

20
YEARS



The Virginia Thurston

Healing Garden Cancer Support Center

Providing education and therapeutic services to those affected by cancer



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

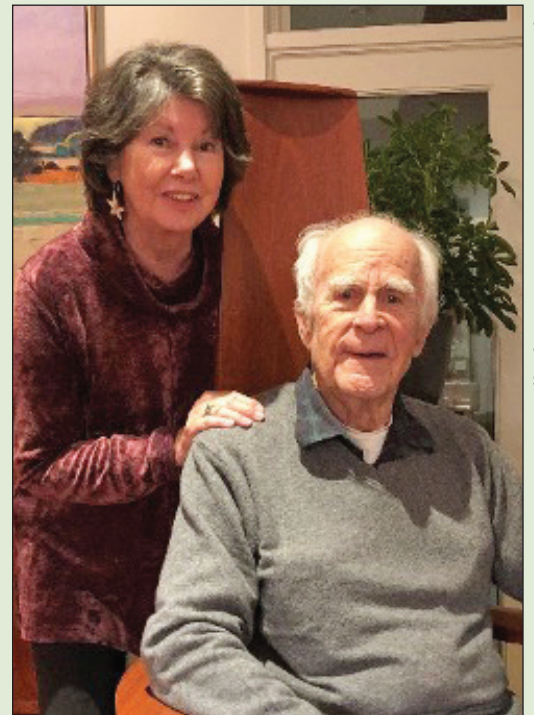
Dear Friends and Supporters,

What a year this has been! As we launched into FY20, the Healing Garden had high hopes to enjoy the celebration of 20 years since our founding- 20 years of growth, of hope and healing. We gathered photos and memorabilia to document happy, fulfilling work, and the many faces of clients, donors, staff and volunteers who have played such a big part in becoming who we are today.

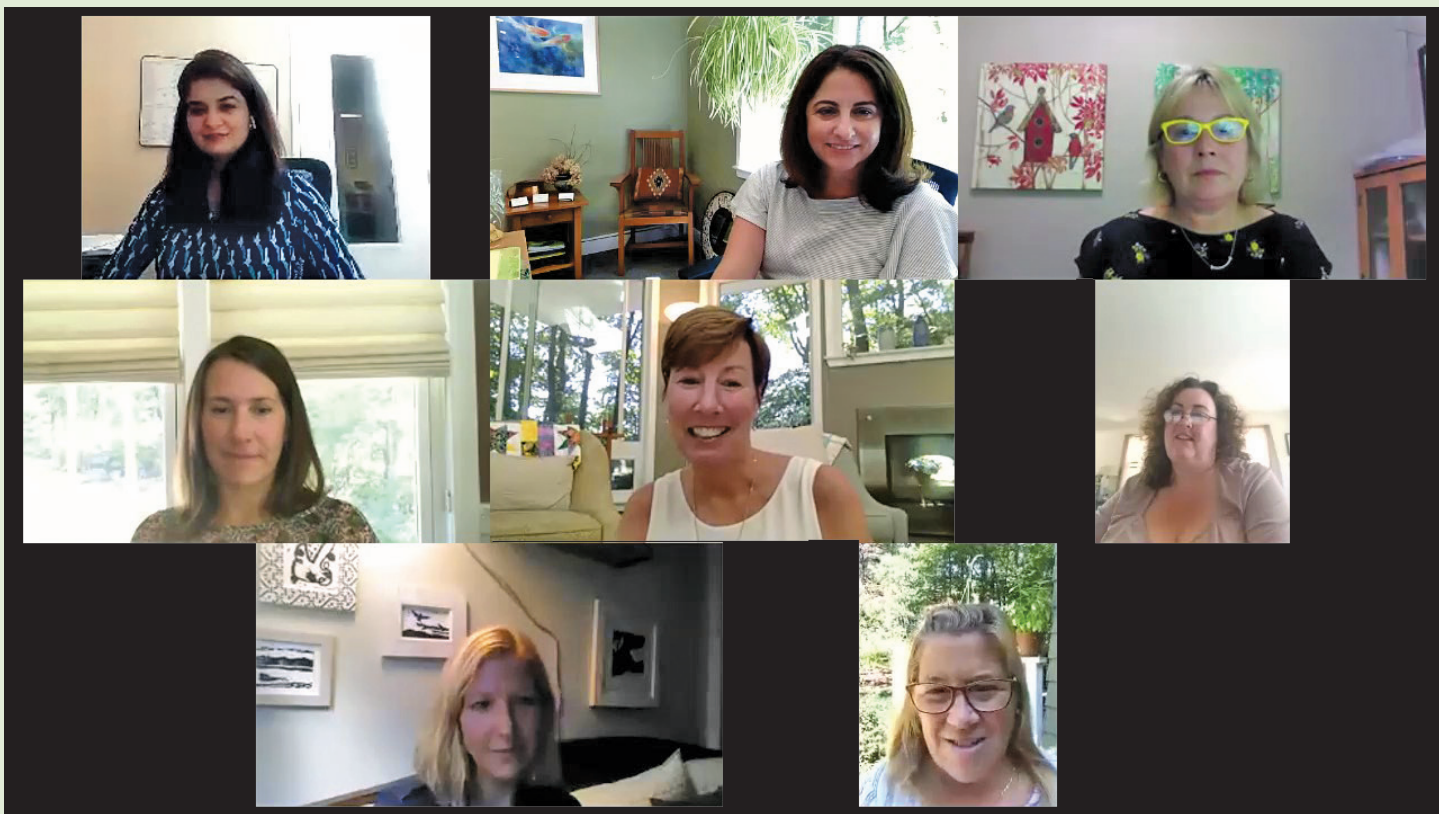
And then, the pandemic hit, and slowly we had to abandon our plans to be together at the Healing Garden providing support, and at our Gala to celebrate our Anniversary.

