

Good Grief Center, Local ALS Chapter Team Up to Support Families

Ursuline Support Services' Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support and the ALS Association Western Pennsylvania Chapter have developed a bereavement education series to help those family members who have experienced the death of a loved one to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control voluntary muscle movement.

According to Merritt Holland Spier, executive director of the ALS Association Western Pennsylvania Chapter, which supports more than 300 families struggling with the disease, "It is our mission to help those living with ALS but also to sustain programs that provide support to families after they have experienced the death of someone who has lived with ALS. We want to be there through the entire ALS

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Spring Conference to Offer Support, Advice for Caregivers

Ursuline Support Services is presenting a day-long conference, "*Stocking the Caregiver's Toolkit: Techniques and Tips for Families and Professionals*," Wednesday, May 13, at the Edgewood Country Club in Churchill.

"Now more than ever, those who find themselves thrust in the role of caregiver are seeking ways to ensure they are delivering the most effective and compassionate care," said Ursuline Executive Director Tony Turo. "As the title indicates, this conference will provide both professionals and non-professionals with the latest methods and ideas for providing care for others while also taking better care of themselves."



Among the highlights of the conference is a keynote address by Theresa Brown, PhD, RN, a clinical nurse headquartered in Pittsburgh, whose column "Bedside" appears on the *New York Times* op-ed page as well as on the *Times* blog "Opinionator." Previously she wrote for the *New York Times* blog "Well" and is a contributor to CNN.com.


Her first book was *Critical Care: A New Nurse Faces Death, Life, and Everything in Between* (HarperOne, 2011, paperback edition). More information on Brown can be found at www.theresabrownrn.com.

Drawing on experts from various disciplines and the Good Grief Center, the conference also will provide breakout sessions and panel discussions, with CEUs available to multiple professions. Sessions will cover such topics as: caregiving in the workplace, financial exploitation and related issues, end of life issues and challenges and social/spiritual issues.

Additionally, the conference will feature a vendors' exhibit and plenty of time for networking to encourage sharing of innovative ideas as well as personal experiences.

We want to acknowledge and thank our early Gold Sponsors for the conference: United Way of Allegheny County and AARP Pennsylvania. We also want to recognize and thank The Pipitone Group for their in-kind donation of all the conference website and communication design.

Early bird registration for the conference is \$100 until March 31. After that date, the cost will be \$125. Discounts will be offered to students and senior citizens.

For more information regarding "*Stocking the Caregiver's Toolkit: Techniques and Tips for Families and Professionals*," call 412-224-4700 or visit www.ursulinecaregiverconference.org. 

Spreading Holiday Cheer

This past December, a number of organizations continued a tradition of sending gifts and groceries to help make the holidays a little brighter for the agency's clients. FedEx Ground went one step farther, when employees posed for a team picture and sent it to Ursuline to help share their enthusiasm for helping others.

The gesture inspired the staff at Ursuline to do likewise, so they sent a photo of themselves wearing smiles and a message of gratitude for all those who help USS brighten the lives of so many others! The photo was shared with FedEx Ground, as well as West Penn Hospital, Edgar Snyder & Associates law firm, ReedSmith law firm and the Pipitone Group, who all chipped in with presents for Ursuline's guardianship wards and service coordination residents.

Upon receiving the gifts from the five organizations, Ursuline Executive Director Tony Turo told his staff, "I know how hard all of you work out there for those we serve. So it's nice to know there are others out there working hard for USS in many of the same ways!"



Open House Highlights

LEFT: Board member Jean Robinson (left) helps USS staff (from left, Jami Cairnes, Elaine Resetar, Karen Tobin) host the October 30th Open House for the launching of the new organizational strategic plan and re-branding to Ursuline Support Services.



Ursuline
Support Services

LEFT: Board member Scott Pipitone and former GGC Executive Director Lulu Orr catch up at the October 30th Open House.

