

Good Grief Rochester, Inc.

Newsletter

Continuing Our Connection

Message From the Founder

— CHERI A. COPIE —

It was almost a year ago that I decided to create a six-week program in the Rochester community to help others during their grief journey. It was a "trial" course to see if my training was at all valuable. If it was, I would offer another six-week session and perhaps one more before summer's end.

What I didn't anticipate was that those in the first group would want to continue! I decided to adapt and redesign the "course." It now would welcome those new to the group into an established community.

At Good Grief Rochester, it wasn't about building an organization; it was about creating a space where no one had to carry their grief alone. It morphed into a unique community.

Today we meet weekly and are at capacity often, but we maintain the spirit of collaboration, sharing, support, and group ministry. While I may have the credentials, it is the group that has the "secret sauce" formula of actively caring for one another in a language all understand.

What we've seen since then has been both humbling and powerful. Week after week, people walk into a room as strangers and leave connected — sharing stories, supporting one another, and beginning to find their way toward a "new normal." As we often say, it's not the facilitator who does the most healing; it's the people sitting beside you.

To those of you who have joined us, trusted us, or supported this work, thank you. You are the reason this community exists.

Grief is something that touches every life, yet so many experience it in isolation. Our mission is simple but deeply important: to give grief a voice and to create a compassionate, safe place where healing can begin.

As we grow, our commitment remains the same — to meet people where they are, to listen without judgment, and to remind every person who walks through our doors that they are not alone.

*With gratitude,
Cheri Copie
Good Grief Rochester*

GOOD GRIEF

ROCHESTER

www.GoodGriefRochester.com

GIVING GRIEF A VOICE

April 2025: GGR started as intimate, biweekly meetings with a simple goal: create a space where grief could be shared openly.

June 2025: GGR became a Monroe County Library System Partner at their request, which afforded us publicity and meeting spaces.

Late Summer 2025: GGR quickly grew into **weekly gatherings** as more people sought connection and support.

Fall 2025: We expanded to serve a **growing and diverse community of participants**, each bringing their own story and strength.

December 2025: GGR became a fully registered **501(c)(3) nonprofit in New York State**, strengthening our ability to serve and sustain this work.

Spring 2026: Continues to grow with intention — ensuring that as we expand, we never lose the heart of what matters most: basic **human connection**.

A Story of Healing

When Catherine lost her husband, the world as she knew it ended overnight. The quiet in her home was unbearable.

Everyday routines — morning coffee, shared glances, small conversations — were suddenly gone. In their place was a heaviness she couldn't escape. She described it simply: "I didn't know who I was without him." Like many who come to Good Grief Rochester, Catherine wasn't looking for answers; she was just trying to get through the day.

Walking into her first group, she almost turned around. The idea of speaking about her loss felt impossible. But something inside her begged her to stay. That night, she didn't say much — she just listened. She felt angry that she had to be there. Life was unfair.

She listened to others who were also navigating loss. Different stories, different timelines — but the same deep ache. For the first time since her husband died, she didn't feel completely alone. She decided, reluctantly, to return. Week by week, something began to shift.

Not all at once. Not in a straight line. But slowly, the weight she carried began to feel shared. She found herself speaking a little more. Breathing a little easier. Even, at times, allowing a small moment of light without guilt. Catherine often says now, "I didn't get 'better.' I got *different*."

That difference is what we call a new normal.

Today, Catherine still carries her grief — but it no longer carries her in the same way. She shows up not only for herself, but for others who are where she once was. Sitting beside someone in their first meeting, offering a quiet nod, a few words, or simply her presence. Because she remembers what it felt like to walk in feeling completely broken.

And she knows now that sometimes, in a space where grief is shared, broken doesn't stay broken. Sometimes, it begins to break open.

And in that opening, there is connection. There is courage. There is the possibility of healing — but together.

Growth Unscripted

At Good Grief Rochester, we offer a compassionate, peer-based approach to grief support — because no one should have to navigate loss alone.

Our core programs include small, facilitated support groups where participants can share their experiences in a safe, understanding environment. These groups are not about fixing grief, but about honoring it — creating space for connection, reflection, and healing alongside others who truly understand.

