

# goodwords

news from the **good grief center for bereavement support**

## What Can I Say?

Thoughts on how to offer sympathy and support

*We live in a society that avoids talking about death and dying. Think of all the phrases we use for death that are really attempts to soften it — passing on, losing someone, or going home. Most workplaces only offer 2 or 3 bereavement days and then expect you back to work and fully functioning. Haven't we all heard, "It's been 5 months, isn't she over it yet?" It's no wonder most find grief a difficult subject, but it doesn't need to be that way. If we follow our hearts and remember three key points, we can support each other during a very difficult time.*

### Acknowledge Their Grief

Often, because we feel uncomfortable talking about a painful subject, we do one of three things. We ignore the situation, we attempt to cast it in a positive light or we try to fix it. Instead, when you see a grieving person, don't pretend like nothing happened. Tell the person you are sorry to hear of his or her loss. Ask someone how they are doing, and then, be prepared to listen to what they have to say.



Here are common statements followed by suggestions which may be more supportive:

*"But, he was 85 and had a full life."*

You must have so many wonderful memories.  
How did you two meet?

*"Her suffering is over."*

We are never prepared for someone to die, are we?

*"Time heals all wounds."*

I'm sorry. This must be so difficult.

## Talk Less ~ Listen More

Listening will do far more to help than most words. Ask simple, open-ended questions and then listen. Sometimes, the answers can be slow to come — don't rush to fill the silence. Your patience shows you really want to hear the response. Physical gestures — a pat on a hand, a hug, offering a shoulder to cry on — are comforting expressions of your support.



Here are some comments that encourage someone to share their thoughts and feelings:

*"I can hear the sadness in your voice."*

This shows you are willing to share their pain.

*"Really? Tell me more."*

Draw the person out — demonstrate you really do want to support them.

*"You were married 40 years, of course it still hurts after only 4 months."*

Look for ways to let them know their feelings are natural and common.

## Be There for the Long Haul

Grieving usually gets harder in the months following a death, not easier. The first year is just that — a year of firsts: the first birthday, the first holiday, the first anniversary, the first vacation, the first... of everything. Find ways to show the person you recognize how difficult these days can be. Grieving can make people feel they are going crazy. Your ongoing support can reassure them that their feelings are a natural response to losing someone important in their life.

- Be in touch every couple of weeks just to let them know you are thinking of them.
- Allow the person to vent. Many times anger is a part of grief.
- Go grocery shopping or bring over a dinner weeks or months later — healthy nourishment is so important while grieving.

# What Can I Send?

## Announcing the Good Grief Care Package and Orchid A Joint Venture of the Good Grief Center and the Manchester-Bidwell Corporation



*Don't we all struggle with what to send following a death? Two local non-profits have announced a new alternative: one that helps those in grief and helps our community at the same time. The Good Grief Center is now offering a newly created Care Package complimented with a beautiful orchid plant from the Manchester-Bidwell Corporation.*



Sally Wiggin, WTAE, introduced the joint venture from what she termed as two of Pittsburgh's most dynamic non-profits

As Sally Wiggin explained, "The Good Grief Care Package offers the tools we all need to help us cope with grief." Included in the Package are a journal, a CD of healing music and meditations, and inspirational Quiet Moment cards that offer insights and suggestions about the many layers of the grief experience. "The Care Package offers people a way to hold the mission of the Good Grief Center in their hands," explains Associate Director, Marilyn Chapla. Each item reveals the grief expertise, compassion and support that are the hallmark of this nearly five-year-old organization.



Ellen Woods and Bill Strickland of Manchester-Bidwell Corporation joined Lulu Orr of GGC and Scott Pipitone of the Pipitone Group, at the Care Package Launch Event

The Care Package can now be sent with a live orchid — fresh from the Drew Mathieson Greenhouse, of the Manchester-Bidwell Corporation. MBC is recognized as a national model offering education and training with the goal of reshaping the business of social change. The shared values of GGC and MBC made the partnership a natural. Both organizations are committed to bringing hope to the people they serve — whether that be those struggling with grief or those working to get their life on a more productive track. This innovative product is another expression of both organizations' missions.

The joint venture not only supports those in grief, it also provides revenue for both organizations. Funding from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous and the Richard King Mellon Foundation supported the development, marketing and initial inventory. A portion of the proceeds from sales of the Care Package and orchid will benefit these two distinctive non-profits that help so many in our community. As Bill Strickland, President of MBC noted, with his trademark visionary zeal, "This is not just a product for Pittsburgh — we see national potential." Judging from his past track record, it probably won't take long for the Good Grief Center and Manchester Bidwell Corporation to make that national impact.

