Clinic made a referral to Kids Path and a date was set for the first visit to the Crossan home.

"I was terrified as I thought of caring for Conner without the nurses and doctors who had been by our side, every day for the past year," Casey said. "My husband and I wouldn't have had the confidence we needed or known what to do for Conner without Kids Path."

Casey went on to explain that at age 11, Conner had developed some strong opinions about his care and what he would tolerate. The Crossans especially appreciated the ways the Kids Path nurse, social worker and chaplain served as their guides, while still allowing Conner and his parents to set the course for care and what mattered most.

As Conner's decline continued, he tried his best to mask the fact that he was having more trouble swallowing and breathing.

Eventually he asked his mother to call Donna, the Kids Path nurse. Conner explained he felt too uneasy to remain at home. Thankfully, a bed was available at Beacon Place, where he remained for the next two weeks before deciding he was ready to return to home. Conner died one day later, in his own home, surrounded by the pets and the people who loved him most.

April 5, 2022 will mark the fourth anniversary of Conner's death; he is their only child.

"If I'm brutally honest, I'd tell you I'm still hoping to hear Conner's footsteps from his room upstairs," Casey said. "But realistically, my greatest hope is to keep Conner's memory alive by helping others."

Casey has found encouragement by working with several national organizations that provide education, research

funding and support to the patients and families of those impacted by pediatric osteosarcoma. She is also a tireless advocate for many organizations that benefit animals, taking up causes that were important to Conner since early in his childhood.

As Conner's fourth "angel day" approaches, Casey is already considering how they will mark the day. Each year they find ways to support EMS, the local fire station, Kids Path and Beacon Place - all organizations which were so vitally important to Conner's last few months of life.



Casey and Conner Crossan  
[Photo submitted]



Casey and Brian Crossan volunteer with Break the Chain Kennel Kru in Greensboro. They sponsored a kennel build, food and toys for this dog - it's one of the examples of places they support on Conner's "Angel" Day or his birthday. [Photo submitted]

"I notice that with each years' visit, my pain is softened, and my gratitude grows," she said.

While grief is ever present, Casey notes that even in its heaviest times, hope is always present - something else that offers her gratitude and a bit of wonder.

"I carry the hope that funding for the treatment for childhood cancers will finally increase and that programs like Kids Path can be found in more communities," she said. "I carry this hope for children and grandchildren that will not be mine; I carry this hope because I loved my brave beautiful boy so deeply."

  
A Service of  
AuthoraCare Collective

Kids Path is a specialized program of AuthoraCare Collective that supports children coping with serious illness and loss.

Learn more, inquire about services, or make a donation at [authoracare.org/kids-path](https://authoracare.org/kids-path).





# We Honor Veterans



## Burlington Campus Awarded WHV's Level Four Status

### Veterans Pinning Ceremonies Held at 30 Participating Facilities

By Linda Ann Fitts

**A**uthoraCare Collective is a proud partner in the We Honor Veterans (WHV) program, a national initiative started by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the Veterans Administration.

Veterans often carry experiences from their military service that can present unique health care challenges. By recognizing these unique needs, our team works to guide them through their life stories toward a more peaceful end-of-life experience.

The national WHV program requires participating partners to complete a series of activities and requirements and is location specific. There are five levels and each one has different activities and resources to increase the ability to serve veterans. Moving through the partner levels helps to increase each organization's knowledge and capacity to serve veterans in the community.

"We are thrilled that AuthoraCare's commitment to serving the unique needs of veterans was recognized with the Level 4 award for the Burlington campus. This honor is the result of a lot of hard work, and it signifies our ongoing belief that military service is part of the unique story of nearly 25 percent of our patients," said Paul Russ, chair of the WHV team and Vice President of Marketing and Development. "Recognizing that their service shapes their experience at end of life provides an opportunity to better care for them and to honor them."

In 2019, prior to the AuthoraCare merger, the Greensboro campus achieved the Level 5 status, which is the highest level currently offered. Only four hospice organizations in North Carolina have achieved this prestigious rank. Once this level is achieved, the work must continue to retain the status. The Burlington campus is now working toward Level 5.

