

Ursuline, SSA Join to Offer Representative Payee Program

Among the most critical concerns for senior and disabled individuals seeking to maintain their independence is the ability to maintain their financial affairs. Helping to meet this need, Ursuline now offers a Representative Payee Program through its Checks & Balance Program (Money Management/Volunteer Bill Paying.)

In place since 2014, the Rep Payee Program is available to appropriate referrals who are agreeable to using Ursuline in this capacity. Supported by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging, Checks & Balance is a volunteer-driven initiative originally designed after an AARP model. Rep Payee is an additional service within this program now offered through a special agreement with the U.S. Social Security Administration. Ursuline can offer the same support

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Ursuline Caregivers Conference Provided Networking, Education and Affirmation

Approximately 120 professional and lay caregivers gathered May 13, 2015 at Edgewood Country Club for an Ursuline Support Services conference, *Stocking the Caregiver's Toolbox: Techniques and Tips for Families and Professionals.*

"Now more than ever, caregivers are searching for new and innovative ways to ensure they are delivering compassionate care while also taking care of themselves," said Ursuline Executive Director Tony Turo. "This conference was designed to bring caregivers together to share information and network with each other regarding the challenges common to all. From the comments gathered after the event, it is fair to say that such information and support are greatly needed today as more and more people find themselves in the role of caregiver, whether by choice or by fate."

The day featured a varied array of speakers to share experience and ideas with attendees. The impressive roster of nearly one dozen presenters included keynote speaker Theresa Brown, PhD, RN, a clinical nurse and opinion columnist for The New York Times; Marie Folino, Director of Care Services for the ALS Association, Western Pennsylvania Chapter; Anne Kertz Kernion, owner/artist of Cards by Anne since 1986 and former professor at both Carlow University and Community College of Allegheny County; Ray Landis, Advocacy Manager for AARP Pennsylvania; Ivana Liberatore, Investment Advisor Representative and founder of Ivana Liberatore CPA, CFP® & Associates, an all-female tax and financial planning firm; Judy Matthews, PhD, MPH, RN, research associate in the department of health and community systems in the School of Nursing and associate director of the

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Mike Lee, USS Board Chair talks with Keynote Theresa Brown after her session the morning of the conference.



Participants share resources on caregiving support during an afternoon session.



Heather Sedlako of United Way (c) and Rebecca Delphia of AARP (r) address a participant's question at the close of their presentation.

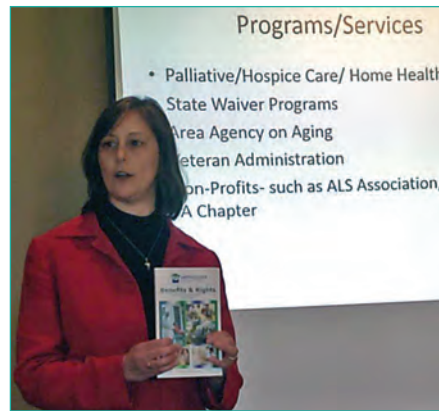
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gerontology program at Pitt's University Center for Social and Urban Research; Heather Sedlacko, Director of Programs for Seniors and People with Disabilities for United Way of Allegheny County; Lisa Story, LPC, founder and executive director of Hope Grows, a nonprofit organization for caregiver support; Alison Strome, MSCP, bereavement specialist for the Good Grief Center and former therapist at Gateway Rehabilitation Center; Nancy Zions, Chief Operating Officer/Chief Program Officer for the Jewish Healthcare Foundation; along with Diana Hardy, MSCP, NCC, LPC, Director of the Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support at Ursuline Support Services. The conference, which provided continuing education credits for physicians, psychologists, nurses, attorneys, professional counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, human resources professionals, certified guardians and nursing home administrators, covered a wide-range of useful and practical topics. These included caregiver in the workplace, financial exploitation and related issues, end of life concerns and challenges, as well as social/spiritual challenges.

Equally important, the conference allowed participants to connect with each other and share their concerns and practices.



Nancy Zions of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation leads two sessions on the foundation's end of life initiatives and POLST (Physician's Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment).




Marie Folino of the ALS Foundation supplies concrete resources for caregiving support to those attending her session.



Ray Landis of AARP provides an update on the organization's advocacy efforts on behalf of caregivers.

"Whether gathered around our vendors' exhibits, at lunch or even between sessions, we could tell that the time available for networking encouraged sharing of innovative ideas as well as personal experiences," said Turo. "With so many caregivers often feeling isolated and alone, we felt this was a key component of the conference. From the feedback we've received, it would appear this was a highly-valued part of the day-long experience."

Sponsors for the conference were AARP Pennsylvania; United Way of Allegheny County; UPMC Health Plan/UPMC Cancer Center; Highmark; Community Life; Westminster Presbyterian Church; Dollar Bank Foundation and the Jewish Healthcare Foundation. 

