

# Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids

Discernment



## Statement of Purpose

Marriage is the cornerstone of the family and an important building block of a healthy world. Couples who face difficult times in marriages are often presented with only one solution: divorce. We at Retrouvaille provide a different answer, one that saves marriages and preserves the family.

“Without a vision my people perish.”  
Proverbs 29:18

## SUMMARY

Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids exists to provide help for couples in West Michigan and beyond who are living with the disappointment and pain of a marriage in trouble. The program is designed to get couples to communicate; to turn to one another and begin talking again at a heart-to-heart level.

With the labor of **members in service**, Retrouvaille offers the opportunity for a journey of marital healing and rediscovery, through healing weekends, support programs, and a peer-to-peer network of support.

The need for this program is increasingly acute. In the United States, 41% of first marriages end in divorce. Even as marriages face more and more stressors, they often lack the support or communication tools necessary to make it through tough times.

We see the results of these marital stressors on a daily basis. For every 20 couples that attend a Retrouvaille weekend, there are nearly 100 that go unserved. Many couples facing financial difficulties are unable to pay the \$300 nominal fee requested by Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids.

Retrouvaille is responding to these needs by initiating an ambitious drive to increase its programs, its volunteer base and capacity for support. Foremost is the effort to increase scholarship offerings for couples that need them.

This initiative will require the investment of donors and active members in service who understand the importance of strengthening marriages and keeping families together.

## CREATING OUR NARRATIVE

Trauma keeps us stuck. Trauma lodges itself in our bodies, mind and spirits. Couples who attend a weekend have experienced not only crisis but sustained trauma as their marriage becomes a source of deep pain. One of the best therapies for overcoming trauma is to continue to tell the story over and over, yet moving forward in the retelling. For someone who is still in trauma, the story does not change, each detail remains the same. However, for those who continue to move through the pain and woundedness, while the elements of the story may be the same, the narrative of their telling gets recreated. By fully immersing ourselves in the Retrouvaille program we recreate a narrative, that in time, finds grace where there was sorrow, gift where there was struggle, mercy and compassion where there was resentment and anger. Doing so helps craft a new meaning making; one that, each of you can become proud of and eventually your couple hood will celebrate. By giving service a chance to do its work, you and your spouse will find that one day you are not just healing anymore, but you are doing so with the hope that other struggling couples will witness. Eventually, you're are not serving for yourselves as much as for those couples who have yet to cross the threshold of a Retrouvaille Weekend.

## DISCERNMENT

This document includes several descriptions of opportunities to assist the Retrouvaille Community at large. We recognize that these opportunities may not speak to all individuals or blend in service as a couple. As these opportunities present themselves throughout the year we only ask that you carefully discern whether or not these opportunities might be right for you and say Yes to the calling when it is heard.

Discernment is a process:

Fr. Matt Malone, SJ, the editor of America Magazine, recently provided an excellent description:

“If you are familiar with the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, then you will likely know his famous “Rules for Discernment” or, to put it simply, his method of decision-making. James Martin, S.J., once described this method in our pages: “Discernment for St. Ignatius means being aware that God wants us to make good decisions, that God will help us make good decisions—but that we are often moved by competing forces: ones that pull us toward God and ones that push us away.”

“Discernment, then, involves entering into a spirit of prayerful questioning, using the imagination to envision the various alternatives and to weigh them with both our heads and hearts. What feels more like an act of faith? What feels more like an act of fear? What opens my heart to the world in generosity? What closes me in on myself and narrows my field of vision? What feels more like an act of love? What feels more like a cry for love?

“Sometimes this method of questioning is called weighing the lights and shadows in our lives. It is true, of course, that no human life is all light or all shadow. It is also true that

discernment never leads to certainty precisely because certainty is the opposite of faith. If we are certain, then we have no need for faith. Discernment is rather a process for choosing acts of faith that are as well-informed and truthful as possible.”<sup>1</sup>

Here are some tried-and-true pointers that can help you discern God's will.

