

# goodwords

news from the good grief center for bereavement support

## Peer Support—the Heart of GGC

*“Pam,” a 25 year old woman, called GGC last spring six months after her father died. She could not find anyone her age who understood her pain. After her initial phone call, we arranged for her to meet with one of our younger volunteers who also experienced the death of her father. She attended our support group and continued to call for peer support a number of times. Right before the holidays, with the anniversary of her father’s death just a couple of days away, she once again called GGC—this time from South America! Through her college she had the chance to study there for two weeks. While she knew this would be a difficult time, she felt her father would have wanted her to seize this opportunity. Pam had learned that no matter where she was, GGC would be there for her.*

*The caller, whose name we changed to Pam, agreed that we could share her story.*

Being there for people like Pam is the heart of the Good Grief Center’s mission. Over 8,000 calls or visits to GGC in the last four years confirm both the need and the value of our program. We call it *peer support*—but just what does that mean?

Nothing is more important to us than listening. Our staff and volunteers are trained in bereavement support. But, beyond that, we’ve been through it ourselves. That’s the core of peer support—getting support from others who have had similar experiences. Often, sharing the pain is the first step in lessening it. Many, like Pam, are surprised by the many layers of grief and how long the grieving process can take. It is not unusual to feel misunderstood and isolated. We understand those feelings and have found that peer support, which begins with compassionate listening, has helped many in need.



Our approach to peer support was designed by our Board of Advisors, comprised of a number of the region’s leading grief specialists. They also developed the training, materials and ongoing education sessions GGC conducts for peer support volunteers. For nearly 5 years, we have seen peer support help many people learn to live with their loss. “Grief is part of being human, not a mental illness. It is something we will all experience—probably many times in our lives. Peer support is the cornerstone of the Good Grief Center,” explained founding Executive Director Lulu Orr.



### Four Ways You Can Help

1. “How are you?” is a question, not a greeting. Let someone know you really want to hear the answer and you understand that things probably aren’t “fine.”
2. Listen to their story—over and over again.
3. Talk about the person who died—say their name.
4. Give them time—understand, and help others to understand, grief is a journey with highs and lows measured not in days or weeks but in months and years.

# GGC a Leader in Social Enterprise

*There's a buzz in the non-profit world about a new approach to sustainability—social enterprises. They are income generating ventures that provide a non-profit with unrestricted funds for operations. GGC's social enterprises are directly tied to our mission allowing us to extend our outreach.*

GGC, though only four years old, is already recognized as a leader in this movement. Lulu Orr has been asked to be part of a panel at this year's national conference of the Social Enterprise Alliance in Atlanta. The Good Grief Center is featured in the latest issue of Community Threads, produced by the Forbes Fund and the Pittsburgh Foundation. Additionally, we continue to work with the Pittsburgh Social Enterprise Accelerator after being selected as one of the winners of their 2005 Business Plan competition.

GGC launched its first enterprise in 2003. Since then, two additional products and services have been developed under the banner of *Compassionate Connections*.

*Good Grief Care Package*—thoughtful alternative to traditional sympathy floral arrangements

*Compassionate Calling*—phone calls made to grieving individuals on behalf of organizations who wish to introduce grief resources and offer support

*Grief in the Workplace*—educational sessions, interactive workshops and support sessions for corporations and other organizations

In a few short years, GGC has established itself as the go-to resource for grief support in our community. To continue to meet the ever-growing demand for our services and programs, we will sustain our operations with income generated from these ventures as well as donations from the many individuals and foundations who support GGC.

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“GGC is developing income-generating ventures that will provide us with unrestricted operating funds and enhance our core mission.”

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## volunteer spotlight

### The News Is Just About Out

Look for an announcement in May from the Good Grief Center and the Bidwell Training Center of the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild. GGC is thrilled to be teaming up with one of the most dynamic and respected non-profit organizations in Pittsburgh. When they first met, Bill Strickland instantly recognized the potential of this joint entrepreneurial venture. He concluded by telling Lulu Orr, “This is a really great collaboration for both of our organizations—with local and national potential!”

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*We all try to reach out in those first days following a death. Don't stop there—cards, calls or a GGC Care Package may be even more helpful in the weeks and months following a death. Mother's or Father's Day, the anniversary of the death or the birthday of the deceased offer an opportunity to show you haven't forgotten and still want to express your support.*

**tip**



### Rich Kuroski:

“I want to help other men deal with grief.” That was how Rich introduced himself when he called to ask about volunteering at the Good Grief Center. After his wife died of cancer, he sought help from a number of sources. He joined a support group and even attended a weekend retreat—two things which he knows would have amazed his wife. Rich eventually remarried and moved to Pittsburgh. He learned of the Good Grief Center from Board Chair Dr. Mark Miller. At first, he thought it could be a resource for him in a new community. Then, he realized it was a place he could help other men. Rich completed the volunteer training in October and comes in every Monday morning. He will be joining Board member Dr. Lillian Meyers at a presentation about grief at UPMC Passavant Hospital this summer. “The bond we strive to create with callers—not as counselors, but as another who has *been there*, can really help,” describes Rich.

message from the executive director

## Dear Friends,

There are so many of you, friends of GGC. I am constantly thrilled by the comments I get about the need the Good Grief Center has filled in our community. One of my favorites that I have heard many times is, “How did people do this before there was a Good Grief Center? I can’t imagine getting through this without GGC.” I am so proud to be a part of this organization and oh so grateful for our incredible staff, wonderful volunteers and amazing board.

