

Bailey Family Funeral Homes, Wallingford, CT

Bailey Family Funeral Homes, Plainville, CT, Carpino & Bailey Funeral Home, Southbury, CT

Pioneering Personalized Memorialization through Signature Services

Rationale

In the face of a rapidly changing funeral profession and increasingly diverse client needs, Bailey Family Funeral Homes recognized a gap between traditional offerings and the desire for personalized, meaningful tributes. We sought to address this by creating a comprehensive suite of unique services that extended beyond the conventional, catering to a wider range of preferences and values.

This initiative was driven by a deep understanding of the evolving landscape of grief and remembrance. Research indicates that personalized rituals and tributes play a crucial role in the grieving process, fostering healing and connection. By offering a diverse array of options, we empower families to create ceremonies that truly reflect the life and legacy of their loved ones.

Detailed Description

The result was our Bailey Signature Services, a curated collection of innovative and distinctive offerings designed to enhance the personalization and meaning of funeral and memorial services. These services, presented in a user-friendly online format and a leather-bound binder in each arrangement room, encompass a wide range of options, including:

- Parting Stones: Transforming cremated remains into beautiful, tangible stones.
- Urn Ark: An elegant urn carrier for respectful transportation of cremated remains.
- Green Burial: Eco-friendly burial options that prioritize sustainability.
- Eterneva: Creating custom diamonds from cremated remains or hair.
- Certified Celebrants: Providing personalized ceremonies for those seeking alternatives to traditional religious services.
- Motorcycle Hearse: A unique and memorable final ride for motorcycle enthusiasts.
- Hope, the Grief Therapy Dog: Offering comfort and support to grieving families.
- Video Streaming: Enabling remote participation in services.
- Rest Among the Stars: Launching cremated remains into space.
- Be a Tree: Biodegradable urns that grow into living memorials.
- Graphic Design Artists: Enhancing photographs for memorial tributes.
- Tribute Videos: Creating personalized video tributes.
- Custom Photo Collages: Large-format prints for memorial events.
- Fingerprint Keepsakes: Crafting unique jewelry and giftware with loved ones' fingerprints.

Benefits to Funeral Home and Staff

Bailey Signature Services have been instrumental in helping consumers seeking unique and personalized options understand that not all funerals are the same. This has led to increased business and enhanced brand reputation. Furthermore, our staff members feel empowered and engaged, as they are able to offer a wider range of meaningful services that resonate with families on a deeper level. The positive feedback and gratitude received from families further reinforce their sense of purpose and fulfillment in their roles. By having all the information and pricing in one place, it gives the arranging director confidence to speak about and offer the options.

Benefits to Families and the Community

The primary beneficiaries of Bailey Signature Services are the families we serve. By offering an extensive array of personalized options, we empower them to create truly meaningful and memorable tributes that honor the unique lives of their loved ones. This fosters a sense of closure, healing, and connection, while also providing opportunities for creative expression and individual preferences. Moreover, our

commitment to innovation and personalized service has set a new standard for funeral care in our community, inspiring other providers to explore new ways of supporting grieving families.

In conclusion, Bailey Family Funeral Homes' development and implementation of Signature Services represent a significant innovation in the funeral industry. By prioritizing personalization, embracing diverse preferences, and offering unique options, we have not only transformed the way we serve families but also set a new benchmark for compassionate and meaningful funeral care in our community.

Bayliff & Son Funeral Home, Cridersville, OH

Bayliff & Son Funeral Home, in Cridersville, Ohio, stands as a beacon of compassion and tradition within the community. With a heritage spanning four generations, Bayliff & Son continues to innovate while upholding the values instilled by its founders.

At Bayliff & Son, treating families as our own is ingrained in every aspect of our service. This commitment to personalized care stems from a belief in community service and personal connections, a legacy passed down through the Bayliff family since the 1930s. By going back to family traditions and the foundational values that lead to success, Bayliff & Son ensures they are there for families to help them navigate through their times of need. Listening to families is of paramount importance to our approach.

