



# Ursuline Support Services

*Help navigating life's transitions*



**Executive Assistant Elaine Resetar shows off the new agency name and tag line adorning dessert at a recent summer staff "picnic" celebration.**

## Ursuline Launches New Direction

### Name Change Reflects Increased Scope of Efforts to Help Those Navigating Life's Transitions

***"Ursuline Support Services" More Reflective of Agency's Increased Role in the Community***

Responding both to a growing need and its increase in services brought primarily by its merger with the Good Grief Center in 2011, Ursuline Senior Services has adopted a new mission, vision, core values statement and strategic plan, as well as a new name: ***Ursuline Support Services.***

"As we see a growing need in the community, need that will only grow and expand in the future, we want to position our organization to be there to assist as many of our neighbors and friends as possible," said Anthony Turo, executive director of Ursuline Support Services. "While we remain committed to those we have always served, we are intent on extending our reach, both geographically and in the populations who need the kind of help we can provide."

According to Mr. Turo, his organization's direction is defined by its new mission statement: ***Ursuline Support Services helps individuals experiencing challenges posed by life's transitions, inspiring hope through protection, education, and advocacy.***

"Ursuline has always maintained a stellar reputation in the community for the support we provide, most notably but not exclusively to seniors, in such areas as guardianship, protective services and service coordination," Mr. Turo said. "Our union with the Good Grief Center added a strong reputation for excellence in grief support. Over the past few months, our combined board of directors and our senior management team have worked to find the most effective, efficient ways to combine these strengths in a way that truly makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts."

Among its immediate initiatives, Ursuline will offer its acknowledged expertise and track record for results in private care management supports to hospitals, health plans, individuals, long-term care facilities and other entities to help limit hospital readmissions, which can be burdensome to all involved. The Good Grief Center component will offer to these same potential partners training and other services that teach how those they work with can be more responsive to individuals at the end of their lives, the families and friends of deceased persons, and other individuals in similar situations.

To formalize this new direction, Ursuline Support Services has adopted a new brand, logo and website, all developed by the Pipitone Group.

"This is not an effort to break with our past, rather, it is a way to build upon it," said Mr. Turo. "Ursuline and the Good Grief Center have, separately, helped countless individuals deal with the myriad challenges they face during their lifetime. As the numbers of those needing such support have increased, so has our commitment to be there for as many as possible."

## INSIDE...

*Martha Ligas Concludes Service with Ursuline.....pg. 2*

*Executive Director Tony Turo talks about transition and Ursuline's new mission .....pg. 3*

*Ursuline Salutes Community Partner PIMS .....pg. 4*



## Revised Mission, Vision and Core Values

*Approved by the Board of Directors, January 27, 2014*

### MISSION

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

### VISION

As Southwestern Pennsylvania's pre-eminent provider of life-transition services, Ursuline Support Services is widely recognized as an innovative and desirable partner and provider. Those experiencing transitions see Ursuline as a leader in guardianship, protective services, service coordination, and grief support. They, and other leaders in the community, value Ursuline Support Services' expertise and view the organization as a "go-to" community resource. The organization is financially sound because it operates several thriving social enterprises, and has been able to attract a large and sustainable cadre of donors, supporters, and volunteers.

### CORE VALUES

No one should struggle alone, and everyone deserves support during life's challenging transitions.

When facing life's transitions, everyone should have a "safe" place to turn for help where highly qualified professionals whom they trust are accessible to them.


Everyone deserves to be treated with respect, dignity, compassion, and professionalism.

Staff, board members, and volunteers treat each other and all stakeholders with the same respect and care that they accord to their clients.

Recruiting, training, and retraining the best possible professionals for every position are organizational priorities.



### Martha Ligas Concludes AmeriCorps Service Experience with Ursuline

Ursuline Support Services was pleased to welcome Martha Ligas as a Change A Heart Franciscan Volunteer, a 12-month AmeriCorps service experience that empowers young adults to live simply in community while serving a vulnerable population. A graduate of Loyola University in Chicago with a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology and a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology, Ms. Ligas served with Ursuline's Volunteer Programs. Ms. Ligas is currently at Boston College pursuing her Master's degree in pastoral counseling. 

**AmeriCorps Volunteer Martha Ligas shares goodbye gathering with her primary Ursuline supervisor, Director of Volunteer Programs Karen Tobin.**

# DIRECTIONS

## from the Executive Director



Whether you have come to know our organization through Ursuline Senior Services or the Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support, you likely are aware that ever since we merged our two agencies in 2011, we have been in a state of transition seeking to determine how we might work together to better serve those who come to us for help.