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as it does for its bill-paying clients but with the additional control and protection that comes with being the assigned rep payee.

"For those no longer able to manage their monthly financial obligations, they can request the support of a representative payee through the Social Security Administration," said Program Director Karen Tobin. "Through this recently added option, individuals granted this support relinquish all controls to their monthly benefits and bill paying; Ursuline assumes responsibility of the participant's financial obligations and provides them with a monthly stipend for personal incidentals."

The Representative Payee component is just another example of Ursuline's commitment to helping individuals age with grace and dignity.

In some cases, Tobin added, the program receives referrals from consumers and caregivers about other potential assistance regarding financial matters, including complex financial situations that individuals cannot manage on their own. A program representative meets with these consumers one-to-one to assess their individual needs. If ever an individual's needs

exceed the Checks & Balance Program's offerings, the consumer is guided to the appropriate agencies and services in Allegheny County which offer the different types of assistance they need.

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DIRECTIONS

from the Executive Director

Handle with Care

I saw a statistic recently that, well, surprised me only because it didn't surprise me. It said that 95 percent of people will say they are caregivers. Some of these are professionals, such as nurses who toil tirelessly to bring comfort to their patients. Others are uncompensated—at least financially—as they give generously of their time and effort to tend to a loved one, a neighbor, a friend or, in the case of so many selfless volunteers, a stranger who simply needs to know someone cares.

But something does surprise me. As critical as caregiving is in our society, and with so many individuals involved in the direct delivery of care, it baffles me why this activity that touches so many lives, isn't more widely acknowledged for its importance.

This was reinforced for me recently during our daylong conference, "Stocking the Caregiver's Toolbox: Techniques and Tips for Families and Professionals." For sure, we offered an impressive list of presenters, who discussed a number of topics meant to make the act and the art of caregiving at least a little bit more effective and maybe even a little bit less stressful.

But it was the many, many conversations with attendees I had or, in some cases, simply overheard, that left the greatest impression on me. The stories I heard were, at the same time, unique and universal. From the professional, I heard comments about innovations in caregiving and how those innovations had mostly improved, but definitely changed, how care is given. But I also heard about how, despite coming to caregiving as a paid professional, none could avoid building a genuine bond with those who came to depend on him or her for a myriad of needs.



The stories from friends and family members were similar, but with two big differences. First, the emotional bond with their loved one was forged long before it became necessary to provide care. And second, they truly were forced to learn on the job; very few had formal training in caregiving, nor could most anticipate what an all-consuming and stressful assignment they had, in many cases, thrust upon them.

But what all caregivers shared, besides the mental, emotional and physical strains, was a feeling that they were somehow alone, unappreciated and misunderstood.

— Tony Turo
executive director,
Ursuline Support Services

But what all caregivers shared, besides the mental, emotional and physical strains, was a feeling that they were somehow alone, unappreciated and misunderstood. And eventually it hit me: with 95 percent of human beings sharing a common connection, that connection was as fragile as butterfly wings.

It was at that point that I realized how important it was to offer our conference. Even more important, I realized how critical it is that Ursuline not just continues to offer its programs and services, but that we recommit ourselves to being a true champion for both caregivers and those who need care.

In the coming months, the staff, administration and board of Ursuline will continue their conversations begun over a year ago to provide our organization with a new and even more ambitious strategic direction than we've pursued before. A cornerstone of our plan will be a commitment to create a community of caregivers who support each other with ideas, with hands and, most importantly, with hearts.

I can think of no more noble path for us to follow.

Tony Turo

 **stocking the
caregiver's toolbox:**



Lisa Story of Hope Grows (I) explains the health and relaxation benefits of "essential oils" to Tony Turo at the conference.

Ursuline Welcomes New Board Members

Ursuline Support Services is happy and honored to welcome six new board members, bringing a wealth of talent and experience to the organization.

“Ursuline is grateful that these six community leaders are willing to volunteer their time to help advance our mission,” said Ursuline Board Chair Mike Lee. **“Their combined energy and expertise, added to that of our current board members, will strengthen Ursuline considerably as we seek to help the more vulnerable among us.”**

The new board members are:

Donna M. Doblick, partner in the Appellate Group of Reed Smith. She joined the law firm in 1996 and is also affiliated with their Trial and Litigation groups. This is Ms. Doblick's second stint on Ursuline's board where she previously served as chair. Prior to joining Reed Smith, Ms. Doblick served as a law clerk to the Honorable Frank H. Easterbook on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. She also worked from 1993 to 1996 for Schopf & Weiss in Chicago in the areas of antitrust defense and other commercial litigation.



Elisa C. Foster has been a Women's Leadership & Mentoring Specialist at Robert Morris University since 2014. Previously, Ms. Foster resided in Philadelphia, where she held professional positions with the Melior Group, a marketing research consulting firm; the Urban League of Philadelphia; the Women's Business Development Center; and Fairmount Ventures, a consulting firm that works with nonprofit organizations.



