

Comprehensive Bereavement Support from the Good Grief Center

Coping with the death of a loved one is a sad and often overwhelming experience.

The toll that grief takes on your life emotionally and physically can be difficult to manage by yourself. Not knowing where to turn for help can increase your daily struggle.

Recognizing this, UPMC Health Plan has embarked on a year-long staff training initiative facilitated by the Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support, the only comprehensive bereavement support agency in the region.

The training initiative has heightened UPMC staff's understanding of the special support needs of grieving individuals. It also has increased staff awareness of available care resources that can appropriately meet the mental, emotional and/or physical health needs of plan members during bereavement.

UPMC Health Plan staff is now better equipped to point grieving

Bereavement cont. on Page 4

USS Care Management Program Discontinues Service

For almost 30 years, Ursuline Senior Services proudly offered Care Management Program services to seniors in our community. It is with great sadness that we now announce that we will no longer be providing this service after June 30th, due to a contracting decision made by the Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

Our goal in care management has always been to provide individualized supportive services to seniors, enabling them to remain in their home for as long as they choose. Through our care managers, information & referral specialist, supervisors and support staff, we have worked very hard to provide individuals with the highest quality of service and the assistance needed to navigate the complex senior care system.

Over the years, our department grew in size, but we never lost our

focus – senior consumers and their caregivers. In addition to arranging and coordinating AAA services, our care managers have helped countless individuals in so many ways. When an individual

experienced a financial crisis, our care manager helped them organize their finances and found resources to assist them. We have aided individuals who had their

utilities terminated and brought food or medications to those going without. We have assisted seniors facing eviction or foreclosure, and worked with many who needed to relocate by helping them search for housing and facilitating their move.

Many of our staff have donated their time and personal belongings to help seniors who were in need of clothing, household items, furniture or a holiday gift or meal. We have cared for (and at times rescued) pets when a senior or

“...the one-on-one interaction you provided as a Care Manager was spontaneous, warm and reinforcing...something lacking in so many senior service providers!”

Care Management cont. on Page 2

INSIDE...



PAGE 3

Ursuline staff members help to find homes for consumers' pets.



PAGE 5

Good Grief Center's Bereavement Conference coming in October.



PAGE 8

PSO Community Partners Concert features En Vogue June 29.

caregiver was hospitalized. The limits of what our care managers would do to help someone in need seemed limitless. As of June 30th, that limit—at least in terms of this one important way—will have been reached with the ending of our AAA contract for the Community-Based Options/Care Management Program services.

We would like to thank the many individuals who wrote to share their support of our efforts over the years during the difficult months after learning of the AAA's decision. These thoughts and sentiments shared by so many will stay with us always and we would like to share some of them with you:

“...the one-on-one interaction you provided as a Care Manager was spontaneous, warm and reinforcing...something lacking in so many senior service providers!”

“As a result of (the Care Manager's) hard work and dedication and the Family Caregiver funding, Mom was able to stay in her own home! This has made her feel great, still semi-independent and we all have such peace knowing she is cared for by caring people.”

“Without the extraordinary assistance provided by Ursuline, I honestly don't know what I would have done. Ursuline provided us with financial resources... along with advice and answers to every question we had.”

“Our children live in other states and cannot take care of us on a day-to-day basis, so we had to turn to Ursuline for many of our every day needs and could always count on their professionalism, understanding and readiness to help, for which we are extremely grateful.”

“From the very beginning there has not been a phone call that has not been returned, a question that has not been answered and a concern that has not been addressed. This is our first experience dealing with this type of service. I am sure that if every agency had employees like (your Care Manager), what a secure world our seniors would have.”

all about News & Updates from Ursuline Senior Services Spring 2012

Administrative Staff

Anthony J. Turo, MPA
Executive Director

William Brickner, MEd, PHR
Director of Human Resources & Administration

Dianne Mettrick, BS
Finance Manager

Ann Mason, MAT, MEd, NCG
Guardianship Director

Cynthia Oliver, MA
Good Grief Center
Division Director

Nancy Scott, BA
Service Coordination Director

Michelle Smart, MS, NPM
Protective Services Director

Karen Miller-Tobin, MEd
Volunteer Programs Director

Roxann Tyger, MPA
Community-Based Options
Director

Mission Statement—
Helping older adults age with dignity.