There is no small irony in all of this. For as the leadership of both Ursuline and the Good Grief Center have come together frequently over the past two years to chart our common future, one word has resonated above all others: Transition.

As we studied the reasons for each organization coming into being, it became clear that we exist, first and foremost, to help individuals at the crossroads of life—facing a major transition, if you will—and to arrive on the other side with hope and with a belief in a brighter tomorrow.

We are here to lend support during these transitions, for all people of all ages. So there is no confusion, we have changed the organization's name to Ursuline Support Services. Rest assured, we are not abandoning those senior citizens for whom we have worked so hard to help maintain their dignity and to allow them to age with grace. Rather, we are extending our compassion, our commitment and our expertise to all who might benefit from them.

Our new Mission Statement leaves no doubt of this. It reads: *Ursuline Support Services helps individuals experiencing challenges posed by life's transitions, inspiring hope through protection, education, and advocacy.*

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a deeper explanation for these changes along with our new Mission, Vision Statement and Core Values. I hope you will take the time to read them; hopefully, they will fill you with the same new sense of purpose and excitement shared by our board, our staff and our volunteers.

On a personal note, I want to extend my deepest feelings of gratitude to all who worked so diligently over the past many months to help us get to this point where we have charted a brave new course for Ursuline Support Services and those we serve. It would be impossible to list everyone but it would include board members and other volunteers, management and staff, and community members who all came to meetings, answered questionnaires and shared their thoughts—many complimentary, some critical, but all deeply appreciated. Your collective passion for what we do has inspired us to recommit ourselves to the work we do.

Finally, let me also thank every one of you who reads this message and wishes us well as we face this most recent transition in our organizational life! As many of you have done, we face this challenge with some trepidation, but buoyed by the knowledge that we will not go through it alone. With your continued support, we will emerge on the other side stronger, wiser and even better positioned than before to help those who need us.

On behalf of our board, our staff and our volunteers, thank you for being there. The best is yet to come. 

*Tony Turo*

*The following letter, written and submitted by Diana Hardy, Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support Director, appeared in the August 2, 2014 edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

## We provide support during the process of grieving

*With the recent suicide of Robin Williams, much has been written and said about the need for all of us to recognize the signs and causes of both addiction and depression, as well as to encourage those who suffer from such diseases to seek help.*

*Without question, we need to do everything in our power to reach these individuals to offer as much care as possible.*

*There is another aspect to this issue that should be addressed. From his family and friends to his legions of fans, Mr. Williams left behind countless individuals touched by grief—who may also need support. As such, they join literally millions of people in our country who experience grief every day and are unsure where to turn in their time of need.*

*When touched by death, individuals often undergo a myriad of emotions, physical disorders and upset of spiritual beliefs, often in isolation. Despite the prevalence of grief in our society, few of us are prepared to deal with it ourselves or to lend support to someone else.*

*The Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support was founded in 2001 to provide bereavement support services and resources for those who anticipate the death of someone or have survived a death, including the loss of a beloved pet.*

*Our professional staff and trained volunteers understand that the death of someone significant in our lives is one of the most difficult experiences we will encounter.*

*Serving as educators, listeners, advocates and coaches, while offering empathic understanding and a safe place to grieve, we are available to provide such specialized support.*

*At the Good Grief Center, we mourn the loss of Robin Williams, who brought great joy to so many.*

*His death reminds us that we all need support at such times in our lives.*





# Ursuline Support Services

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## All About US "Going Green!"

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# Ursuline Salutes Community Partner, the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science

Both Ursuline Support Services and Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support have enjoyed strong, positive relationships with a number of community businesses and organizations over the years.

Once such stellar partnership for the Good Grief Center is with the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science (PIMS). The two organizations have had a collaborative relationship for many years. Representatives of GGC have visited PIMS on several occasions to provide educational support on grief and the mourning process. PIMS students frequently visit GGC for tours and to hear about the services and resources offered at the Center and throughout the region. Students



**PIMS' Carolyn Thompson (r) greets GGC Director Diana Hardy at CPI Class 147's fundraiser in honor of our organization late last year.**

say they find the information to be helpful and that they learn of a resource they can use as they begin to work in funeral homes.

Just last year, the PIMS CPI Class 147 hosted a fundraiser to support GGC's work. This inaugural event was led by PIMS instructor Carolyn Thompson. Lunch was provided at the Edgewood Club, along with a Chinese auction and raffle. More than \$500 was donated to GGC as a result of this event.

GGC is grateful for individuals like Ms. Thompson, those in Class 147

and PIMS for their generous support and friendship. For more information, visit [pims.edu](http://pims.edu).



[www.ursulinesupportservices.org](http://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.*