

Bio and Background Tara Hoit, THP, GC-C

Cultivating Life, LLC

Tara Hoit is an executive-level professional consultant with over 20 years of leadership in strategic planning, communications, change management, program and operations management, business development, staff engagement, and fundraising for hospice and bereavement organizations. Holding a B.A. in Speech Communication (Healthcare Organizational Communication), a certificate in children's grief counseling, and a Graduate Certificate in Horticultural Therapy, she combines exceptional verbal and written communication skills with an inspirational leadership style that motivates diverse stakeholders to achieve shared goals and successfully navigate organizational change.

Leveraging her expertise in healthcare communication and therapeutic program design, Tara structures her consulting engagements around a rigorous, data-driven process. She begins with a comprehensive needs assessment, combining community-level data with insights from patients, families, and staff to identify service gaps and target priorities, before co-creating tailored, evidence-informed solutions. She evaluates organizational readiness for grant funding or program growth, developing competitive proposals complete with detailed budgets, logic models, and sustainability plans. She brings staff and leadership together to set SMART goals and clear success metrics, then translates those objectives into interventions, defining operational protocols, training curricula, and referral pathways. By piloting initiatives in focused settings and gathering real-time feedback through attendance figures, satisfaction surveys, and outcome measures, she refines each element before scaling. Finally, she embeds ongoing evaluation, tracking participation trends, pre- and post-assessments, and client feedback to guide continuous, sustainable improvement, ensuring programs remain responsive, compassionate, and impactful for everyone they serve.

As Vice President of Program Development at Ohana Preservation Foundation (2022-2024), Tara defined the mission and vision, established measurable goals, and built all facets of community programming from concept through evaluation. She designed therapeutic horticultural initiatives, managed and delivered dynamic children's grief programming, including the creation and implementation of a horticultural therapy-based six-week grief support curriculum for schools. Under her guidance, a donor database of over 2,000 donors and a comprehensive grants program were launched to sustain long-term funding and engagement.

Previously, as Executive Director of Capital Caring Kids (2015–2022), Tara drove 68% annual revenue growth and a 46% increase in patient census by leading market analysis, strategic business planning, and fundraising across twelve regional offices. She managed a \$2.5 million budget, supervised 22 staff, cultivated referral relationships with ten major hospital systems, and recruited, trained, and stewarded over 200 volunteers. Her innovative telehealth pilot and virtual care coordination with healthcare providers for pediatric patients during COVID-19, and a horticultural support program for staff compassion fatigue, set national best-practice standards.

Earlier roles, including Program & Resource Development Liaison at Mary Washington Healthcare and Executive Director of Hospice Support Care, laid the groundwork for her expertise in designing healing gardens and bereavement centers, evidence-based curriculum development, and merger integration. Tara's success is underpinned by the creation and implementation of KPIs, electronic medical record templates, and data-driven impact studies.

Her scholarship includes an economic analysis of pediatric concurrent hospice care, currently in press in the *Journal of Palliative Medicine* (Lindley, Richar, Hoit, & Steinhorn, in press), as well as poster presentations at the American Academy of Pediatrics annual conference (Lindley, Richar, Hoit, Kuchar, Kestenbaum, & Steinhorn, 2020) and at the Center to Advance Palliative Care National Seminar (Richar, Lindley, Vilt, Hoit, Kestenbaum, & Steinhorn, 2019).

This blend of published research, hands-on program innovation, strategic leadership, and intentional staff development helps teams reimagine organizational systems, workflows, and cultures to support the deep, meaningful work of hospice and bereavement. This ensures that every project Tara undertakes delivers measurable outcomes, sustainable funding, and deeper community impact.

In addition to professional program and resource development consulting, Tara's therapeutic horticulture practice provides support to individual children and adults through dynamic healing sessions designed to advance therapeutic goals. Therapeutic horticulture sessions for patients and healthcare workers, invite groups to learn, grow, and connect through gardening activities. Working with plants fosters teamwork, problem-solving, and communication while offering a safe and healing space to process challenges. The therapeutic gardening environment sparks curiosity and wonder, blending hands-on education and processing with moments of reflection. Plants become the teachers, reminding us of resilience, balance, and connection to ourselves, each other, and the natural world.

Tara received her graduate certificate in Horticultural Therapy through Colorado State University through the Horticultural Therapy Institute. Tara earned her Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner credential through a 4-month paid internship at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. Tara also completed a residency at the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, located on the Bunny Mellon estate in Upperville, VA.