

The Intelligencer

December 2011

“The Ted Lindeman Outreach Foundation helps new widows and widowers, but the foundation is running out of money to give”

By Christina Kristofic

The Ted Lindeman Outreach Foundation needs money if it's going to be able to continue to provide support for new widows and widowers in Bucks and Montgomery counties. To help, donate online at www.tedlindemanoutreachfoundation.com or send a check to the Ted Lindeman Outreach Foundation, P.O. Box 352, Jamison, PA 18929.

At Thanksgiving, we invited readers to tell us about some of the great local nonprofit organizations doing good deeds here in Bucks and Montgomery counties. The newspaper's staff wanted to lend a hand to these groups this holiday season by telling you about these Do Gooders and their missions of help. About 80 nominations were received from readers offering heartfelt testimony on behalf of these organizations. We've selected 10 to tell you about in a series of stories, which will be published through Jan. 2; some honorable mention organizations will be recognized in the paper toward the end of the series. We hope you are inspired, as we were, in learning about the mission of these local charities.

Lori Murphy came home from a weekend in the mountains with her four kids to find her husband Patrick lying dead on the kitchen floor. He'd had a heart attack soon after she and the kids had left for the trip.

In just a few completely unexpected minutes in early August, Murphy lost everything.

"It's still not real to me," she said, choking up.

The 50-year-old Warwick woman had lost her love and - because she worked for her husband's recruiting business - her livelihood.

Murphy had carried a \$1 million life insurance policy on Patrick for years, but dropped it last year because Patrick's business wasn't doing as well as it had in the past and the policy was expensive. She had nothing.

"I threw myself into my kids, making sure they were OK," she said.

And while Murphy worried for her kids, bills started to pile up. Murphy had no idea how she was going to pay them.

Then a longtime family friend saw Murphy's son working at Genuardi's, and learned what had happened. The friend gave Murphy the web address for the Ted Lindeman Outreach Foundation, an organization that provides financial and emotional assistance for new widows and widowers. "I didn't know places like that existed," Murphy said. She went to the site, filled out some forms and submitted some copies of documents. And for three months, the foundation sent Murphy a check to help pay her bills.

Ellen Lindeman, the founder of the Ted Lindeman Outreach Foundation, said she tries to help every family that contacts her.

The foundation usually gives the widows and widowers about \$3,000 per month for the first three months after they lose their spouses. But more people have been finding out about the foundation and asking for its help (six families this year alone) and foundation fundraisers haven't brought in as much money as they did in the past, so the foundation hasn't been able to give as much money. Lindeman said, "I'd rather split it as evenly as we can and help more families than have the other ones get nothing."

And now the foundation is out of money.

"I'm in a situation I've never wanted to be in," Lindeman said.

Lindeman is not sure yet what she's going to do. She doesn't want to tell people no. But she can't say yes if she has nothing to give. She plans to meet with her board of directors in January to brainstorm fundraising ideas.

Lindeman has found a few other ways to help the widows and widowers who need her.

When Lindeman heard from Kyle Enama, a high school student who raised money to buy Christmas gifts for people in need as his graduation project, Lindeman told him to contact Murphy. Murphy gave Enama her kids' wish lists, and he bought the gifts and dropped them off just a few days before Christmas.

And Lindeman always can offer a sympathetic ear; she lost her husband, Ted (for whom the foundation is named), to esophageal cancer in 2004.

Still, Lindeman knows a sympathetic ear won't pay the mortgage or electric bills, or put food in children's mouths.

"She was sending me a check and apologizing that it couldn't be more," Murphy said of Lindeman.

Murphy said she's grateful for what she got: "(Lindeman) came up with an amount that helped me to make payment arrangements with people. ... It helped me to be able to keep my electricity on, keep my phone on. Without her, I don't know what I would have done."

Murphy is still at home with her children. She intends to go back to work as a bookkeeper when she feels comfortable leaving her children - ages 10 through 17 - at home.

For now, Murphy's living on Social Security. She said, "At this point, I don't know whether I'll be able to stay in my house, but I have to deal with it one day at a time."