



LIFE MATTERS

NEWSLETTER

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region

Spring / Summer 2021

FEATURE STORY:

CHILDREN'S GRIEF:
HOW THERAPY BUNNIES ARE
BRINGING COMFORT

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HOSPICE & Palliative Care

CHARLOTTE REGION

PROVIDING COMPASSIONATE CARE SINCE 1978

A Letter from the President & CEO



Dear Friends,

For years, we have asked for your support. You have gone above and beyond to answer that call.

In these uncertain times, when so many are searching for a spark of hope, I wanted to take this opportunity to show how your support has made a difference.

In this newsletter, you will see how your generosity has enabled us to provide excellent patient care despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like all of you, we have had to adapt to many challenges and find creative ways to serve our patients and families.

We are excited to share that we have also expanded access to care in new areas across the Carolinas. Thanks to you, our gold standard of care will support even more patients and families as we have done in the greater Charlotte area since 1978.

I am especially pleased to announce that Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region (HPCCR) has merged with our natural partner to the west, Hospice Cleveland County (HCC). Both of our organizations have a long history of commitment to our communities, providing excellence in care, and serving all in our communities who are in need. Working as a single organization, our effectiveness in delivering care will only be strengthened. Read more details on page 14.

The most important thing to most of us is family. Thank you for helping us provide **thousands** of families the comfort and care they and their loved ones deserve when it is needed most.

Keep reading to discover all the ways HPCCR is leading the charge to respond to patient and family care needs, provide access, and remain the largest and best not-for-profit hospice in the Carolinas.

Thank you and please stay safe!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter A. Brunnick". The script is fluid and cursive.

Peter A. Brunnick, CPA

President & CEO, Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region



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*“He calms me down,” Karlee says.
“I get happy.”*

GRIEF CARE SERVICES - *We Support. We Listen. We Care.* - 704.375.0100

Grief is unique to each individual. Through fundraised dollars, Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region (HPCCR) provides comprehensive grief services for all ages. We extend support to family members and other loved ones, both before and after death, through: Short-Term Counseling, Referrals to Intensive Therapy, Chameleon's Journey Grief Camp for Children and Teens, Support Groups, Educational Workshops, and Workplace Grief Support Programs.

THERAPY BUNNIES BRING COMFORT

Meet Karlee Brewer and Buster. Each day across 28 counties in North and South Carolina, Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region (HPCCR) cares for those facing serious illness or nearing death. Part of the HPCCR mission is to help the bereaved heal after the loss of a loved one. Karlee is one of those tender souls. We'll get to Buster in a minute.

Karlee lost her dad, Samuel, in a motorcycle accident last July. Samuel and Karlee were best friends. Until she was 3½, the only place she'd sleep was in his arms. "Samuel had her spoiled rotten from the day she was born," says Sha Brewer, her mom.

Losing her father at the young age of seven left Karlee defiant. She struggled to process her feelings. Enter HPCCR Grief Counselor, Missy Francis, and Buster, the Dutch bunny. Determined to comfort this freckle-faced little girl, Missy turned to a unique ministry that uses the most tender living things to soothe our hurts, therapy bunnies.

"He calms me down," Karlee says. "I get happy."

Buster and his therapy bunny friends belong to Brittany Bryson. Brittany founded "Bunny Blessings" as a non-profit ministry to comfort folks in nursing homes, homeless shelters, and the like. Her bunnies come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Most had been abandoned.

Buster and Company started out in her home, then moved to the garage, and finally to a bunny barn the family built on their five-acre spread in Belmont. With COVID-19 preventing Brittany from bringing the bunnies to people in need, the people in need are coming to the barn. That includes Karlee and her mom, and hopefully other members of the HPCCR family. "Our mission is to love one another," Brittany says. "These bunnies bring so much joy. They're small, they're quiet, and they're not aggressive. Bunnies are super soft."

The therapy bunnies are developing a following. Some nurses in Australia saw them on Facebook and messaged their support. The bunnies even have their own website – www.bunnyblessings.com – with pictures and bios. Along with many other entertaining stories, it says right there that Karlee's friend, Buster, spills his water bowl all day long.

HPCCR's Missy Francis, whose mission is to heal the hurts, says the bunnies were guests at an Employees Therapy Day in Lincolnton, but it's watching Karlee and Buster at the barn that leaves her nearly speechless. "It's Karlee's own special sanctuary," Missy says, unable to finish the thought. "I'm crying. I'm sorry." Magical time with soft bunnies is just one of many ways the HPCCR team finds to bring comfort and joy to those who grieve.