In true form, though, as often happens here at the Healing Garden, out of the darkness emerged a beautiful light! Several Foundations, Corporations, and charitable entities granted the Healing Garden COVID-19 emergency funds, helping to defray the loss of income from the canceled in-person Gala. Vendors were quick to help us set up our HIPAA compliant technology to take our programs and services online without missing a beat. As a matter of fact, not only did we continue to serve our clients well, our numbers increased and utilization increased by 20%! The needs are greater and we can respond. I am so very proud of the Healing Garden team - this is not an easy way to work, but they are dedicated and giving souls.

So as we wait out this pandemic, I reflect on our 20 years. We owe enormous gratitude to Bill Thurston and Betsy Tyson-Smith for envisioning and creating the Healing Garden- a resource that is so important and needed. We would not have made it if not for the generosity of the **Just 'Cause Walk, the 60-mile, 3-day fundraiser that raised \$1,454,074 over 18 years to support the Healing Garden**. To Tucker Smith, the leader of the army of Garden Volunteers for so many years, and to Jay Bearfield who designed and installed many of the garden water



Bill Thurston & Betsy Tyson Smith



features- thank you! To Rich and Cindy Pellitier and Nashoba Valley Winery who generously host our Galas- thank you! To Susan and Peter Grilli who have always allowed us to enjoy their property- thank you! To Sarah Hindle, the first Board Chair, who presided for 12 years, and was instrumental in launching a successful capital campaign to renovate and expand the facility- thank you! To Pamela Sawyer, our second Board Chair, who was instrumental in expanding our mission beyond women with breast cancer to include all people affected by cancer- thank you!

There are so many more moments and people to celebrate - past and present staff, Board members, Advisory Council members, and donors. To all of you - you have made the Healing Garden what it is. Cheers to the next 20 years!

With joy,

Meg Koch

Margaret Koch
Executive Director
margaret@healinggardensupport.org



When I was first diagnosed with non-small-cell lung cancer in the summer of 2017, what I didn't know about cancer would have shocked you. "Stage IV," my doctor said. "Out of what?" I asked, hoping we were on a 1-to-ten scale. I have learned so much in the last three years, and so much of that learning process--from navigating chemotherapy to spiritual healing--has taken place at the Healing Garden. Perhaps most importantly to me has been my almost three-year participation in the Healing Garden support groups--especially my beloved Metastatic Support Group for others who are stage four cancer patients (that's four out of four, I was chagrined to learn!).

