



# goodwords

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

## Good Grief means being good to yourself

1. Talk about your loss with friends, family or a professional. Grief is a process, not an event.
2. Let yourself enter the emotions of grief. Grievers tend naturally to avoid the painful emotions. Losing someone close to you means you deserve to allow yourself to feel all your emotions - sadness, anger, intense longing, guilt and others.
3. Consider writing your loved one a letter. Say what you would tell them as if it were your last chance. Even if you never share the letter with anyone, writing it may help you work through your grief.
4. Resume your life but leave time and space for grieving. Life marches on for the living. But try to resist the temptation to “throw yourself” into work or other diversions. This leaves too little time for the grief work you need to do for yourself.
5. Take care of yourself. You have been wounded. Something very valuable and dear has been taken away from you. Give yourself time and space to begin healing. Get enough rest. Eat nourishing food. Give yourself a break.
6. Resist the temptation to use alcohol or drugs to numb your pain. These can interfere with the grieving process by delaying it or covering it up.
7. Consider seeking out other grievers. Someone who has also been through grief can empathize with you, and vice versa. The Good Grief Center recognizes the value of sharing in a group setting and offers groups on site and also has a comprehensive list of groups throughout our region.
8. Don't feel obligated to join groups if they are not for you. The grief process is highly individual. Some people prefer solitude or reflection rather than group work. Do what feels right for you.
9. Be patient. The grieving process often includes setbacks. Don't expect to set an “I'll be over it” deadline and succeed. Often, grieving resumes after a time, sometimes even months or years. Reminders can trigger a flood of emotions. Don't be surprised if this happens, and don't consider it a sign of weakness. Instead, your psyche is telling you more grief work needs to be done.
10. Create your own memorial service. Celebrate their lifetime accomplishments, values and principles. Consider carrying the torch of a cause they believed in as a memorial. Start a scholarship, plant a garden, or make a donation in their name.
11. The grieving process has run its course when you feel weary of rehashing events and memories and know that your loved one can remain with you only in spirit. For some, the process never really ends; it just gets easier over time. You will know you are ready to move forward when you feel you can reinvest the energy once invested in your loved one in a new place. This takes time. Good grief means being good to yourself during the process.
12. As you heal and begin to live your “new normal” with increased energy and a sense of excitement about the future, please consider something that many find richly rewarding – volunteering.

***Our mission:*** To be a comprehensive bereavement resource and referral center that builds a more compassionate community through grief awareness, education, support and hope; creating a safe place where all who have experienced the pain of death may come to work through loss and learn to manage grief.

# VOLUNTEERING

truly contributes to personal health and well-being. Volunteers make our world a better place. How do you feel about sharing your gifts and talents with others?

Volunteering is an opportunity that is just too good to dismiss without some consideration. At the Good Grief Center we simply could not fulfill our mission of offering support to the bereaved if it weren't for our volunteers.

The stories we hear about why our volunteers are drawn to this type of service (working with the bereaved) are as unique as the grief experience itself. Some are here because of a personal grief experience that taught them how valuable having someone who would listen was to them. Others are here because they realize the bereaved are a population that have many challenges and are underserved. In both cases they want to offer their compassion and skills as listeners.

Many non-profits, who use the talents of volunteers, would not be able to open their doors without the energy of these wonderful individuals. However, it is not just the organizations and the populations they serve that benefit from the many hours of work volunteers generously give. Volunteers often report the scales being tipped on the side of receiving much more than they give.

GGC's volunteers work all shifts. Many come in the evening or on the weekend, after working or

attending school all day or all week. As they arrive and settle in we often notice and hear they are feeling tired from the challenges of their day. When they leave we consistently hear their amazement at how the experience has energized them with a second wind. The energy comes from the relationships they form, the teaching, the sharing of their skills and of themselves with another. Sharing the human experience - priceless.

Volunteering becomes an avocation for many. We have seen a volunteer experience ignite a passion that takes the volunteer on a path to higher education and career change. Along with expanding social networks and developing new skills, volunteers often report a general feel good effect, a sense of accomplishment and increased life satisfaction.

If this article has gotten your attention and you are considering the possibilities of volunteering, pick up the phone and call Marilyn (412.461.1776) for more information on how you can share your gifts and talents with the Good Grief Center. Or visit our web site [www.goodgriefcenter.com](http://www.goodgriefcenter.com) to learn more about our volunteer program. You can make a difference by volunteering at GGC and becoming a GGC volunteer will make a difference in you.

*"Be the change that you want to see in the world."*    Gandhi

## **Register now**

for Volunteer Education and Training Sessions  
Peer Support Volunteers and Organizational Support Volunteers

## **Sessions begin on May 15th**

To help us give the gift of listening, or to lend support in other ways,  
please join our Good Grief Center team

Contact Marilyn @ 412.461.1776 or email her at  
[marilyn@goodgriefcenter.com](mailto:marilyn@goodgriefcenter.com)

**Training will be held at our new location | 2717 Murray Avenue - Squirrel Hill**

message from the executive director

## Dear Friends,

You may remember our original plan was to move in the fall of 2007. However, we experienced delays in receiving necessary permits that snowballed into other delays and more permits. Let's just say things did not go as smoothly as planned.