A LOVE FOREVER STRONG

Roz and Tommy held hands as Chaplain Jonathan used a slightly updated version of their original wedding vows from ten years prior - connecting past and present with their strong bond of love.



Hospice and palliative care is more than just treating pain and symptoms for a patient. We provide a holistic form of care that treats the *whole person* and the emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of their lives. We also know that life does not end with a diagnosis or even hospice care...there is life left to live and moments to celebrate. Playing a small part in making celebrations possible is something we are grateful for each and every day - because every life matters. And we can help families create positive memories to carry them through the end-of-life journey and beyond.

So, when Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region (HPCCR) Chaplain Jonathan Allen learned that a very special patient, Roselynn (Roz) Skidmore, and her loving husband, Tommy, had a 10-year wedding anniversary coming up, he jumped at the chance to make that momentous milestone a memorable occasion!

When Roz received her ALS diagnosis in 2016, she was in her early fifties. As she describes it, she was "at the height of her life." She was physically fit, active in her church, enjoyed her career, and loved spending time with her family. Her son, Jesse, two-year-old granddaughter, Hadley, and new grandson, Hendrix, are the lights of her life.

Tommy, though, is her soulmate. When you meet them, you know this is a love like no other. Tommy adores Roz; you can see it in every move he makes. He tells us that

he, "knew the minute they met he was going to marry Roz." And they did just that on January 18, 2011 when they married in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on a gorgeous tropical beach with Jesse, her son, and Kelsey, Tommy's beautiful daughter, as their witnesses.

In 2014, Roz and Tommy had just returned from an action-packed trip to Costa Rica where they swam with sharks, rappelled down a waterfall, and ziplined through the jungle. They were so enamored with the beautiful country of Costa Rica that they planned on spending part of their retirement years there.

But shortly after their return, Roz began to feel that something wasn't right. Her normal daily activities became harder. After two years of tests, doctor visits, and progressing symptoms, she learned she had ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) - a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord.

When you get to know Roz, you learn that she has a history of taking the most challenging of situations and turning them into an immense source of strength. True to form, she did that with her ALS diagnosis.

She found the positive in this new challenge and made it her faith-based mission to raise awareness and spread hope and happiness wherever she could.



From raising over \$12k in her first walk in support of ALS to raising another \$15k in her second and so many other incredible achievements - she's a beacon of light through the hope and joy she shares with the world. And those who have had the pleasure of meeting her, even for a moment, know that's just who she is - in her heart and soul.

Getting to know Roz and Tommy Skidmore has been an incredible inspiration and pleasure. When they asked Chaplain Jonathan if he could perform a vow renewal ceremony, it was an opportunity he could not miss!

"I feel blessed to participate in this very poignant and meaningful ceremony," Chaplain Jonathan expresses.

Though COVID and other unforeseen circumstances tried to dampen the spirit of the occasion, the Skidmore's love and excitement in celebrating their vow renewal was too strong to let obstacles get in the way.

As the date approached, Roz's condition began to decline, leading to an adjustment to their ceremony. The plan for Roz in a wheelchair by Tommy's side in a larger ceremony in their spacious living room was no longer possible, and they made the difficult decision to have her stay in bed. Due to COVID space restrictions, this limited the attendance to a maximum of four, but this would not keep them from having a very special and intimate ceremony.

As Roz has described after being told three times in the past four years that she only has months to live, she "chooses to believe Christ is in charge of that decision, not man."

So when the day of the ceremony arrived, she was ready. The beautiful couple dressed in white - just like their wedding day. In place of tropical flowers, were delicate

pink roses. And a lovely bouquet of 10 balloons - one for each year of their marriage - added a very special and meaningful touch.

Roz's father arrived early with flowers and a precious kiss on the cheek. Due to his own health concerns he reluctantly, but lovingly, departed prior to the other guests arriving.

In a small, intimate ceremony, Roz and Tommy held hands as Chaplain Jonathan used a slightly updated version of their original wedding vows - connecting past and present - with their strong bond of love - a love *forever* strong.

We would like to wish the Skidmores a very happy 10th wedding anniversary. Your story, and your love for one another, inspire us.

