Helping Hospice From The Start

Volunteers of distinction, Blaine and Karen Killian show their dedication in countless and meaningful ways.

In an induction ceremony at his alma mater in May, longtime CarePartners Foundation volunteer Blaine Killian was recognized as a TC Roberson Graduate of Distinction. In his acceptance speech, Blaine talked about his commitment to CarePartners Hospice and spoke of the organization’s valuable service to those needing hospice care.

In turn, CarePartners Foundation would like to honor Blaine Killian’s contributions to the Hospice community. And it’s impossible to pay tribute to Blaine without also doing the same for his wife, Karen.

Beginning in the early years when we were called Mountain Area Hospice, Blaine and Karen became dedicated to the Hospice movement being established in our community. In the late ’80s they helped plan and orchestrate Hospice’s first major fundraiser, Super Flea, which quickly grew into a gigantic annual rummage sale. The Killians provided encouragement, solicited donations, and promoted the concept into reality. A wildly popular success, Super Flea ultimately lead to the opening of CarePartners first thrift store in Biltmore Square Mall.

Blaine Killian was the behind-the-scenes force throughout the 26-year run of the Festival of Trees, a CarePartners holiday fundraiser. In the mall, in the late-night hours before Thanksgiving, Blaine rolled out Christmas trees, setup fencing, and laid down hundreds of yards of artificial snow so that the lavishly decorated display could be unveiled to the public the day after Thanksgiving.

In tandem with the Festival of Trees, the Killians ran the Holiday Gift Wrap fundraiser, a gift-wrapping service manned by volunteers that raised thousands of dollars for Hospice. Every detail of that event was orchestrated by Karen and Blaine. They ordered the wrapping paper and supplies, set up the booth and hung banners, recruited the volunteers, and accounted for each day’s proceeds. They were tireless.

Presently, the Killians are active in one of CarePartners most savored events—Cookie Night. Twice a month, volunteers gather in the family kitchen of CarePartners Solace Center to bake homemade cookies for patients and their loved ones. Karen is a lead project volunteer, and Blaine is a chief cookie maker. In Keebler elf fashion, they don aprons, mix recipes, time the batches, and stack fresh-baked cookies onto platters. Families talk about Cookie Night for days afterwards. The home-like atmosphere and aroma offers normality to the lives of patients and families who enjoy interacting with the volunteers, and the cookies!

Beyond their volunteer commitments for fundraisers and events, Blaine and Karen have also established and organized their own fundraising event for Hospice, an annual golf tournament supporting CarePartners Hospice services. The tournament is in its seventh year. Last year the Winston Pulliam Memorial Classic raised over $24,000 for Hospice.

For practically all the years that CarePartners Hospice has been in existence, Karen and Blaine have dedicated themselves by volunteering uncounted hours, recruiting friends and family to volunteer, raising thousands of dollars, baking zillions of cookies, and unrolling miles of wrapping paper. CarePartners Foundation is grateful for the supportive role the Killians have played in the story of hospice in our community. Their dedication has truly enriched our community. Thank you, Blaine and Karen!
Growing Caring and Compassion in Western North Carolina

Perhaps the best part of being involved with CarePartners Foundation is the joy of meeting new people in the communities CarePartners Health Services serves and hearing their stories of compassion and caring. As CarePartners Health Services has grown, with Hospice and Home Care programs now in Macon, Transylvania, and McDowell counties, the role of the Foundation has also grown. I have found that each community is unique and different and each loves and holds dear their local programs. Our responsibility is to work with those programs and the folks who donate and support them.

We are now working to build strong relationships in Macon, Transylvania, and McDowell counties to demonstrate that CarePartners Foundation is a grassroots, community-driven foundation, not only concerned with the work of CarePartners Health Services, but also the people who live in each county. That is why we have decided to support local high school students with scholarships as they move into healthcare careers. In addition, we look to collaborate with community agencies working to improve the health and well-being of people in Western North Carolina.

The stories that you will read in this edition of Milestones demonstrates the importance of how our grants have touched the lives of CarePartners patients, families, and staff in countless ways. Whether it has been for equipment, operational support, capital projects, or education the Foundation has strived to always find a way to generate the financial support needed. Through donations, rental income, our retail operations, and investments we are able to make sure that CarePartners Services of Rehabilitation, Home Care, Hospice, and Adult Care will be available in Western North Carolina.

The generosity of our many donors and volunteers make the work of the foundation possible. Thank you for your investment and know that 100% of your donations will stay in our local communities.