Keith R. Lagnese, MD, FACP is a clinical instructor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School Medicine. The former president of the St. Clair Hospital medical staff, Dr. Lagnese has extensive clinical and professional experience, including his current work with Community Life in Homestead, a PACE program that oversees all aspects of healthcare for an elderly underserved nursing home eligible panel of patients.



Scott Marentay was promoted in 2014 to chief operating officer of HyperActive Technologies, a Pittsburgh-based company QSR (Quick-Service Restaurant) drive-thru solutions provider. Mr. Marentay also served the company as vice president of operations and director of client services. Previously, he was the customer service manager for Micros Systems, Inc. Currently, he serves as a trustee for the Early Learning Institute.



Louise Cavanaugh Sciannameo is the vice president for communications and external relations for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Sciannameo has an extensive background in public relations, communications and marketing, having worked in executive management positions for Carlow University, the University of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Mercy Foundation, Mellon Financial Corporation and Carnegie Mellon University.



Kyle Steffen, an Army veteran who served in Afghanistan and earned the Army Commendation Medal, Combat Infantry Badge and Purple Heart, currently is the workforce development manager for Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania. In this capacity, Mr. Steffen leads a team of employment specialists to help career-minded veterans find meaningful jobs in the region. As of June 15, 2015, Mr. Steffen will be moving to Allegheny Health Network where he will serve as associate director of major gifts.



W E L C O M E

Message from the Ursuline Board Chair

Dear Friends of Ursuline Support Services:

There exists a sometimes lively debate among nonprofit organizations—particularly those who provide direct services to individuals facing difficult challenges such as managing grief or providing care to others—as to how much “like a business” we should operate. On the one hand, the fear is that if any organization pays too much attention to the bottom line, it will lose its soul by forgetting the mission and passion that spawned its birth in the first place.

Yet, not to run any organization as cost-efficiently as possible, the other side argues, only dooms it to a never-ending pattern of stress: funds become tight, programs suffer and, eventually, the very ability for the agency to continue to exist is threatened.

This challenge is constant and presents itself to all nonprofits, regardless of size, mission or service area.

I am proud to share with you that the Board, management and staff of Ursuline has been, and shall remain, committed to maintaining the proper balance between what we could call “head” and “heart.” In the Winter 2015 edition of this newsletter, I shared with you that Ursuline has adopted a new strategic plan, fully integrating it with the Good Grief Center and insuring an unified mission and vision.

I now wanted to share with you that we are taking the next steps toward putting our organization on as firm a footing as possible through the development and implementation of an Annual Plan. Still in its approval process, I can share with you that in the coming fiscal year, Ursuline Board and staff will be taking strategic steps to increase and insure strong and



diverse revenue streams and thus improve our financial performance, grow our volunteer base to strengthen many of the programs they support and expand our efforts in the marketing/communications area so that we might better create awareness of the issues of caregivers and those in grief, thereby attracting greater support from the community at large and also key funders.

Our efforts in the marketing/communications area also will help us reach deeper into our communities to alert those who might benefit from our services to learn more of our programs and expertise.

As we initiate our plan, we are looking for new and innovative ways to expand our services. This will mean some repacking and refocusing of some programs to better meet new needs. For example, we are looking for ways to partner with businesses and other organizations to provide help with such issues as grief in the workplace or the growing phenomenon of employees who also are caregivers. We also are looking at the use of emerging technologies, with a particular nod toward social media. We believe that such

tools as our web site, Facebook and Twitter will help us provide more information more quickly while building a community of individuals who share similar challenges, question and concerns.

These remain challenging times for for-profit and nonprofit organizations alike, requiring a steadfast pledge to managing organizations as smartly, efficiently and effectively as possible. We at Ursuline are committed to doing just that but with a promise never to forget why we are here in the first place: to help those who need us to navigate life's transitions.

With your continued support, we are confident in our ability to meet that commitment.

Sincerely,

Mike Lee, *Chair*



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effectively as possible.**

— Mike Lee, *board chair*
Ursuline Support Services



Ursuline Support Services

Help navigating life's transitions

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review and wrap-up

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Ursuline Support Services is now registered with Smile.Amazon.com. For those of you who are frequent visitors and users of Amazon.com, you can go into the site by way of Smile.amazon.com, and select Ursuline Support Services from the list of registered charities or go to directly to the following link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1401610>. If you do, a 0.5% donation of your total purchase will be made to our agency!

It may not seem like a lot but, if you and all those you share this with do this for USS, it could mean quite a bit over several months or years. Give it a try!

Bookmark this link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1401610> so all your eligible shopping will benefit Ursuline Support Services. Thank you! 

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United Way Donor Designation Code: 281



Ursuline Support Services was awarded this Seal of Excellence by the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO), under the Standards for Excellence.

MISSION:

Ursuline Support Services helps individuals experiencing challenges posed by life's transitions, inspiring hope through protection, education, and advocacy.