In addition to the administrative staff, the following staff assisted in the development of this newsletter:

Betty Jane McAllister
Richard Murphy
Nadine Pcholsky
Elaine Resetar

Ursuline Employees Go to the Dogs...Cats and Birds, too!

Animals “Rescued” by USS Staff from/for Program Consumers

Sister and brother kittens, “Lulu” and “Julian,” were taken home by an Ursuline employee the day they showed up in our offices with the rest



of their litter. The intention was to adopt only one, but when these two were left at the end of the day, she took them both! As pictured, the two have taken to making themselves comfortable anywhere they like (like a fruit bowl in the middle of the dining room table)! Of course, now that they are bigger, their owner sees that each has their own bowl! Now that's love!!



“Fred” the Schnauzer was forced from his home when his owner was placed in a long-term care facility. A friend of an Ursuline staffer adopted Fred, after a much-needed grooming, and now claims she can’t imagine life without him!



Mitzi was adopted by an Ursuline staffer when her previous owner had to place her into a care facility. She came to US in need of a good bath and some veterinary attention. Here’s Mitzi after her “spa” day!



“Daisy” (right) was adopted by a family member of an Ursuline employee when her owner relocated to an apartment that would not allow pit bulls! She now relaxes with her new brother “Duke” (left) in a loving home that doesn’t care a wit about her parentage!! Our consumer rests easier knowing that Daisy shares a home with others who love her as much as she did.

“Simone,” a pure-bred toy Yorkshire Terrier, was found abandoned in an apartment near one of our program’s consumers.



An Ursuline employee on site was asked to help find Simone a home, which she did—with her. Simone now demands, and receives, all the attention any pet should come to expect!

...and Ursuline gives back!!



Few people outside of Ursuline’s headquarters know just how much the agency is full of life! Tucked away in the executive offices dwell a very prolific pair of zebra finches, “Zephyr” and “Zipper.” The pair has already hatched two clutches and raised ten healthy chicks...so far...since joining the agency about a year ago. While most of the chicks have landed homes with employees’ families and friends, the last clutch yielded a pair of mostly white birds that now reside at the Kane Regional Center McKeesport. Laureen Gordon at Kane McKeesport, who takes very good care of the approximately 25 birds in their lovely walk-in cage (which is actually a small aviary!) was excited when offered the pair through Ann Mason, Guardianship Program Director, here at Ursuline. Laureen is always appreciative when people donate exotic finches (especially different colors—particularly red and green) as well as canaries for the aviary because the residents and their family members enjoy seeing the colors and hearing the birds singing. In fact the residents have asked for canaries! Charlene Flaherty Yoder, Kane McKeesport Administrator, offered her thanks for the gift of birds from Ursuline as well. “The residents do enjoy them,” she shared with Ann when she learned about the donation of the new “pets” to the Center.

If other residential facilities would like to talk to US about adopting future offspring of Zephyr and Zipper, contact Tony Turo at 412-683-0400 or aturo@ursulineseniors.org.



individuals in the right direction on their personal path to healing.

What Grief Is and Isn't

Grief is the constellation of emotions that an individual experiences when someone important in their life dies. Mourning is the outward expression of that grief.

Unfortunately, we live in a society that often encourages grieving individuals to "get over it" and keep their painful thoughts and feelings inside, often for the comfort level of others. Not having a place or support system where you can express these thoughts and feelings can cause emotional overload. It's not uncommon for grieving individuals to feel as if they are going crazy.