DIRECTIONS

from the Executive Director

For as long as I can remember, I've been a bit of a news junkie. While I've always enjoyed knowing what is going on locally, nationally and around the world, such knowledge can be hazardous to your health. Simply put, if you spend too much time watching CNN, MSNBC or Fox News, you can begin to wonder something:



When exactly did humans stop caring for each other?


It's when I find myself beginning to struggle with that question that I'm most grateful to be working for Ursuline Support Services and to be associated with our staff, volunteers and participants—all of whom demonstrate a commitment to caring and concern for others that is nothing short of awe-inspiring.

Whether having chosen caregiving as a profession or called upon unexpectedly to help a loved one through one of life's transitions, these individuals all have one thing in common: an ability to put the needs of others above their own.

What is also clear is that caring for another can be both complex and challenging. That's why Ursuline is offering a day-long conference, ***"Stocking the Caregiver's Toolkit: Techniques and Tips for Families and Professionals,"*** Wednesday, May 13, at the Edgewood Country Club in Churchill. Our hope is that professionals and nonprofessionals alike who attend will learn new ways to deliver the most innovative and effective care to others while taking better care of themselves.

We are gathering an impressive roster of speakers, beginning with keynoter Theresa Brown, PhD, RN, a clinical nurse and author headquartered in Pittsburgh, whose column "Bedside" appears on the *New York Times* op-ed page as well as on the *Times* blog "Opinionator." Previously she wrote for the *New York Times* blog "Well" and now contributes to CNN.com.

If you or someone you know has assumed the role of caregiver, I would encourage you to attend this important conference. You can call Ursuline or visit our website for more information. If you are unable to attend but would like to help someone else to do so, I would ask that you consider using the enclosed envelope to send a contribution, which will help defer the registration cost for someone who will appreciate the help. There are also opportunities for organizations to help sponsor the conference—at varying levels—or provide a vendor table at the event to share resources and information with our attendees that day.

Let me close by thanking all of you who continue to support the work of Ursuline Support Services. Our work truly does change lives for the better and we couldn't do it without your help and generosity. 

Tony Turo

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journey for anyone and everyone who may need us."

To help those families cope, the ALS Association Western PA chapter partnered last fall with the Good Grief Center to offer a series of bereavement support groups, which met weekly for six weeks to provide education and support on how to effectively cope with and better handle the mourning process.

"We want to be there through the entire ALS journey for anyone and everyone who may need us."

— Merritt Holland Spier
executive director, ALS Association
Western Pennsylvania Chapter

"Grief education is badly needed among our ALS community," added Ms. Spier. "We pride ourselves on our guiding principle which is: Persons living with ALS and their families come first in everything we do. That's why we are honored to work in partnership with the Good Grief Center to offer such an important service."

Diana Hardy, director of the Good Grief Center, said another series, offered on Saturdays for family members of those who suffered from ALS and are now deceased, began in February and is running through March 28.

"Although we talk about the uniqueness of their loss, we also talk about taking care of themselves as they move forward," Ms. Hardy said. "I have learned a great deal about resilience and strength from these incredible people. We hope that our work with ALS families will help everyone who participates find an effective way to cope with his or her loss. The information we share can also help others who lose someone at the hands of other, equally devastating diseases."

For more information on specialized bereavement support and education groups provided through GGC, please call 412-224-4700. 

Dear Friends of Ursuline Support Services:

Thanks in large part to your unwavering support of our agency, Ursuline Support Services enjoyed another successful and productive year in 2013-2014.



It began with the board, administration and staff launching a new strategic plan and unveiling our new brand, one that clearly represents Ursuline as fully integrated with the Good Grief Center, with the sum of all "parts" creating a much more efficient and greater "whole." With a unified mission and vision, Ursuline is well positioned to offer greater support to more individuals throughout an even wider geographic area.

Our future indeed looks bright. Building upon the strengths of our existing programs, we are committed to introduce new, more expansive initiatives to fuel our growth and reach. These initiatives will include, but not be limited to, areas such as caregiver support and private guardianship, to name just two. More about these programs, as well as others, can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope you will take the time to learn more about our work and our needs, and share this information with your friends and colleagues.