Learn more about Roz and her work to raise ALS awareness in her September 2017 profile in *Lake Norman Woman Magazine* at https://issuu.com/lakenormanwoman/docs/lknw_sept17_issuu/50





YES, SOUP FOR YOU!

Soup on Sunday is always the last Sunday in January.

For over two decades, Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region's (HPCCR's) annual "Soup on Sunday" fundraiser has been a much-anticipated community gathering event as winter temperatures create a chill in the air. In a "typical year," 800 – 1000 attendees fill the Philip L. Van Every Culinary Arts Building at Central Piedmont Community College, under a banner of friendship and community, to sample amazing soups prepared with winter soup-lovers in mind. As COVID-19 numbers climbed following the holidays, the question became: how do you safely serve delicious soups from local chefs during a pandemic? Curbside delivery service with a smile, of course.

Taking a page from Chick-fil-A's playbook, HPCCR volunteers and staff delivered hundreds of quarts of pre-ordered soup and safely engaged with donors and supporters, all through the passenger side window of a car. What proved remarkable about this year's event was that despite all the obstacles and pressing

hardships faced by Charlotte's culinary community, 20 restaurants (including culinary schools and caterers) chose to participate this year, collectively donating 140 gallons of soups, stews, and bisques. Special commemorative soup bowls were available again this year for purchase, to enjoy soup all year long.

Proceeds from "Soup on Sunday" are used to fund four critical aspects of HPCCR's mission. Through this event and other gifts from the community, HPCCR ensures access to compassionate and high-quality care for all (regardless of ability to pay), leverages innovation to drive support of patients, provides critical resources to families and caregivers along their journey, and supports area healthcare initiatives by measurably lowering rehospitalizations.

HPCCR would like to recognize the following sponsors for their loyal support, especially this year!

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



\$29,670

RAISED AT 21ST ANNUAL SOUP
ON SUNDAY

 140 GALLONS OF SOUP DONATED	 26 VOLUNTEERS & STAFF WHO DONATED TIME
 20 PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS, CULINARY SCHOOLS, & CATERERS	 12 SPONSORS SUPPORTING THIS YEAR'S EVENT

THANK YOU, SPONSORS

- » Berkeley Capital Advisors
- » Edifice, Inc.
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- » Tillotson-Kenefick of Wells Fargo Advisors
- » Rodgers Builders
- » Accrue Partners
- » Aquesta Bank
- » GreerWalker
- » THM
- » Showalter Construction
- » US Foods (quart containers, crackers)
- » Carolina Clay Connection (pottery bowls)
- » Central Piedmont Community College

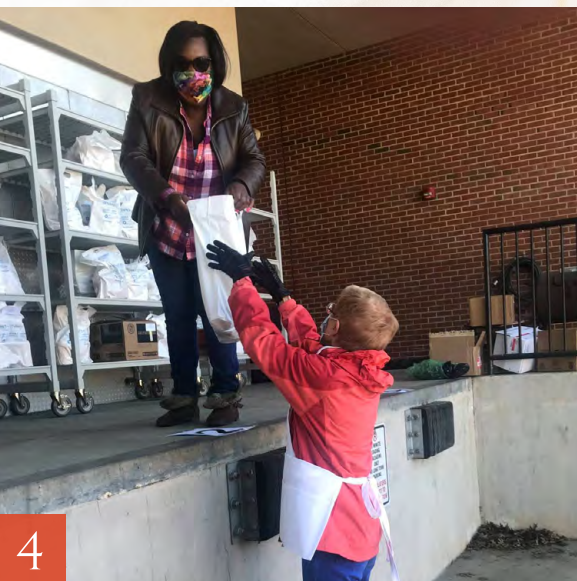
PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS

» Barrington's
» Brixx Wood Fired Pizza
» Charlotte Cooks of Central
Piedmont Community College
» Community Culinary School of
Charlotte
» Dogwood Southern Table & Bar
» Dressler's

» Fenwick's
» Fin & Fino
» Harper's Restaurant
» Johnson & Wales University
» Killington's Restaurant & Pub
» Mert's Heart & Soul
» Nourish Charlotte
» Red Rocks Café, Bar & Bakery

» Red Salt by David Burke
» Santé
» Savory Moments Catering
» The Porter's House
» Trio's
» The Fig Tree

*Thank you for making the 2021 Soup On Sunday drive-through
experience a success & so much fun!*



UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars for 2021 fun & fundraising!