Bayliff & Son Funeral Home distinguishes itself through a blend of traditional values and creative approaches that define the funeral experience. From the moment families arrive, they are in a nurturing atmosphere reminiscent of a warm homecoming. Freshly baked cookies, a tradition started by Grandma Bayliff, greet guests, providing comfort during a difficult time. The cookie dough is purchased from local schools during fundraisers, benefiting both the school children and providing comfort for the families.

When families are having visitations, there are several different areas for families to have privacy, comfort, and fit their needs. The setting is designed with various seating options and personalized scents through ScentAir technology, tailored to conjure cherished memories of the departed. We use different scents to match the preferences of the deceased: for those who loved the outdoors, we use fresh-cut grass or pine tree scents; for bakers, we might use sugar cookie or apple pie scents; during Christmas, peppermint, cinnamon, and pine are used; for coffee drinkers, we have coffee scents; and for movie-themed visitations, there is a popcorn scent. These scents provide a comforting atmosphere and memories.

One of the hallmarks of Bayliff & Son's service is our dedication to personalization. For instance, if the deceased had a favorite color or attire, the staff adorns similar colors or attire in solidarity. In one memorable instance, they celebrated the life of a young Harry Potter enthusiast with a themed event, where staff dressed in Hogwarts robes, and special effects added a magical touch to the ceremony. Another time, we had a gentleman that always wore red socks – we wore red socks. We Always try to incorporate something special to remember the deceased and help the family feel our support for them.

Another unique offering is the memory table, where families can display personal mementos and stories that encapsulate their loved one's life. This interactive approach encourages people to reminisce and share anecdotes, making a deeper connection and celebrating the individuality of each person honored.

Special effects are a testament to Bayliff & Son's dedication to going above and beyond. From releasing balloons that symbolize releasing loved ones to having themed visitation meals that reflect the passions of the deceased, every detail is planned to honor and memorialize in a meaningful way. Additionally, special take home treats personalized to the deceased are provided. For example, for a golfer, little bags with green shredded paper resembling grass and a wooden golf tee with the deceased's name were given, adding a personal touch to the remembrance.

This commitment to personalized care not only enhances the grieving experience for families but also fosters a sense of pride and satisfaction among Bayliff & Son's dedicated staff. By creating an environment where families feel supported and cherished, the staff finds fulfillment in knowing they are making a meaningful difference in people's lives. This approach has contributed to the funeral home's growth and reputation as a trusted pillar of the community. When staff and friends visit other funeral homes, they often find that this level of service and dedication is not matched elsewhere.

For families, the benefits are profound. They receive not just a service but an experience that celebrates the uniqueness of their loved one's life. Beyond individual families, Bayliff & Son's commitment to community extends to their pet services and involvement in local events. We operate our own pet

crematory, recognizing the importance of pets as family members and offering the same level of care and respect.

Bayliff & Son Funeral Home exemplifies innovation through a return to timeless values of compassion, respect, and personalized service. Our commitment to honoring traditions while embracing innovation has not only distinguished us in the industry but also enriched the lives of those we serve. Through our dedication to celebrating life and supporting families in times of loss, Bayliff & Son Funeral Home continues to set a standard of excellence that embodies compassionate care. With each service, we honor their legacy of integrity and community spirit, making us a beacon of hope and support in the Cridersville area and beyond.

Carmon Community Funeral Homes, Windsor, CT

Carmon Funeral Home and Family Center, Avon, CT; Hayes-Huling & Carmon Funeral Home, Granby, CT; Nicholson & Carmon Funeral Home, Suffield, CT; Samsel & Carmon Funeral Home, South Windsor, CT; Ladd-Turkington & Carmon Funeral Home, Vernon, CT; South Green Memorial Home, Hartford, CT

Our firm has many ongoing activities and programs that we have initiated and supported for years. We have a grief center, Mary's Place, A Center for Grieving Children and Families, that has programs year-round. We hold Blue Christmas events in several different houses of worship; these are seminars for handling the holidays. We have ongoing support programs for widows and widowers which meet twice a month. We offer Christmas Ornaments to commemorate a loved one, and Memorial Services for those we have served. These programs are part of our ongoing outreach to those we serve. This year, beyond these ongoing services we are expanding our outreach services to help those far and wide participate in services that they cannot attend in person. We are doing this by offering recording and streaming services anywhere services are being held.