We serve individuals experiencing all types of loss, with a focus on building community and reducing the isolation that often comes with grief. Whether someone is newly grieving or further along in their journey, they are welcomed exactly as they are.

In addition to our ongoing groups, we continue to grow our offerings to meet the needs of our community, expanding access, deepening support, and ensuring that everyone who seeks connection can find it here.

Because healing doesn't happen in isolation — it happens together.

Finding Gratitude in the Midst of Pain

"I didn't think I'd ever be able to talk about my spouse without breaking down. Now I can share memories and feel supported instead of overwhelmed."

"I am able to say things here with these 'strangers' that I can't say with my loving family."

"I've learned that healing doesn't mean forgetting. It means learning how to carry love and the loss together."

"I remember that night I imploded with emotions in front of everyone. It all came out — as if it were expected. I needed to release to make room for my healing."

"Being able to give grief a voice is critical to my healing in a healthy manner. GGR helped me get there but then expected me to pay it forward to others — which I embrace."

"I'm grateful for a place where I don't have to explain my grief — everyone just understands."

"I can be REAL here. I am heard, understood, and can process my journey with a clearer mindset."

"I'm grateful for the simple act of being listened to — without judgment, without advice, just presence."

"Registering for GGR was probably the hardest step because I was admitting that I needed help. Then walking into that first meeting was so awkward — but that lasted just five minutes. I was welcomed as I was. Joining GGR was also one of the best decisions I've made."

"Before coming here, I felt completely alone. Now I know there are people walking this path with me."

"I'm grateful for the people who showed me that even in grief, true connection is still possible. Over time, I feel hope and direction for where my life will take me next."

"This group gave me permission to feel everything I was trying to hold in."

"I came here looking for support to get through hard weeks. Over time, I didn't want to leave, as I didn't expect to find a community."

<p>Join a Group</p> <p>If you or someone you know is navigating loss, our support groups are always here. Whether it's your first step or part of an ongoing journey, you are welcome.</p>	<p>Share with Others</p> <p>One of the most powerful ways to help is simply by spreading the word. You never know who in your life may be quietly grieving and in need of support.</p>	<p>Give Back</p> <p>Many in our community find that, over time, their healing includes helping others. Whether it's welcoming someone new, sharing your story, or offering encouragement, your presence makes a difference.</p>
<p>Support Our Mission</p> <p>As a nonprofit, we rely on the generosity of our community to continue and grow our programs. Your support helps ensure that anyone who needs grief support can access it.</p>	<p>Stay Connected</p> <p>Follow along, attend events, and continue being part of a community that believes no one should have to grieve alone. Together, we are creating a space where grief is met with compassion — and where healing can begin.</p>	<p>Daily</p> <p>When you encounter someone who is grieving, be present. Hear their story and learn of the love they still carry in their hearts.</p>

CALENDAR EVENTS

Every Wednesday evening, we hold a Good Grief Rochester meeting at the Irondequoit Public Library from 6:00–8:15 pm.

Coming this June, we will be holding a "Next Chapter: Life & Financial Empowerment Day." Presenters from our community will address the new life skills grief survivors need to learn.

Coming this August: "Pet End-of-Life: Decisions, Care & Support" — a pet loss workshop open to the public to learn about decisions through pet euthanasia.

WISHLIST

Supportive Gift Cards: Uber or Lyft gift cards (high need) for those unable to drive to meetings. Staff can distribute as needed.

Gift Cards to Amazon, Walmart, Target, craft stores, and grocery stores.

Transportation: Drivers willing to bring participants to or from meetings (typically Wednesdays, 6:00–8:15 pm).

Event supplies and refreshments.

Regular meeting place on the city's central or west side, available on a predetermined weekday evening from 6:00–8:30 pm — office meeting room, community center, or similar space. Ideally low- or no-cost. If a business offers us space, we will proudly promote their generosity on our website as a valued sponsor.

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As we close this first newsletter, we're reminded that grief is not something to "move on" from — but something we learn to carry, together.

Wherever you are on your journey today, we hope you are reminded of this: **you are not alone.**

With gratitude, *The Good Grief Rochester Team*

100% of your donation will be applied to costs associated with meeting spaces, program materials, tracking software, resource materials for outside special programs, and supplies. All funds benefit the participants.

Easy to use donation link:

