

Lincoln grief center will counsel mourners

By Judy Goeschel

People who are mourning the loss of a loved one no longer have to face their grief alone.

Starting within the next few weeks, volunteers at Lincoln's new Grief Center will counsel people on how to deal with dying, death and grief.

Kicking off the Grief Center is a workshop Wednesday at First Plymouth Congregational Church, 20th and D Streets. According to the Rev. Gordon Simmons, First Lutheran Church, the workshop's purpose is to provide an "educational forum" for a mixture of people.

Its purpose also is to place an awareness of dying, death and grief before people, hoping they can come to terms with death and find a more meaningful life, he said.

Concept developed

The concept of a Grief Center was

developed early last spring, when a group of people formed a "Parent Comfort Group." They were concerned with counseling parents who had lost a child, Simmons said.

The idea of a grief center to deal with all kinds of grief developed out of the desire of group members to broaden their counseling services. People will be referred to the Grief Center by individuals in churches, Simmons said, or through the media or social agencies.

Each person who comes to the center for help will first be interviewed, and then placed in a discussion group. The groups will explain the grief process and discuss the practical problems involved.

"We want to help people realize that there is normal grief process," Simmons said.

Program participants for Wednesday's workshop include a number of professional people: doctors, nurses, morticians and religious-oriented participants.

Panel on death, dying

Jackie Turner, Lincoln Regional Center nurse, will participate in a panel on dying, death and grief perspectives and also lead a discussion section of the workshop called, "When Your Child Dies."

Turner said she first became interested in the Grief Center while attending a meeting of the parent Comfort Group last spring. She lost a daughter in a fire about a year ago, and after having read about the Comfort Group in the newspaper, decided to see if she could help others in similar situations.

Funding for the Center will come mainly from individual and group contributions, according to Simmons. He said he expects the center to cost about \$5,000 to operate the first year and \$3,000 each year after that. The profit from the \$5 workshop registration fee will help get the Center started, he said.

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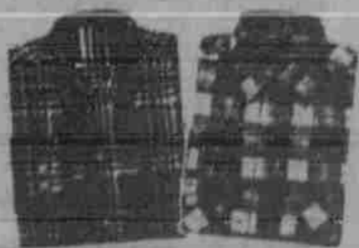
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