"Trilogy has always done backward flips to help us be successful. … Trilogy has been absolutely fantastic in working with us."

- Judge B. Glen Whitley, Tarrant County, Texas

Tarrant County, Texas, Provides Central Access Point for Resources & Services with Trilogy-powered *Tarrant Cares*

Situation

Back in 1999, Fort Worth, the county seat of Tarrant County, Texas, suffered the tragedy of a mass shooting within the Wedgwood Baptist Church. After it was later discovered that the shooter, who took his own life after killing seven and injuring another seven, suffered from an untreated mental illness, the city's mayor turned to local mental health providers, requesting a plan to improve access to quality mental health services for all Tarrant County residents.

The collaborative effort gave birth to the Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County, which has expanded to over 100 members that include county and city officials, private and not for profit hospitals and service providers, school districts and universities, child welfare and foster care, individual practitioners, and impacted family members.

Early on, Mental Health Connection identified the need for making its wealth of resources better known to Tarrant County residents—as well as the many agencies and service groups involved. Community workers in one organization needed an efficient way to immediately identify needed services offered by others. Mental Health Connection also wanted to enhance the depth and breadth of the information it offered.

Solution

Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley, who served on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Counties, met Bruce Bronzan, a co-founder of Trilogy Integrated Resources,

Tarrant Cares … serving Forth Worth and the rest of Tarrant County, 3rd most populous county in Texas, and 15th most populous within the United States.

developer of Network of Care, which utilizes the Internet for social good by providing fast and easy access to comprehensive community services, information, support, and assistance on a localized level to millions of people nationwide. Judge Whitley was impressed by Network of Care's goal to ensure "No Wrong Door" exists for those in need of social services and provide trusted information for anyone interested in making better decisions about the health and well-being of themselves and those around them.

Bronzan, who passed away from lymphoma in 2020, was a much-honored advocate for healthcare who served as a county mental-health program director, and then served as a county supervisor for eight years as the lead for all health and human-services programs. He was a member of the California State Legislature for 10 years and chairman of the Health Committee and the Select Committee on Mental Health, before leaving the public sector to create Network of Care with co-founder Afshin Khosravi.

Judge Whitley was immediately impressed with what Trilogy had created with Network of Care and worked with Mental Health Connection President Patsy Thomas (recently retired) and other Tarrant County leaders to implement Network of Care for the county—which was branded as *Tarrant Cares*. The county decided to go beyond mental health and deploy the full suite of Network of Care products, including its library of resources covering a broad array of social-services and healthcare topics.

Providing Access via Text Messaging

More than 10 years after the launch of Tarrant Cares, a local task force chaired by Cook

Children's Medical Center, studying the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), decided that family members needed an easier way to seek help when a child was exposed to abuse, neglect, family violence, or any other experiences that could disrupt a child's development and lead to chronic health conditions.

Trilogy created text messaging access to the resources of Tarrant Cares.

"Texting is probably one of the best ways to communicate resources and information because people feel more comfortable texting than they do picking up the phone," said Roderick F. Miles, a member of the ACEs Task Force and executive administrator in the Office of Tarrant County Commissioner Roy Charles Brooks. "Our vision is to keep people from falling through the cracks, and we do that by creating space for them to advocate for themselves and be their own navigators, their own social workers—and then they become advocates for other people and help them navigate through the process as well."

Tarrant Cares asked Trilogy for help in creating text-based access to the wealth of resources on the site. The new service, TXT 4 Tarrant Cares, works by simply texting FIND to the cell phone number 67629, to begin a guided search for relevant services, including local services defined by ZIP code.

Best Practices for Deploying Network of Care

Tarrant County created such a well-organized plan for deploying and maintaining Tarrant Cares that it provides an unofficial *best*

practices for deploying the Network of Care. Here's a look at some of their basic strategies:

- **Find Program Funding**. A logical first step for Judge Whitley was to go to community groups that would benefit from Tarrant Cares to help the county with funding the service. "From a financial standpoint, we went to the community, described what we were doing, and they immediately saw the benefits," Judge Whitley says. "Two hospitals helped fund the project, along with some of the major nonprofits that would be involved. Everyone recognized what a tremendous benefit this would be for our citizens. They saw that Tarrant Cares was something they could point to and be pretty proud of."

- **Identify Agencies and Service Organizations (Large & Small) for Inclusion**. From the very beginning, Tarrant County saw the value of going all-in, which meant taking advantage of the entire suite of Network of Care products and including all relevant county agencies and service organizations as part of Tarrant Cares. "We created 10 working groups that spent six months identifying all of the stakeholders that should be part of Tarrant Cares," Thomas says. "We trusted Trilogy to handle the national resources, so we focused on

Tarrant County-specific resources where people in our community could go to the web and find things that were down the street or within the county line. Some agencies and organizations were obvious, but we wanted to include smaller organizations that were providing important services on a local or even neighborhood basis."