The WHV program not only serves hospice patients who are veterans, but also encourages its partnering agencies to serve community veterans as well. During November, AuthoraCare participated in several events in honor of Veterans Day. Several team members participated in Alamance County's annual Veterans Day parade held Nov. 13 in downtown Graham; the WHV team held a virtual ceremony for staff on Veterans Day (Nov. 11); and approximately 400 veterans were recognized with pinning ceremonies at 30 different partnering facilities. These services were held the week of as well as weeks following Veterans Day.

AuthoraCare volunteers are currently creating personalized Valentines that will be distributed by our staff to veteran patients during the month of February. Since 2011, Valentines for Veterans has been an annual (WHV) project. AuthoraCare is committed to providing specialized comfort and support to veterans and their family members. We know it is never too late to show gratitude and say "thank you" for the sacrifices they have made.



*Veterans gathered at the flagpole at WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Start Community on Nov. 9.  
[Charity Apple]*

# CORKS FOR KIDS PATH CELEBRATES 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

By Charity Apple

For Julie Tesh-Clark, AuthoraCare Collective's annual Corks for Kids Path fundraiser is a family affair.

Tesh-Clark, who serves as the chairperson of the 15th anniversary event, will be joined by her sister, Kelly Thompson, and their parents, Billy and Laurie Tesh, as members of the planning committee, along with several community volunteers.

The family owns Pest Management Systems Inc. (PMI), which has been in operation for 40 years now.

"We love giving back to the community," said Tesh-Clark, who works in Customer Care/Community Outreach. Kelly and Patrick Thompson operate PMI's Pinehurst and Sandhills offices. And Jeremy Clark runs his family's pest control business in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

"AuthoraCare Collective is an organization that we hold close to our hearts. Our family members have been cared for by AuthoraCare," she said.

It was Tesh-Clark's best friend, Charlotte Davidson, who invited her to participate in the Corks for Kids Path committee 10 years ago. And Tesh-Clark, in turn, encouraged her parents to be a part of the event. Despite living in Baton Rouge, La., where she works from home, Tesh-Clark has continued to support the fundraising effort.

"They've had a lot of fun, as have I," she said. "I am honored to be chairing the 15th anniversary event."



*From left to right: Jeremy Clark and Julie Tesh-Clark; Laurie and Billy Tesh; and Kelly and Patrick Thompson, who operate the PMI Pinehurst and Sandhills offices.*

*[Photo submitted]*

Kids Path provides support for medically fragile children and grieving children. It relies on public support for nearly 70 percent of its operating budget. In 15 years, Corks for Kids Path has raised more than \$1.6 million to support Kids Path.

The first Corks for Kids Path was held at Revolution Mill in Greensboro and although the locations have differed throughout the years, the mission remains the same – to generate funds and awareness for Kids Path.

Paul Russ, VP of Marketing and Development, was inspired by a UNC Children's Hospital event and used it to create Corks for Kids Path.

"We were looking for an event that appealed to a supportive audience," Russ said.

AuthoraCare's Kids Path program has been highlighted in The Wall Street Journal and was recognized by the Duke Endowment as a model program.

There are now 12 hospice organizations in North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia which have Kids Path programs.

The fundraising goal for this year's event is \$200,000.

"We realize this is a hefty goal, but we are encouraged by the outpouring of support we have already received," Tesh-Clark said.

[continued on pg 6](#)

15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

*Corks for Kids Path*

Greensboro's Premiere  
Wine Tasting Event

[#corks2022](#)

FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 2022  
5:00 P.M.

Elm & Bain  
620 South Elm Street  
Greensboro, NC

[Become a Sponsor >](#)

# Corks for Kids Path

(cont. from pg. 5)

Zeto, in Greensboro, will generously donate 100 percent of profits from any of the completed wine orders. Zeto also will sell cases of wine for \$250 as part of its Case for the Cause program.

