



CONTINUING A LEGACY OF
COMPASSIONATE CARE

The Power of Two

A PERSPECTIVE ON MEMORYCARE'S LEADERSHIP

MemoryCare's model of care is not the only unique feature of the organization. Rather than a traditional approach to leadership, MemoryCare follows a co-leadership model. Here is what our leaders say about sharing these tasks:

Coming on board with MemoryCare in the spring of 2024, I was excited to be the new Executive Director. I had many tools in my leadership tool kit, but I did not have specific experience working in medical practice or working with people living with dementia. Working alongside a co-leader who does have this background and expertise has helped me feel more comfortable setting strategy and operational processes in subject areas that were new to me. I believe that having the opportunity to collaborate and leverage diverse skill sets in a leadership capacity is a tremendous benefit to the organization. This model sets up MemoryCare for success by dividing the intense workload and stress of leadership and providing a partnership for tackling challenges and innovating. I am grateful to be part of the leadership duo and the greater team at MemoryCare. Teamwork makes the dream work!

CHRISSIE GULDEN, MPH

Executive Director



I joined MemoryCare in 2023, shortly after meeting Dr. Noel. Her passion and unwavering commitment to serving people living with dementia and their caregivers were immediately evident. I remember telling her during my interview, "I can't imagine a better job."

Thanks to her mentorship and guidance, I have gained valuable insight into what it takes to step into the role of Medical Director. This opportunity represents a significant milestone in my professional journey, and I am genuinely eager to contribute to our shared mission of providing exceptional patient care.

Our co-leadership model is intentionally designed to embrace diverse perspectives and enhance our decision-making process. Dual-leadership is especially vital for a unique practice like MemoryCare, where understanding and addressing the needs of our patients and caregivers are at the forefront. They are the heart of everything we do.

I look forward to continuing our work together—strengthening our care, expanding support, and fostering growth for MemoryCare. I am excited about what the future holds for our organization and the positive impact we will continue to make.

NIKKI GORDON, DO

Medical Director



What an amazing gift it has been to nurture MemoryCare through a quarter of a century and to know that its future is in the capable hands of Chrissie Gulden, Dr. Nikki Gordon, an extraordinary Board of Directors, and our most dedicated, compassionate, mission-driven staff. To paraphrase Frederick Buechner, our best calling is the place where our deep gladness and our community's deep need meet. I have experienced such privilege to witness how families care for each other in profoundly inspiring ways and to help them through a very challenging illness. They are the reason for everything we do, and it is only through the support of our generous community that we can have the opportunity to transform dementia care.

MARGARET A. NOEL, MD,
Founder



Caregiver College Comprehensive Support for Caregivers

At MemoryCare, education is one of the most powerful ways we support families. Our quarterly program, Caregiver College, offers a course consisting of six classes that help caregivers understand various aspects of dementia and tips on how to provide care for a loved one experiencing cognitive issues- while caring for yourself.

Your donations make this possible. Each gift helps us provide evidence-based education at no cost to those who truly seek help and support during what can often feel like a hopeless time. Giving families these tools for the journey is the heart of the mission of MemoryCare- but we can only do it with your help. Together we can make our community stronger and more empowered, which benefits us all.

“After my mother’s recent diagnosis of vascular dementia, my father and I attended The SECU Center for Memory Care’s Caregiver College. There were six weeks of informative classes on a variety of subjects. These classes were extremely helpful and the teachers were patient and willing to answer all questions from the participants. We learned not only the best ways to care for my mother as her disease progresses, but also how to take care of ourselves in the process. Over twenty years ago, my mother-in-law was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease. If we had had this kind of support and information, that journey would have been less difficult for all of us. I thought about that experience during every session of Caregiver College. I am so grateful that this kind of support exists now for my mother and father.”

-LSD



KEEPING FOCUS

My husband, Charley Akers, grew up in Charlotte where at the early age of 7, he developed a love of photography, snapping shots of everything with his beloved Kodak Instamatic 304, complete with its film canisters in those early days. When he entered Myers Park High School, he was particularly inspired by a photography class he took. He even turned his bedroom closet into a dark room!



