



PROVIDING  
**COMPREHENSIVE CARE**  
with the support of our community

# From the Board

**We are thrilled to welcome Chrissie Gulden to the MemoryCare family as our Executive Director.** With more than twenty years of leadership and operations management experience leading mission-based organizations, Chrissie brings a wealth of expertise and a deep commitment to serving the vulnerable members of our Western North Carolina community.

Chrissie has a proven track record in nonprofit leadership, most recently at BlueWest Opportunities, Inc. During her tenure she successfully merged two non-profit organizations into a single entity with an \$11 million operating budget, consistently achieving the highest national accreditation for home and community-based support services. Her strategic vision and dedication to serving dementia patients and their caregivers will be invaluable as we continue to enhance our services and support for those we serve.

As we embark on our 25th year of service, we are confident that under Chrissie's leadership, MemoryCare will continue to fulfill our mission to be a model program that provides expert guidance for caregivers, comprehensive treatment for people living with dementia, and education about dementia, caregiving, and healthy aging.

*Please join me in welcoming Chrissie to our team!*

Warm regards,

**LAURA MEHERG**

Board President, Development,  
Governance (chair)





# Our Mission is three-fold:

- To provide specialized medical care to older adults with cognitive impairment;
- to support caregivers with education, counseling, and improved access to services;
- and to provide community education.

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## From the Medical Director to All of our MemoryCare Families and Community

On behalf of MemoryCare, may I express our profound sadness about the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene. Heartfelt condolences go out to those families who lost loved ones, their homes, and their livelihoods. We also extend the sincerest appreciation to first responders, those who are devoted to restoring infrastructure, and volunteers providing aid, comfort, and support during these challenging times. We express our special thanks to the Van Winkle Law Firm for opening space for operations when our building was shut down during the aftermath of the storm.

Through the will of our dedicated staff and supportive Board of Directors, we have remained open virtually through this crisis for all our families whose lives were already stressed from living with dementia. The long-lasting impact of such a disaster will be with us for years. We are so deeply grateful to each of you who are able to donate to help us continue to nurture, support, and educate our caregivers and to provide exceptional medical care for the people we serve... especially now.

**MARGARET A. NOEL, MD**



## Deerfield Charitable Foundation

MemoryCare is grateful to Deerfield Charitable Foundation for a generous gift that helps sustain resources for our families in need.

The Foundation's donation comes at a pivotal time, as MemoryCare seeks to cover caregiver cost-sharing fees for the fiscal year of 2024. The Foundation's support will enable MemoryCare to continue our range of services, including caregiver education, counseling, and assistance with behavioral management and legal issues. These services are vital for helping caregivers navigate the complexities of dementia care, from addressing safety concerns to managing end-of-life decisions.

The Deerfield Charitable Foundation was established to enhance the charitable activities of Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community and extend its reach across Western North Carolina. They have committed to supporting area residents in need and promoting excellence in healthcare. Their mission includes a strong focus on projects serving the older adult community. We extend our gratitude to Deerfield Charitable Foundation for their generosity and commitment to improving the lives of older adults and their caregivers.





## Givens Estates

MemoryCare is grateful for the invaluable support we receive from Givens Estates. Their commitment to helping us enhance the lives of individuals with memory impairments has made a profound impact on our mission.

Givens Estates generously provides a home for The SECU Center for MemoryCare on their beautiful campus as well as operational support for the building and grounds. This support helps keep our overhead low, allowing us to direct more resources to meeting the needs of our patients and caregivers.

What is more, the Givens community treats us like family. The residents and

personnel have been kind with sharing their time, talents, and resources since the inception of our program. We have been so fortunate to have this relationship for all these years.

Together, we are making strides in improving the quality of life of older adults in WNC, and we look forward to continuing this important work together.