In particular, I would like to call your attention to an upcoming day-long conference that Ursuline is offering on May 13 at Edgewood Country Club in Churchill. Titled, *"Stocking the Caregiver's Toolbox: Techniques and Tips for Families and Professionals,"* this important event will bring together individuals from multiple professions and with varied situations to learn and share with each other the particular challenges, responsibilities and rewards that come with being a caregiver. More information will be coming soon, but I urge you to mark your calendar now for what is sure to be a valuable and inspiring experience.

On behalf of Ursuline Support Services' Board of Directors, let me be the first to express my sincere gratitude for your ongoing support. We remain committed to serving the needs of our community, but the only way to do so is with your help. You make a profound difference in the lives of so many others, and for that I thank you.

Sincerely,

Mike Lee, *Chair*

ANNUAL

Annual **FINANCIAL** Report*

July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

INCOME

Public Guardianship**	\$521,690
Private Guardianship	
Fee for Service	201,130
Medical Assistance Fees	130,474
Protective Services	365,592
Service Coordination	
SLEP**	135,000
Marian Plaza	27,797
Volunteer Programs	
AARP Money Management**	36,000
Cart to Heart Shopping Program	6,906
Flu Shot	28,958
Good Grief Center	90,269
Administration***	73,631
TOTAL	\$1,617,447

EXPENSES

Public Guardianship**	\$525,250
Private Guardianship	
Fee for Service	215,406
Protective Services	365,847
Service Coordination	
SLEP**	136,930
Marian Plaza	27,499
Volunteer Programs	
AARP Money Management**	36,025
Cart to Heart Shopping Program	6,044
Flu Shot	28,958
Good Grief Center	200,679
Administration***	105,355
TOTAL	\$1,647,993

* audited figures

** Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging programs

*** \$105,823,000 of Administration income and expenses are included in the contract amounts of the Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging programs; \$51,020 of Administrative income & expense is included in the remaining program budgets.

REPORT 2013-14

Annual PROGRAM Report

July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

CORE PROGRAMS

Guardianship284 Wards

Allegheny Public Guardianship

(Includes Kane & Court Support) – 154 Wards

Fee-for-Service Guardianship

(Includes Trust Services) – 67 Wards

Out of County

(Includes Cambria Care Center) – 63 Wards

Protective Services705 Reports of Need

Service Coordination839 Residents

Volunteer Programs49 Participants

Checks & Balance

(Bill-paying) – 31 Participants

Senior Reassurance

(Wellness calls) – 8 Participants

Cart-to-Heart

(Grocery shopping) – 10 Participants

In-Home Flu Shot Program61 Participants

Good Grief Center.....1,853 Participants

Support Services – 778 Participants

Training Activities:

On-Site Numbers – 18 Participants

Off-Site Numbers – 1,057 Participants

Call Report – 5,969 Overall Contacts

Total Unduplicated

Persons Served3,791 Participants

OTHER SERVICES

Volunteers75 Volunteers

Good Grief Center–18

Volunteer Shopping Service–11

Money Management Program–17

Board of Directors–15

Senior Reassurance–4

USS Staff–10



Though Challenges May Grow, Commitment and Results Remain Strong

Despite the increased demand and diversity of the programs she oversees, Michelle Smart, director of Guardianship, Protective & Support Services, still considers herself “the luckiest director in the agency.”

The reason? “Because I get to see professionals across several specialized programs do amazing work every day,” she said.

Established in 1984, Ursuline’s Guardianship Program operated through the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of Allegheny County, now a division of the Department of Human Services. This service offers adult guardianship usually to persons who are more than 60 years old, primarily low income and who are referred for guardianship by the AAA, the Orphans’ Court division of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, or from family members, attorneys, nursing homes, the Veterans’ Administration, hospitals or other institutions.