The pandemic showed the importance of providing participation by family members who could not attend services in person and encouraged us to provide even better technology to make these services available to family and friends all over the world. We purchased equipment (See product information and specifications at end of this essay), that was able to accomplish this. It was a wonderful addition to our offerings to those families we serve with relatives in other countries. Some countries we regularly broadcast to include, India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Jamaica, and Poland. Many broadcasts, routinely span the United States and much of Europe. Local churches use Facebook and YouTube which are not secure and often not reliable. Our portable equipment is safe and dependable. If needed, we have the option to record and upload later to those sites for public viewing at a convenient time.

We are able to take this new portable camera equipment easily to houses of worship, gravesides, and many of the other venues we are using today for memorial gatherings that many like to use the term, "Celebration of Life" rather than funeral or memorial service. The equipment is able to record as well, therefore, if streaming is not possible or the family does not wish to have it live streamed, we can simply record the service, edit as appropriate, and upload it to our website with the deceased obituary or simply give them a copy for their personal use

Additionally, two of our locations, Windsor and The Lodge Community Chapel, had older fixed camera systems which were dedicated to recording and streaming of services. We have upgraded these systems and additionally have added new fixed cameras and computers in Avon, Granby, Suffield, South Windsor, and Vernon. These systems are dedicated to recording and streaming.

Several of our funeral directors have been trained and can operate the equipment along with several of our Professional Assistants. This high-quality portable camera and support equipment augments the fixed installations at our locations. This benefits the funeral home by offering a service to our families which many funeral homes can't offer. The new technology is easy for the staff to operate.

I have included the information and specifications for those firms interested in the details of this exceptional equipment that takes the experience we offer to the highest level of quality and the service we want to offer to those we serve.

Equipment: The Panasonic HC-X1500 captures high-quality video, while the DJI Mic 2 ensures excellent audio. The YoloBox Mini integrates both streams, overlays graphics, and handles multi-platform streaming. The result: a professional live stream for clients with seamless video and audio.

Let's delve deeper into the details of each device:

1. Panasonic HC-X1500 Camcorder:

- o The Panasonic HC-X1500 is a compact 4K camcorder designed for professional video production.

o Key Features

- 4K Recording: Capture UHD 4K video at 60p, ensuring high-quality footage.

- 24X Optical Zoom: The wide-angle Leica Dicomar lens provides flexibility for various shooting scenarios.
- Manual Controls: Features manual rings, ND filters, and 10-bit internal recording.
- Wi-Fi Live Streaming: Built-in WiFi allows seamless streaming to platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitch.
- Dual SD Card Slots: Enables continuous recording and backup.
- o Use Case: The HC-X1500 serves as the primary video capture device, providing high-resolution video content.

2. DJI Wireless Microphone 2 (Mic 2):

- o The DJI Mic 2 is a portable wireless microphone system designed for professional audio recording during live streams.
- o Key Features:
 - Broadcast Quality Audio: Records crystal-clear vocals with intelligent noise cancellation.
 - Multiple Inputs: Supports both line-in and microphone inputs.
 - USB Out: Recognized as a webcam by computers, making it versatile for various setups.
 - 18-Hour Battery Life: Ensures uninterrupted streaming sessions.
- o Use Case: The DJI Mic 2 captures high-quality audio, enhancing the overall stream quality.

3. YoloBox Mini:

- o The YoloBox Mini is a super portable live streaming encoder, monitor, and recorder.
- o Key Features:
 - Compact Size: Fits in your pocket, perfect for mobile live events.
 - 1080p60 Video: Delivers professional-quality video streaming.
 - Multiple Destinations: Simultaneously stream to platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitch.
 - Graphic Overlays: Customize your stream with scoreboards, logos, and countdown timers.
 - Monitor Mode: Use it even when not live streaming for recording, switching, and adding overlays.
 - 4G LTE Support: Stream over cellular networks when Ethernet or Wi-Fi isn't available.
- o Use Case: The YoloBox Mini integrates video and audio streams, overlays graphics, and creates a seamless and professional live stream experience.