In the Metastatic Support Group, we joke that this is a group you never want to qualify to join, but once you do, you are so grateful to find this amazing, deep resource. We meet weekly or biweekly and the discussions are celebratory when someone is realizing success on his or her treatment plan, completely healing when cancer mutates around the medicine and treatment plans change or simply run out, hilarious because we can talk the talk for real, without fear of judgment (and what passes

for humor in this group is often black, and real, and sorrowful when we lose our beloved fellow travelers as we must.)

When Covid-19 began to shut down the world last March, I knew I was dependent on the lifeline the Healing Garden provided me. Yes, I get massages and take yoga and attend retreats at the Healing Garden, but three years in a support group with a bunch of very ill people have a way of building up a dependence on those forged friendships and the access to the Healing Garden resources. Do you need a ride to MGH? The Healing Garden has a process set up. You need to talk to someone about alternatives to Western Medicine? The Healing Garden can put you in touch with other clients who are exploring those same alternatives. Do you need to work through applying for Disability? Here are some resources. But for me, being held by my group, being seen and understood, with zero pressure to give and 100 percent permission to take, to be honored, to be heard--that has been critical to my healing and my hopefulness. Would Covid-19 shutter those possibilities, especially given how immunocompromised this group is?

Nothing short of miraculous is what actually happened. You heard a lot of complaints as we all got used to Zoom, and one member of our group calls our screenshot--9 to 12 women and our fearless leader, Brianne: the Brady Bunch shot. We have thrived in this environment.

Where before, someone might not have had the energy to get up and get to Harvard for the group, now that person simply shows up, maybe in a robe, maybe dressed up in a hoodie and yoga pants, and participates. Really participates. We have grown and thrived with this technology. I know many clients are participating in classes, yoga, art, nature through Zoom.

One absolutely unanticipated joy has been our ability to stay present with one of our dear friends who recently entered hospice care. She can come to meetings and if she is tired or struggling to speak, no matter. We can shower her with love, talk about all of our concerns, make our dark jokes, and see her laughing with us. We are so honored by being allowed

to participate in any way with her journey, and I believe the Healing Garden will make this technology work in circumstances like this in the future (beyond COVID--can we dream?) so that our most vulnerable clients can continue to access the healing power of the Healing Garden.



The Brown Family Kids.

The 2019 Annual Perennial **WALK AND RIDE TO THRIVE**

was a huge success, raising over **\$90,000!**

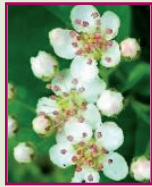
This was our last in-person event prior to COVID-19.



OUR DONORS

On behalf of the clients we serve, we thank you all for helping to provide a unique community of compassionate understanding and support.

Floral Leadership Giving Society



The Healing Garden's Floral Leadership Giving Society recognizes those individuals and corporations who demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the Healing Garden through their accumulated gifts of \$1,000 and above.

Nasturium Giving Society \$10,000 and Above

Anonymous
Charles River Laboratories Inc
Mr. & Mrs. James Conniff
Gazbar Sports Grill
Glassybaby White Light Fund
Mrs. Sarah Hindle
Mr. John Duquette
Middlesex Savings Charitable
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Mr. & Mrs. William Sawyer
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Jasmine Giving Society \$7,500 to \$9,999

Mr. & Mrs. David Martin
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Panek
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Victor

Passionflower Giving Society \$5,000 to \$7,499

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Ms. Gail Hindle
Ms. Ruth Silman & Mr.
Timothy A. Clark
Mr. Paul Wexelblat

Lavender Giving Society \$2,500 to \$4,999

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Hawthorne Giving Society \$1,000 to \$2,499

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& Mr. Russ Cook
Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. William Young
Zheng Zhang
Ms. Marjorie Zychowski



Click & Bid

Auction Item #112



Private gourmet dinner party for 6, hand-crafted by 2017 James Beard Rising Star Nominee and Yvonne Restaurant's Executive Chef, Juan Pedrosa.