Many of our clients speak of "things that did not happen as planned." Their plans are of far greater importance than our move. Plans for traveling in retirement years, plans for their child to graduate from college and plans to do things for parents who spent their entire life doing for the kids. All of the people we meet are reeling from the unexpected changes that the death of a spouse, a child, a parent or other loved one brings. Helping them, helps us to remember to keep our unplanned delays in proper perspective.

The focus of their lives has changed dramatically and that is why GGC is here. To help them re-focus on a future they never dreamed of, to listen to their story, to give them hope that they can do this, to give them a safe place where this can happen. There are so many incredible people who have shared their stories with us. They have surprised even themselves in how they have been able to re-invent their lives after an unthinkable loss. There are many more stories to be shared. Our incredible growth is a result of the people who need support during this difficult time.

There are too many people to thank individually but I will say that if it weren't for our amazing staff, volunteers and board, as well as our incredible architect, Alan Dunn, trusted contractor, Jeff O'Donoghue and our wonderful architect consultant/ guardian angel, Brooks Robinson, Sr., none of this change would have been possible.

I am grateful beyond words to the many who have helped us along this exciting, yet challenging path. In May our new home will be 2717 Murray Avenue. It is filled with compassion, great strength and hope - all of which will continue to blossom and grow. Please come by and visit!

With heartfelt thanks to all who have helped us through these many changes!



*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

## goodnewsgoodnewsgoodnews

With a huge smile and a grateful heart, Lulu Orr, ended a phone conversation with Linda Woodward and Jim Hargis, Bereavement Specialists, at AseraCare Hospice. Lulu just received the good news that HPC Foundation, AseraCare's charitable giving arm, was making



a generous donation of \$2,500 to GGC. As if that news wasn't enough, they called back to say they DOUBLED the amount of the donation because they realized our move would increase our needs. Imagine our delight!

The HPC Foundation is funded by AseraCare's grateful families and the foundation keeps this generous spirit alive and growing with giving that reaches out and supports community organizations whose services are dedicated to supporting and strengthening end of life needs. THANK YOU ASERACARE.

### Susan Rossetti - Volunteer spotlight

Susan came to GGC as a volunteer in 2006 after reading an article in the newspaper about us. She had just retired from a 37 year career as a high school Spanish teacher. During those



"I felt I wanted to give back."

years she traveled extensively throughout Spanish speaking countries and learned volumes about the culture as well as the language.

Something that stood out as quite different from our own culture is how differently they deal with death. She observed, "When someone dies the bereaved feel like they still have a place. The person doesn't grieve alone. The family, in fact the whole community, is involved in the process. I felt a similar feeling about GGC's approach to loss and grief."

Her personal experience with grief brought her to GGC. However, she noted it is the people, the clients, staff and those relationships that keep her coming back. Susan noted that it may surprise people to learn that being able to help people who are hurting by being there to listen is very fulfilling.

Susan understands the importance of self care while doing this type of work. When she leaves the center at the end of the day she realizes she must honor the stories she has heard but not take them with her. She takes care of body, mind and spirit by keeping physically active with walking and biking. Last summer Susan and her husband biked from Washington, D.C. to Pittsburgh. Quite an accomplishment!

GGC is proud and honored to put our good spotlight on Susan Rossetti, a Peer Support Volunteer.



## Bereavement Support Groups

Meeting at the Good Grief Center

### Open Group

2nd & 4th Thursday of each month  
7-8:30 p.m.

### Daughters without Mothers Group

1st Thursday of each month  
7-8:30 p.m.

*GGC maintains a comprehensive listing of support groups throughout the region, please call 412-461-1776 for information.*



## GGC to move in May

2717 Murray Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217  
Phone: 412.224.4700

# Wish list

Wishes do come true and we have been very fortunate to have received a number of items from our wish list. With our May move date ever so close - here is our updated wish list. Please consider a tax-deductible donation of:

- Full-size refrigerator
- Upright piano
- Brochure/pamphlet racks
- Children friendly furniture, large pillows, etc.
- Office supplies (we'll have several new work stations to outfit! Maybe your business has an excess of some basics.)
- Video camera
- Gift cards

If you'd like to help and would prefer to make a donation, naming opportunities are still available for individuals or businesses. Talk with your employer about the importance of the Good Grief Center in our region and request that they contact Page McSorley for more information. We are truly grateful for all donations, whether in-kind or monetary in nature. Wishes that are granted will be acknowledged in upcoming newsletters and, as always, are greatly appreciated!



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