Care CONNECTIONS

LifeCare Volunteer Newsletter

www.lifecarevolunteers.org

August 2026

Summer Reflections

As we welcome August, we are reminded of how much comfort can be found in simply being present for another person. In hospice care, the gift of your time, compassion, and companionship makes a meaningful difference in the lives of patients and families facing difficult journeys.

Whether you're visiting a patient, making a supportive phone call, assisting in the office, or helping behind the scenes, your service reflects the heart of hospice. The kindness you share brings dignity, connection, and reassurance to those who need it most.

As summer begins to wind down, we encourage you to take a moment to reflect on the impact you have made. While you may not always see the lasting effect of your efforts, please know that your presence matters. Every smile, conversation, and act of caring helps remind patients and families that they are not alone.

Thank you for your dedication to our mission and for the compassion you bring each day. We are deeply grateful for all you do and honored to have you as part of our hospice family.

Wishing you a wonderful August!

Upcoming Agency Calendar

August 3-4	Camp Voyager Kids' Grief Camp in Wilmington
August 10	Volunteer Zoom calls
August 19	Kids' Grief Camp in Jacksonville (in partnership with Hope for the Warriors)
August 21	Begin the Conversation clinic at Wilmington Home Office
August 29	Last Chance for White Pants Gala
September 19	Fall Impressions Ceremony at Brunswick Care Center

July In-Person Volunteer Meeting Recap

Red, White & Blue and Volunteer Pride Too! ❤️🤍💙

July's in-person volunteer meetings were all about celebrating America's 250th Birthday! Each meeting space was decked out in red, white, and blue, creating a festive atmosphere filled with food, fun, fellowship, and raffle prizes.

Several meetings featured special guests. Brunswick County volunteers had the opportunity to meet our new CEO, Karen Brubaker-Miller, while Horry County volunteers welcomed LCFL chaplain, Roger Hamilton, for a thoughtful discussion on spirituality in hospice care. Roger shared guidance on handling conversations when patients or families ask about personal beliefs and how to respond respectfully when beliefs differ from our own. Much like Karen's recent appearance during our May volunteer Zoom meeting, Roger is joining us on the August Zoom call for all volunteers to participate!

We were also proud to present several Morgan Awards and celebrate six volunteer referrals this quarter, recognizing those volunteers with well-earned gold stars. A special award was presented to New Hanover veteran volunteer Mike Hamby during the July 16 volunteer meeting in recognition of his outstanding leadership, promotion, and advancement of the New Hanover White Shirts Pinning Team over the past three years. Be sure to check out the photos and additional details in our Volunteer Spotlight in this newsletter.

We also introduced a new form of recognition for our New Hanover Vigil Team. Butterfly pins were awarded to volunteers who signed up for 24/7 vigil coverage during the two vigils held in June, representing an impressive 23 shifts of compassionate support. You'll find more information about this recognition later in the newsletter.

To wrap up each meeting, volunteers put their knowledge to the test with a lively game of Family Feud, featuring a mix of American-themed trivia and ACHC survey questions. Everyone seemed to enjoy the friendly competition, although opinions differed on the enthusiasm of the buzzers!

Thank you to everyone who attended. We appreciate your dedication, your spirit of service, and the many ways you continue to make a difference for our patients and families every day.

REMINDER: ZOOM calls

Monday August 10th @ 10am and 6pm

Featuring LCFL Chaplain Roger Hamilton: "Spirituality in Hospice Care"

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us04web.zoom.us/j/2947198640?pwd=q08fyXsaP2S02AdquJqlPCB7TCdjQ8.1
Meeting ID: 294 719 8640
Passcode: Volunteer
Phone only: (646) 931-3860

Volunteer Spotlight

Mike Hamby - Veteran Volunteer

by Laura Long

A special award was presented to New Hanover veteran volunteer **Mike Hamby** at the July 16th volunteer meeting for his excellence in leading, promoting, and advancing the New Hanover White Shirts pinning team for the past 3 years. He has personally attended over 450 veteran pinnings in that time and is largely responsible for the pinning team growing from 0 members to 31 members. For over 3 years, Mike was on call 7 days a week to receive and organize veteran pinning ceremony requests for New Hanover County. In addition, he personally took every new potential or interested pinning team member under his wing, beginning with a thorough email complete with a volunteer application, a sample pinning video, samples of the certificates used and a personal testimony explaining what his involvement on the team meant to him. Mike has recently had to take a step back due to having had to neglect many other commitments while playing such a large role in the veteran's program. But rest assured, he is still very involved with the pinning team. Ten other white shirts showed up to stand with Mike and support him on receiving this special award.