This year's Corks for Kids Path is set to be in-person on June 3 at Elm & Bain, 620-B S. Elm St., Greensboro, site of the historic former Blue Bell Co. plant. In addition to wine tastings, it will feature a variety of locally brewed craft beers, hors d'oeuvres by 1618 On Location, and a silent auction. The event was originally scheduled for March, but out of an abundance of caution due to the Omicron Variant, it was postponed.

Another way to participate is the Experience Raffle. One hundred raffle tickets are being sold for \$100 each. The winner will be able to choose from three different experiences. The prizes include an in-home Italian wine tasting; vacation to Cocoa Beach, Fla., including admission to the Kennedy Space Center and lunch with an astronaut; and a trip to New Orleans which includes a sightseeing boat tour, jazz cruise and cooking class. The trip selections are redeemable for 18 months after the night of the event.

Last year's event was virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It raised \$88,755 for Kids Path programs and services. "It was so humbling to know that despite what was going on in the world, people loved the cause enough to give," said Tesh-Clark. "We are so grateful for the outpouring of support."

**To volunteer for the planning committee, email Paul Russ at [paul.russ@authoracare.org](mailto:paul.russ@authoracare.org).**

**For more details on Corks for Kids Path, visit [corksforkidspath.org](https://corksforkidspath.org).**

**To view a video about Kids Path's impact on children and families, visit [youtu.be/ReKBkd9NJ1M](https://youtu.be/ReKBkd9NJ1M).**



## Greensboro Elks' Charity Golf Tournament Raises \$26,250 for AuthoraCare

By Jane Gibson

The Greensboro Elks Lodge No. 602's 10th annual charity golf tournament, which was held Sept. 17 at Bryan Park's Players Course, raised \$26,250 for AuthoraCare Collective.

"When I think about our tournament and its success, I am reminded of the motto of the Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks - Elks Care, Elks Share. Our members recognize that at some point, hospice is going to touch every one of our lives," said Debbie Barrow, who has served as chair of the Elks Charity Golf Classic committee for the past five years. "Because we know we are making a difference, Greensboro Elks Lodge members invest hundreds of



*Golf carts line the road on the day of the tournament.*

volunteer hours every year. It's hard work, but it's something we do well and something we look forward to every year!"

After experiencing the cancellation of the 2020 tournament, Barrow and her entire tournament committee worked tirelessly to present a well-organized, fun 2021 event. They not only reached back to longtime sponsors, but engaged new ones as well. Many lodge members stepped up, eager to achieve their goal of raising \$200,000 by the 10th anniversary of the tournament. They met their goal and exceeded it, raising \$215,910!

Key to the tournament's success were generous donors and sponsors, listed below.

### 2021 ELKS' GOLF TOURNAMENT SPONSORS

**Gold Sponsors** - Greensboro Elks Lodge, Debbie & Steven Barrow, Forbis & Dick Funeral Service, Heath Amusement, JG MIT, Michel Family Foundation, MSJ Glass & Glazing, Rio Grande Mexican Kitchen, Samet Corporation, Syngenta, and United Healthcare.

**Silver Sponsors** - Clinard Quality Storage, Mark and Teresa Craig, Grandpa Marine, Hunt Electric, William Courtney Jenkins, Triad Power Controls, New Garden Moose Lodge, Jersey Mike's Subs (Jeremy Jhingee, franchise owner.)



# Holiday Cheer 2021

## Annual Program Assisted Kids Path Families and Adult Patients

By Charity Apple

A uthoraCare Collective's Holiday Cheer program provided gift cards to 150 kids in the Kids Path program and 17 adult patients along with their family caregivers.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, gift cards were given to Kids Path patients and families on both the Burlington and Greensboro campuses. Gift cards also were used to purchase items for long-term care adult patients (and their family caregivers) cared for by the Greensboro team.

Abby Sylvia, a Kids Path patient, was one of the recipients of the program.

Tracy Sylvia, Abby's mom, said because of the generosity of Holiday Cheer donors, "we were able to purchase the dollhouse that Abby has wanted for a couple of years now. Let me tell you the smile on her face was priceless!"