Clement L. Pantalone Funeral Home, Inc., Greensburg, PA

Towards the end of 2022 we began discussing the need for community education regarding funeral planning. During the years of COVID, there were many people that were impacted by the loss of a loved one and many had no plans or had even discussed what their funeral arrangements might look like. Even the ones that had prearrangements had to significantly alter their original wishes. As a result, the funeral industry as a whole is changing at a much faster pace than prior to the pandemic.

We decided in 2023 to have several "Lunch and Learn" seminars. We advertised on Facebook, our website, in church bulletins and put flyers at local public spaces that offered a bulletin board for events. In addition to all of this, we also sent letters to our families that we had served in the past three years, inviting them to learn more about preplanning. We had seminars at a local restaurant and also at our outdoor pavilion in the summer. Each month was a talk on the importance of preplanning, even if it is just letting your family know what your wishes are. We also spoke about prefunding arrangements with an irrevocable policy if a loved one needed to spend down assets when going into a nursing home. In addition to our talk, we also invited different entities such as attorneys, financial planners, representatives from the Veteran's Administration and Hospice from the community to talk about things like: Wills and Trusts, Estate Planning, Financial Planning, Veteran's Benefits and Forms and Hospice Care both at home and in the hospital.

All of the seminars were well attended. We kept the groups at less than fifteen to offer more time for questions. We were invited to speak at two of the local churches as well. We were included in one of the area Catholic Churches discussion groups regarding end of life and the Catholic Funeral Rites.

During these seminars we were able to answer many interesting and inciteful questions. We were able to give valuable information about the process of planning a funeral. At our firm, we encourage families to be as creative as they want. We have told our groups, "You can have more than one graduation, more than one wedding, but you will only have one funeral, make sure it is the service that you want to have for your memorialization."

Our plan for this upcoming year, in 2024, is to offer more seminars on prearranging and prefunding funeral arrangements, but we will also focus on seminars that discuss things like cremation and the options that you can consider as well as other topics that are of interest to the community.

Cornerstone Funeral Services & Cremations, Birmingham, AL

Rationale Behind the Idea:

In our community, there's often a lack of intentional effort to address end-of-life matters before it's too late. Many individuals and families find themselves unprepared when faced with the practical and emotional challenges associated with funeral planning, estate management, and grief support. Recognizing this need for proactive education and support, our funeral home developed the "Empowering Communities: Getting Your Affairs in Order" program.

Drawing from various sources, including community surveys, anecdotal evidence, and national statistics, it became clear that there was a significant gap in knowledge and preparedness surrounding end-of-life matters. For instance, according to a survey conducted by Hospice News, only 22% of individuals had documented their end-of-life wishes, leaving many families to make difficult decisions without guidance.

Detailed Description of the Program:

The "Empowering Communities" program is a comprehensive initiative aimed at providing individuals and families with the information and resources they need to plan for end-of-life issues proactively. Through a series of workshops, seminars, and informational sessions, we cover topics such as probate, Medicare, veterans programs, life insurance, grief counseling, and funeral planning.

These sessions are led by knowledgeable professionals, including funeral directors, estate planners, legal experts, grief counselors, and representatives from relevant community organizations. Each session is designed to be informative, interactive, and accessible to individuals from all walks of life.

Benefits Provided to Funeral Home and Staff:

By offering these educational services, our funeral home strengthens its position as a trusted resource within the community. We are not only fulfilling our mission to serve families with compassion and professionalism but also establishing ourselves as leaders in proactive end-of-life planning.

Moreover, our staff members benefit from the opportunity to engage with the community in a meaningful way. They gain satisfaction from knowing that they are helping individuals and families navigate difficult decisions and find peace of mind.

Benefits Provided to Families and the Community:

The "Empowering Communities" program provides invaluable information and support to families facing end-of-life issues. By attending our sessions, individuals gain a better understanding of their options and are empowered to make informed decisions about their future.