- **Include Organizations Beyond Traditional Boundaries**. While the focus was on Tarrant County resources, the group made exceptions whenever residents would benefit. "We wanted only resources that were available to Tarrant County residents, but decided to include services located beyond our county line, as long as their services were available to Tarrant County residents," Thomas says. "For example, at that time, we had very few resources for autism, so we wanted to list resources, even if the services were in Austin."

- **Harvest Wisdom from All**. Early in the process, the Tarrant Cares organizers invited participants from across disciplines to large meetings to explore the best ways to make the spectrum of services visible to and available for those who needed them. "When you gather 100 people together, sharing their experiences from all walks of life, you come up with a lot of great ideas, as well as questions to be answered," Thomas says. "Bringing all stakeholders together produced a lot of insights and information, and along the way everyone earned a sense of ownership."

- **Create Governance Subcommittees for Each Area of Service**. Tarrant Cares covers offerings from more than 50 agencies and service organizations—everything from prenatal care and childhood development, to mental healthcare, family support, and public health, to veteran services, to ex-offender reentry, to senior services—that

no single person or committee would be able to effectively manage so many diverse offerings. So, Tarrant Cares created what it terms *governance subcommittees* to manage the offerings for each area of expertise. "We created an overall Governance Committee, with governance subcommittees for each one of the units to be responsible for looking at the materials offered, and to vet all participating organizations offering services," Judge Whitley says. "This created a powerful collaborative process and helped ensure the quality of every service offered, because the subcommittees are protective of their particular unit and want to make sure that the information in there is accurate and up to date and something that will be a benefit to the people who are seeking help."

- **Make it User-Friendly & *Detailed*.** The Tarrant Cares implementation team, working with all of their governance subcommittees, collaborated to create a portal that had a user-friendly set of information for each service offered. This meant that in addition to the vast library of reading materials, visitors could see things like operating hours, fees, which agencies offered a sliding scale for payments, whether there was a waiting list—and even photos of the building to make it easier to spot when arriving. Thomas notes: "It turned out that waiting-list information was important not just for individuals, but also for agencies looking for resources at other organizations to help their clients."

- **Work with Others**. In addition to the various social-services agencies and service organizations that became part of the Tarrant Cares hub, the organization also works closely with United Way of Houston, which provides resource data to Tarrant Cares. United Way's updating process includes contacting all 211 agencies every six months for a complete update of each

agency's services. The 211 Service Directory links callers with relevant nonprofit organizations. The two organizations work together, and 211 resource specialists can use Tarrant Cares websites to help callers find the service they need.

- **Hold a Tight Deadline**. When there's a lot to do, it helps to have a deadline. "From the outset, we gave ourselves six months to get Tarrant Cares up and running," Thomas says. "We achieved our goal. It was amazing what a community of dedicated people was able to achieve in that short period."

- **Involve All Organizations in the Roll-Out**. When it came time to roll out Tarrant Cares, the county benefitted from the sense of ownership that was felt throughout all of the agencies and service organizations that had contributed to the site. Each organization found its own ways to promote the rich collection of resources that constituted Tarrant Cares. Promotional efforts ran the gamut from bus-stop signs to posters placed at healthcare and service organizations, to bookmarks placed in libraries.

- **Continue Communicating with "Lunch & Learns."** Long after Tarrant Cares was rolled out, the organization continued to sponsor quarterly "Lunch & Learns" in which representatives from different agencies and organizations would get together to share stories and strategies about how they are getting the most from Tarrant Cares.

- **Governance Subcommittees Should Be Ongoing.** It's important to underscore that the governance subcommittees set up for each area of service play an important ongoing role in vetting the services that are offered by agencies and organizations. While the governance subcommittees are essential to getting a Network of Care operational, they should continue to

function to keep data current. "We've been up and running with Tarrant Cares for more than a decade, and the governance subcommittees continue to meet on a regular basis to review and update their areas," Judge Whitley says. "If an organization wants to be added to Tarrant Cares, the appropriate governance subcommittee will vet them to validate that they're genuine in the services and quality that they're providing. The committees also check to see that data for all participating organizations is current. These committees provide a major benefit to the ongoing

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success of Tarrant Cares."

Benefits

Tarrant County has enjoyed a number of benefits since deploying Tarrant Cares, including:

- Providing a central point for current information with "No Wrong Doors."
- Including depth of information to help users easily find exactly what they need.
- Making good use of governance subcommittees.

