

Embracing **H**OPE.  
**35**  
 YEARS

# Sharing 35 Stories to Help Tell Ours

By Ann Gauthreaux

Jaden, Miriam, Tricia, Ben, Vonda, and Marketia. It is my privilege to introduce you to these six gracious people who all have one thing in common—a connection to Hospice & Palliative CareCenter. They represent 35 people who are sharing part of their story, so that you might better understand ours.

2014 marks Hospice & Palliative CareCenter's 35 years of service to our community, and yet, after caring for generations of families, there are still many people who don't fully understand the benefits of our care. Perhaps by reading some of the 35 stories we are sharing, you will get to know us better and know where to turn if you or a loved one is ever in need.

As the first hospice in the state, we admitted North Carolina's very first hospice patient in 1979. It must have been a leap of faith for them to reach out at such a vulnerable time. After all, hospice was a new approach to healthcare at end of life. The movement was just beginning nationally and in North Carolina. It changed the way people thought about living their final months. Hospice care was a new alternative that offered patients a choice to embrace quality of life rather than enduring futile treatments and dying in hospitals. Hospice made it possible for patients to be at home, with holistic care designed to support them and their family—medically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

As we commemorate our 35th year, we remind our community that when curative treatment for serious illness is no longer effective, there is still much we can do. That's why Hospice & Palliative CareCenter exists. With Hospice, you can embrace hope. Hope to live fully and comfortably at home, making lasting memories with those who matter most. This was the guiding principle 35 years ago, and it remains the same today.

Sitting knee-to-knee and hearing their stories has been a gift. I've been touched by their strength and resiliency, and I've been reminded why I so eagerly wanted to join this organization 20 years ago. We chose to commemorate this milestone with one primary goal: to share the stories of 35 people who know first-hand what it feels like to reach out to Hospice & Palliative CareCenter, so that you get to know us better. Please don't hesitate to reach out for help, hope and support—we are just a phone call away.



"My favorite part about Camp Carousel was when we tied the note to the balloon and let it go. My note said, 'Miss you and wish you were here.' But my grandpa is in a better place now and I accept that and feel better." - Jaden Pledger



"I was growing very tired of watching people who were nearing the end of their life being filled with fluids and doing CPR on them. I decided I was ready for a change and wanted to help make people comfortable at home in familiar surroundings. Working for Hospice allows me to do what I love—caring for people." - Tricia Zylstra



"My first call was to Hospice. They helped me through the entire process. Our Chaplain spoke Spanish—and even though the others didn't, mom was very comfortable with them. I felt like I could pick up the phone and call night or day. They were always there for me—until the last moment. They are there when you need them the most." - Miriam Hernandez



"Hospice helped us know what to expect. We didn't have to worry about my mom because Hospice was taking care of my grandmother—and that was a relief to my mom. I know my mom really liked the nurses and it felt like we were all in good hands with Hospice." - Ben Bryant



"I am grateful to Hospice that we were able to fulfill my father's wishes of being at home. And for honoring my father's final wishes to be with his family. He was at peace knowing we were there for him—and that Hospice was there for all of us." - Vonda Henderson



"All of these 8 years working with Hospice have been so rewarding—just a blessing. I love what I do because it's so personal and makes a difference—it's an honor. It's a very vulnerable time for patients and families. But we are there to build trust and provide comfort during crucial moments." - Marketia Street

To see the faces and hear the 35 stories of those who have been touched by Hospice care, visit [www.hospicecarecenter.org](http://www.hospicecarecenter.org). For more information about Hospice & Palliative CareCenter, Kate B. Reynolds Hospice Home and any of the programs and services offered, call 336-768-3972.