



(910) 457-5300

Coastal Companion Care Communicator

5101 Southport/Supply Road SE, Southport, NC 28461
101 Southport/Supply Road SE, Southport, NC 28461



Mike Ramsey watches over Danielle Bond, pre-school daughter of CCC Employee Lori Bond.

What's in a Name? The "Care" Counts.

One administrator of another local in-home care company, obviously impressed by Coastal Companion Care, asked a CCC caregiver: "What's their secret over there?" Her two-word response came quickly: "They care."

CEO Mike Ramsey leads from the heart and teaches through example the importance of caring. He doesn't hesitate to jump right in. "If I don't do it, how can I expect caregivers to do it?"

Sometimes Mike is called into service at 2 in the morning to sit at the side of a hospital patient. In another situation when he filled in for a caregiver, he helped a man shave and exercise. Mike noticed the windows were dirty, so he washed them.

Mike acknowledges that his approach toward leading Coastal

Companion Care is greatly influenced by his work as a pastor. He recalls when he served a congregation of 450 people. He could look out at those in the pews, or look at the cars in the parking lot, and tell who was missing.

The names of those missing were placed on lists and distributed to other parishioners who contacted – by a card, a call, a visit – the parishioners who hadn't been in attendance for a suspicious number of weeks.

"Look, pastor! I got three cards!" one older member exclaimed. Mike asserts, "We can teach people to care."

The "pastor CEO" also believes that an important aspect of his job is to "make it easier on the caregiver." That's one reason CCC owns two vehicles. Mike explains: "If a caregiver has car trouble, she uses the company car. That way she won't miss her hours and the client will be taken care of."

A true servant-leader, Mike recognizes that CCC employees balance multiple roles and lead busy lives. No one knows that better than Lori Bond, on-call scheduler/administrator, whose daughters are welcome in the office.

In fact, everyone is welcome. Stop by and learn more about us.

**To the world
you may be
just one person,
but to one person
you are the world.**

The Welcome Sign

Most caregivers agree that the hardest part of the job is losing the person you have grown to love. In just one week Clare went from troubling symptoms, to urgent care, to the emergency room, hospitalization, and to the hospice facility where she took her last breath.

None of us were prepared to lose this under-five-foot Italian dynamo who never hesitated speaking her mind "good, bad or otherwise," as she'd often say. Her constant plea, said with frustration, tears or both: "I want to go home!"

Home was always in New York, and in the last months of Clare's life, home was in her Brooklyn neighborhood with her long gone loved ones -- mother, father, brothers and sisters, and Skip, her childhood friend, sweetheart, husband and the love of her life for 80 years.

Her second day of hospitalization, Clare closed her eyes and never opened them again. She did not eat. She did not speak. She lay peacefully without moving. Family came from Michigan, New York, and Virginia. Clare's daughter arranged 24-hour care from Coastal, and we all took our turns around the clock, caressing and comforting and scurrying off for the nurse when hearing a strange beep from the monitors that kept Clare tethered to this world. We all talked to Clare.

As I paced near her bedside during
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FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES

Living on Less

AARP North Carolina finds that financial security may be a key concern of older North Carolinians. Near a third age 65 and over rely on Social Security for 80 percent of their income. Many are delaying retirement and are concerned about their jobs. Income drops dramatically after age 65. The median house-hold income for those in NC who are 65 and older is \$33,749, the sixth lowest average in the country.

The “Care Gap”

Millions of men and women at midlife are assuming the care-giving of their parents, even giving up their paid work for unpaid caregiving. Today there are seven potential caregivers per frail older person. By 2050 there will be fewer than three.

AARP Public Policy Institute concludes: “Supply of family caregivers is unlikely to keep pace with future demand.” Over the next decade, the demand for family caregiver jobs is projected to increase by 48 percent, requiring 1.6 million new positions by 2020.

The fastest-growing direct-care occupation is personal care aides, yet wages for these workers have declined by 5 percent in the last decade. Doris Seavey, director of policy research at the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, underscores the importance of investing in a 21st-century caregiving infra-structure: “Aging isn’t just about the elderly anymore; caregivers face challenges greater than what most families can be expected to manage alone.”

(Excerpted from AARP Bulletin, December 2013)



No Countries Are Ready to Support Older Citizens

A global study released by the United Nations in October 2013 revealed that the world is not ready for an aging population.

The report ranks the social and economic well-being of older people in 91 countries. Sweden comes out on top, and Afghanistan is at the bottom. The year 2050 will mark the first time in history that people over 60 years will outnumber children younger than 15.

