



# goodwords

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

## Gender Differences in Grief



Many researchers investigate and study how we grieve in order to help us better understand the process. Here at GGC we know that each person who calls or visits has a unique grief experience. It can also be helpful to understand

how gender differences play a part in how we grieve. Understanding the differences and similarities can help us better support family, friends and co-workers either male or female.

GGC staff and volunteers are honored and humbled with the opportunity to hear so many stories from grieving clients of both genders. Often a repetitive theme is noticed. Women frequently express that they feel their male counterparts are not grieving, or being supportive; and often men say that they do not know how to best support their female loved ones, or how to handle the emotion and pain that stems from grief.

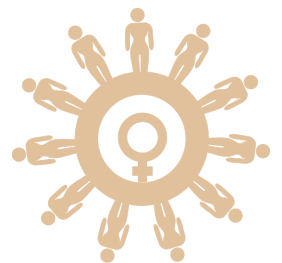
Men tend to be more comfortable attending to life changes by taking on new roles and responsibilities that result from the death of a loved one. By doing something like learning new non-traditional roles such as cooking, cleaning, or becoming a single parent, men may find this is a distraction from their grief. Men may also seek new identities and relationships sooner than women do. Males view social relationships as more of a time to share activities than emotions. So often they state that they know the story in their head and they don't need to retell it. They tend to want to "fix it" and will rely on their own resources - often keeping feelings and emotions to themselves.

On the other hand, women tend to be more emotional and will work on their grief by talking about it. They will tell their

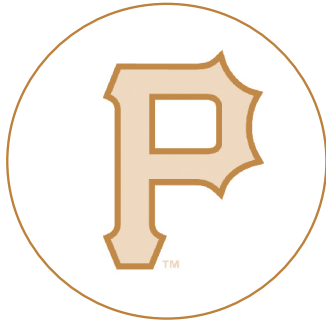
story over and over again because it helps them process and work through their grief. Women confide in friends, outwardly express their feelings and emotions, and "feel" their way through grief. Focusing on only these aspects of grief might delay a woman from doing necessary new things such as tackling finances, household/auto repairs, or creating new relationships.

Men say that they limit their expression of emotion because they may not want to appear weak. Women report frustration with men demonstrating little emotion and their not wanting to talk about the person who died. Women may view this as cold and think that the man is not grieving. Men are often faced with the duty of being strong and so may be given little social support. Society has traditionally taught little boys not to cry while on the other hand comforts little girls who do. Hopefully as we educate more this message is changing. These conflicting gender messages can carry through one's entire life and may cause misunderstandings between males and females who are grieving. This can lead to frustration, anger, and feeling isolated in one's grief for both genders.

What is important to remember is that neither way is right or wrong, just different. Both genders can learn from the other. There are ways we can cope with the many new roles and responsibilities we face when a loved one dies. If we learn to understand and accept one another's differences we can learn to support one another without trying to change them. Grief is a very personal experience and everyone will do it in his or her own way. The best thing we can do is support one another during this journey.



## Order tickets now for Good Grief Center Night at PNC Park!



**What:** A ball game and  
the Steve Miller Band

**Where:** PNC Park

**When:** Saturday, July 24  
at 7:05 p.m.

**Why:** A great opportunity to  
leverage your contribution to  
GGC as we expand our good work.

**The Good Grief Center (GGC) is teaming up with the Pittsburgh Pirates for an exciting night at the ball game. Join in on the fun when the Pittsburgh Pirates play the San Diego Padres on, Saturday, July 24 at 7:05 p.m. You will hit a grand slam with each ticket purchased: admission to the game, a live post-game concert with the Steve Miller Band, and a donation made to GGC.**

Two reasonably priced ticket options are available. Outfield box seats are \$20 of which \$5 per ticket is donated to GGC, or \$12 for left/right grandstand seats of which \$3 is donated to GGC with each ticket purchased. Tickets may be ordered by visiting GGC's website at [www.goodgriefcenter.com](http://www.goodgriefcenter.com) or by calling GGC 412-224-4700. Why not get a group from work or your child's class or scout troop? Those wishing to sit together should place one order for all tickets to ensure same section seating.

This event will prove to be great entertainment for families, friends, and large groups. Groups of 20 or more will be recognized on the color LED board at PNC Park.

Support the Good Grief Center and our hometown team while having a great time. Let's go Bucs!

## Good Grief Center's Executive Director Receives 2010 Women in Business Award

The *Pittsburgh Business Times* held its Business Women First - 2010 Women in Business Awards ceremony on March 15th at the Westin Convention Center Hotel. Twenty-five of the region's most outstanding women were honored for their business accomplishments and exceptional leadership in the workplace for both non-profit and for-profit sectors.

Among the honorees was the **Good Grief Center's** own Lulu Orr. Lulu has long been recognized by many for her gifts of outstanding vision, compassion, and "can-do" attitude.

As founder and Executive Director of the Good Grief Center, Lulu has worked tirelessly to build an organization that affords bereavement support to anyone who is grieving. Over the last 10 years Lulu has guided GGC with her inspirational leadership and innovative thinking. She is the first to say no one can do this alone, we must all work together in order to build a more compassionate community. Our hats are off to Lulu for all her hard work and an honor well deserved.

## Become our Fan on Facebook

### Are you on Facebook? Join us!



At the Good Grief Center, we are dedicated to helping people through times of grief and loss. Raising awareness of GGC is an ongoing priority.