But grief is not a mental illness. It's a natural and normal human reaction to the death of someone significant in your life, and can even include the loss of a beloved pet, explains Cynthia Oliver, director of the Good Grief Center.

"Reaching out for help doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you," Oliver says. "People often believe that they should be able to manage their loss alone. They are hesitant to ask for help, but it's very healthy to get guidance from people who understand and can relate to their pain. Even the strongest people can benefit from extra support."

Everyone grieves in their own way and at their own pace. Grief can last for days, weeks, months or years depending on factors such as your relationship with the deceased, religious beliefs, or life experiences. No two people grieve in the same way.

Symptoms Associated with Grief

Grief can affect a person's overall health, which is why it's important to visit your Primary Care Physician often. Maintaining good physical health is necessary for healthy grieving.

- Emotional: Sadness, anxiety (including panic attacks), fear, shock, disbelief, numbness, anger, guilt, and loneliness.
- Physical: Crying spells, fatigue, insomnia, nausea, aches and pains, lowered immunity, and weight loss/gain.
- Behavioral: Sleep problems, absent-mindedness, confusion, and withdrawal from friends and relatives.
- Spiritual: Searching, exploring, questioning, and a deepening or lessening of one's faith.

There are Different Types of Grief

- Uncomplicated: With this grief type, the range of feelings and behaviors which follow a loss gradually soften as the person accepts the loss and moves forward with their life.
- Anticipatory: The range of grief-related feelings and behaviors occur prior to a loss, such as when a loved one has a terminal illness.
- Complicated: This grief process lasts much longer than uncomplicated grief due to severe emotional pain and other issues. A person experiencing complicated grief typically feels "stuck" and has trouble resuming their life. It usually requires the services of a professional therapist.

UPMC maintains a comprehensive list of in-network professional therapists specializing in grief for the benefit of their subscribers. The Good Grief Center also maintains extensive referral lists of grief professionals and area bereavement support groups.

Peer Support is Key to Healing

Sometimes a grieving person simply needs compassionate support from individuals who will listen to, acknowledge, validate and normalize their pain in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

The Good Grief Center—a no-cost resource for UPMC Health Plan members—offers exactly this through peer mentoring. The agency does not offer professional therapy; rather, staff members and trained volunteers serve as peer educators, listeners, advocates and coaches while offering empathetic understanding and a supportive presence to grieving individuals and families.

The Center, located at 2717 Murray Avenue in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood, is a division of Ursuline Senior Services but serves all ages. It assists individuals and families as they work through the grieving process by providing one-to-one emotional support in person or by phone, grief education, referrals to community resources, support groups, and access to a lending library.

UPMC Health Plan members can utilize Good Grief Center support by calling the agency at 412-224-4700. Mention that you are a UPMC subscriber.

Continued on Page 5

Continued from Page 4

Tips for Those Coping With Loss

Nothing can fully take the pain of grief away, but there are healthy ways to cope and restore hope:

- Talk about your loss with friends, family members or a professional. Grief is a process, not an event. It takes time to heal.
- Be mindful of the energy that grieving takes. It's hard work and can be exhausting. Listen when that little voice tells you that you're tired and need to take a break or get some rest.
- You may have trouble concentrating or remembering things. That's normal. For work-related tasks or home chores, make lists and rely on them. Give yourself some extra time. Give yourself a break.
- Consider creating a memorial or tribute to honor your loved one. For example: Plant a garden, make a donation to a cause he or she championed, or create a special scrapbook or photo album.
- Find support outside of your social circle, perhaps at your church, a support group, or other place. The goal of healing through grief support is not to stop the pain or forget about your loved one, but to help you live with the loved one's memory in a way that lessens the pain over time and restores activity levels to what they were prior to the loss.

Source: Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support, 412-224-4700, www.goodgriefcenter.com.



Business of Bereavement Conference This Fall

Mark your calendar now for our first Business of Bereavement Conference. Insights on Grief: Bereavement Skills and Strategies for Professionals. The conference is scheduled for **October 23, 2012**, at the 20th Century Club in Oakland.