Basically, a person needs a legal guardian because he or she lacks the capacity to make effective decisions regarding personal health, safety, welfare or finances. When individuals have no one to act on their behalf or family members disagree as to whom should assume that responsibility, they become candidates for guardianship.

“The challenge is that guardianship cases are becoming more diverse,” said Smart. “The program used to be limited to persons over 60 but now we serve many who are younger than 60 and we are seeing more afflicted with various diseases.”

Through AAA, Ursuline’s Protective Services investigators are trained in accordance with state law to provide crisis intervention for individuals 60 or older who lack the physical or mental capacity to protect themselves from imminent risk such as physical or psychological abuse, caregiver neglect, financial exploitation, abandonment or self-neglect.

In the area of Service Coordination, Ursuline’s Supportive Living Enhancement Program (SLEP) brings coordination services to seniors and adult with disabilities in Pittsburgh. Ursuline’s SLEP coordinators assist residents with acquiring adaptive equipment, in-home supports, as well as health and financial benefits. They read and interpret mail, link residents with community resources and provide long-term support, crisis intervention and advocacy as needed.

According to Smart, the service coordination program is experiencing an increase in residents with mental health issues and a lack of adequate resources or services to assist them.

Guardianship cont. on page 6

URSULINE SUPPORT SERVICES

Current Board of Directors *(as of January 2015)*



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Former Strategy & Operations, Financial Management
Deloitte Consulting LLP

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Former Directors who served during 2013-14

Nicholas Castle, Professor, Dept. of Health Policy & Mgmt.
University of Pittsburgh

Maryanne Fello, Director
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Vincenza Fiore, President/Owner
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Catherine Rossey, (formerly) Business Banking Sales Manager
PNC Bank Corporation

Michael Sundo, Controller
Jewish Healthcare Foundation

Alison Wolfson, Project Coordinator
Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas


Guardianship cont. from page 5

"We are facing more challenges," she said. "And that is true of all our programs: paperwork, demand and expectations are all increasing."

While these added demands and expectations can increase stress among Smart's 17-member staff of professionals, she says she manages a group of "amazing people."

"We know we save people's lives," Smart said. "No matter which of our services your loved one receives, you can be assured he or she will get the right attention. To a person,

our staff will tell you, we wouldn't do anything for someone we serve that we wouldn't do for our own mom or dad."

Anyone wishing to support these programs can make a financial contribution to Ursuline Support Services. Additionally, said Smart, "It is crucial that we all be on the lookout for people who might need help. Be a neighbor to your neighbor. Watch to see if they are not following their daily routines, like bringing in the daily paper. Or pay attention if someone seems to be acting erratically. They just might need support of some kind." 

Independence Support Services: Providing Individuals with Independence and a Whole Lot More

For most people, the idea of living independently, to be able to undertake most of their daily tasks with little or no needed assistance, is critical to maintaining a high quality of life.

Recognizing this, Ursuline Support Services offers a program called Independence Support Services to help individuals maintain their independence while getting the help they need from a team of dedicated volunteers, who are happy to assist with everything from bill paying to grocery deliveries or a daily wellness call.

Under the leadership of Director Karen Tobin, Ursuline offers three distinct programs under the umbrella of Independence Support Services: Checks & Balance, Cart to Heart Grocery Shopping Services and Senior Reassurance. All rely strongly on volunteers and the need for such help continues to grow.

“Generally, there is a great need out there for these programs,” Tobin said. “We continue to keep a list of those who could use our services but we don’t have enough volunteers for everyone.”

Checks & Balance is a bill paying program, sponsored by the Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging. It assists adults and those with disabilities who have difficulty maintaining their monthly financial obligations. The program matches trained volunteers with adults who need help budgeting and assuring their bills are paid on time. The volunteers prepare bills for payment, help with check writing and balance checkbooks.

For those no longer able to manage their monthly financial obligations, even with the assistance of a bill-paying volunteer, the support of a Representative Payee through Ursuline and the Social Security Administration can be made available. Through this recently-added program, individuals granted this support relinquish all controls of monthly government benefits and bill paying; Ursuline assumes responsibility of the participant’s financial obligations and provides him or her with a monthly stipend for incidentals.