The Burlington campus' Sam's Wish Fund Holiday Cheer received \$18,770 in donations and the Greensboro campus' Holiday Cheer program received \$13,806. Donations were used by families for gifts as well as groceries and other items.

Holiday Cheer programs have been held on both campuses for a number of years. The Burlington campus' Holiday Cheer program began in 2004 as a collaborative event with Bethany Presbyterian Church; it later became known as Sam's Wish Fund Holiday Cheer.

Sam's Wish Fund is named for Samantha "Sam" Harvell, a Kids Path patient, and its Holiday Cheer program has helped Kids Path patients and their families for the last 10 years. Harvell died of cancer on Nov. 15, 2008; she was 15 years old. Burlington's Holiday Cheer is for Kids Path patients and kids receiving counseling.

Sam's Wish Fund Holiday Cheer provided for 53 children and their families.

"This year, more than ever, we are so grateful to all of the people who have contributed to Sam's Wish Fund Holiday Cheer," said Patti Gasparello, Director of Kids Path. "Given the impact the pandemic has



*Abby Sylvia, a Kids Path patient, is shown with her dollhouse that was purchased with gift cards the family received through Kids Path's Holiday Cheer program.*

*[Photo courtesy of Tracy Sylvia]*

had on children and families, being able to provide some holiday cheer means so much."

Sam's Wish Fund Holiday Cheer was spearheaded by Allison Nichols with Maple View Farm, along with support from Walter "Bird Dog" Riddle and Doug Shambley. In addition to donations of gift cards, about \$8,000 worth of diapers and wipes were donated to Kids Path patients and families.

"Strangers come together to help these families; it's such a beautiful

feeling," Nichols said. "It's a blessing to be able to help – not just the kids – but their parents and siblings, too."

Nichols said the Kids Path program of Randolph County has started their own Holiday Cheer program to assist Kids Path patients and families.

"They looked at what we were doing and realized that they could do something similar to help patients and families in their area," she added.

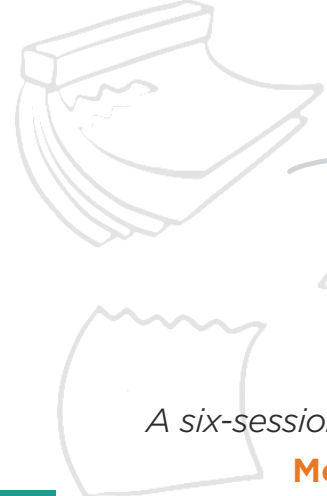
Holiday Cheer began on the Greensboro campus more than 20 years ago to provide Christmas gifts to Kids Path patients and their families. It evolved into a way to help adult patients as well.

"We have patients in our long-term facilities that have very little family or support and this is a way to provide them with some holiday cheer," said Cathy Lohr, Volunteer Coordinator.

This year's Holiday Cheer program on the Greensboro campus provided for 38 families (97 kids and 57 adults); and 17 adult patients and 10 family caregivers. The program relies on support from the community and businesses.

"It is always a project of faith," she said. "I stay amazed at the generosity we receive." In addition to gift cards, an area church and business provided Kids Path families with food for holiday meals.

"Every Christmas morning, I think about how the patients and families must be feeling while opening their gifts and/or enjoying the food that they might not otherwise have if not for the generosity of our donors," Lohr said.



# What's Happening?

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### COVID Loss Support Group

*A six-session support group for those who have experienced a loss due to COVID-19*  
**Mondays, March 14, 21, 28, April 4, 11, and 18 | 6 - 7:30 p.m.**

### Living After the Loss of An Adult Child

*An eight-session support group for those who have lost an adult child.*  
**Thursdays, March 31, April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5, 12, and 19 | 6 - 7:30 p.m.**

*To register and receive information, contact 336.621.5565 or email [griefsupport@authoracare.org](mailto:griefsupport@authoracare.org).  
Visit [authoracare.org](http://authoracare.org) for our most current calendar.*

**The POWER of KNOWING**

*A Free Webinar Series*

### Aging in LGBTQ+ Communities A Two-Part Webinar Series

LGBTQ+ seniors face unique challenges and needs as they navigate care options and services. Whether you are a member of the LGBTQ+ community or a caregiver seeking greater understanding, this two-part series is for you.