The day-long conference will offer competency based training and workshops for professionals and volunteers who interact and work with clients, families, and constituents who are managing grief and concerned with end of life planning.

Keynote speakers, *Huffington Post* reporter and authors Judith Johnson and Laurie Swartz, will provide a motivational platform that will inspire participants to gain a better understanding of grief and loss so that they can have more meaningful conversations, provide greater support, and a compassionate response to the needs of the dying and grieving among their constituents.

INSIGHTS ON GRIEF: *Bereavement Skills and Strategies for Professionals*

**Tuesday, October 23, 2012
20th Century Club, Oakland**

An excellent opportunity for physicians, nurses, clergy, financial planners, health care workers, students, and others who want to develop improved understanding and more active listening and communication skills. CEU's will be offered.

Volunteers are needed in all areas of conference planning including promotion, workshop planning, sponsorships, conference logistics and day of event activities. Corporate sponsorships to support and promote the event are also being sought.

Please call or email Cindi at the Good Grief Center at cynthia@goodgriefcenter.com if you are interested in partnering, volunteering or getting more information about the conference. Regular updates will be sent throughout the summer.



PANO Announces Standards for Excellence Class of 2012

The Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) honored the latest cohort of organizations to earn the Seal of Excellence as part of the Standards for Excellence program during a special recognition ceremony at their Annual Conference held on April 16 & 17 at the Best Western Premier Hotel in Harrisburg, PA.

PANO's Standards for Excellence program recognized four newly-certified organizations for 2011-2012:

- Catholic Leadership Institute, Wayne, PA
- Phoenixville Community Health Foundation, Phoenixville, PA
- Westmoreland County Food Bank, Delmont, PA
- Pearl S. Buck International, Perkasie, PA

PANO's Standards for Excellence program recognized four recertified organizations for 2011-2012:

- The Learning Lamp, Johnstown, PA
- Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
- Ursuline Senior Services, Pittsburgh, PA
- Center for Independent Living of Central Pennsylvania, Camp Hill, PA

The Standards for Excellence program was designed to increase the public's trust in Pennsylvania's Community Benefit Sector by demonstrating organizations' willingness to act ethically and be accountable in their operations,

governance, human resources, financial management and fundraising practices. The first of its kind to promote self-regulation in the sector, the Standards for Excellence program provides nonprofits with clear guidance on best practices in operations while also helping them to achieve the highest levels of efficiency and effectiveness. The Standards for Excellence code requires strict adherence to eight guiding principles and 55 rigorous benchmarks.

"From a recently completed Impact Evaluation Study on the certification process, we have compelling evidence that the certification process creates stronger organizations. We commend these organizations for making the commitment to engage in this process," says Tish Mogan, PANO's Standards for Excellence Officer.

What the Ursuline Senior Services has to say about the Standards and Certification:

"This is our second run-through with the Standards for Excellence for Ursuline Senior Services. Through the pursuit of the Standards for Excellence Certification, Ursuline shows to our community of consumers, donors and foundations that we are serious in our commitment to best-practices and the pursuit of excellence. In this time of incredible change within the non-profit field, we believe that




the Standards of Excellence communicates something important about US as an organization that really can't be told any other way."

– Anthony J. Turo, Executive Director, Ursuline Senior Services

PANO's Standards for Excellence Program

The hallmark of PANO's Standards for Excellence program is the Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector, which guides nonprofits through a rigorous voluntary certification process to implement sustainable high standards by using educational resources, technical assistance, a network of replication partners, and licensed consultants.

The Standards for Excellence program, which just celebrated its 10th anniversary in Pennsylvania, was conceived by Maryland Nonprofits, and is known nationally through the Standards for Excellence Institute. Today, the Institute has ten licensed replication partners, including PANO. To learn more about the Institute, visit their website. 