## Support Through Hard Choices

Mom was formally diagnosed with Alzheimer's at the beginning of 2016, although we saw evidence of dementia earlier than that. My Dad, her husband of 57 years at the time, took on the responsibility of caring for her. Even though I was living in San Francisco at the time, I saw the toll that caring for Mom had on Dad. I had lived away for 25 years, and in mid-2017, I chose to return to NC to help Dad care for Mom. Within a year, Dad was diagnosed with a terminal blood cancer, and he passed away months later. As he realized the end was near, he asked that I care for Mom. My stomach sank. My Mom and I had never had an easy relationship. And I couldn't deny my Dad's wishes. My grief therapist suggested I reach out to MemoryCare,

and that was one of those decisions I look back upon as a pivotal point in my life.

Every person I encountered at MemoryCare was compassionate, and didn't judge me when I cried or was frustrated with Mom's behavior, or frustrated with the lack of support from my siblings. They recommended resources (if you are supporting someone with dementia, please read *The 36-Hour Day*) and shared concrete ways that I could care for myself, and ways I could interact with Mom. They gave me practical tips on how to speak with Mom (don't argue, it's okay to support an alternate reality) and suggested activities we could do together (walk as much as possible; silence is okay).

Throughout the five years that I supported Mom as her primary caregiver, they helped me reframe my perspective



to focus on all the things she could continue to do, and to be grateful for those.

They named the frustrations I was feeling, and gave me permission to be angry, and then let that anger go. When I was feeling at the end of my rope, I would email my frustrations to my care team, and to my amazement a response would come within



a day, empathizing with what I was going through, and sharing suggestions of what I could try next or resources available to me. When I could no longer care for Mom at home, they supported me in finding an appropriate care facility for her.

Mom entered hospice care in October 2023. One of the hardest choices I had to make was giving up our regular visits to MemoryCare. Even though we weren't clients of MemoryCare anymore, our care team checked in regularly to see how I was doing, and to remind me to take care of myself.

Mom passed away in January 2024. I'm so grateful for the support I received from MemoryCare. Their support allowed me to treasure the last five years I had with Mom, and when I remember her, I remember the beautiful individual that MemoryCare helped me see.

## Celebrating Our Volunteers: A Mutual Gift of Support and Growth

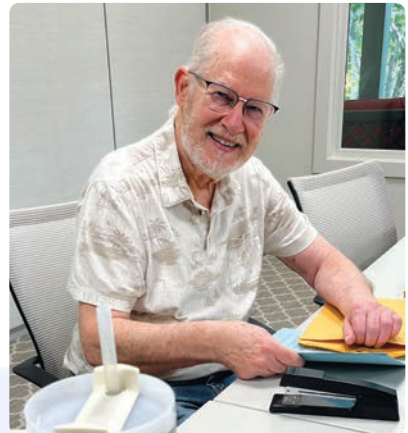


At the heart of every thriving organization lies a group of dedicated volunteers whose selfless efforts make a big impact. We are fortunate to have a small, dedicated team of volunteers who generously contribute their time, skills, and positive outlook. Last year, our volunteers provided a cumulative total of more than 100 hours of service!



Our volunteers often describe their experiences as mutually beneficial. They bring support to our programs and initiatives, helping us achieve our mission. In return, they find personal growth, a sense of purpose, and the joy of making a difference in the lives of others.





We are always eager to welcome new volunteers into our fold. Opportunities to get involved include greeting families, maintaining the resource library, doing clerical work, and more. Each new member adds unique skills and perspectives that enrich our work. If you're interested in making a meaningful impact, we encourage you to consider volunteering with us. Together, we can continue to create positive change.



## Supporting A Need

**MemoryCare is grateful to the Haywood County Senior Resource Center** for their generous support in hosting our satellite clinic. This partnership has enabled us to expand our reach and better serve the community in Western North Carolina.

Before the launch of our satellite clinic in 2012, our program already supported 19 counties in the region, but the Haywood County clinic covers 7 additional counties.

This has significantly improved accessibility to MemoryCare's specialized care for families who would find it challenging to make the commute to Asheville.

Thank you to the Haywood County Senior Resource Center for helping us enhance our impact and provide vital assistance to those who need it most. Your support is instrumental in our mission to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by cognitive challenges.