SCOTT W. BUCHANAN
President & CEO
CarePartners Foundation
In the past three years Keri Hogan has gotten to know a lot about CarePartners and its services. “I am constantly and consistently in awe by the level of professionalism and care that radiates from each area of this company,” Keri says in a letter recounting the ways CarePartners has touched her life and the lives of her family.

Keri’s initial encounter with CarePartners came soon after her mother passed away. Keri learned that CarePartners would offer bereavement counseling to her and her family. “I had no idea such services existed,” says Keri as she recounts how her daughter met with a bereavement counselor as a way to work through her grandmother’s death. “Her time there was a huge benefit to her ability to cope with such a tragedy and gave her an outlet to learn and grow.”

During that time, Keri learned about the services provided by CarePartners Adult Care. With her mother’s passing, Keri’s aunt became her responsibility. Keri knew her aunt needed a social outlet and a place to make friends, but it was impossible for Keri to meet these needs by herself.

CarePartners Adult Care, with facilities in Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania counties, provides a safe, stimulating daytime environment for aging and impaired adults. Her aunt receives a stipend to be in the program and CarePartners helped the family find an adult advocate who assists Keri in getting her aunt to activities and appointments. According to Keri, her aunt is flourishing—“Her time at CarePartners Adult Care each week is the highlight of her life. I get FULL reports on the great food, outings, activities, and friends she has there!” Keri adds that her aunt’s advocate “has become a friend and treats my aunt like family.”

Last March, Keri’s father suffered a stroke and was hospitalized. Eventually the discussion of where to go for in-patient rehabilitation came up. When CarePartners was presented as an option, Keri’s immediate response was “Yes!” Keri reports that the 21 days her father spent in-patient rehab proved to be life-saving. “The level of knowledge and expertise in the nurses, therapists, and especially the CNAs was reassuring and uplifting,” Keri says.

After in-patient care her father transitioned to Home Health care, then to out-patient Rehabilitation—utilizing CarePartners services the entire time to meet his needs.

“I cannot tell you the peace each therapist brought with each visit,” says Keri, “and they continue to do so.” She goes on to say, “From the scheduling, to case managers, to housekeeping and beyond, each person is friendly, accommodating, comforting and welcoming.”

As an administrator for Henderson County Public Schools, Keri Hogan knows the importance of attention to detail and the nurturing benefits of connecting with the people one serves. “CarePartners goes above and beyond the norm,” declares Keri.

In October, Keri’s sister-in-law “took her last breath at the Hospice Solace Center,” Keri says, as she recounts the most recent life event when CarePartners served her family. “The nurses and staff made this difficult time more tolerable.” She recalls how she and her family had many discussions “about the wonderful care patients and their families receive at the Hospice Solace Center.”

Keri even remarked on CarePartners physical assets—the buildings that house their services, their surroundings, and their maintenance. She says, “CarePartners’ facilities in Asheville and Hendersonville are always clean and well kept,” adding, “There is a level of beauty, serenity, and adaptability that shows high expectations and priority toward excellence.” That’s notable praise coming from an institutional administrator such as herself.

Keri Hogan closes her letter, saying “I wish I could list each and every staff member that has touched my life and that of my family’s and buy them a “beer” or give them a raise! But there are just too many and they all have been wonderful. So, congratulations on a business well done. I can only say keep those high standards, because they are noticed and appreciated by many, especially by me.”
Retail Operations Moves Into New Space

With no room left to grow, a warehouse next door offers a “blank slate” to create an ideal operations center for CarePartners Foundation Thrift Stores and Estate Sales Services.

On December 1, in order to expand its capabilities, CarePartners Foundation Thrift Store and Estate Sales Services ended regular operations at 105 Fairview Road. It was the end of one chapter, the beginning of another. Six years prior they had moved from a small store in Biltmore Square Mall into the sprawling industrial site—a former dry cleaning operation—in order to expand the thrift store and add estate sale services.

“The old space served us well over the years, and it felt like home for many of us,” says Skip Wade, Retail Operations Director for CarePartners Foundation, “but it was patched together from several buildings—some without HVAC.” He explained that Estate Sales quickly ran out of space to store all the furniture and housewares it receives, so merchandise had to be moved between rented storage trailers and warehouses around town.

“At the time we realized our space was blocking our ability to grow and streamline,” says Wade, “a super-sized warehouse became available right next door.” The idea of a massive renovation and relocation seemed daunting at first, but everyone embraced the exciting challenge of turning a blank slate into the ideal Thrift Store and Estate Sales showroom.

