



## WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY? FRIENDSHIP

**“Being friends with Tracey has made me a more understanding and compassionate person. She has an unconditional devotion to her friends and inspires me to be a better person with all of my relationships,”** said Ashley who became a Compeer volunteer in 2007. Tracey shared, “Ashley is a great friend, she’s understanding and listens well. We get excited when we share good news with each other and we hear each other’s problems. She also inspires me to get creative.”



Tracey and Ashley (L to R) take a selfie at a Singing Christmas Tree event, tickets compliments of the Compeer program.

Tracey is an artist and a storyteller. Ashley said, “I have enjoyed seeing Tracey grow as a person. She has taken her artwork to another level and has sold many of her pottery pieces at various events. She always amazes me with the new illustrated stories she comes up with and I love reading them all.” Tracey says Ashley has helped build her confidence. “I trust people more because of Ashley and actually have more friends now because of our friendship. She’s very positive in my life; she remembers the things that are important to me.” Tracey says that her health has improved in several ways during their friendship. “She lifts my spirits. . .she’s also inspired me to make diet changes and take long walks to improve my diabetes. She motivates me; now we take one hour walks in the park after a meal, plus I meet another friend for 30-60 minute walks as well.” Ashley has seen dramatic improvements in Tracey’s health, “Tracey used to go into the hospital a few times a year when we first became friends. Over the past 3-4 years, I think she may have had only one visit to the hospital.” Clearly, they’ve both benefited from the relationship as Ashley concludes, “Tracey shares with me often how thankful she is we’ve been friends for so long and it really makes me feel good that she appreciates our friendship just as much as I do.”



The Mental Health Association of Central Carolinas’ Compeer Program serves adults in mental health recovery through its core service: one-to-one supportive friendship. Through this matched relationship, Compeer friends meet once /week or every other week for one hour for one year – most last longer. Meetings occur in natural settings using natural supports (i.e., enjoying a walk together, meeting for coffee, playing checkers or tennis, exploring a library). Based on the time-honored tradition that the support of friends is healing, the Compeer program is “making friends and changing lives.” The program is considered a best practice for recovery by the American Psychological Association and is included on SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs.

### **Compeer achieves measurable results:**

- Our volunteer mentoring relationships build self-confidence and independence.
- Our program saves precious health-care dollars by reducing hospitalization costs.
- All those involved in our programs – the people we serve, volunteers and therapists – give us outstanding effectiveness ratings, ranging from 94-100% satisfaction

To learn more about becoming a Compeer volunteer, call 704-365-4830, visit the [Compeer page](#) or e-mail the Compeer program at [mha@mhacentralcarolinas.org](mailto:mha@mhacentralcarolinas.org).

[www.mhacentralcarolinas.org](http://www.mhacentralcarolinas.org)