Furthermore, by fostering open dialogue and collaboration within the community, we create a supportive network where individuals can seek guidance and share experiences. This sense of community and solidarity is essential for promoting resilience and well-being, especially during times of loss and transition.

Partnerships with Business and Community Organizations:

To maximize the reach and impact of our program, we have partnered with New Rising Star Church. The church assists with advertising and facilitates discussions on end-of-life topics with its congregation, ensuring that our message reaches a diverse audience.

Continued Improvements:

While the "Empowering Communities" program has been well-received, we are continually seeking ways to enhance its effectiveness and accessibility. In the past year, we have expanded our outreach efforts to include more underserved communities and introduced online resources for those unable to attend in-person sessions. Additionally, we have increased the frequency of our events to quarterly, ensuring that individuals have ongoing opportunities to engage with our program.

In conclusion, the "Empowering Communities: Getting Your Affairs in Order" program serves as a vital resource for individuals and families seeking to plan for the future with confidence and peace of mind. Through education, support, and community partnerships, we are proud to play a role in empowering our community to navigate end-of-life matters with dignity and resilience.

Cozean Memorial Chapel and Crematory, Farmington, MO

Here at Cozean Memorial Chapel we have initiated what we like to call direct cremation with a little extra. Like many funeral homes we have a simple cremation package on our general price list that in essence is simply a "direct cremation". However, we have begun to add some personal benefits for the families who choose the simple cremation package. It is our goal to show a personal touch given from our funeral home that we have found to be very much appreciated by our families.

When we call the next of kin once their loved one has passed, we set up a time for them to meet with us and we tell them to bring a photograph of their loved one. We also let them know that the immediate next of kin can arrange an ID view of the remains. Most families do not expect this with a direct cremation, and we have found that many times it is a comfort for the family to have a final moment of silence together. We frequently have the ID view in our on-site crematory building where we have established a nice viewing area with homey furniture. We bring the remains of the family's loved one into the viewing room on most occasions, however, if the remains are not in a proper condition for close viewing, we have a picture window in the viewing room whereby the family can view through the window. Before the viewing we take the time to set the features and comb the hair to make the deceased look as natural as possible without being embalmed and fully prepared.

We also go out of our way to make sure that we get a digital fingerprint of each decedent so that we can register it with a company called Legacy Touch. When the fingerprint is registered with this company, we receive a pin number which we print on the Legacy Touch brochure. The brochure is given to the family so that at any time in the future they can order any number of a variety of jewelry pieces direct from Legacy Touch simply by using the pin number we have given them on the brochure. In addition to the fingerprinting, we also offer the next of kin a gift which is a pendant on a chain that holds a small amount of cremated remains.

Another service we offer free of charge with our simple cremation package is helping the family with an obituary that we post on our website along with a photo. Many funeral homes do not offer this service with a direct cremation; however, we have found that since many times families choose cremation due to money restraints, it is worth it for our staff to spend a little extra time preparing an obituary for our website free of charge. Not only does it prove to be very satisfying to our staff to be able to include this service, but it seems to be appreciated greatly by a family that we will take the time to sit down with them to talk in depth about their family member's likes, interests, and survivors.

Danekas Funeral Chapel and Crematory, Coleville, WA

Danekas Funeral Chapel and Crematory – Chewelah, Chewelah, WA

As the cremation rate has increased in Washington State, a problem we have unfortunately seen with increased occurrence is cremated remains that have been abandoned or otherwise unclaimed over the years. In spring 2023, following several acquisitions and mergers over the past century, it was determined that the 50+ loved ones in our care were deserving of being reunited with their families or laid to rest in a respectful and dignified manner. We began pulling records for all of the remains, with the longest-standing resident being in our care for 74 years, and began the task of drafting letters and contacting phone numbers.

Through this process, we connected with the Stevens County Coroner's office, who had another 8 sets of unclaimed remains in their care. With the added assistance of the Stevens County Coroner, we were able to find out that 7 of the sets of cremated remains that had not been claimed were those of veterans. After speaking to our contact with the Washington State Veterans Cemetery, explaining the situation, and filling out applications for the unclaimed remains and the coroner's indigent deaths, we were able to secure eligibility for all seven, the largest number the cemetery has been able to approve at once. A local team of veterans had the honor of making the two-hour trip to the cemetery, a final act of brotherhood many were eager to take part in.