**Part One: Thursday, February 10, 12 - 1 p.m.**  
**Part Two: Thursday, February 17, 12 - 1 p.m.**

Register at [authoracare.org/knowning](http://authoracare.org/knowning)  
Read about this event on page 9.

## Now Streaming On Demand at [authoracare.org/knowning](http://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
- Healing Hearts During COVID-19

- Beyond the Casserole: Supporting Grieving Persons
- COVID-19 Vaccine: Question, Answers, Concerns
- Dementia | Parts 1 & 2
- Finding Joy During A Long Journey of Illness
- The Patient and Caregiver Experience
- Whole-Person Care





# Education Through Entertainment

**THEATER PROJECT  
HOPES TO INFORM,  
SERVE AS A RESOURCE**

*Left to Right: Garrett Davis | Blanche McAllister Dykes | The "Forget Me Not" Logo*

**By Charity Apple**

**G**arrett Davis has portrayed a character with Alzheimer's disease for 13 years now.

He stars as June, the comical patriarch in Gdavis Productions' award-winning stage play, "Forget Me Not." June's illness is often overshadowed by his wife's battle with cancer and his daughter's struggle to accept his diagnosis.

"Denial is a big part of it," said Davis, who has experienced the impact of Alzheimer's in his own family. "Even though I have played this character, it doesn't make it any easier when a family member is struggling with the disease."

That's why the partnership between AuthoraCare Collective and Gdavis Productions to produce three 25-minute episodes about palliative care, hospice care, grief support and the stress of caregiving, has been so important to him.

"COVID-19 pushed us into the film industry. We were no longer able to tour and perform plays," Davis said. "This is something good that came out of the pandemic. If it hadn't happened, we wouldn't have pursued this project."

April Herring, Community Education/Outreach Coordinator for AuthoraCare Collective, had worked with Davis in the past and attended some of his productions, including "Mama's Girls," which addresses the struggles of caregiving.

The three episodes were filmed in the fall and the hope is to unveil the entire project to a live audience when it is safe to do so. "It all hinges on how this pandemic plays out," Davis said.

Private donors and grants from the S.J. Edwards Foundation and AARP of North Carolina raised funding for the project.

The first episode, about palliative care, was shared virtually with the Alzheimer's Association in Dallas on Dec. 20.

"We received good feedback from the panel event," Herring said. "It gave us a bit of insight on how our own community may respond to the project."

Herring and Davis also recently created a social media commercial which in addition to Herring, featured AuthoraCare Collective team members - Doyle Berryman, Front Desk Receptionist on the Greensboro campus; Dee Curry, LPN, Community Liaison; Wanda Moore, LTC and Lusk Center Coordinator; Marichia Perkins, Hospice Aide; and AuthoraCare volunteer Joel Graves.

"The commercial represents our values and is warm, authentic and inviting," Herring said. "It contradicts what people often have in mind when they hear the word 'hospice.'"

The commercial introduces a custom jingle performed by gospel music artist Blanche McAllister Dykes of Columbia, S.C. Participating in this jingle has meant a lot to McAllister Dykes because her husband used to work as a Certified Nursing Assistant in Home Health Care.

Davis, who first met McAllister Dykes a few years ago in Fayetteville, reached out to her about creating and singing the jingle.

"I am a religious and spiritual person and I feel that everything we do in life solves a problem for someone else," she said. "The work that AuthoraCare does takes great responsibility and love."

A soft launch of the first episode, along with the commercial, was held Jan. 27 with a virtual audience comprised of leaders from Historically Black Educational Institutions as well as health- and faith-based organizations.

"It has been such a wonderful experience working on this project with Garrett and his team," Herring said. "As African-Americans, our history and culture is steeped in great storytelling. With Garrett's skill and expertise in theater arts, we will be able to reach out to communities and promote awareness of our mission and services in a unique and entertaining way."