Flight of the Dove
August 7, 2021

"This is the best ride around!"
Join us for our 16th annual cycling & fundraising event for Hospice of Laurens County!

For event information, visit our website at www.hpccr.org/upcoming-events



Anchor the Date

21st Annual Regatta Party
The Peninsula Club • September 24, 2021

A charitable evening of cocktails, dinner, music, live and silent auctions - with friends!

For more information, visit our website or contact Nancy Cole at 704.335.4312 • colen@hpccr.org

Sponsorship Opportunities Available!



Online Registration Now Open!
Registration Deadline: September 30, 2021



A Grief Camp for Children & Teens
Camp Thunderbird • October 16 - 17, 2021
For Children & Teens Ages 7 - 17



NEWS & CELEBRATIONS

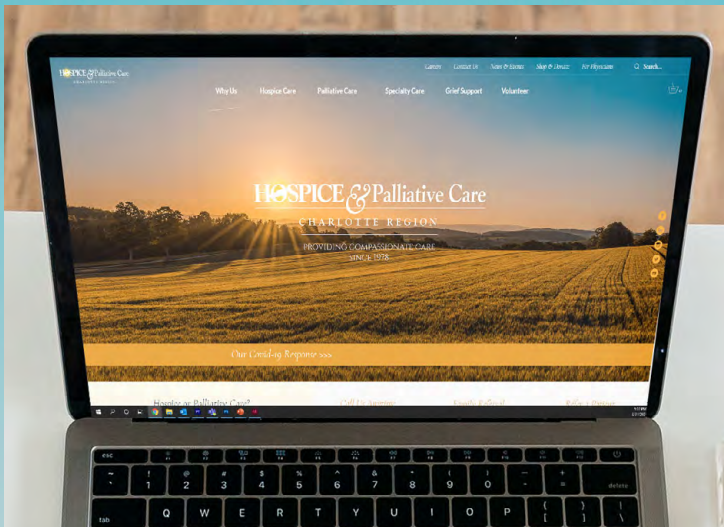
Celebrating Our Volunteers During Volunteer Appreciation Week

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region (HPCCR) celebrated Volunteer Appreciation Week during the month of April with surprise goodies for our volunteers. We were so happy to see all those smiles again in-person. Thank you to our incredible volunteers for bringing so much joy to the patients, families, caregivers, and communities we serve each and every day. You are the heart of HPCCR!



Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region Has a New Look & New Websites

You may have noticed a new look to our website, www.hpccr.org, in March. You may have even noticed our new website for Chameleon's Journey Grief Camp, www.chameleonsjourney.org. Today, we are thrilled to officially announce both of our new websites which bring new resources to our community and so much more!



HPCCR.ORG

CHAMELEONSJOURNEY.ORG

ACCESS TO CARE BEYOND THE CHARLOTTE REGION



“We are gaining a highly regarded partner in Hospice Cleveland County and increasing our ability to serve all who are in need. This opportunity further enables us to provide a seamless continuum of care across a broad geographic region.” - Peter A. Brunnick, President & CEO, Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region (HPCCR) is committed to providing exceptional end-of-life care beyond the Charlotte area. As part of that pledge, we are expanding access through a partnership with our neighbor to the west, Hospice Cleveland County (HCC). This combination of two hospices with stellar reputations will create an opportunity to leverage the talents of our staffs to broaden our reach, respond to care needs, and stay ahead of health care changes.

Both organizations are not-for-profits who have strong community ties and provide access to uninsured and underinsured patients and families through generous donations. The two respected leaders have a combined 50 plus years of experience in the hospice industry. The collective organization will now serve over 2,600 patients daily across 28 counties in North and South Carolina at six hospice houses, or in homes, hospitals, and other in-patient facilities.

HPCCR President & CEO Peter Brunnick states, “We are gaining a highly regarded partner in Hospice Cleveland County and increasing our ability to serve all who are in need. This opportunity further enables us to provide a seamless continuum of care across a broad geographic region.”

With constant evolution in healthcare policy, Medicare reimbursement, and delivery, Brunnick said the combined resources of the two hospice providers will help the organization stay ahead of change, remain competitive, and respond to patient and family care needs. HPCCR and HCC have collaborated frequently over the years, and both

achieve superior rankings on the federal government's Hospice Compare quality measures of hospice providers nationally.