Just the beginning of the Tarrant Cares welcome page, with its wealth of services.

- Enhanced collaboration between, and within, agencies.
- Heavily used: "More than 3.3 million page views last year."
- Ease of use.
- Support for new programs: Helping formerly incarcerated successfully reenter society.
- Support for new delivery platforms: Extending Tarrant Cares via text messaging.
- Great company to work with "I honestly can't say enough good things about them."

"No Wrong Doors"

Tarrant Cares was based upon a philosophy of "no wrong doors," meaning that from whatever point a user might enter the site, they would be able to navigate to the best information and services to meet their needs.

"Tarrant Cares provides a central place where everyone can go to find out about all the providers and services available to help them," Judge Whitley says. "The site also provides a great service for the caregivers, as well as the individuals needing assistance. Everyone can also take advantage of the library of resources to research issues that they might have, and be proactive in managing their care. Again, this benefits the individual in need, as well as the relatives, caretakers and others who are involved in helping."

Tarrant Cares works directly with Trilogy, whenever needed, to update information on the site, or to add new content to Trilogy's extensive library of articles and other informational resources so users always have the most recent information on providers and services.

"Prior to deploying Tarrant Cares, Mental Health Connection put together a beautiful brochure listing available services," recalls Virginia Hoft, Executive Director of Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County. "But the problem with paper is that so much information was outdated by the time we could get it printed and distributed. Tarrant Cares has given us a better way. We have mechanisms in place to help ensure that our information is continually updated. With nonprofits, things can especially change in a hurry, depending upon what grants they've received and what programs they've introduced, retired, or changed."

Depth of Information to Help Users Easily Find Exactly What they Need

Hoft says that from the beginning, Tarrant Cares was dedicated to making information easy to find, while also providing depth of information.

"We knew it wasn't enough to just provide a resource's website address," Hoft says. "When someone goes to a nonprofit's website, generally the first thing they see is whatever is going on that month at that agency, or perhaps information about fundraising events, donor programs, and things like that. We were dedicated to saving users time and effort by providing a quick dive into the details on services that each organization provided—so

they could more easily navigate to the information and services they needed."

Patsy Thomas, Retired President of Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County, played a major role—along with Hoft, Judge Whitley and others—In working with Trilogy to create Tarrant Cares. She agrees with Hoft about the desire to provide depth of information for each organization represented on the Tarrant Cares site.

"Early on, we decided that visitors to Tarrant

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>
> **- Virginia Hoft, Executive Director, Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County, Texas**

Cares would best be served by providing as much detail as possible for each organization," Thomas says. "It went from basics such as: What are their hours of operation? To what are the costs? Do they have a sliding fee based on income? What insurance do they take? Is there a waiting list for services? If so, how long is the wait? In addition to providing the address, we included a photo of the building to make it easier to find. For sites dealing with

The Tarrant Cares Library provides a wealth of knowledge for users to explore.

psychotropic drugs, we included photographs of various pills and descriptions to help users understand what they might be taking. Whatever anyone felt would be helpful, we included, always keeping the focus on serving those who came to the site."

Judge Whitley has long been impressed by the quality—and volume—of information that Tarrant Cares provides through use of Trilogy's libraries of content.

"The resource library is a very integral part throughout Tarrant Cares," Judge Whitley says. "Someone might hear from their doctor that

they have a certain health situation, and they might not understand what that means or the consequences," Judge Whitley says. "Most people are very reluctant to spend a lot of time asking questions of a doctor. So with Tarrant Cares, they can go home and really dive into the information about their condition. At the same time, they can learn what community resources and services might be provided. All of this makes the Tarrant Cares library a tremendous place to go when facing a challenge."

Natalie Rose, Community and Court Liaison for Judge Whitley, and Governance Committee Chair, Mental Health Connection of Tarrant

ADD OR EDIT TARRANT COUNTY AGENCY LISTINGS

♡ Add To Favorites

United Way of Greater Houston, in partnership with Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County, provides resource data to Tarrant Cares. United Way of Greater Houston's updating process includes contacting all 211 agencies every six months for a complete update of each agency's services.

Please 🔗 click here to contact the resource staff to make any updates/changes to your agency's information. If you are a non-profit, provide a direct service and would like to be added to the 211 Texas database, please 🔗 click here to contact the resource staff.

If you are a consumer, dial 211 to speak with an information and referral specialist 24 hours a day.

🔗 **2·1·1** TEXAS

Tarrant Cares makes it easy to keep information up to date.