This is a big moment for us—our very first issue of **goodwords**. We’ve had an internal newsletter for volunteers and board members but now we include you...our friends. We want this to be a newsletter that you want to read—one that is helpful and informative. Please let us know what types of articles you would like to see in future issues. As always, GGC is driven by unmet needs—maybe we can answer a question you don’t know who to ask, or maybe there is a subject related to grief you wish you knew more about. Whatever ideas you have to keep this newsletter meaningful, please let us know.

Once you’ve read this newsletter, don’t pitch it—give it to someone you know who is grieving. That way you are acknowledging their grief as well as giving them information about a place that is here for anyone dealing with grief.

Many thanks to all of you—our friends. I hope you enjoy our latest creation. Stay tuned for many more. Please remember, we are here for you or anyone else who may need some added support during a most difficult time.

Take care,



*Comments? Suggestions?*

*send us an email at*

[support@goodgriefcenter.com](mailto:support@goodgriefcenter.com)

*or visit our website at*

[www.goodgriefcenter.com](http://www.goodgriefcenter.com)

412.461.1776

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### Garden Club of Allegheny County Helped to Fund GGC Memory Garden

At GCAC’s annual meeting in January, Memory Garden partners Stephanie Flom and Mark McKenzie presented a visual diary of the garden’s creation. GCAC had all 11 of their funded projects on hand to showcase their projects. The Memory Garden, located at the Center’s home at the Carnegie Library of Homestead, provides a tranquil spot for healing and reflection which will comfort many for years to come. We are grateful to GCAC for their generous support!



### We Shopped Till We Dropped

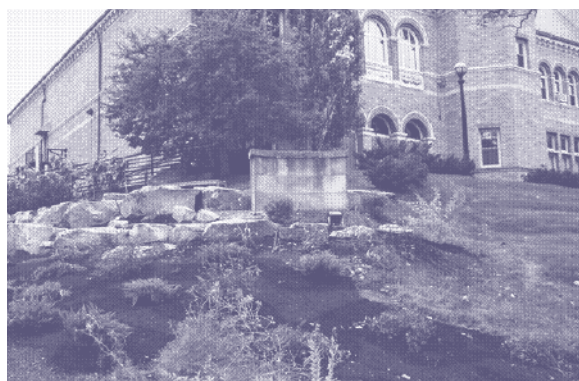
What do the Ten Thousand Villages Store, Journeys of Life Bookstore and the East End Food Co-Op have in common? They each hosted shopping events and donated a portion of the sales to the Good Grief Center. We were honored that these three area stores selected GGC to support. Not only did the events help us financially, they were great opportunities for us to spread the GGC word. Many thanks to each of them!

### GGC Library Growing

Thanks to the generous support of the HPC Foundation for Hospice Care (AseraCare Hospice), we are in the midst of nearly doubling our lending library. In addition to books focused on grief, we are adding many new audio books and videos—both of which are frequently requested. The library is well used by clients, the three support groups held at GGC and professionals who visit the Center. As with all the resources offered at GGC, we carefully review the books to make sure they are of the highest quality and cover the wide array of issues relating to the grieving process.

### Coro Fellow Conducts Market Research

With the help of intern, Indhu Sekar, GGC was able to conduct market research needed for the expansion and refinement of our social enterprises. Indhu came to GGC from the nationally recognized Coro Fellow program, whose distinguished alumni includes Senator Dianne Feinstein. During her internship, she helped conduct focus groups researching the new version of our *Care Package*. She was also able to conduct qualitative surveys with past *Grief in the Workplace* clients as well as research resources and programs from cities across the country. “Being selected as a site for a Coro Fellow really helped us leverage the efforts of our small staff with the addition of a very talented young lady.” said Lucie Van der Veer, GGC’s Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator.



*Good Grief Center Memory Garden*

### Our Good Wish List

- Volunteers needed to tend the memory garden
- New laser printer
- Window shades so we can see our computer screens
- New phone system—is your company planning an upgrade, share your old system with us
- Small refrigerator
- Air Conditioner—window unit
- Case of Kleenex
- Volunteers willing to deliver brochures to area churches, community centers, etc.

*The Good Grief Center operates as a non-profit under the Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute, a 501(c)(3) organization, which serves as our fiduciary agent.*

## New Board Members Go Right to Work

**Carole Davis**, Owner of Marjie Allon Fine Stationary on Walnut Street, is bringing her creative flair and marketing expertise to our upcoming 5th Anniversary Celebration in September.

**Cynthia McCormick**, Director of Corporate and Government Affairs at the Carnegie Museum of Art, is leading a new funding effort by developing contacts and strategies to secure government grants for GGC from both state and national sources.

**Rev. James Simms**, pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church, is working to expand our network of religious leaders and extend our outreach in the African-American community.

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## *Ain't Too Proud to Beg*

Recognize that tune? Now for our begging part—please mark your calendars and plan to join us. The **Temptations** will be performing at this year's Pittsburgh Symphony Community Partner Concert on June 15<sup>th</sup> at Heinz Hall. A full 100% of your ticket purchase will be donated to the Good Grief Center if you purchase the ticket by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to select GGC from the list of area non-profits when you order your tickets. Tickets may be purchased by calling 800.743.8560 or online at [www.pittsburghsymphony.org](http://www.pittsburghsymphony.org). It's a great way to support GGC and have a fun evening too.

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Save the date.  
Our 5th Anniversary Event  
**September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006**  
at the Andy Warhol Museum



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