### **Talk to Someone You Respect.**

God often speaks to us through the wisdom of others. Seek out the wisdom of at least one and perhaps several people who you feel have the gift of wisdom and ask for their advice.

### **Find Some Solitude.**

It's good to talk to other people when making important decisions, but at some point, it is crucial to make some time to be alone with your thoughts and with God. Invite God into your decision-making process.

### **Start with What You Know.**

Lay out all of the facts in front of yourself so that you can deal with the known before you delve into the unknown!

### **Tell God What It Is That You Desire and What You Fear.**

Be honest and tell God what your deepest desires and fears are in this situation is. Before you can say the words, “thy will be done,” be sure you are truly in touch with your own will; otherwise it will come back to bite you anyway!

### **Let God Speak to You.**

Most of us don't actually hear a voice when God speaks to us. However, pay attention closely to the ways that God is speaking to you. What kinds of thoughts, feelings (especially love, joy, and peace, or a lack thereof), and memories might God be stirring within you to help you make your decision? What Scripture story or saint's life comes to mind that might enlighten your decision? Find the passage or story and prayerfully read it.

### **Know That God Has a Plan for You.**

Remind yourself that you are not on your own and that you don't have to yell and scream to get God's attention to help you in this matter. On the contrary, remind yourself that God has a plan for you and that his plan is driven purely by love.

### **Pray to Do God's Will.**

As difficult as it may be, pray the words, “thy will be done,” asking God to give you the strength you need to continue to discern his will and to follow it.

### **Wait.**

If circumstances allow, wait before making your decision. Continue to pay attention to your feelings to see which direction you are being drawn to.

### **Prayerfully Commit.**

At some point, you need to act. Knowing that you have sought God's will, set forth to do the loving thing.

### **Check Out the Fruits.**

Discernment is ongoing. After you have decided on your course of action, prayerfully evaluate it. If the fruits (outcomes) of your decision—your words, actions, and behaviors—are good, then it is a good indication that the decision you made is good. If the fruits are “rotten,” then that is a good indication that you may need to alter your course. True discernment results in good fruit (even if it's something we wouldn't normally pick out for ourselves).

Discernment can help you when you face decisions. Even though making good decisions can be difficult at times, trust that the Holy Spirit is with you to guide you and help you choose what is good and true.

## **PRAYERS OF OUR COMMUNITY**

The following section includes prayers of the Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids Community. Whenever two or more are gathered, he is present. Each prayer is said during all meetings and gatherings.

### **The Path – Prayer of the Retrouvaille Grand Rapids Community**

Lord, Bless the path.

Help us to continue down the path,

Help others to find the path.

### **God Has Created Me**

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have a mission. I may never know in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I have a part in a great work: I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. I shall do good. I shall do His works: I shall be an instrument of peace

**John Henry Cardinal Newman**

### **Prayer for Oneself**

Lord I place myself before You, for You are filled with beauty and light and care deeply about me. Help me to listen, before speaking. Help me to respect and understand the opinions of others. Help me to value and appreciate those I am about to meet. May Your light enfold me. May Your Spirit guide me. May Your grace abound in me. I make this prayer through Christ the Lord Amen,

## **Prayer for Insight – Said Before Making Decisions**

May the Lord touch our eyes, as he did those of the blind Then we shall begin to see in the visible things those which are invisible. May we open our eyes to gaze, not on the present realities, but on the blessings to come. May he open the eyes of our heart to contemplate God in Spirit, through Jesus Christ the Lord, to whom belong power and glory through all eternity.

## **EXPERIENCE RETROUVAILLE OF GRAND RAPIDS**

### **OUR MISSION**

Catholic in origin, Retrouvaille is a Christian peer ministry to troubled marriages and as such is designed to provide help for married couples who are living with the disappointment and pain of a marriage in trouble. The program is designed to help couples turn to one another and begin communicating again at a feeling level and to keep their marriage and families together. The board of directors forms a multi-denominational Christian community as the spiritual foundation of its ministry to those hurting marriages.

Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids is an international community of disciples committed to the continued healing of their marriages and who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, share their own personal stories, talents and gifts to promote and spread the healing ministry of Retrouvaille.

### **OUR VISION**

To be the leader throughout Michigan in implementing the Retrouvaille program and saving marriages, supporting hurting couples and bringing healing to generations of families.

### **THE ROLE OF THE BOARD**

The board of directors has three primary legal duties known as the “duty of care,” “duty of loyalty,” and “duty of obedience.”

**Duty of Care:** Take care of the nonprofit by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will

**Duty of Loyalty:** Ensure that the nonprofit's activities and transactions are, first and foremost, advancing its mission; Recognize and disclose conflicts of interest; Make decisions that are in the best interest of the nonprofit corporation; not in the best interest of the individual board member (or any other individual or for-profit entity).

**Duty of Obedience:** Ensure that the nonprofit obeys applicable laws and regulations; follows its own bylaws; and that the nonprofit adheres to its stated corporate purposes/mission.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE BOARD AS A WHOLE**

As the highest leadership body of the organization and to satisfy its fiduciary duties, the board is responsible for

- Determining the mission and purposes of the organization
- Strategic and organizational planning
- Ensuring strong fiduciary oversight and financial management
- Fundraising and resource development
- Approving and monitoring the organization's programs and services and ensuring that its activities are enriching to couples and serves the vocation of marriage
- Enhancing the organization's public image
- Assessing its own performance as the governing body of the organization

## **EXPECTATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS**

Each individual board member is expected to

- Live the vocation of marriage
- Know the organization's mission, policies, programs, and needs
- Follow the organization's bylaws, policies, and board resolutions as established by its board of directors and those of Retrouvaille International.
- Maintain confidentiality about all internal matters of the organization
- Faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements
- Serve as active advocates and ambassadors for the organization and fully engage in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for the organization to advance its mission
- Leverage connections, networks, and resources to develop collective action to fully achieve the organization's mission
- Give a meaningful personal financial donation within means
- Prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in ALL board meetings
- Actively pursue opportunities to serve its members by participating fully in one or more committees

## **FURTHER MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO**

Each executive couple has the responsibility to attend all regular and special meetings of the board of directors as determined by the annual calendar. All board couples will be active participants in CORE meetings and shall continue to seek other opportunities to enrich their marriages. Board members agree to act prudently and responsibly as good stewards and ambassadors for the ministry's work and values and to at all times represent Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids in a positive manner.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF ITS MEMBERS

### COORDINATOR COUPLE

#### Two-year Term

**Being Coordinator allows an opportunity to witness first-hand the healing journey of our members and experience our impact within the community at large.**

Purpose of the Coordinator is to assure Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids remains faithful to the mission and by-laws set forth by the International Council and Local Board of Directors keeping our local community accessible to everyone.

1. Prepares agendas for board meetings
2. Oversees board meetings and calls special committee meetings when necessary
3. Appoints committee chairs, recommends who will serve on committees
4. Organizes annual calendar of Retrouvaille activities
5. Acts as a liaison to the Retrouvaille International Board & Regional Coordinator including attendance at its Annual Meeting in accordance with the organization's best practices
6. Maintains collaborative partnerships including but not limited to the diocese of Grand Rapids
7. Responsible for liaison to the directors of Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids and making sure directors follow through on their job responsibilities.
8. Periodically consults with board members on their roles and helps them assess their call to serve

NOTE: The Coordinator Couple must have attended their initial WEEKEND at least one (1) year before taking office; attended their POST sessions; had regular attendance and participation at CORE meetings; must have presented their Introduction; and must maintain an effort in good faith to present at Post and Weekend programs.