County, is also impressed by the resource library.

"Individuals and their family and caregivers can learn a lot from the resource library—whether they are dealing with cancer support, managing stress, taking care of themselves when their baby is fussy," Rose says. "There is information on domestic violence, mental health issues, veterans' concerns, early childhood development, re-entering society after serving time in prison. Just about any challenge that might come up in life, our citizens can find information and services to help on Tarrant Cares."

Making Good Use of Governance Subcommittees

The governance subcommittees created for each specialty represented on Tarrant Cares were a major help in creating the accuracy—and depth—of information on the site.

"The subcommittees would put as much detail as needed into what requirements had to be met in order to be able to qualify for treatment from a particular resource," Judge Whitley says. "This saved our users of the site from wasting time calling a bunch of agencies only to find out

that they, or the individual they were helping, wouldn't qualify. We wanted to save them as much pain as possible."

The governance subcommittees also worked closely with Trilogy to vet existing library content and to suggest additions.

"Trilogy was extremely receptive to any suggestions coming from a governance subcommittee," Thomas says. "For example, we had a physician who was active in the autism area, and he read every single news page and research paper on autism in the Trilogy resource library. He vetted everything. Sometimes he would say 'This article is kind of out of date.' And sometimes he would suggest adding a new article. If our governance subcommittee—which consisted of other autism experts—agreed, then Trilogy worked really hard to swiftly meet the content requests. We created a solid system to make sure that we maintained the integrity of everything that we offered."

Enhanced Collaboration Between, and within, Agencies

Tarrant County has a tradition of professional collaboration, dating back to the founding of

Mental Health Connection and its goals of uniting community resources. As Mental Health Connection helped with the founding of Tarrant Cares, it embedded the sense of collaboration into creating the site.

"I'm a strong believer in collaboration, because nobody can be expert in every single field," Thomas says. "After many years working in the community, I'm convinced that the best outcomes emerge when you bring together different areas of expertise, a variety of views, and people pooling their knowledge together to share with others. In this way individuals and their different agencies can see how their piece of the work fits into the big picture to make everything better for everyone, which is what we have tried to do with Tarrant Cares."

Tarrant Cares serves as a collaboration point between agencies—and within agencies.

"A lot of nonprofit agencies don't have a formal intake process," Thomas says. "The first point of contact for someone calling in might be the first person who answers the phone—which might be a volunteer. Tarrant Cares is designed so that no matter who answers the phone, they have a resource to immediately consult to help the caller. That's part of our philosophy of *No Wrong Doors*."

Tarrant Cares has also proven to be a powerful tool when one agency looks to find another agency's help. An agency fielding a call about a domestic violence problem, upon hearing about involvement with a veteran suffering from PTSD, can immediately search Tarrant Cares for Veteran and PTSD resources, while the caller is still on the phone.

"Agencies seeking to refer people to additional resources value the fact that they can see

Children and Families

Tarrant Cares for Children and Families provides information and resources about children and families, including:

- Health
- Child care
- Mental and physical illnesses
- Parenting
- Mentoring programs
- Life skills
- Counseling
- Case management
- Substance abuse and addiction recovery
- Community services
- Emergency and crisis supports
- Recreation and leisure

Go to Site
Children and Families

Just one of the gateways into resources at Tarrant Cares.

exactly what services are offered, what qualifications exist, and—very importantly—whether there is a waiting line for services," Judge Whitley says. "Tarrant Cares has done a lot to support collaboration between organizations."

Heavily Used: "More than 3.3 Million Page Views Last Year"

With a population of 1.8 million, Tarrant County is the third most populous county in Texas and the 15th most populous in the United States.

The county is well served by Tarrant Cares, as the site experienced more than 3.3 million page views in 2020.

"It's really wonderful to see how heavily the Tarrant Cares site is used," Rose says. "People come to the site with all sorts of needs and questions. To provide a view into the diversity of needs, in 2020, Children & Families was the most visited area of Tarrant Cares, followed by Veterans, followed by Developmental Disabilities. Those were the top three areas of interest, followed by Seniors in fourth place, and then Domestic Violence and Behavioral Health."

Rose notes how important Tarrant Cares is in helping people find services they need. "Before working for the county, I had no idea there were so many services out there, available to those in need," Rose says. "Very few members of the public know of all of these services. The beauty of Tarrant Cares is that once they land on the site, they can easily search for whatever resources and services they might need."

"To provide a view into the diversity of needs, in 2020 Children & Families was the most visited area of Tarrant Cares, followed by Veterans, followed by Developmental Disabilities … followed by Seniors in fourth place, and then Domestic Violence and Behavioral Health."