*From left to right: Xavier Hill, Production Assistant; Merrick Ward, Senior Editor/Cinematographer; and Jerry Albritton, Lighting and Technical Director, film a scene featuring Darren McGill (Mr. Bill) and Garrett Davis (June) on Oct. 6. [Charity Apple]*

# AuthoraCare Represented at NAHC Fall Forum

By Charity Apple

Cheryl Rodrigues, MSN, BSN, RN, Administrative Director of Palliative Care, and Devin Griffith, Chief Operations Officer (formerly VP of Business Development and Innovation) were presenters at the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) Fall Forum, which was held virtually on Nov. 3.

The session, "Building Breakthrough Partnerships that Transform Relationships with Home Care and Long-Term Care Facilities," explored innovative approaches to transforming and deepening partnerships with home care and long-term care facilities. The presentation was based on the Long-Term Care Breakthrough Initiative (Facility Care Council or FCC) that was developed at AuthoraCare during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The presentation engaged a very strong audience for its entirety – well over 100 people. We were able to discuss a bird's-eye view of the FCC, background, planning steps, research, and some areas of consideration for others as they evaluate pursuing a similar initiative with a community partner," Rodrigues said. "There was a significant amount of engagement after the presentation with a multitude of questions about the FCC as well as community palliative care and palliative care/home health partnerships."

The presentation was made possible due to the Long-Term Care Breakthrough Initiative being accepted in the NAHC Innovation Conference Track, Griffith said.

A Facility Care Council was developed to help support, educate and to provide a common platform for our community partners in long-term care facilities. The FCC initiative utilized a multidiscipline team approach to build and cultivate our partnerships and contributions to the facilities that we serve. The FCC initiative utilized a multidiscipline team approach to build and cultivate our partnerships and contributions to the facilities that we serve. The FCC started in an effort to connect with facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the FCC has a long-range plan to continue this platform, as it has served as an amazing resource and an opportunity to build from this initiative. "There was a tremendous opportunity for us all to work together and support the needs of our long-term care facilities," Griffith said.

"The focus of the FCC is Person-Centered Care. We want to focus on everyone involved in the patient's care, in addition to the patient – we are stronger together. The goal is to educate, discuss and help provide tools that everyone can put into practice. The FCC has really taken a shape of its own by receiving feedback from our partners during the FCC meetings, this has really allowed us to bring forward topics that are most needed for our council members," Rodrigues added.



Devin Griffith



Cheryl Rodrigues

## AuthoraCare President/CEO Appointed to NHPCO Board of Directors

By Charity Apple



Kristen Yntema (left), President/CEO of AuthoraCare Collective, has been appointed to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's (NHPCO) Board of Directors.

"NHPCO is a premier source of information, connection, collaboration and innovation," Yntema said. "I am honored and humbled that I get the

opportunity to represent AuthoraCare in this way."

Yntema was among five new members appointed to the board for a three-year term. "Our board members come from programs that vary in size, structure and service area and represent the wide range of organizations across the country that share our common goal of leading person- and family-centered care," said Edo Banach, NHPCO President/CEO.

Yntema, MBA, MHSA, has been involved in health care since the age of 15, entering the work force as a certified nursing assistant. A native of Leesburg, VA., she double majored in public administration and business at Elon University and earned an MBA and master's degree in health services administration from Xavier University. She worked at Cone Health for 10 years in administrative positions. Prior to being named President/CEO of Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro (now AuthoraCare), she worked at Advanced Home Care for nine years.

Within six months of her role as CEO, Yntema attended the Leadership Conference of NHPCO, which provided the opportunity to meet some great leaders in the industry.

"Being on the board of directors gives me the opportunity to learn from and lean on the experiences of those from other hospice organizations across the country," Yntema said.

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at AuthoraCare

## Upcoming Webinar Addresses Challenges Facing LGBTQ+ Elders

By Kate Clancy Phillips

The Summer of 2020 was a major turning point in the social dialogue surrounding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the United States. Issues of racial justice and systemic discrimination were given new voice as society grappled with the murder of George Floyd.