Later, he was fortunate to attend the prestigious Brooks Institute of Photography in California. After graduation, he returned to the South and began a photography business in Atlanta. His clients, including Amoco Oil, AT&T, Coca-Cola, Hotel Del Coronado, Kodak,

Omni Hotels, Playboy Enterprises, UPS, and Wachovia, were numerous and globally recognized Fortune 500 firms, as was his award-winning photography.

After several years on the West Coast where he honed his skills at portraiture, we moved back to the South in 2012 and were drawn to the appeal of the Western North Carolina mountains, making our home in Asheville. Noticing his repetitive questions and a change in behavior, Charley and I learned he had mild cognitive degeneration in 2017 and by 2024 he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.



“MemoryCare has been a wonderful resource for us from the Caregiver College to ongoing support by their teams. They have helped us both navigate this difficult journey step by step. We are truly grateful for all their services.”

The disease affects our lives in many ways. But Charley retains his interests, like hitting tennis balls, especially with our dog, Cody, who brings us both joy. Charley also holds fast to his amazing artistic talents, enjoying photographic composition. His appreciation for the natural beauty of the mountains continues, and he loves our leisurely travels along and around the Blue Ridge Parkway with its many photographic opportunities.

We learned about the unique model of care of MemoryCare from our primary care doctor and enrolled as a family in 2022. From our first 3-hour visit with the team of a specialized physician and a care manager, we have been impressed and grateful. The team encouraged me to take “Caregiver College,” a series of six, three-hour lectures for caregivers of people with memory disorders. I appreciated all of the resources from caregiver services to lawyers, and information to help me understand more about what was happening to Charley's brain, and how important it is for me, as his caregiver, to take care of myself.

JULIA AND CHARLEY AKERS

See more of Charley's photography at CharleyAkersPhoto.com



Inside The MemoryCaregivers' Collection

by Mary Donnelly

The MemoryCaregivers' Collection, written by Mary Donnelly, offers a powerful blend of experience and insight drawn from her years of working closely with both caregivers and those living with dementia.

Those of you who know Mary know that she is no stranger to the emotional journey that caregivers navigate. A long-time dementia consultant and founding coordinator of the MemoryCaregivers Network here at The SECU Center for MemoryCare, Mary has supported many families through the complexities of memory loss. As a former caregiver for her own mother, she writes with a depth of understanding that only comes from lived experience.



The book is a curated collection of essays, stories, and reflections that showcase the inner life of caregiving and its moments of stress, humor, and resilience. It doesn't offer easy answers but it encourages readers to stay present, to shift expectations, and to see value in small victories. It also offers insight into the emotional part of caregiving—the guilt that can come from losing patience, the sadness of watching a loved one change, and the strength required to keep showing up day after day.

The MemoryCaregivers' Collection is a much-needed resource. Whether you are a caregiver yourself, preparing to step into that role, or simply trying to better understand what a loved one is going through, this book can offer clarity and comfort. It reminds us that, while caregiving may be challenging, the overall message rings true: *understanding changes everything*.

A substantial portion of the book's proceeds will go toward supporting MemoryCare's work with families. Search for it on Amazon or pick up a copy at MemoryCare.

"This is the best book I've ever read on dementia! Mary takes a 36 hour day that caregivers face and turns it into English that is easily understandable. Her narrative, story-telling approach, with real life examples on all the myriad topics of dementia, actually makes the reader look forward to the next chapter and what new knowledge is shared. She's somebody who's "been there" and can relate personally to all the issues caregivers face taking care of people living with dementia. I loved the various tips and "how to's" to mitigate the symptoms of the disease and her caregiver suggestions to try to approach a "24 hour day". I have it on my desk (not bookshelf!) for ready reference on the issues for which I need refresher training. A must read for any caregiver who wants to get easily educated and needs help fast!"

-Doug M.

Transforming Generosity into Impact

CELEBRATING JANET DOYLE

After many years of dedicated service, Janet Doyle is retiring from her role as Development Director at MemoryCare. Janet has played a vital role in advancing our mission by building personal relationships and community partnerships. Because of her passion for her career and for what we do at MemoryCare, she has grown charitable giving across all areas of our organization.