Donated by: Marcia & Jim Croyle

The Virginia Thurston Healing Garden
Cancer Support Center

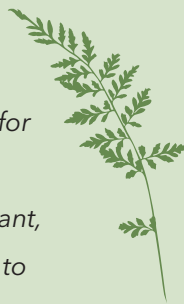
COVID-19 transforms
20th Anniversary Gala into
virtual event with great
success, raising \$45,000!



While the facility has been
closed, the grounds
are open and
nature is still here.
We were able to
enjoy the glory of
meeting in person, at least
part of our year.



Healing Garden
clients became
volunteer drivers for
Expect Miracles
Transportation Grant,
reducing barriers to
access care.



Volunteers, including Anne
Marie Hershberger, Carolyn
Copp and Tina Flaherty were
busing making masks for
client households.



Support arrives in many ways,
including Girls Scout Cookies for
clients from our local
Brownie troop.



Steward of Hope 2020

The Healing Garden is delighted to appoint Sarah Hindle the 2020 Steward of Hope award recipient. The award celebrates an individual whose contributions exemplify compassion, dignity, generosity, and love. "For two decades, Sarah has tirelessly worked to support the mission of the Healing Garden; to provide education and therapeutic programs and services to improve quality of life for all those affected by cancer. She is a delight to work with and is so very generous. I have had the privilege to work under her leadership as Chair of our Board, and now as the recipient of her sage advice and example of grace" remarks Meg Koch, Executive Director.

Sarah was raised in Oak Park, Illinois, attended public high school, and enjoyed her father's gentleman's farm on weekends, and summers

on Crystal Lake in Michigan. She attributes her interests in volunteerism to her work with the Junior Service League working with inner-city underserved youth in Chicago, her connections to her church, a summer camp based on Christian ideals, and her parents who were very philanthropic and



shared their passion with her. Sarah understood at an early age that "we should be there for others".

Like Sarah, Win Hindle supported the Healing Garden, making a final bequest that the Healing Garden Board, with Sarah's family's approval, became the foundational gift used to start the Hindle Legacy Giving Society initiating a Healing Garden Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation of North Central MA.

Sarah takes no personal credit but was instrumental over many years for growing the organization, increasing the Board, driving a successful capital campaign, and expanding the mission to be as inclusive as it is today. When asked what message Sarah wants others to think about, she replies "Live gently, work from your heart, observe nature and all that it can offer you in lessons, and listen." With six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, and a legacy of charity, volunteerism, and activism, Sarah exudes the qualities that make her the Healing Garden's Steward of Hope recipient for FY 2021.

**The Hindle Legacy
Giving Society
honors those who
have included the
Healing Garden in
their estate plan:**

Mr. Win Hindle

Ms. Carol Ehrlich

Mr. & Mrs. Dana Koch



Generous Matching Gift Raises Endowment Funds

Diagnosed in 1991, after many years of living with her cancer under control, Chris Way came to the Healing Garden when her cancer spread and there was no cure. She needed to navigate the journey of endless rounds of chemotherapy, radiation, and eventually clinical trials. She arrived at the Healing Garden

looking for support and tested the waters with Yoga, journaling, Tai Chi, and Qi Gong. Her journaling resulted in a self-published book of essays on living with metastatic disease, which she shared with our other clients, as a testament to the challenges they face. As time moved on, we watched her smile grow a bit wider, her serenity felt more palpable, and her "living" became more clearly precious. Despite a poor prognosis Chris flourished and deepened her engagement in mindful living - from her beautiful periwinkle blue clothing to her appreciation of

nature, and personal practices in writing and mindful movement, all learned and/or strengthened by her participation at the Healing Garden. After 25 years of living with cancer, Chris passed away in the fall of 2015. Everyone who knew her was so positively influenced by her exceptional grace on this journey.

Thankfully, Chris's influence at the Healing Garden continues. Her husband, a retired physician, Dr. Jon Way, chose to join our Board of Directors. Jon felt it imperative to ensure the Healing Garden remains a vital resource for others, as it had been for Chris.

In celebration of the Healing Garden's 20th Anniversary, Jon pledged a \$10,000 matching gift to Annual Appeal donors who had already made an annual gift, who would join him by making an additional gift to the Healing Garden's Endowment Fund. We saw incredible generosity in our donor's responses to the challenge, such that \$31,925 has now been added to the fund. In loving memory of Chris Way, and in honor of Jon Way, MD; we are so very grateful.