In the wake of this dialogue, AuthoraCare Collective proactively engaged in DEI work to better advocate for employees, patients, and families. That work continues in earnest to this day, and has become a major point of operational focus as AuthoraCare looks to the future.

Mary Manley is the Director of Growth and Provider Relations at AuthoraCare and has served on the DEI Committee since its inception.



Mary Manley will be a panelist for part one of the upcoming webinar series, "Aging in LGBTQ+ Communities".

"At AuthoraCare, we believe that proactively pursuing DEI work is a responsibility. We must continue asking questions, seeking understanding, and having difficult conversations to fulfill that responsibility to our team, our patients and families, and the broader community," Manley said.

Part of these efforts include shedding light upon the challenges facing LGBTQ+

seniors as they seek medical care and support through the aging process.

Historically, LGBTQ+ persons have faced challenges when seeking medical care. According to Sage USA, a nonprofit advocacy organization, "LGBTQ+ elders can be targets of discriminatory acts (from) health care providers. They often experience victimization based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation and gender identity". Additionally, many LGBTQ+ elders avoid medical care due to fear of mistreatment or discrimination. Some choose to actively hide their gender identity

or sexual orientation when seeking care, which can lead to negative mental health effects over the long-term.

AuthoraCare, as an organization that serves older adults with palliative, hospice, and grief support care, understands the importance of removing these barriers so that LGBTQ+ elders can get the care they need and deserve.

In February, AuthoraCare will partner with Sage Central North Carolina, AARP North Carolina, and the Duke Clinical & Translational Science Institute to offer a two-part Power of Knowing webinar series: "Aging in LGBTQ+ Communities".

"This series will address the unique challenges facing LGBTQ+ seniors as they navigate care options and services. Members of the LGBTQ+ community, caregivers, health care professionals, and members of the community can all benefit from these two insightful panel discussions," said Risa Hanau, Clinical and Community Educator at AuthoraCare.

Hanau will serve as moderator for both discussions. "We are lucky to be partnering with AARP, Sage Central North Carolina, and Duke on this series to harness the incredible knowledge and resources they provide to our community," she added.

You can learn more about these upcoming webinars, register, and get to know our panelists at [authoracare.org/knowning](https://authoracare.org/knowning).



JOIN US FOR...

### Aging in LGBTQ+ Communities

A Two-Part Series

Part One: Thursday, February 10, 12 - 1 p.m.

Part Two: Thursday, February 17, 12 - 1 p.m.



## 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.

## SPRING CLEANING? DONATE TO THE HOSPICE THRIFT STORE!

Getting a jumpstart on spring cleaning? AuthoraCare's Hospice Thrift Store accepts a variety of items in good, working condition, including:

- Appliances
- Area rugs (none over 10 feet)
- Artwork (paintings and sculptures)
- Books (paperback and hardback) and magazines
- Christmas trees (and decorations)
- Clothing, shoes, purses and accessories
- Craft supplies
- Curtains
- Furniture – Bedroom suites, chairs, china cabinets, rocking chairs, sofas, tables, etc.
- Gardening supplies – Flower pots as well as yard art/sculptures
- Health and beauty items – Hair dryers and curling irons
- Housewares (Dishes, gadgets, glasses, silverware, and Tupperware)
- Jewelry
- Medical equipment – Crutches, folding bedside commodes, new packages of adult incontinence products, walkers, and wheelchairs
- Office supplies – folders, pens, pencils, etc.
- Sewing supplies (bolts and scraps of fabric, sewing patterns, and thread)
- Sports equipment (Balls for every sport, baseball bats, tennis rackets, golf clubs and golf bags)
- Toys



Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and donations can be dropped off at the loading dock between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Contactless delivery is available at the dock. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, masks are required of all staff and shoppers.

A donation receipt, for tax purposes, is available upon request. For more details, call the thrift store at 336.229.0490. Larger items, such as furniture, can be picked up by calling 336.532.0164.

For more details, [visit our Facebook page.](#)

### AuthoraCare Hospice Thrift Store

2134 Hanford Road  
Burlington, NC 27215  
336.229.0490

Tues - Sat, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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