The combination with HCC brings two more hospice houses into the fold: Wendover Hospice House in Shelby and Testa Family Hospice House in Kings Mountain. Both organizations use a holistic hospice approach with collaborative teams of care providers for patients and families.

“This is great news for Cleveland County and the Charlotte region as we combine two community-based, not-for-profit hospice providers committed to delivering the best possible care for patients – regardless of their ability to pay or the complexity of their illnesses,” says Myra McGinnis, who will continue as president of Hospice Cleveland County. “Unlike the for-profit providers that are increasingly entering this region, our organizations have been here for decades, so we know our communities, our patients and our healthcare providers – and we put their interests first.”

For over 36 years, Hospice Cleveland County has served thousands of patients and their families in Cleveland, Gaston, and Rutherford counties. Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region is the state's first hospice, founded 43 years ago, and provides a range of services in the Carolinas, including four hospice houses. Our joint desire is to spread our mission to relieve suffering and improve the quality and dignity of life through compassionate hospice care for those at end-of-life, palliative care for those with advanced illness, and through community education.



IN MEMORY

Dr. William “Bill” Williams, Jr.

Dr. Williams, a valued former physician at HPCCR, passed away in March at age 73. One of his most important contributions was leading our Kids Path pediatric specialty care program where he helped our young patients, and their families, with compassion and through his invaluable expertise.

Dr. Williams completed residencies at UVA Medical Center and Charlotte Memorial Hospital in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. Children and families were dear to his heart, demonstrated by his founding of the Davidson Clinic in 1978 where he cared for countless families. He also served as Chief Medical Officer of Carolinas Medical Center (now Atrium). While presiding as Chair of the National Board of Medical Examiners, he influenced medical professionals all over the world.

Dr. Williams was devoted to his community, profession, patients, and public health. He positively influenced many people during his tenure here from mentoring staff to caring for young people and their families. We feel fortunate to have been a part of his life and will continue to miss him dearly.

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NORTH CAROLINA REGIONAL LOCATIONS

South Charlotte

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region
Philip L. Van Every Learning Resource Center
Center for Palliative Care Advancement
704.375.0100

Lincolnton

Hospice & Palliative Care
Lincoln County
704.375.0100

Shelby

Hospice Cleveland County
704.487.4677

Davidson

Hospice & Palliative Care
Lake Norman
704.375.0100

SOUTH CAROLINA REGIONAL LOCATIONS

Clinton

Hospice & Palliative Care
Palmetto Region - Laurens
864.833.6287

Fort Mill

Hospice & Palliative Care
Palmetto Region
833.772.0556

OUR HOSPICE HOUSE LOCATIONS

Huntersville, NC

Levine & Dickson
Hospice House - Huntersville
704.375.0100

Shelby, NC

Wendover Hospice House
704.487.7018

East Charlotte, NC

Levine & Dickson
Hospice House at Aldersgate
704.375.0100

Kings Mountain, NC

Testa Family Hospice House
704.751.3918

South Charlotte, NC

Levine & Dickson
Hospice House at Southminster
704.375.0100

Clinton, SC

Hospice & Palliative Care
Palmetto Region - Laurens
Hospice House
864.833.6287

Legacy

HOSPICE LEGACY SOCIETY

Philanthropy plays an important role in HPCCR's vision for the future of hospice and palliative care. Including HPCCR in your estate plan is just one way you can create a legacy that helps to ensure all of our neighbors have access to care regardless of their age, diagnoses, or ability to pay.

For more information, contact Tom Atwood, Vice President of Philanthropy at (704) 335-4325 | atwoodt@hpccr.org

WHAT LEGACY WILL YOU LEAVE BEHIND?



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twitter.com/HospiceCLT



instagram.com/hpccr



Search: HPCCR

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region (including Hospice & Palliative Care Lake Norman, Hospice & Palliative Care Lincoln County, Hospice & Palliative Care Palmetto Region, Levine & Dickson Hospice House - Huntersville, Levine & Dickson Hospice House at Southminster, and Levine & Dickson Hospice House at Aldersgate) does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, veteran status, genetic information, or disability on admission, in treatment, or participation in its programs, services, activities, or employment.

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Spanish: ATENCION: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-704-375-0100 (TTY: 1-704-568-8505)

Chinese: 注意：如果你会说中国话，语言援助服务，免费的是可供您使用。致电 1-704-375-0100 年 (TTY: 1-704-568-8505)