In regards to the remaining cremated remains, we continued to make contact with families who had either forgotten, or were unaware, that their loved one was in our care. In one particular story, we were able to reunite a mother with the cremated remains of her infant, an infant she and her remaining children had been searching for since 1974. They family made the trip to Northeast Washington, and our staff felt compelled to make the trip special for them. Upon their arrival, the family was greeted and brought into our private visitation space, which had been decorated for a visitation with the infant's urn and a floral arrangement. They were kind enough to share their story with our staff members, and thanked us endlessly for helping reunite them with someone dear to their hearts they had feared was lost forever.

Over the months, several more stories like this were shared, and by the end, nearly 65% of loved ones were returned to the loving care of someone close to them. When we were well past the mandated waiting periods and it was apparent that the avenues of contact we had were exhausted, our staff transported the remaining cremated remains, where they were laid to rest in a permanent place, able to be visited by all.

David C. Brown Funeral Home, Belleville, MI

Ask the Mortician Event

Our funeral home hosted a community event. This was to invite anyone and everyone to take part in a casual lunch and to ask questions and get information on their own level of need. Our funeral home wanted to involve our community. This event was titled, "Ask the Mortician."

All funeral homes are aware of the trend of wanting simpler services, the often-found lack of respect for full funerals, and the need to have a quick disposition of their loved one's human body. Seeing ads for a quick and unbelievable price for a "direct cremation" without any knowledge of the facility has sparked these two directors to inform, answer questions and be there for the community.

Funeral director and grief-counselor Jacqueline J. Dalzell, CCO, LAP, Licensed Funeral Director, has always been passionate about talking about death and funerals. This passion began in middle school. The idea that talking about death is taboo or "morbid" needs to be removed from society. Many people plan their estates with a will. This is encouraged and sought out, never discussing the fees. But, when you ask people to talk about their death, the room gets quiet. A will is made to direct as to what you do with your items and money when you die, so why is the funeral so off-limits to discuss? Jacqueline likes to open this discussion. This is to help others ask questions in a safe, informative easy-going lunch atmosphere at a local family restaurant. The owner and other funeral director, Shelly Brown Chudzinski, CCO, CFSP, also attended and spoke at the event.

This was accomplished by placing an ad in the local small-town paper. The ad invited anyone to come and talk to a mortician about anything they would like. We ran this ad for a month and took names of those interested in attending. Our idea in using a local restaurant was to promote their business and stay in the community in which we serve. We had ten attendants in our group. They varied in age and walks of life.

This took place on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at Sam's Restaurant located at 60 Main Street, Belleville, MI 48111. This event was held from noon until 2 PM. Jacqueline Dalzell, Licensed Funeral Director, CCO, LAP, and Shelly Brown-Chudzinski took informational bags and other funeral home "show and tell" items and hosted the talk with a question-and-answer time as well. There were various questions ranging from how to arrange a funeral if there is no family to help, to how to move an already paid funeral to another state. One of the greatest moments came when a young man arrived and told us he was going to "Interrogate us today." He had with him a spiral notebook and said, "I have questions." And boy, did he! Two pages of numbered questions ranging from how long it took us to learn to properly apply cosmetics to the question "How do you deal with the sadness?" It turns out this gentleman is currently a student at the local community college and is hoping to attend Wayne State University. He wants to enter the field of mortuary science. He was very excited and very thankful to attend this event. The others seemed to enjoy his questions as well.

This is how sparks are ignited. Not just in this wonderfully enthusiastic young man, but the whole group. We heard everyone's questions, and each person was listening. We had one couple stop by our funeral home afterward to get information and paperwork on adding a funeral representative to their funeral plans. Each person left with a pre-planning book and a bag full of various items that would help in planning the funeral.