Chris and Dr. Jon Way

Memorial Gifts In Loving Memory of

Kerry Barton Lee

M. Jacqueline
Beauchemin

Brenda Belanger

Iris Ben David

Harriet Bridges

Nancy Cappello

Patricia Castagno

Liz Chambers

Chrissy Clawson Audibert

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Marianne Wessling-
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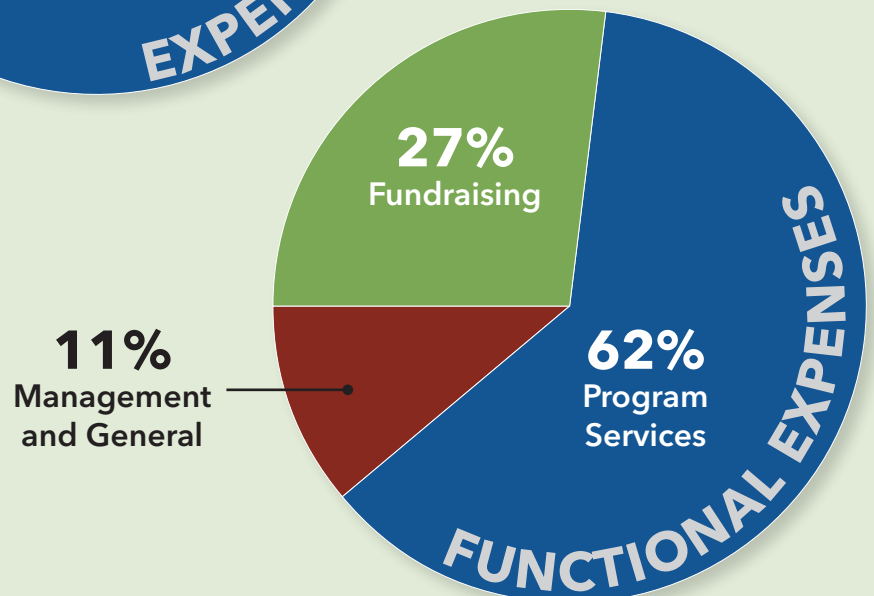
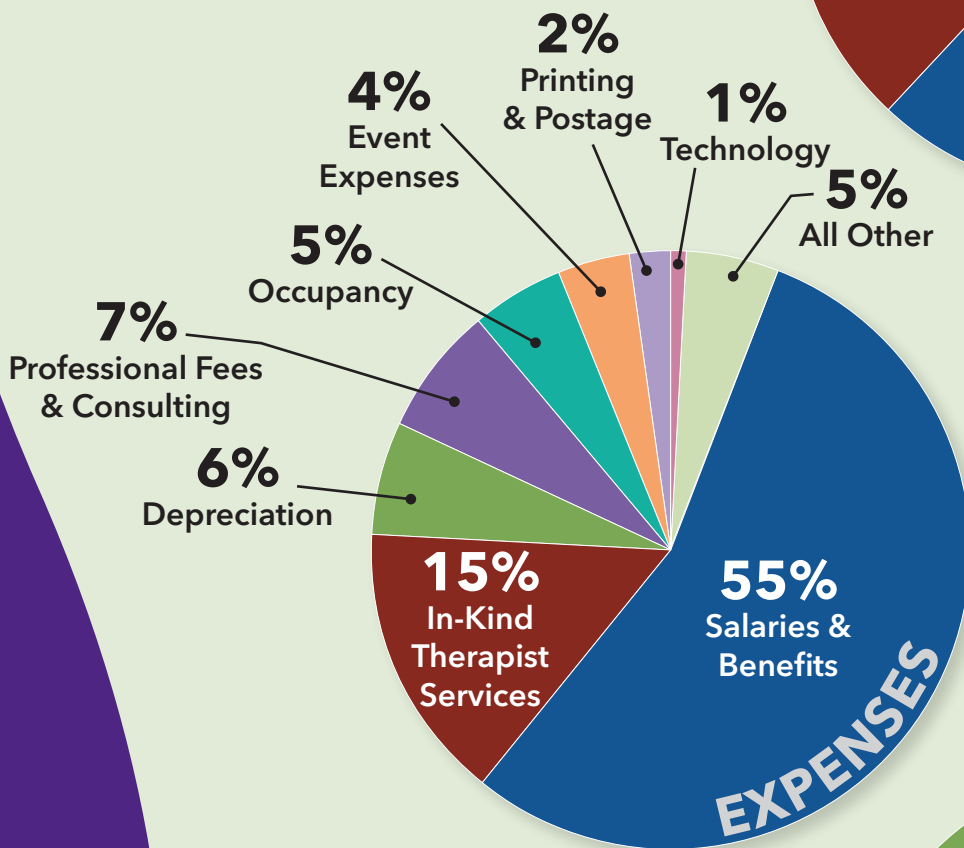
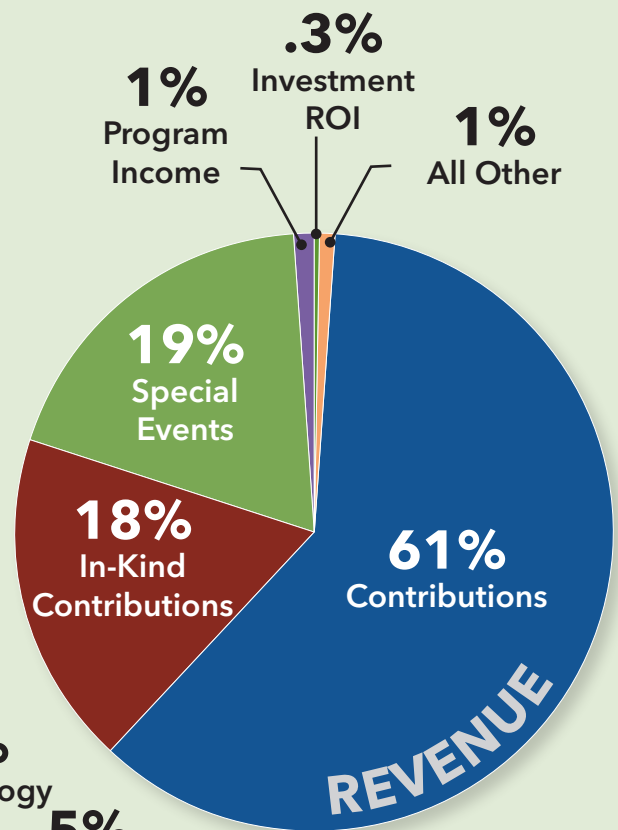
Michelle White