Your Volunteer Coordination Team

Marti Deeter, Volunteer Services Lead –-910.902.9908/marti.deeter@lifecare.org
New Hanover, Pender, & Onslow Counties

Laura Long, Volunteer Programs & Veteran Coordinator - 910.620.5062/laura.long@lifecare.org
All counties & Care Centers (programs/Vets) and BR/CO/BL/RO (home care)

Megan Campion, Administrative Coordinator - 843.848.6487/megan.campion@lifecare.org
All SC counties

Susan Gough, Administrative Coordinator - 910.796.7942/susan.gough@lifecare.org
All counties serviced by LCFL

All the volunteers of Lower Cape Fear LifeCare – thank you for the countless ways you contribute to the mission of our organization!

Moments that Matter

UNC Health Southeastern was awarded $575,000 from **The Duke Endowment** to establish Robeson County's first coordinated hospital-to-community palliative care program in partnership with Lower Cape Fear LifeCare. The investment represents a significant step forward in expanding access to compassionate, patient-centered care for an estimated 400 patients with serious illness while strengthening the healthcare continuum across Robeson County. By creating a seamless connection between hospital care and community-based services, the initiative will ensure that patients receive the right care, at the right time, in the setting that best meets their needs.

LifeCare
CENTER FOR PALLIATIVE MEDICINE
EXPERT SUPPORT FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS

After 18 years of service, we celebrated the retirement of our teammate, **Nancy Cooper** last month! Many of you have known Nancy as a steady source of compassion, comfort, and support for countless patients, families, volunteers, and teammates at our Wilmington care center. As a hospice chaplain, she walked alongside people from many different backgrounds and beliefs, always meeting them where they were with kindness, respect, and a listening ear. Thank you, Nancy, for the care you have shared, the lives you have touched, and the legacy you leave behind. Wishing you all the best in your well-earned retirement!

One of our patients recently had a Bucket List wish to connect with his favorite artist, **Jelly Roll**. He already had tickets to see him in concert, but his dream was to meet the person behind the music that had brought him so much comfort and encouragement. When meeting in person wasn't possible, a team of LifeCare social workers reached out to Jelly Roll's team. Soon after, a special package arrived, filled with thoughtful gifts and fan mail. As each item was opened, our patient's smile grew bigger and bigger. It was a simple act of kindness that created a moment he and his loved ones will always remember! A heartfelt THANK YOU to Jelly Roll and his team for helping make this wish come true!

Volunteer Announcements

Make a Difference at the Wilmington Care Center

Looking for a meaningful way to support our patients and families? Consider signing up for a **Patient & Family Visit** shift at the Wilmington Care Center. Volunteers provide companionship, emotional support, a listening ear, and a caring presence for patients and loved ones during their time at the Care Center.

Flexible two-hour shifts are available daily, making it easy to fit volunteering into your schedule. Want a recurring shift? Let me know! If you'd like the same day and time each week (or month), I can sign you up, so you don't have to remember to do it yourself.

Questions or ready to get started? Contact Marti for more information. Whether you're a current patient visitor or looking for a new way to serve, we'd love to have you join us.

Save the Dates

We invite all volunteers to join our LifeCare Memory Partners program staff and participants as we support the local Alzheimer's Association at three of their **Walks to End Alzheimer's**. Please join us, if you can, for a morning of fellowship and community collaboration.

- Saturday, September 26 – Jacksonville Commons Recreation Center, Jacksonville
- Saturday, October 31 – UNCW campus, Wilmington
- Saturday, November 7 – Grand Park at Market Common, Myrtle Beach

Lower Cape Fear LifeCare will also be participating in the **Cape Fear Heart** Walk in support of the American Heart Association. If advocating for heart health is more your thing, this event is for you.