Seeding the Future...

by Tony Turo
Executive Director

It is hard to say good-bye, no matter what the reason for the departure, whether at the end of a friendly visit or at the end of a life. Organizationally, to bid farewell to colleagues who move on professionally now and then just comes with the territory. But, to say good-bye to an entire program of dedicated, passionate staff members—as Ursuline

Senior Services is forced to do with the loss of our Care Management Program (see Page 1 cover feature), along with reduced funding to our Guardianship Program—has been especially difficult these past several months. It's not just the impact on the agency that the loss of such a significant program will have, but it's the disconnection from so many strong co-workers—many of them friends—that makes these circumstances so sad.

Ursuline prides itself on bringing together a Grade-A team of professionals across our various programs through to the administrative level. Losing such talent due to such forced

cutbacks is the meanest sting of all. Losing the opportunity to serve so many consumers with what we believe is such a strong formula of support is also a cause for regret at this time of transition. Our team's consistent focus on the development of superior customer service to our consumers and an overall positive environment for our employees has created the dedicated attention to these ideals. That's what makes Ursuline a place where people enjoy working and consumers benefit from the way services are provided. While every staff member departure Ursuline is experiencing is impactful, I



Departing Community-Based Options/Care Management Program Director Roxann Tyger

would be remiss if I did not recognize the particular loss of Roxann Tyger from the Allegheny County network of professionals who have helped to create the quality web of care management services our senior neighbors have enjoyed for over 20 years. (See **All About US**, Spring 2011, Page 5 archived on our website www.ursulineseniorservices.org for a feature on Roxann's 20th anniversary with the agency.)

Ursuline Senior Services has been a mainstay of our county's care management for community older adults nearly since the inception of the services. As the program grew over the years,

care management—in many ways—began to define who we were as an agency. Now, that definition has to change. We are fortunate to have such strong complimentary programs, albeit not as large, in the wake: Guardianship, Protective Services, Service Coordination, assorted Volunteer Programs and now, our newest division joining the organization just last fall, Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support. Each will play a role in the future “re-invention” of exactly what Ursuline will become in its next period of service to our community.

A sentiment that has been shared throughout our agency since the beginning of the year comes from a line from the new summer film “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel” (2012):

“Everything will be alright in the end. If it is not alright, then it is not the end.”

These words represent what we here at Ursuline believe as we move into the next phase of our experience of service to the community we treasure.

We appreciate so much so many of our regular and new supporters who have been so kind in their encouragement during this challenging time. Here's to the continuing journey!

—Tony Turo

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In This Issue



USS Care

Management: Program discontinues service after June 30.



Good Grief Center:

New Bereavement Conference is coming in October. See details on page 5.

En Vogue Headlines June 29 PSO Community Partners Concert at Heinz Hall

En Vogue, one of the most successful and popular female R&B groups of all time, will headline the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's (PSO) Ninth Annual Community Partners Concert Friday, June 29 at Heinz Hall.

En Vogue will perform with the PSO in the second half of the concert, which will be led by PSO Resident Conductor Lawrence Loh. The first half will feature cellist Gabriel Cabezas, winner of the senior division of the 2012 Sphinx Competition, which aims to


encourage, develop and recognize classical music talent in the African American and Latino communities.

En Vogue is responsible for a long line of R&B and pop smashes in the 1990s. Songs, such as *Hold On, My Lovin' (You're Never Gonna Get It)*, *Giving Him Something He Can Feel*, *Free Your Mind*, and *Whatta Man*, featuring Salt-N-Pepa, are just a sampling of the mega hits made famous by the Pop/R&B super group.

Fusing style, sophistication, sass, and sex appeal, the En Vogue



En Vogue headlines this year's PSO Community Partners Concert

formula was magical, and the group went on to sell more than 8 million albums. 



www.ursulineseniorservices.org

United Way Donor Designation Code: 281
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Ursuline Senior Services was awarded this Seal of Excellence by the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO), under the Standards for Excellence.