#### **Tony and Julie Say:**

*“When things got difficult, service to Retrouvaille gave us purpose outside of our problems. Over the years. Service in this capacity has reconnected us to the living church and ultimately has helped to restore our faith.”*



## **DEPUTY COORDINATOR COUPLE**

### **Two-year Term**

**The Deputy Coordinator plays an active role in aiding couples in service to the community.**

The purpose of the Deputy Coordinator is to act in a supporting role to the coordinator thru the development of skills, thoughts, leadership and actions preparing to act as Coordinator.

1. Carry out special assignments as requested by the coordinator
2. Understand the responsibilities of the coordinator and be able to perform these duties in their absence
3. Help other couples fulfill their Retrouvaille servant-leadership positions as needed

### **Brian and Mary Say:**

*Serving as Deputy Coordinators gave us more quality time together as a couple and solidified friendships which we are blessed to have and truly appreciate! Moreover, it provided an opportunity to partake in something larger than ourselves: the chance to contribute to the healing of broken families and shattered childhoods."*

## **SECRETARY COUPLE**

### **Two-year Term**

**The Secretary Couple is an active witness to the growth of our community.**

The purpose of the Secretary Couple is to record and retain records in support of Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids.

1. Maintains accurate notes of all board meetings
2. Responsible for keeping all minutes on file
3. ] Ensure the safety and accuracy of all official board records

### **Yvonne and John Say**

*The reason we both committed to serve was to continue helping the community and to add another dimension to doing things together instead of each of us doing things separately. Our major problems began with married but single lifestyle and changing as much of that as possible has helped us to grow together in new ways. The more we can continue to find things to do with each other the married single lifestyle continues to fade into distant memory. There is also the enjoyment of seeing others follow their own paths of enlightenment in this eye-opening*

*process. We all find things that make us wake up and open ourselves to new things, for Yvonne and myself this was out way of trying to give back for the gift of Retrouvaille.*

## **FINANCE COUPLE**

### **Two-year Term**

#### **The Finance Couple contributes in active ways to the overall success of Retrouvaille Programs**

The purpose of the finance couple is to keep and maintain the financial records of Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids and make sure that we fulfill all financial requirements and laws as demanded by Retrouvaille International, the State of Michigan and the Federal Government.

1. Maintains records of monies received and paid out through official accounts of Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids.
2. Provides an up to date financial accounting at each community meeting.
3. Pays all invoices and reimbursements relative its programs
4. Responsible for submitting required government, tax (IRS), and state agency reports.
5. Responsible for maintenance of all licenses and records associated with Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids as a non-profit agency. (501C3 and License to Solicit)
6. Responsible for procurement and maintenance of board approved insurance policies.

## **C.O.R.E COORDINATOR**

### **Two-year Term**

#### **The C.O.R.E Coordinator has the opportunity to answer the needs of our members directly.**

The purpose of the Core Coordinators is to organize monthly C.O.R.E meetings to further heal the Retrouvaille couples and build relationships in support of Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids.

1. Selects topics for monthly marriage enrichment programs for community members
2. Actively pursues speakers and other resources in support of the topic
3. Communicates the description of monthly actives to the publicity couple 4-6 weeks
4. Ensures a light meal is prepared or delivered
5. Submits appropriate expense reports to the finance couple when appropriate

## **Tony and Julie Say:**

*Being C.O.R.E Coordinator has kept us be accountable to attend C.O.R.E every month. Seeing couples excited about having the opportunity to connect and being support to each other is extremely rewarding. Especially when the activity we have planned is well received.*

## **WEEKEND COORDINATOR**

### **Two-year Term**

**The Weekend Coordinator facilitates the beginning of the healing process for literally every couple that comes to Retrouvaille.**

The purpose of the Weekend Coordinator is to secure locations and volunteers in support of weekend programs hosted by Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids.

