

CHARLES HOUSE ASSOCIATION

Helping people age the way they have lived

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024

A NEW ERA FOR CHARLES HOUSE

Going into our 35th year, the Charles House Association Board of Directors has been preparing for the future. After 20 years as the Executive Director, Paul Klever has announced his retirement. Paul's years with Charles House represent a period of tremendous expansion of our mission and service to elders and their caregiving families. The Board has been engaged in nearly a year of planning for Paul's retirement and preparing for the transition to new leadership.



On May 1, 2024, Dean Fox will take the helm as Executive Director of Charles House Association. Dean joined the Charles House family 14 years ago as a UNC-CH student volunteer who had little experience with elders. Over the years, he has grown into the work and Charles House ethos, increasingly taking on leadership roles, most recently as Associate Director. The Board of Directors is confident that Dean is uniquely qualified to carry on the Charles House Method and approach to eldercare, which began in the 1980s with the creation of Charles House by the family and friends of Charles Jones.

Former Board member Brad Fox and Paul visit with founder Beppie Bradford and Jones friends Denise & Christopher Carey at the 25th Anniversary Celebration.

The new era will build on the programs and initiatives developed under Paul Klever's leadership over the past 20 years:

- Firmly planting The Charles House Method as a unique approach to eldercare
- Developing Charles House Eldercare Home as a pioneering residential care model, opening Charles House-Yorktown in 2011 and Charles House-Winmore in 2014
- Guiding the relocation of Charles House from the original millhouse in Carrboro to the Center for Community Eldercare on the Carol Woods campus in 2015, doubling the capacity of the Day Program
- Establishing the Rebecca and Michel Bradley Program in Learning & Service, expanding opportunities for students from many educational institutions to gain experience in aging and eldercare in the Charles House environment
- Navigating the unknown territory of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Anchoring Charles House Association as a highly respected and sustainable non-profit
- Being an integral part of nearly 1000 families' caregiving journeys

The Charles House Board of Directors is grateful to Paul for his 20 years of outstanding leadership and welcomes Dean to his role in continuing to provide excellent eldercare and support to community elders and their caregiving families.

Charles House Board of Directors

Seated: Jamilah Sabir-Calloway, Ellen Culler

*Standing: Peggy Cohn, Luke Riggsbee, Dan Lehman, Robert Smith,
Robert Spransy, Pamela Nielsen*

Not pictured: Beth Tillman, Ben Buckner, Tamara Baker, Julie Lindsey



A FAREWELL FROM PAUL KLEVER & SALLY FREEMAN



Paul, Sally and Zipper

In our early twenties, before we met, Sally and I were both directors of nursing home activities. This early experience brought us together in the 1980s, developing services for the aging for a nonprofit hospital in Denver. Sally pioneered a day program for people with dementia as respite for their family caregivers. She soon learned that fostering camaraderie and feelings of belonging transformed the participants' lives as well. Twenty years later, we discovered that Charles House was trying to embody this same ethos.

After caring for Sally's parents through the last two years of their lives, her mother with Lewy Body dementia, we moved from Georgia with our two young sons. A year later, the opportunity to become part of Charles House proved to be a good fit for our talents, experience, and passions.

Early on, Beppie Bradford filled us in on the history of Charles House and the influence her parents, Charles and Dorcas Jones, had in shaping Charles House, including Charlie's lifelong engagement in Chapel Hill desegregation. What we learned from our previous work with elders and dementia had an uncanny similarity to the intention of Charles House to be a welcoming, respectful and empowering environment for people with dementia.

We found that the formative years of Charles House had established a broad base of community support and goodwill. Still, Charles House was a relatively young nonprofit and offered an opportunity for me to expand into a strong and exemplary community organization.

As programming and financial stability took root, Charles House started growing. The number of caregiving families including Charles House in their journey increased, and the concept of neighborhood Eldercare Homes was conceived. In 2011, Charles House-Yorktown opened as the model of a non-institutional, community-based approach to residential care. Charles House-Winmore became our second Eldercare Home in 2014.

