

## Lulu Orr, executive director, Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support

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Lulu Orr

When Lulu Orr was 5 years old, her father died from Hodgkin's disease. Eleven years later, her best friend died in an automobile accident. Those two experiences sparked a desire to help others cope with death. She began her nursing career at **Forbes Hospice** and, in 2001, she founded the **Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support** as a nonprofit resource and referral center for anyone who needs help managing the loss of a loved one. Orr also is a member of the professional advisory board and the founders society board of Forbes Hospice, as well as boards supporting The Caring Place, Helping Hands Healing Hearts, Allegheny Cemetery and an orphanage in Kenya called Hekima Place.

2009 was a tough year. What was your business strategy?

Driven by our mission, we stretched in order to continue providing our services to all who needed our support — free of charge. ... With the downturn in the economy many businesses saw a reduction in their workload — for us it was just the opposite.

How did it turn out?

It has been an incredible year for the Good Grief Center as our total outreach numbers exceeded 30,000 in our ninth year. From our new location in Squirrel Hill we have been very successful in reaching those who are grieving. Calls to GGC increased 85 percent, support group attendance jumped 106 percent and appointments for support rose 66 percent. Fortunately our volunteer involvement increased as well. Volunteers supported GGC with over 4,600 hours in 2009 — more than the equivalent of two full time positions!

If you could go back and change one thing about your career, what would it be and why?

If I could change one thing it would be to have traveled more working as a nurse. I did some work as a nurse in Africa and the Seychelles, but I would have liked to have worked as a nurse in more places and have had our children experience a larger variety of cultures.

Do you use LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter?

Yes, I do. As an organization that touches people, we look for multiple ways to reach people who are grieving, ranging from individual support, group support and offering a variety of resources to help people with their grief.

What's your best networking tip?

You won't know until you ask. Don't be afraid to talk to anyone — the CEO or the maintenance man — both can and will help you out!

What is the best book you've read this year?

"The Help" by Kathryn Stockett

What would the title of your autobiography be?

"Good Grief!"

Who would play you in the movie version?

Lucy Van Pelt from Peanuts, but our "psychiatric" help isn't even 5 cents!