1. Recruits weekend presenting teams, Angel couples and priest as far ahead as possible.
2. Recruits couples to provide light meal to presenters on Friday prior to the weekend launch.
3. Recruits couples for weekend set-up and greeters
4. Maintain an accurate inventory of supplies in trailer and arrange for restock
5. Arrange for delivery of supplies trailer to program facility
6. Orders weekend program books, dialogue cards & Post Program workbooks
7. Arranges for copies of all necessary printed materials and take-home packets
8. Ensures appropriate maintenance and storage of Mass Kit in accordance with the Information Code of Cannon Law.
9. Obtains prayer cards from prayer couple 2-4 weeks prior to the weekend
10. Recruits couples for facilities clean up

NOTE: It is highly encouraged that the WEEKEND Coordinators recruit several community volunteers for assistance with the above described duties.

## **Tony and Julie Say**

*Being Weekend Coordinator has allowed us to experience new ways to work effectively as a team and experience the fruits of our labor.*

## **PUBLICITY COORDINATOR**

### **Two-year Term**

**The Publicity Coordinator gives life to our programs and a voice to the community at large.**

The purpose of the Publicity Couple is to create visibility and attendance at Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids WEEKENDS and actives.

1. Maintains database of members
2. Actively promotes all activities of Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids
3. Coordinates marketing collaterals utilized for the promotion of Retrouvaille activities. Includes but not limited to letters, ordering of brochures and publications posted on various websites.
4. Maintains the website of Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids.
5. Coordinates bulletin announcements to all participating churches and parishes at least two months prior to scheduled Retrouvaille weekend & other activities.

NOTE: It is highly encouraged that the Publicity Coordinator recruit several community volunteers for assistance with the above described duties.

### **Tony and Julie Say**

*Being publicity couple has given us the opportunity to actively witness to others and let the good within us show.*

## **REGISTRATION COUPLE**

### **Two-year Term**

**The Registration Couples open the lines of communication to couples who are hurting. As registration couple you are Retrouvaille before the weekend begins.**

The purpose of the Registration Couple is to welcome new Friday Night Couples to Retrouvaille of Grand Rapids thru the registration process.

1. Using program guidelines, the registration couples serves as the primary point of contact for all couples from the time of inquiry to the time the weekend begins.

2. Using the registration resources on the Retrouvaille International Website to ensure appropriate tracking for program registrants.
3. Welcome couples to the weekend and ensure appropriate check in processes are complete.
4. Provides additional details to the weekend coordinator/coordinator when necessary

### **Amy and Aaron Say**

Serving as the registration couple has blessed us with the gift of helping other couples that are hurting as we once were. For most couples we are the initial contact with the Retrouvaille community. This lets us watch the couples progress from the beginning of their Retrouvaille journey.

## **FUND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Two-year Term**

The purpose of the fund to oversee our donor relations program and manage our fundraising initiatives.

- Develop fundraising campaigns
- Communicating with current and prospective donors
- Manage individual and corporate gifts
- Planned an annual giving campaign/event

## **DIALOUGE QUESTIONS**

So often when we are in a process of discernment about a choice we're trying to make in our lives, we are focused on the concluding outcome of that decision. What is the right decision here? What am I supposed to do? Did I make the right choice? Have I landed in the place I was supposed to land?

Life with God is more about living through a life with God than arriving at a particular point or conclusion or decision. Life with God is a verb and a process. It is active and ongoing. It involves continuous change, and that change concerns our inward and outward being.

Pause to consider the following questions for a moment:

- **Who is God making me to be?**
- **What is the fullness and wholeness that is his aim over the whole course of my life?**
- **How does this decision versus that one affirm that work of wholeness in me?**

These are the real questions at the heart of discernment. It is not about one right answer or another that will bring us to a place of arrival. It is about how a decision continues to shape us into the person God intends for us to become in the broader, longevity-seeking scope of our lives.

- **What is the work of healing, wholeness, and redemption God seems to be about in your life? How might the decisions you are seeking to make be a part of that broader work?**
- Are we open to the call from our community to serve? HDIFAMA?
- What talents can we offer to the community? HDIFAMA?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Gracious Lord,

We thank you and we praise you for the many ways you have blessed and guided our Retrouvaille community.

Unite our hearts and minds as generous stewards of the gifts you have given.

Bless our efforts as together we grow.

Amen.