- Natalie Rose, Community and Court Liaison, Office of Tarrant County Judge B. Glen Whitley, and Governance Committee Chair, Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County

Ease of Use

Tarrant Cares has an extremely user-friendly and logical user interface that makes it easy for users to find the information they need. From an administrative standpoint, Tarrant Cares has seamless ease of use because the site is hosted by Trilogy.

"We don't have to know anything about programming, we don't have to worry about servers, because Tarrant Cares is hosted by Trilogy," Hoft says. "We just deliver update requests when needed, and they have the trained staff to implement them."

Trilogy also makes it easy for users across a spectrum of languages to access the resources on Tarrant Cares.

"As soon as a user arrives at Tarrant Cares, they are offered the opportunity to choose their own language," Rose says. "They can choose from 108 languages—from Armenian to Zulu. Once selected, all content on the site is automatically translated for them."

Judge Whitley also values the ability to translate content to preferred languages, saying: "The amount of research materials and articles that Trilogy has on just about every topic, as well as the more than 100 languages they can be instantly translated to, makes this very beneficial to our citizens."

Support for New Programs: Helping the Formerly Incarcerated Successfully Reenter Society

When Judge Whitley heard the leader of a local nonprofit speak on the need to provide services to formerly incarcerated persons who were reentering society, he immediately thought of Trilogy and Tarrant Cares.

"This great individual who was heading up a reentry program for the county, got in front of a group and described his vision, and everyone felt this should be part of Tarrant Cares," Judge Whitley says. "We contacted Trilogy, and they thought it was a great idea, too. Working with the local nonprofit, Trilogy crafted a Reentry program that the original visionary is very happy with, and it's been a great success. Having the program accessible through Tarrant Cares has given it the visibility it deserved to help it succeed."

Rose notes that the county is often contacted by other counties asking about Tarrant Cares, and that there has been special interest in the new Reentry program.

"Trilogy has always done backward flips to help us be successful," Judge Whitley says. "They really came through on the Reentry program."

Support for New Delivery Platforms: Extending Tarrant Cares via Text Messaging

Hoft says everyone was impressed with how swiftly and efficiently Trilogy created text-based access for Tarrant Cares resources.

"We went to Afshin [Khosravi, CEO of Trilogy] and told him what we needed," Hoft says. "His

> *"The amount of research materials and articles that Trilogy has on just about every topic, as well as the more than 100 languages they can be instantly translated to, makes this very beneficial to our citizens."*
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> **- Judge B. Glen Whitley, Tarrant County, Texas**

response was: 'We can do that.'"

Rose was also impressed with Trilogy's efficiency in creating the texting platform for Tarrant Cares.

"The idea of giving people the ability to access resources via texting was kind of born out of a community town hall," Rose says. "People on the ACEs task force, some of whom were members of Mental Health Connection, came to Tarrant Cares and asked if we could do a texting platform using the information on the website. So, we contacted Afshin at Trilogy, and within a

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week, he had a demo, which we then fine-tuned, and recently released the service. Afshin and Trilogy have been wonderful helping us out with this."

Great Company to Work With: "I Honestly Can't Say Enough Good Things About Them"

Judge Whitley has long been impressed with his experience in working with Trilogy—including the flexibility it provided in changing the name of the service.

"Trilogy has been absolutely fantastic working with us," Judge Whitley says. "Everywhere else the Trilogy platform is called *Network of Care*, but our people said, we'd really like to call it *Tarrant Cares*. I was thinking to myself, well, Trilogy isn't going to let *that* happen, but they did, and I think that name, Tarrant Cares, has made a big difference in our success."

Rose, who serves as a main contact between Tarrant Cares and Trilogy on an operational basis, says: "I honestly can't say enough good things about them. I really can't."

About Trilogy

The Network of Care utilizes the Internet for social good by providing fast and easy access to comprehensive community services, information, support, and assistance on a localized level to millions of people nationwide. The goal of the Network of Care is to ensure "No Wrong Door" exists for those in need of social services, and to provide trusted information for anyone interested in making better decisions about the health and well-being of themselves and those around them.

Starting with a pilot project in the area of aging and long-term care for the Californian counties of Alameda and Sacramento in 2000, the Network of Care quickly grew to over a dozen counties before expanding into the behavioral health field for San Diego County in 2003. The success and growth of these websites eventually led to the development of a suite of Network of Care products and services. For more than two decades, Trilogy has developed hundreds of Network of Care websites for more than 30 states and over 600 counties. Trilogy Integrated Resources continues to improve the platform with the latest version released in 2019. For more information, visit us at www.trilogyir.com.