It was a big project and it had to move quickly. The front of the building, which had been divided into offices, would become the thrift store but first the walls and ceilings had to be removed. Today it’s an open, light-filled showroom. New display fixtures were added, old fixtures were painted, and efficient LED lighting and HVAC were installed throughout the building.

Behind the thrift store showroom, a large stockroom was built around existing warehouse shelving. Staff and volunteers love the new stockroom—it’s organized by department and everyone can work in the same area. Most importantly, the stockroom’s storage capacity turned what seemed a hindrance into an asset. Skip explains: “The thrift store is a bit smaller than before, but with a large stockroom we can pre-price merchandise and have it ready to restock shelves as soon as there’s space.” Skip estimates that the new thrift store is selling 50% more merchandise with 25% less store space.

Above the stockroom, a loft space was reconfigured for offices. The large, open area is divided into individual work spaces, a meeting space, volunteer work areas, and an area to photograph merchandise to sell on-line.

The rest of the building—the largest portion—houses Estate Sales operations. A building-wide fence that separates the storage area from the showroom doubles as a gallery wall for hanging artwork. Existing shelving along the outside wall serves as double-decker bins to display lightweight furniture, like chairs and small tables.

“A huge benefit of moving into a warehouse is inheriting its loading docks,” Skip says, “The massive garage doors are great! Now we can pull our trucks and vans inside to load or unload merchandise without freezing or getting wet.”

The Grand Re-opening at 75 Fairview Road took place on February 17 with a highly anticipated Estate Sale. Skip sums up the move by saying, “We’re a lot more visible here. Now people can see our building and its big, colorful sign from Fairview Road. We added another sign on the side you can see from Sweeten Creek Road.” “We get a lot more traffic in the thrift store than before—our sales have increased greatly!”

Top: Front of the new building soon after moving in. Center: Inside the bright and open thrift store. Bottom: View of Estate Sales’ showroom from the office loft.
Marion Thrift Store Turns One

Opened in August of 2016 to support Hospice, the Marion thrift store joined CarePartners Foundation’s Retail Operations in October. The store continues to fulfill its commitment to raise funds for Hospice.

Located directly beside Tractor Supply at 417 North Main Street, the 8,000 square foot thrift store offers a large selection of home goods, including furniture, appliances, books, housewares, clothing, and more.

Lovingly dubbed “the Macy’s of Marion” by shoppers in the area, the store was voted 2017’s “Best Thrift Store” and “Best Used Furniture Store” by readers of The McDowell News. The Hospice Thrift Store of Marion operates with generous help from volunteers and donations from the community. Store hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and closed on Sunday.

Small Contributions Add Up

“If people believe in an organization and give on a regular basis, it really adds up and makes a difference,” Max says, explaining how he and Tharesa have been able to sustain a legacy of giving. In return, Max and Tharesa have seen the difference their gifts make to CarePartners.

Pop-Up Estate Sales in Brevard

In July, CarePartners Foundation Retail Operations staged two pop-up estate sales in Brevard, North Carolina. The sales space, just across from Brevard Elementary School, was filled with items both times, then quickly emptied. The enthusiastic staff and volunteers of CarePartners Home Care & Hospice of Transylvania County helped spread the word and pitched in to help on sale days.

Hat’s off to everyone in Transylvania County who supported this special event to raise funds for Hospice.

Max and Tharesa Owenby started giving to CarePartners and Hospice in 2000 when a beloved uncle received hospice services at The Solace Center. The experience impressed them. They were moved by the kind, considerate staff and volunteers, and by the comfort and support patients and their loved ones received. Over the years, as other family members received CarePartners Hospice services, Max and Tharesa witnessed the same good work, reinforcing their commitment to support Hospice. Because of their ongoing support of Hospice, the Owenby’s monthly gifts amount to an impressive sum.

“If people believe in an organization and give on a regular basis, it really adds up and makes a difference,” Max says, explaining how he and Tharesa have been able to sustain a legacy of giving. In return, Max and Tharesa have seen the difference their gifts make to CarePartners.

Married for 46 years, the Owenbys met when Max was 13 and Tharesa was 10. They both attended Reynolds High School, then Max went into the Navy where he was stationed in Vietnam for a year. They were wed in 1971. The Buncombe County natives ventured away from home when Max took a job in Arkansas, living there five years, and for a 10-year stint in South Carolina. In 2014 the couple retired from their careers—Max in manufacturing, Tharesa in mortgage loans—to return home and live on property in Fairview that’s been in Tharesa’s family for three generations.