The Global Watch Index was created by global elder advocacy groups to collect data on income, health, education, employment and age-friendly environments in each country.

The fastest aging countries, all which rank in the bottom half of the ratings, are developing ones, such as Jordan, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua and Vietnam where the number of older people will more than triple by 2050.

Many countries do not provide income, health care and housing for their senior citizens.

Afghanistan, for example, offers no old age pension to those not in the government. Men’s life expectancy is 59 years, and women’s is 61 years, compared to a global average of 68 for men and 72 for women, according to U.N. data.

That means that Abdul Wasay, age 75, who is a former cook and

blacksmith, spends his days trying to sell toothbrushes and toothpaste on a street corner in Kabul’s main market. He nets just \$6 a day, barely enough to support his wife and to buy meat twice a month.

“It’s difficult because my knees are weak and I can’t really stand for a long time,” he says.

His knees are weak but he can’t afford treatment even though government hospitals are free. Wasay complains that they provide little treatment and hardly any medicine.

Many older people cannot find work because they are not strong enough for day labor. Some resort to begging.

“You have to keep working no matter how old you are – no one is rich enough to stop,” Wasay says. “Life is very difficult.”

(By Kristen Gelineau, The Associated Press, excerpted from The Middletown Press & West Hartford News, October 2013)

Caregiver Buddies

Those caring for an older parent often feel isolated and exhausted from managing two households.

AARP Foundation is piloting Connecting Caregivers to Community (CC2C), a program to find and train buddies for family caregivers who manage the care of a parent or other older family member. Buddies listen, offer spiritual support, provide suggestions about resources that might be useful for caregivers, and encourage caregivers to care for themselves.

Volunteer caregiver buddies attend training sessions to learn about the emotional and physical challenges faced by caregivers. Once trained, they are matched with a caregiver to be a buddy.

Pilot sites for CC2C are Raleigh, NC; Chicago; Humble, Texas; and Washington, D.C.



SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

AARP Health Tips

AARP emphasizes that the fundamentals for a healthy heart have not changed: healthy diet; regular exercise; weight loss if needed.

Heart disease strikes more Americans than any other condition. Here are four more ways to help you live a longer, healthier life.

Look on the bright side

Researchers at Harvard recently reported that optimism and positive emotions may prevent heart problems. People who believe good things will happen often make healthier lifestyle choices. When you encounter tough times, here are questions to ask.

- ▶ How have I grown from facing this challenge?
- ▶ What new skills have I learned?
- ▶ Are my relationships stronger as a result?

Clear the air

Daily you breathe invisible particles that harm your heart. Air pollution increases your risk of heart problems.

Inhaled pollutants irritate your lungs and the vessels around your heart. For those who already have heart problems, a few hours of exposure can trigger heart attacks, heart failure, and strokes. Even healthy hearts sustain damage from air pollutants over time.

If news reports warn of air pollution, stay indoors.

Take a Stand

Regular workouts are beneficial, but what you do the rest of the day matters. Too much sedentary time appears to create heart risks, even if you exercise.

Move your legs around regularly to help blood flow freely so that your body can clear harmful fats from your arteries and control blood glucose

If you watch TV, stand up during commercials.

If you read, stretch your legs after each chapter.

Wear a pedometer. Aim for 10,000 steps a day. A day when you've taken less than 5,000 steps is a sedentary day.

Manage your stress

When you are under stress, your heart rate and blood pressure go up. These changes help you respond in an emergency. That's the good

news. But stress that lingers from financial and health problems, for example, never lets up. Help yourself through tough times by building caring social networks; watching a funny movie to make you laugh; and, as needed, seeing a mental health professional.

Cocoa Helps Memory

A Harvard University study revealed that drinking two cups of cocoa a day for 30 days significantly improved memory of older adults. Cocoa drinking boosted blood flow to the brain, particularly in those whose flow was impaired. Spices help.

- ▶ If you add cinnamon, it moderates blood pressure.
- ▶ Add chili powder to calm arthritis. It may ease headaches and help with insulin control in those with diabetes.
- ▶ Add peppermint to aid Digestion.



Mary Grande (above) brightens her day by visiting Community in Schools (CIS) thrift shop in Southport. The CIS mission is "to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life." Thrift shop proceeds help fund CIS programs and services.