Pamela Wyman

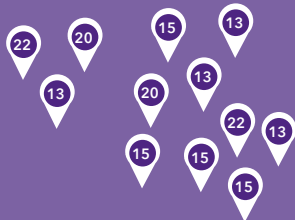
FY 20

Our Financials

REVENUE: \$707,712
EXPENSES: \$664,320



In FY20 The Healing Garden *served over 318* clients from **70** different towns & cities from **3** states (MA, NH, NY)



Our overall reach:

Towns with ten or more households served

Acton	22	Fitchburg	11
Harvard	20	Lunenburg	11
Bolton	15	Sudbury	11
Stow	15	Groton	10
Concord	13	Littleton	10
Leominster	13	Westford	10



4,249 Visits by clients and caregivers, **19%** increase over prior year



318 Individual clients and caregiver served
114 new clients



1,305 Individual counseling & bodywork sessions, **11%** drop over prior year due to COVID-19 restrictions for bodywork

45% of clients have breast cancer,
40% have other cancers,
15% are caregivers and bereavement clients

306 Therapeutic/educational classes, **37%** increase in attendance over prior year



187 Support group sessions, **21%** increase over prior year



88% of clients were female
12% were male





The Virginia Thurston

Healing Garden Cancer Support Center

Providing education and therapeutic services to those affected by cancer

145 Bolton Road | Harvard, MA 01451

info@healinggardensupport.org

Founders:

William Thurston
Elizabeth Tyson-Smith

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& Care Coordinator**
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MAILING TEMPLATE
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Because of you,
supportive care starts here.