Through Cart to Heart, adults with physical or health limitations can receive groceries on a regular schedule thanks to a volunteer. The Senior Reassurance Program, meanwhile,

matches a volunteer caller with a senior who lives alone or even a couple who has no one to check in on them. The volunteer schedules a brief daily wellness call and can provide emergency contact as needed with family, a neighbor or emergency support.

While all of these programs have been met with great support and gratitude, Tobin said that she cannot expand them without increased volunteer or financial support. For example, Cart to Heart currently serves seven clients, with almost a half dozen

more on a waiting list. Under the Checks & Balance Program, currently 21 clients are being served by 18 volunteers. According to Tobin, individuals can move through this program from bill-paying to the Representative Payee service—but only if more volunteers can be recruited.

“I’m currently working with four Rep Payee clients directly,” she said. “When we gain more volunteers, the program can grow.”

Tobin said that the volunteers come from all walks of life and all professions, including bankers, accountants, police and “individuals who just want to give back.”

“These services are so needed, but they don’t pay for themselves,” she said. “We need consistency among our volunteers, who do need to undergo background and reference checks, along with specific training.

We also can always use additional funding for some of the programs. Without that, we will only maintain the programs, not grow them.”

Tobin is happy to share letters and cards she has received from grateful family members whose loved ones have benefitted from Ursuline’s Independence Support Services. While the tangible benefits speak for themselves, Tobin knows the value of the programs is much more than that.

“What will help our programs grow the most will be when more people see them as a two-sided benefit,” she said. “Our volunteers don’t just perform a service. There is a social aspect to their work that grows as they talk to our clients while paying bills or delivering groceries. That personal connection is good for both the volunteer and the client. It’s one person connecting with another and that may be the most important aspect of these programs.”

“Our volunteers don’t just perform a service. There is a social aspect to their work that grows as they talk to our clients while paying bills or delivering groceries.”

— Karen Tobin
Director, Independence Support Services





Ursuline
Support Services

Help navigating life's transitions

Administrative Center
2717 Murray Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Phone: 412-224-4700
FAX: 412-224-4717
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Techniques & Tips for Families & Professionals

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Edgewood Country Club, Churchill

Go to www.ursulinecaregivingconference.org for more information.

Ursuline Rededication Celebration Launches Expanded Mission, Direction


Dozens of staff, volunteers and supporters gathered at Ursuline's Squirrel Hill office—which also houses the Good Grief Center—Thursday, Oct. 30, 2014 to formally announce and celebrate the agency's recommitment to serving those individuals who face the challenges of life's transitions.

Board Vice Chair Ginny Calega served as mistress of ceremonies, first welcoming to the dais Board Chair Mike Lee, who provided a brief overview of Ursuline's future direction. Executive Director Anthony Turo then outlined the history of Ursuline, including its 2011 merger with the Good Grief Center, which provided the new entity with a host of added capabilities to be shared with both existing and future clients.

Karen Tobin, director of Independence Support Services, provided a sketch of some of Ursuline's programs. She was followed by Board member Scott Pipitone, whose advertising and marketing firm, the Pipitone Group, assisted Ursuline in

developing a new brand and marketing strategy, including a new logo design and web site. Pipitone spoke eloquently about the Good Grief Center and the important work it does for individuals who have suffered loss.

Lee concluded the formal program by adding his own personal reflection and inviting those attending to learn more about the organization's enhanced mission, vision, direction and plans for reaching even more individuals in need.

Later, Turo added that the sense of enthusiasm in the room was noticeable. "There are just so many people who need the kind of help we can offer and that number continues to grow," he said. "Ursuline and the Good Grief Center both have histories of being there for those suffering from an unfortunate turn in their lives. We are recommitting ourselves to be there in the future with the same compassion as always, but with even better and more innovative programs." 



www.ursulinesupportservices.org

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.