- Saturday October 24 – UNCW campus, Wilmington

LifeCare Memory Partners is working with local partners to offer a couple **educational forums** for professionals, caregivers, volunteers, and community members this fall centering on dementia and brain health. Keep an eye out for more information to come.

- Friday, November 6 – Burney Center, UNCW, Wilmington
- Date/location TBD – Pender County, Burgaw area

Butterfly Pins Honor Vigil Team Volunteers

At our July volunteer meetings, we introduced a special new recognition for members of our New Hanover Vigil Team: **butterfly pins.**

The butterfly is widely recognized as a symbol in hospice care, representing transformation, hope, and life. It beautifully reflects the natural cycle of life, the resilience of the human spirit, and the gentle transition that occurs during end-of-life care.

Each butterfly pin presented was different and unique, honoring the individual patients whose final journeys were supported through our vigil program. Just as every patient is unique, so too was each butterfly selected to commemorate the compassionate presence provided by our volunteers.

Volunteers received one butterfly pin for every vigil shift they signed up to cover, even if the patient passed before the volunteer had the opportunity to arrive for their scheduled shift. Your willingness to answer the call and be present for patients and families during such an important time is deeply appreciated, and we are grateful for your dedication and commitment.

If you did not receive your butterfly pin at the meeting, don't worry. We will be mailing pins to eligible volunteers soon.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who participated in our June vigils and helped provide continuous support through a total of 23 vigil shifts. Your compassion ensures that no one has to face their final moments alone.

Interested in joining the New Hanover Vigil Team? Contact Marti to learn more and get started.
And exciting news…plans for a Brunswick County Vigil Team are currently in the works!
If you're interested in participating, please reach out to Laura for more information.

Last Chance for White Pants, August 29, 7-11p.m.

Tickets are now on sale for the region's most popular summer event (and our largest fundraiser)! Activities will include fabulous food, dancing, raffles, and oodles of fun. Check out http://www.whitepants.org for more information.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The Last Chance for White Pants Gala is quickly approaching, and our Foundation team is reaching out to ask for your help in making this year's Gala a tremendous success.

The Gala will be held on Saturday, August 29, from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the Brooklyn Arts Center (516 N 4th Street, Wilmington, NC)

They are currently seeking assistance in two important areas:

Silent Auction Donations

The silent auction is a key part of their fundraising efforts, and would greatly appreciate any help securing donated items, gift certificates, experiences, baskets, services, or other auction-worthy contributions from businesses, friends, family, or community contacts.

Event Set-Up and Event Night Volunteers

They're also looking for volunteers to assist with:

- **Morning-of-gala set-up (10AM 8/29)** – helping arrange auction items, décor, signage, registration areas, and other event preparations.
- **During the Gala** – assisting guests, monitoring silent auction tables, helping with registration, providing general support, and closing out the auction.
    - **This includes free admission to the Gala**.
- **Morning after gala clean-up (8/30)** – helping us wrap up the evening and ensure everything is packed away efficiently.

Whether you can donate an item, help secure donations, volunteer your time, or assist in multiple ways, your support will make a meaningful difference in helping us further the mission of Lower Cape Fear LifeCare.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Foundation Coordinator, Kelly Greenland at kelly.greenland@lifecare.org or 910-796-7921.

Thank you for your continued generosity, dedication, and commitment to serving our community. We truly could not do this work without you.

Marti's both/and

Reflections and recommendations on books, shows, and stories that remind us life is rarely just one thing

End Game

2018 Netflix Documentary

End Game is a 2018 Netflix documentary (runtime of 40 minutes) that follows terminally ill patients and the palliative care professionals helping them navigate difficult end-of-life decisions. Directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, the film explores the emotional, physical, and ethical realities of serious illness while highlighting an important philosophy of care: treating the whole person, not just the disease.

While the documentary focuses on palliative care, a service we provide at Lower Cape Fear LifeCare in addition to hospice care, it also highlights something that is central to our mission: community education and open conversations about death, dying, and quality of life.