Find us on Facebook to discover more about our services and to easily spread the word. Please become a fan by simply visiting our page and clicking on "Become a Fan". You will receive real time messages from GGC through your Facebook profile. Become a Fan and/or support our "cause" which will help us to help others!

***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.

## message from the executive director

## Dear Friends,

We are happy to report on the success of Pittsburgh Gives and our annual appeal. The combined results of these dollars are what we depend on to keep our doors open and continue to provide our valuable services free of charge. Your generosity makes such a difference and we wanted to share a few examples of how and who it helps:

Since the cover article is about gender differences let me share an unusual call from a local college student. "Bob" called looking for advice on how to best help his roommate and friend "Tom" whose brother had just died. Bob felt Tom would feel more comfortable at a group if his male friends went with him. We worked with Bob in giving him options on how to support his friend and reminded him that Bob would ultimately make the decision if he wanted to attend a group – alone or with his friends. Bob continues to stay in touch with GGC explaining that our suggestions are very helpful and he knows he is helping Tom.

Naturally as we age we experience loss and the older we get the more losses we encounter. One woman, "Mary" who had survived two major losses - her husband and her son, most recently "fell apart" when her oldest, dearest friend died. Who would she talk to about all of her troubles and fears? Who would she laugh with or go to the movies with? Mary's intense grief surprised her and she feared it wasn't "normal". She comes to GGC for peer support because she knows we understand. Mary knows now that it is natural to feel the pain of losing her best friend.

As you can see, the work we do is making a difference, but we cannot do it alone. We have just launched an awareness campaign promoting memberships for area businesses and hope you will encourage your employer to support GGC. Please visit our website [www.goodgriefcenter.com](http://www.goodgriefcenter.com) or call us to learn more 412-224-4700. We'll report in the next issue all of the companies that have joined us to help make our region a more compassionate community.

As always, many thanks,



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## PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

*Prestigious National Honor for Volunteer Service*

The Good Grief Center is proud to announce it will award 11 volunteers with the PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD, a national honor offered in recognition of volunteer service.



Bronze award recipients (100-249 hours) include: Sue Abramson,

Yvonne Beninati, Melissa Grant,

Elmer Harkema, Emily Hogan, Richard Lees, Sandy Lucsko, Susan Rossetti, Kathy Samudovsky, and Mona Strassburger. Our gold award recipient (500+ hours) is Diana Gong.

We are so appreciative of our dedicated volunteers who consistently take the time to make a difference in the lives of others. In 2009 our volunteers donated over 4600 hours (an increase of 99%) of their time supporting the mission of GGC. The awards will be presented at GGC's annual volunteer recognition event this spring.

## going green

**Win a \$50 Giant Eagle gift card!**

By being the 50th person to change from receiving our newsletter via snail mail to email.

GGC is consciously making every effort to do its share in protecting our environment. One way to partner with GGC in this endeavor is to save a tree and receive our newsletter via email. Help us save the environment as well as lowering our postage costs.

Please email us at [newsletter@goodgriefcenter.com](mailto:newsletter@goodgriefcenter.com) with the subject line "**going green**" or call us at 412-224-4700 and we'll make the change. Remember, if you're the 50th person, you win a \$50 Giant Eagle gift card.

GGC values your trust and commits to protecting the personal information we obtain from you.

*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)

412-224-4700

  
**good grief center**  
 for bereavement support  
 2717 Murray Avenue  
 Pittsburgh, Pa 15217

APRIL				
M	T	W	T	F
			DAUGHTERS w/out MOTHERS 7-8:30 PM	1 2
CALL GGC FOR SUPPORT	5	6	AFTERNOON OPEN GROUP 3-4:30 PM	7 8
			EVENING OPEN GROUP 7-8:30 PM	9
12	13	14	DAUGHTERS w/out MOTHERS 7-8:30 PM	15 16
19	20	AFTERNOON OPEN GROUP 3-4:30 PM	EVENING OPEN GROUP 7-8:30 PM	21 22 23
26	27	28	29	30

MAY				
M	T	W	T	F
MOTHERS'S DAY AHEAD CALL GGC FOR SUPPORT	3	4	AFTERNOON OPEN GROUP 3-4:30 PM	5 6
			DAUGHTERS w/out MOTHERS 7-8:30 PM	7
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17	18	AFTERNOON OPEN GROUP 3-4:30 PM	DAUGHTERS w/out MOTHERS 7-8:30 PM	19 20 21
24	25	26	EVENING OPEN GROUP 7-8:30 PM	27 28
31				

JUNE				
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FATHER'S DAY AHEAD CALL GGC FOR SUPPORT	7	8	EVENING OPEN GROUP 7-8:30 PM	9 10 11
14	15	AFTERNOON OPEN GROUP 3-4:30 PM	DAUGHTERS w/out MOTHERS 7-8:30 PM	16 17 18
21	22	23	EVENING OPEN GROUP 7-8:30 PM	24 25
28	29	SIGN UP FOR PIRATES GAME!		30

JULY				
M	T	W	T	F
SIGN UP FOR PIRATES GAME!			DAUGHTERS w/out MOTHERS 7-8:30 PM	1 2
5	6	AFTERNOON OPEN GROUP 3-4:30 PM	EVENING OPEN GROUP 7-8:30 PM	7 8 9
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