Facing Death Gracefully

Most Americans are not comfortable talking about death. A caregiver is sometimes caught in a bind if the person she is caring for wants to talk but family members want to remain quiet.

A Philadelphia design group invented a card game to help people open up before it's too late. "My Gift of Grace, a Conversation Game for Living and Dying Well" is a card deck of 47 questions to get friends and family talking about funerals, disability, forgiveness, and philosophy.

The game, created by two palliative-care experts, doesn't just ask about pain and suffering, as many legal documents do. It also asks about positive experiences that can give meaning to our last months. The game focuses on the personal, experiential side of caring for another. It's great for playing with family, strangers, someone you're planning to marry, friends, patients, and co-workers.

The group that invented the game thought about where families talk: the kitchen or dining room table. The creators thought about familiar activities that facilitate conversation. That's when they thought of cards.

One of the frequently asked questions about the game is "What kinds of questions will I have to answer?" The website explains: There are questions about your views and values about life, death, and dying.

The questions are not simple. Some examples: "Think of the last disagreement your family had. How was it resolved?" "If you had one day to say you were sorry to anyone you wanted before you died, who would be first?" "Write your own epitaph in five words or less."

There are practical questions, too, about cremation vs. burial, who should get your stuff, what you'd like in the memorial service, and whom you want to make decisions if you can't.

Ira Byock, a nationally known palliative-care expert, thinks that many people have a "veneer of denial and avoidance" when it comes to discussing death, but inside, they're actually quite eager. Sharing their thoughts, he said, can help them and the people they love. "It truly is a gift to give one another," he said. "The conversation itself is a gift that will keep on giving at some of the most difficult times."

(Excerpted from *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12/30/13 and www.mygiftofgrace.com)

The Sign

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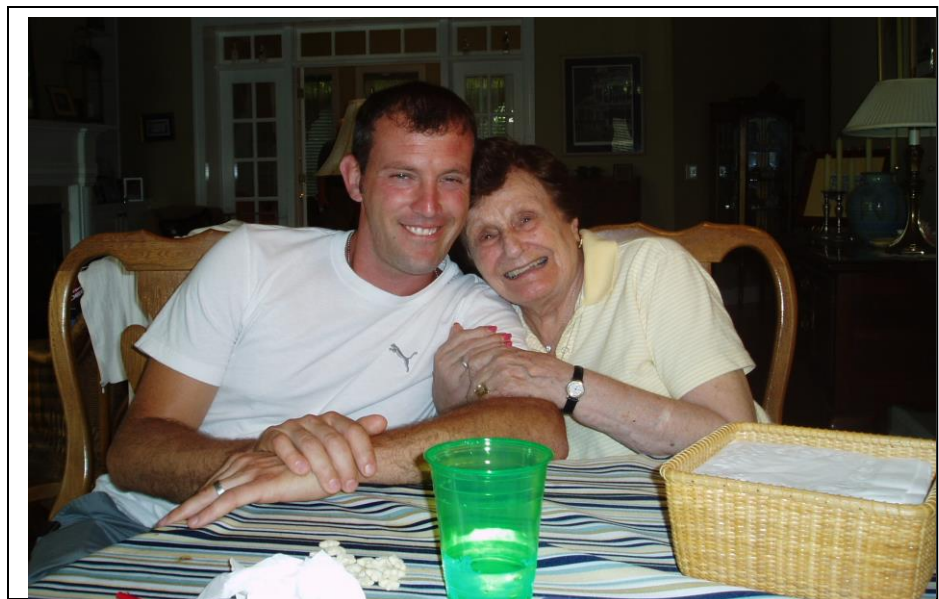
one nocturnal shift, I said, "Okay, Clare. You are getting your wish. You are going home. Your family is waiting for you. When you get up there, send me a sign and let me know you are at peace. I don't care how you tell me. I'll know. Just send me a sign."

Two days later Clare died. I eased my grief and closed this chapter by helping clear out her house; by packing many of her clothes for thrift store drop-off. I took bags of clothes home to sort, to check for spots, to launder as needed. As I gathered up the last batch of Clare's clothes from the laundry room counter, I heard a "clink" on the floor.

I bent down to pick up a small coin the size of a quarter; a "blessing" coin Clare usually carried in her wallet. Engraved on each side of the coin was an angel. It was the sign.

"Thank you, Clare," I whispered. "Thank you."

(By Jane Edwards in loving memory of Clare Fiori Molinari, 9/26/20 to 1/10/14).



Clare Molinari with her grandson Matthew, spring 2013