Over the past 17 years, Max and Tharesa have educated themselves about CarePartners’ range of services. Max explains that he recently was a patient in Occupational Therapy and that his therapist was kind, patient, considerate and offered wonderful guidance for equipment he needed to purchase. During that experience Max says he saw for himself how well-cared for patients are. The couple also say that friends tell them positive things about their experiences with CarePartners. Max declares that CarePartners is “the perfect name,” that the organization “is a caring partner in people’s lives.”

Max and Tharesa’s generosity and community mindedness extends to supporting other organizations they believe do good work. Their church, Trinity of Fairview, is very important to them as well. They are part of a small group of church members who go to CarePartners Hospice Solace Center twice a year to provide meals to the patients and families and to offer prayers. The couple also donates to CarePartners Hospice Thrift Store—they enjoy shopping there as well.

When not tending their property in Fairview, Tharesa and Max enjoy working crossword puzzles together.
A Day at the Dragon Boat Races

CarePartners’ inaugural event rallies enthusiastic participation.

CarePartners Foundation’s inaugural dragon boat race was held Saturday, June 24 on Lake Julian in Arden, North Carolina. The colorful event drew a crowd of over 700, including 13 teams, their friends and families, and enthusiastic dragon boat spectators.

**Dragon Boats and Races**

“What’s a dragon boat,” you ask? Good question. Derived from a Chinese boating tradition going back over 2,000 years, dragon boats like the ones used in the race are 46 feet long with seats for 20 paddlers in 10 rows. Perched in front of a boat, a drummer faces the rowers and beats out paddling rhythms. In back stands a steerer who holds the rudder and sometimes belts out instructions. The ends of the vessels are fitted with decorative Chinese dragon heads and tails.

Dragon boat racing is the fastest growing water sport in the United States. On any given day a race is taking place somewhere. The sport is open to all skill levels—even folks who don’t consider themselves athletes enjoy participating.

**The Event**

This year’s Drums & Dragons event hosted 13 teams, five of which were organized from departments within CarePartners and two from Mission Health. Other participants were Symmetry Financial Group, Hard Exercise Works fitness center, and The Laurels of GreenTree Ridge. Regional teams were Healing Dragons of Lake James and Healing Dragons of Charlotte.

Teams paddled three rounds of matches to compete for ranking. Topping the three rounds was the WaveHearts, bringing home the Gold to CarePartner’s Orthotics and Prosthetics. The Silver went to the Hard Exercise Works team, and the Bronze to Symmetry Financial’s team This is How we Row.

Captain for the Gold team, Wilder LaFond, described the WaveHearts as “quite a mix!” He said, “Half the team was from staff, the rest came from family and friends, plus one random guy off the dock who volunteered to fill in for a no-show.” Wilder added, “I liked his t-shirt that appeared to be hand-written with a Sharpie marker.” The back read, “1939 Model ‘And Still Running’.” LaFond, who is director of CarePartners’ Orthotics and Prosthetics department, went on to say, “I’m most excited we had four O&P patients on-board.”

The event stimulated a surge of enthusiasm for next year’s race from sponsors and teams alike. Ideas are already circulating for next year’s event.
**Summer Golf Tournament**

CarePartners Foundation 2nd Annual Winston Pulliam Memorial Classic

A favorite summer event now in its seventh year, the CarePartners Foundation Golf Tournament takes place at the beautiful Etowah Valley Golf and Resort on Thursday, August 17, 2017. The CarePartners Foundation would like to thank Rusty Pullman and Pulliam Properties for sponsoring the tournament. Pulliam Properties’ support over the last two years has been tremendous. Over the past five years the tournament has raised over $112,000 to support CarePartners Hospice and Palliative Care.

**Mustangs for Hospice**

Blue Ridge Mustang Club Rides Again for Hospice and Palliative Care.

If you see a long line of Mustangs in your rear-view mirror, or passing in tandem on the road between Hendersonville and Mount Mitchell, you’ll know it’s time for the Blue Ridge Mustang Club of Asheville’s 10th Annual Car Show and Pony Run. The weekend event takes place Saturday and Sunday, August 19 and 20 and benefits CarePartners Hospice & Palliative Care.

The car show takes place Saturday at Four Seasons Ford—an event sponsor—located at 601 Duncan Hill Road, Hendersonville, North Carolina. The Pony Run commences the next day at Four Seasons Ford when the drivers line up and head up the Parkway to Mount Mitchell.

Each year, the Blue Ridge Mustang Club and their volunteers do an extraordinary job facilitating the event. Last year the club raised over $15,000 for Hospice! It’s quite an experience to see a herd of vintage and new mustangs assembled all in one place. So head out and take in the show and rally!