Jacqueline talked about grief, and being a certified grief counselor. She talked about living with your emotions, and that was helpful to one guest who had just lost her best friend. She talked about the handout in the bag written by Dr. Alan Wolfelt regarding the importance of mourning. This is a big part of what we do and often the public thinks funeral directors are cold and uncaring. When we talk openly about grief, we bring "the elephant in the room" out of hiding. When we feed and nurture the elephant it can grow and remove the fear of a person getting their funeral in order. We need to talk openly about this topic. Upon departure the guests thanked us, but most importantly we thanked them for their time, and taking care of a big need for their family. Letting them know to plan it out is a great gift to their loved ones.

Duksa Family Funeral Homes at Newington Memorial, Newington, CT
Duksa Family Funeral Homes at Burritt Hill, New Britain, CT

We believe that creating an environment that offers comfort for the families we serve and their guests is an extremely important factor in the overall funeral experience at our funeral homes. Time and again we receive comments from our visitors, expressing how they have never seen such a beautiful funeral home and loved the feeling of celebration and love. We have made a concerted effort to make an impression at every point of physical presence at our locations. When approaching our facilities, guests can hear music from outdoor speakers, creating a peaceful sense, and during visitation, music that the family has requested is played, personalizing the experience. The sounds from water falling into our stone pool helps to create a calm sense of sanctuary as well.

Upon entering, you will see lit trees and beautiful wreaths adorning our interior doors. Our china cabinets in our lobbies are transformed throughout the year to display different items that change with the seasons. We have created a large space with tables and lit white birch trees in each of our visitation chapels where guests will pass by and view personal and meaningful items from the family we are serving. We encourage them to bring in framed photos and memorabilia to display. We have scoured stores and boutiques, and hunted on-line for props and display tools so that we could showcase these beautiful items. Having found small enough clips, we have begun offering families the option of adorning our lit trees with their photographs as a means of display, which has become more and more popular and beautiful to see. We have purchased specialty standing easels and table easels so that poster boards and large photos are presented in a more elegant style. We have found an assortment of different stands to use on our tables so that personal items and vases of flowers on display are at a variety of heights. Within this area of display, we have candles lit in soft colored votives of different sizes, as well as a collection of wooden carved items to decorate the space.

In order to personalize each funeral experience, we have beach items like shells and starfish, butterflies and other collections to use, depending on what is meaningful to each family.

We have an arbor that is used over the casket or urn, that we decorate simply, depending on the season. If someone has a favorite color, we use sheer fabric and silk flowers to enhance the space. We also have upgraded our lighting above the arbor/casket/urn, to have the ability to light up this space above in a favorite or otherwise special color to the family or the deceased. We have personalized this arbor even further from time to time, once finding and decorating it with small birds for the service of a bird lover, for instance. We have even moved the arbor to a different location in the room, in order to create an entire space dedicated to a special love, like a sports team.

We have purchased large, flat-screen tv's and mounted them on the walls of our visitation spaces and encourage families to keep memories alive by showing many beautiful photos.

We constantly make changes and additions so that we are not just creating the same look over and over. We pride ourselves in suggesting, offering and executing meaningful, personalized tributes for loved ones, as often as we can. It exceeds expectations from our families, and provides a sense of comfort they often seem truly surprised to have experienced in these difficult days. It's why we love what we do.

Finch & Finch, Inc. Funeral & Cremation Service, Altavista, VA

Finch & Finch, Inc. Funeral & Cremation Service – Flynn Branch, Gladys, VA

Here at Finch & Finch Funeral & Cremation Service, we have strived to be the best for generations. In today's time, technology and, more specifically, social media has become the forefront of building and maintaining business-community relationships. We already had a Facebook page, however, this year we decided to partner with Disrupt Media to create a detailed organic strategy to engage our community and build and foster relationships that can be leveraged to drive Preneed and At need leads. Families are most likely to choose the funeral home that is "best known" rather than just the "best." For us to compete today against much larger funeral homes, it is simply not enough to be just the "best" anymore, we must work hard to become the "best known" as well. It is evident that cremation rates are rising, and it is necessary to utilize our social media presence to maintain our business' viability as profit margins continue to shrink due to those cremation rates. We must communicate our value to customers and reinforce the importance of services whether choosing cremation, burial, body donation, or any other forms of disposition that may be available. We must strengthen our current relationships and expand relationships with customers outside of our normal market.