Her warmth and professionalism have left a lasting mark on MemoryCare. Though we will miss her, we are deeply grateful for her contributions and wish her happiness and relaxation in her retirement.



WELCOMING LISA FORT

Hello MemoryCare family! My name is Lisa Fort and I'm thrilled to be the full-time Director of Philanthropy, as I joined this amazing organization in May of this year.

My career for the past 30 years has been in the field of development. I am passionate about helping organizations grow and thrive through effective fundraising strategies. As a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), I have honed my skills in donor relations, campaign management and leadership, allowing me to drive impactful initiatives that resonate with both donors and the communities we serve. My experience encompasses many sectors, including higher education, healthcare and social services which has provided me with a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities that organizations face in today's philanthropic landscape.

I am committed to continuous learning and professional growth, and I actively engage with the broader development community to share insights and best practices.

In my free time, I enjoy reading, mosaic tile art, taking care of our various pets (a rabbit, three ferrets, a cat and a dog) and teaching my teenager how to drive. OK, I don't enjoy that last activity but someone has to do it!

I look forward to contributing to our teams' goals and continuing to make a difference in the lives of those afflicted by dementia and their families.



Donor Spotlight: Rob Daniels

A LIFE OF PURPOSE AND FAMILY, ROOTED IN HARD WORK

Rob Daniels, a devoted father and grandfather, has always been driven by a strong work ethic, a value he learned from his mother, Rachel. While he once dreamed of becoming a basketball coach or forest ranger, his path led him elsewhere. Now, with a fulfilling life behind him, he is most proud of the adults his children have become and cherishes the time spent with his kids and grandkids.

A PERSONAL JOURNEY LEADS TO A NEW MISSION

His relationship with MemoryCare began following his wife's diagnosis when his primary care physician recommended the organization. Seeing the needs of others in his community with memory problems, he was inspired to help ensure they could get the care they deserved without facing financial hardship. For this donor, education is key. He is especially pleased that MemoryCare is delivering essential education and care for a condition that the world remains "largely uneducated about". The mission of Caregiver College is a part of the work that particularly resonates with him.

A CALL TO ACTION ROOTED IN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Drawing on his own experience, he advises potential donors that they will likely encounter memory problems in their lives or in the lives of those they love. "I know so many people who are convinced it will never happen to them. I used to be one of them," he says. He believes that sharing knowledge and raising awareness through education is vital.

A LEGACY OF HELPFULNESS

Ultimately, Rob's hope for his giving is that others will be able to get the help they need. His goal is to be thought of as someone who is true to his word and willing and able to help others along the way.

Rob now serves as a volunteer at MemoryCare, greeting and chatting with others who are on this journey. We are lucky to have him!



SUPPORTING OUR MISSION

As a valued supporter of MemoryCare, your generosity is the backbone of our mission, and we want to ensure that you feel appreciated and informed about the difference your contributions make.

As our organization continues to grow and adapt, we recognize the need to offer flexible giving options that reflect the diverse ways our supporters engage with us. The new annual support levels provide clear pathways for involvement, allowing you to choose a level that resonates with your philanthropic goals and capacity to make a difference.

We invite you to explore these new levels and consider how you can make a lasting impact with your support. Every dollar counts, and with your help, we can continue to support dementia patients and their families through our unique care model.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Together we can achieve incredible things!

Follow us on Facebook and watch your inbox for an opportunity to participate in Giving Tuesday, which happens on December 2nd.



Every giving level represents a step toward strengthening programs that guide, educate, and empower caregivers and their loved ones. Donate online at MemoryCare.org.

FRIEND

UP TO \$999

Friend level gifts can help:

- Purchase materials for our resource center
- Contribute to our peer support program
- Support our education program

ADVOCATE

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Advocate level gifts can help:

- Cover initial program enrollment costs for families
- Connect community resources
- Improve rural access for families

CHAMPION

\$2,500 - \$9,999

Champion level gifts can help:

- Sustain program funding for low-income families
- Expand our community education program
- Support our satellite clinic
- Support our education program

VISIONARY

\$10,000 +

Visionary level gifts can help:

- Fund a Gift of Care
- Sustain MemoryCare's model of care
- Maintain a standard of excellence in dementia care

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