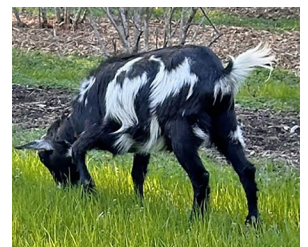
At the same time, Carol Woods Retirement Community invited Charles House to propose a potential use for the former childcare center on their campus. In the initial walk-through, it was Sally who saw the potential of the space and began the intricate planning for the re-design of the day program, the interiors, and the gardens. In the summer of 2015, Charles House opened the Center for Community Eldercare, doubling the capacity of the day program.

In addition, the establishment of the Bradley Program in Learning & Service expanded the impact Charles House has on the lives of students from many educational institutions. For some of these students, their Charles House experience changed their career path. For all of them, we hope the experience enlightens their attitudes about their own aging, and that of their families.

The pandemic changed life in so many ways. At Charles House, we weathered the turmoil, supporting families through online programs, and adjusting to new rules for eldercare homes. We continue to find our footing in the aftermath.

We are grateful for all the grand and intimate moments with so many people throughout our time at Charles House. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute from our core-selves to such a worthy endeavor and to help our community support a beacon of eldercare as unique as Charles House.

Now, as Sally and I move into the new life of retirement, we hope our many years of being with elders will inform our own later years. We bid farewell, gratified that we leave Charles House strong and in such capable hands for the new era ahead.



Max

“Paul and Sally embody what goodness, grace, and goodwill look like.” Jamilla Sabir-Calloway, CHA Board

DEAN FOX STEPS UP



Dean in the wild

I came to Charles House in 2010, when I was a junior at UNC-Chapel Hill. At the time, I was a psychology major with a service-learning requirement, no experience with older adults, and limited knowledge of the experiences of people living with dementia. We were offered an array of volunteer sites to choose from. My recollection is that most of them were assisted living or skilled nursing facilities, and that I chose Charles House because I had never heard of such a program and “it sounded different” – I couldn’t have guessed then how right I was.

In the years since, I have developed a deep appreciation for how our unique approach – The Charles House Method — empowers individuals with dementia to find meaning, enrichment, and an active social network through their final years. Having filled many roles in my fourteen years with Charles House, it is with great pleasure and excitement that I now step into the role of Executive Director of Charles House Association.

In my time at Charles House, I have benefited from exceptional mentorship from a number of individuals, most notably Paul Klever and Sally Freeman. Without Paul and Sally, Charles House would not be all that it is today. Through their intentional and innovative development of the Charles House Method and dedication to the program team, participants, and various stakeholders, they have paved an extraordinary path that defines Charles House’s identity. I owe them my deepest gratitude for their leadership and guidance.

I also want to express my thanks to all of the wonderful team members and volunteers I have worked alongside over the years at the Day Program and Neighborhood Eldercare Homes, to our committed Board of Directors, to the generous supporters who help us keep our programs accessible, to our community partners, and especially to the many caregiving families we have had the pleasure to partner with over the years.

Under Paul’s guidance, Charles House has become a beacon of support for caregiving families in Chapel Hill and the Triangle; meeting local caregiving families where they are and growing and adapting to meet their needs through changing times, ever in keeping with the legacy of Charlie Jones and the vision of Beppie Bradford. This vision is well-defined by the Charles House Method, which I am excited to carry into Charles House’s next stage. As the region continues to experience an ever-growing population of older adults and caregiving families, Charles House is in a strong position to meet those families where they are and evolve with their needs, and we will continue to do so in the spirit of dignity and inclusivity that has defined the organization from the very beginning.

Community has always been the heart of Charles House, and I am beyond thankful to be part of such a unique and impactful organization. I look forward to connecting with many of you in the coming weeks and months to discuss what the future holds, and I look forward to continuing the good work and spirit of excellence for which Charles House is so well regarded. Thank you all for being a part of Charles House.



Sally helps with sweet potato harvest



Dean in the garden

Paul introduces Sally’s goats to participants



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