What makes *End Game* so powerful is its honest portrayal of patients, families, and caregivers facing some of life's most difficult moments. Rather than focusing solely on medical treatment, the film emphasizes the importance of listening, supporting, and helping patients define what quality of life means to them.

The final words spoken in the documentary are, *"We are wired to run away from death, but death is a part of life."* That message stayed with me long after the credits rolled.

As hospice volunteers, many of us are doing the opposite of what comes naturally. We are choosing to move toward people during challenging times. Whether sitting with a patient, supporting a family member, providing a vigil, or visiting at the Wilmington Care Center, our presence helps ensure that no one faces these moments alone.

Perhaps one small step we can all take is to become more comfortable having conversations about end-of-life wishes, quality of life, and the support hospice and palliative care provide. Education begins with awareness, and awareness often begins with simple conversation.

As an academy award nominee for a documentary/short film, *End Game* is deeply moving, thought-provoking, and well worth watching. Thank you to our very own Susan Gough for recommending it!

EDUCATION CORNER

The surveyors are coming…are we ready?!?

If you've attended one of our volunteer orientation classes, you've probably heard us talk about one of our favorite LCFL policies…our **Compliance Program**. I know, compliance doesn't sound very exciting at first. It's easy to think of it as a collection of acronyms like ADA, OSHA, HIPAA, DEA, and OIG.

But compliance is much more than regulations and requirements. It's the foundation that helps ensure we provide safe, ethical, high-quality care while protecting our patients, families, volunteers, and organization. As we await the arrival of the ACHC surveyors in North Carolina, it's a great time to remember that survey readiness isn't something we do just when surveyors arrive. It is something we demonstrate every day through our knowledge, professionalism, and commitment to following LCFL policies and best practices.

LCFL Policy Highlight – Compliance Program

POLICY:

1. Lower Cape Fear LifeCare (LCFL) complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations as well as acceptable standards of practice. The laws are as follows, including but not limited to:
    a. Local and State Licenses
    b. Professional Licensure Laws
    c. Practice Standards
    d. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
    e. Equal Employment Opportunity Act
    f. Fair Labor Standards Act
    g. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
    h. Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHA)
    i. Medicare Regulations
    j. Medicaid Regulations
    k. HIPAA
    l. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987
    m. Balanced Budget Act of 1997
    n. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
    o. US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
    p. Occupational Licensure Laws
    q. Public Health Regulations relating to infectious disease
    r. Office of Inspector General Exclusions Program (OIG)
    s. Other laws and regulations applicable to hospice

2. LCFL uses the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's (NHPCO) "Standards of Practice for Hospice Programs" as their guideline.

3. In an effort to conduct business according to the highest ethical standards and in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, the agency maintains a Compliance Program that is described in the Compliance Plan. The agency is committed to complying with federal and state regulations and private insurer standards. The agency will identify and correct any instances of non-compliance.

The Compliance Program includes the following:

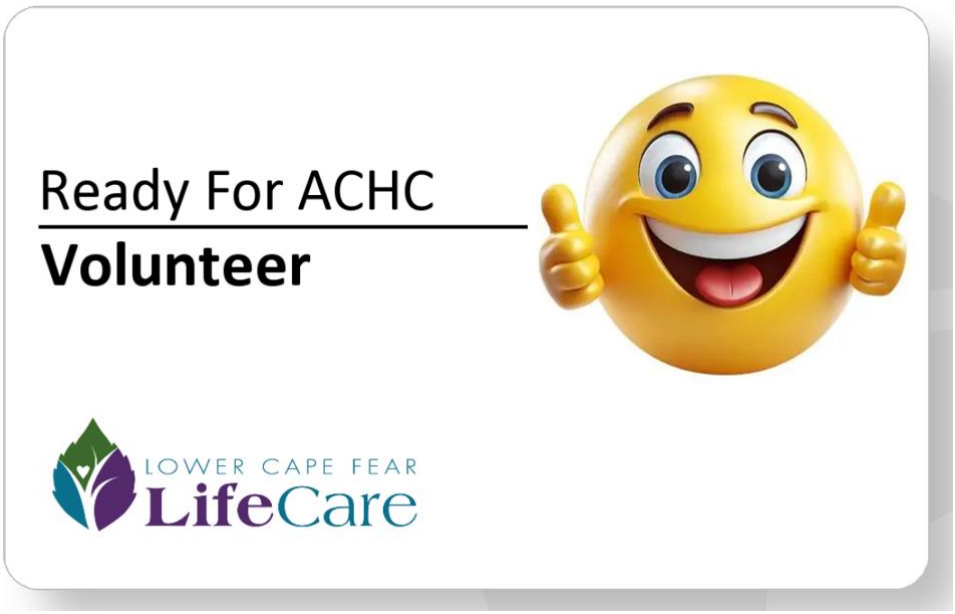
- Ethical Principles and a Code of Conduct to which all employees, independent contractors and agents must adhere
- A Compliance Officer and committee (Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement -QAPI) designated to oversee the Compliance Program
- A reporting system is available for employees to report violations of the Code of Conduct
- Open lines of communication, such as email, the compliance hotline, and/or face-to-face contact, are available to anyone reporting a possible violation or lodging a complaint
- Anyone that notifies the Compliance Officer of an issue will be protected from retaliation
- A comprehensive staff education and training program
- Performance of internal audits to monitor compliance
- Enforcement of the Compliance Program and disciplinary actions for violations
- Notifying employees of possible disciplinary actions or penalties associated with violations of regulations, hospice standards, and policies and procedures
- Commitment to not hiring individuals or working with business entities who have been sanctioned, debarred, or otherwise excluded from participation in federal healthcare programs
- Commitment to corrective action as appropriate
- Adherence to the Compliance Program is a condition of employment for all personnel and an element of an employee's performance evaluation.

4. Negative outcomes affecting accreditation or licensure will be documented in the agency's program annual evaluation and reported to the Board of Directors, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, (NCDHHS) South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, (SCDHEC) and ACHC. Responses and actions to the outcomes will be documented.

5. Reporting requirements for the above are followed.

Volunteer Best Practice

Name Tag/Badge – Volunteers must wear their official LCFL name tag/badge when providing ANY volunteer service for LCFL.



Volunteer Suggestion

Be visible – If volunteering at a nursing home, the Hospice Care Center, or other Hospice offices, introduce yourself to the staff that's there. When out in public, share your experiences and the Hospice philosophy (keeping confidentiality, of course).

Volunteer Reminders

And if you find yourself face-to-face with a surveyor:

- If you are the first person to meet the surveyor, please ask for their ID to verify they are a surveyor from ACHC and ask them to have a seat in the lobby of the office. Immediately notify your volunteer coordinator or staff member on-site who will contact the appropriate staff members.
- If asked any questions, keep your answers short and to the point. If you don't know an answer, just say "I don't know but I can find out for you!"
- A great fallback response is "I would contact my Volunteer Coordinator!"

Volunteers Needed – Sign Up Here

Wilmington Care Center (HCC)

Front desk coverage: Sign up here
Visit patients and families: Sign up here
Pet and music therapy: Sign up here

Brunswick Care Center (BCC)

Front desk coverage: Sign up here
Pet and music therapy: Sign up here

Whiteville Care Center (WCC)

Front desk coverage: Call (910) 642-9051

Wilmington Corporate Office

Assembly of admission packets: Sign up here

Almost Done

A few important reminders and announcements before you go

- Reply "I read it" to this email so you can get credit for your time; **DO NOT** "reply all".
- Be sure to log your volunteer hours in a timely manner so they are officially documented: https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=AiIQ3MDJZUqrlesoy5OuDJEJNQJkCLhMvE_E6EH0sbxUNjI5VUwzNDVSQkE3WElSVlA2WU9DNEo2Wi4u
- If you know of a local professional looking for a meaningful career in end-of-life care, please contact us. We are looking to fill open positions for nurses, nursing assistants, and several clinical roles across our entire service area.
- If you are part of a church, civic club, or other community organization, contact Jason Clamme (Jason.Clamme@LifeCare.org) for possible education and outreach programs.
- All things LCFL volunteering can be found here: Volunteer website
- If you are on social media, please like and follow Lower Cape Fear LifeCare.