# A Note from the Executive Director

It is my honor to be a part of the wonderful work of MemoryCare. During the past six months, I have witnessed a dedicated and focused team delivering care with compassion and integrity. I have come to know friends of MemoryCare who graciously give their time, talents, and resources to support our mission. And I have seen how fellow community organizations value the needs of the residents in WNC and assist in making our services and resources accessible to all with need.

I am appreciative of the commitment and leadership provided by the MemoryCare Board of Directors. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside Dr. Noel, learning MemoryCare's history and gaining an understanding of the foundation it has been so carefully built upon. Finally, I am humbled to share space with the talent of the administrative, development, and clinical teams that bring MemoryCare to those we serve.

*I thank each of  
you for the warm  
welcome and all  
your encouragement  
and support.*

With gratitude,

**CHRISSIE GULDEN**





## Caregiver College Brings Closure

The last couple of years of my father's life weren't normal. We had always been close with special shared memories— just us two—and suddenly, I became public enemy number one. I am a volunteer EMT and am trained to recognize signs and symptoms of cognitive impairment, but his change

in behavior still caught me off guard. What made matters worse was that I was most often the target of the outbursts, the paranoia, and the withdrawal.

I had been acting as a caregiver for both parents and was told about MemoryCare by a good friend. After my father passed away, I saw a notification about Caregiver College on MemoryCare's website.



As I was still caring for my mother, I thought it would be helpful to arm myself with information. And as expected from an organization staffed by the unmatched resources as MemoryCare, every session did just that. What I didn't expect to get out of it, however, was closure from the loss of a parent, coupled with the pain of lingering memories of the personal attacks. The information shared in each session

offered so much comfort as it peeled back the onion, illuminating the dynamics of this disease.

Now, instead of dwelling on those last two years, I can remember my father as the amazing, caring parent and the great influence in my life that he was.

I am so grateful for the Caregiver College Program and MemoryCare for giving me my father back!



# Why we need your help:

- Insurance does not cover the full cost of our services.
- With our aging population, WNC needs a best practice dementia care program.
- Half of our annual budget comes from grants and donations.
- So we can be here and serve families as long as there is a need.

## YOUR DONATIONS GO TOWARD

- Caregiver counseling, education, and support
- Access to care for all with need
- Educational programs
- Caregiver peer support groups

C

Consider the tax advantage of making a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA to MemoryCare

A

Assist families with scholarship funds for their care

R

Renew your support to MemoryCare regularly with recurring gifts

I

Impact families for generations with a named Gift of Care

n

Name MemoryCare in your estate via a bequest, as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, and/or through common stock transfer

G

Give honor to loved ones by contributing in their names for special occasions





# Donation Levels

\$50

For materials in our resource center

\$150

To provide live and on-demand education events to caregivers

\$250

For peer support groups of the Memory Caregivers Network

\$500

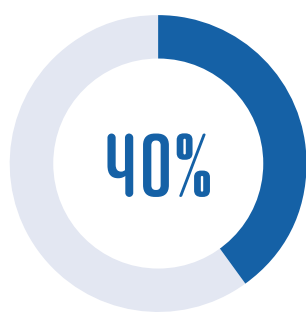
For our satellite clinic serving rural areas of Western North Carolina

\$1,500

To support one family's care for a full year

\$10,000

To endow a "Gift of Care" to support the care of one family every year in perpetuity



**of families enrolled in Memory Care are low income by HHS Federal Poverty Standard**

Your support can create a much-needed lifeline for those who care for loved ones facing the challenges of dementia and Alzheimer's.

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Ex-Officio

scan to  
donate



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*MemoryCare is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization (Federal Tax ID #56-2178294). For more information on planned giving opportunities, please contact our office. Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the Charitable Solicitation Licensing Section at 1.888.830.4989. This license is not an endorsement by the State.*

*We express our sincere appreciation to all who shared their words and pictures, and to Creative Clarity Studio for help with the design of this publication.*

**memorycare.org**