### volunteer spotlight

## Linda Gates:

Linda came to the Good Grief Center as an intern four years ago when she was earning her Masters in Counseling from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. And, fortunately for GGC, she never left! Linda is co-facilitator for two support groups held at GGC on Thursday evenings: an Open Bereavement Group on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays and our Daughters Without Mothers Support Group on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays. These groups are open to all and free of charge. Many thanks to Linda for her dedication and loyalty to the Good Grief Center! For more information about these or many other support groups around the region you may call or email GGC at 412-461-1776 or [support@goodgriefcenter.com](mailto:support@goodgriefcenter.com)

message from the executive director

## Dear Friends,

As you well know, relationships and partnerships are a key part of our lives. They certainly are at the heart of GGC. The relationships we establish with the grieving are built on trust and the knowledge that GGC is a safe place where people can find support and share their stories.

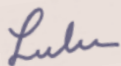
Equally important are the professional partnerships we have created since opening our doors in 2001. The Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute (PPI) serves as our fiduciary agent which allows us to focus on our mission, knowing that our financial matters are being handled by this well-established, reputable organization. PPI is regarded as one of the region's foremost counseling centers which also assures a dependable referral for our clients.

Our newest partnership with the Manchester Bidwell Corporation (MBC) weaves together the missions of two very different non-profits. As you have just read, we have joined forces on a social enterprise venture which combines our Care Package with MBC's locally grown orchids. This is a win-win for both organizations as well as all who receive this beautiful acknowledgement.

On a personal note, the most important relationship I have is clearly with my family. I am happy to tell you that we will be traveling to Africa this summer — part volunteer work, part safari. It is sure to be an exciting time for us all!

While this means I will be away from GGC for 4–6 weeks, I know Marilyn, Lucie, Toni and GGC will maintain and grow relationships with all of our clients and friends — you included. Many thanks for all your continued interest and support.

Take care,



*Comments? Suggestions? send us an email at  
support@goodgriefcenter.com  
or visit our website at [www.goodgriefcenter.com](http://www.goodgriefcenter.com)  
412.461.1776*

## goodnewsgoodnewsgoodnews Memory Garden



### Back in Bloom ~ Thanks to Mitzvah Day Volunteers

Is there a more welcome sign of spring than the sight of a garden coming back to life? And, is there a more massive gardening task than spring clean-up? Thanks to the Mitzvah Day volunteers that task was accomplished in record time with many hands and many smiles. A joint effort of Rodef Shalom Congregation and Calvary Church, Mitzvah Day volunteers of all ages worked together on numerous projects throughout the city in a day of service. Fortunately GGC was selected as one of their spring projects. We are most grateful to all those who helped.

### Help Keep It In Bloom ~ Become a Memory Garden Volunteer

Why not bring a couple friends for a morning of gardening in this special Memory Garden at the historic Carnegie Library of Homestead. Once a week, or even once a month, would be a great help. You'll be adding to the beauty of the Mon Valley and honoring the memories the plants in our garden represent. Please call 412-461-1776 or email [lucie@goodgriefcenter.com](mailto:lucie@goodgriefcenter.com) to volunteer in our garden.

### Wishes Do Come True

We'd like to thank the following individuals for responding to the Wish List in our last issue of goodwords:

Carole Davis – air conditioner  
Terry Griggs – air conditioner  
Fred Goldsmith – phone system  
Reverend James Simms – called with offers of help

### Still Wishing...

Volunteers to tend our garden  
Brochure and display racks for our growing library  
New desktop computer  
Round conference table for six  
Case of kleenex



Join us for **“Picture This...”** on September 21, 2006

Help us celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Good Grief Center by enjoying an evening of fun at the Warhol Museum.

### Guest of Honor ~ Martha Perry

Martha Perry, retiring this fall as Associate Executive Director of the McCune Foundation, will be honored at our anniversary event for the lasting impact her career at the Foundation will have on our region. Martha forms a rare partnership with grantees like GGC — stimulating strategic thinking, providing wise counsel and offering moral support. As we celebrate our 5th year, no one has contributed in so many ways to the success of the Good Grief Center as Martha. Please help us thank her!



Put yourself in the Picture  
Join our Committee or become a sponsor  
Call 412-461-1776 or  
email [support@goodgriefcenter.com](mailto:support@goodgriefcenter.com)

### Committee

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bob Antonelli           | George H. Love II        |
| Jimmy Armstrong         | Elizabeth Lynn           |
| Deb Bergen              | Marguerite Jarrett Marks |
| Mia & Joel Bernard      | Cynthia McCormick        |
| Bonnie & Vaughn Blaxter | Page McSorley            |
| Bea & Jim Bradley       | Debbie & Doug Millar     |
| John Carpenter          | Mark Miller              |
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| Emily & Charlie Jarrett | Dan Weisberg             |
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| Kitty Lesko             |                          |

*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.*



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