When meeting with Disrupt Media, we provide them with all the content via photos and videos as well as information for the prompts they provide. They create graphics and interactive posts for community involvement. Each post is catered to a new topic surrounding our funeral home, facilities, employees, and community outreach. The prompts we share are a mixture of informative, lighthearted, fun, and family oriented. This new social media program benefits our community by offering more information that would have otherwise been inaccessible to them. This engagement appeals to individuals that may be too fearful to approach the funeral home with questions, or those that are too busy to come in, and even our members of the community that can no longer drive or get around well. This provides everyone access to valuable information about us in the comfort of their own home. Additional benefits of our increased social media presence include boosting the morale of employees by showing continued appreciation and acknowledgement as well as creating opportunities for connecting with potential families to serve. It is pertinent to make ourselves available to people that may not have been aware of our services and the quality of care we provide, so funneling this information directly to users' Facebook feeds gives us direct access to an untapped market.

We are thriving in a very small, tight-knit community, so we understand the importance of familiarity and consistency. Putting our employees' faces out there for the public via videos and photos help instill those families with that sense of comfort and trust that they know who they will see when they walk through our doors. We hope to spark an interest, so more people feel comfortable asking questions or learning more about the services we offer and care we provide for all families. Social media has proven to be a vital tool for us to show what exactly sets us apart from other funeral homes and how we can meet each family's unique needs. We are taking the mask and mystery away from funeral service by answering questions most people avoid talking about with the hope of providing a new level of transparency because we are confident in the work we do and the services we provide. Our phone lines and doors are open to anyone wishing to educate themselves, ask questions, or get to know us, so why should our social media be any different?

Grupo Gayosso, Mexico City, Mexico

Cementerio Gayosso Morelia, Morelia, Mich, Mexico; Cementerio Leon I, Villa Insurgentes, Mexico; Cementerio Parque Memorial, Naucalpan de Juárez, Mex. Mexico; Cementerio San Ignacio, Aguascalientes, Mexico; Cipreses, Naucalpan, Mexico; Gayosso Acapulco, Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico; Gayosso Aguascalientes, Aguascalientes, Mexico; Gayosso Allende, Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico; Gayosso Capillas El Carmen, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico; Gayosso Capillas Marianas, Monterrey, NL, Mexico; Gayosso Capillas Vallarta, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico; Gayosso Colima, Ciudad De Mexico, Mexico; Gayosso Cuernavaca, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico; Gayosso Del Rio, Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico; Gayosso Felix Cuevas, Ciudad de Mexico, CDMX, Mexico; Gayosso Francisco Villa, Leon, Guanajuato; Mexico; Gayosso Irapuato, Irapuato, Guanajuato, Mexico; Gayosso Lomas Memorial, Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico; Gayosso Lopez Mateos, Guanajuato, Mexico; Gayosso Lopez Mateos, Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico; Gayosso Madero, Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico; Gayosso Morelia, Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico; Gayosso Periferico, Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico; Gayosso Reynosa, Reynosa, Tamps, Mexico; Gayosso Santa Gema, Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico; Gayosso Santa Monica, Tlalnepantla de Baz, Estado de México, Mexico; Gayosso Sullivan, Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico; Jardin de la Esperanza, Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico; Jardines De Santa Gema, Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico; Jardines del Carmen, Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico; Jardines del Descanso, Monterrey, NL, Mexico; Jardines Del Parque, Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico; Jardines Del Tiempo, Irapuato, Guanajuato, Mexico; Jardines Del Tiempo, Gomez Palacio, Durango, Mexico; Jardines Eternos, Aguascalientes, Ags, Mexico; Jardines Eternos, Calzada Amatista # 107, Col. Lopez Portillo 35026, Gomez Palacio, Durango, Mexico; Mausoleos del Ange, Coyoacan, Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico; Monte De Los Olivos, Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico; Panteon Espanol, Col. Las Fuentes C.P., Mexico; Panteon Guadalupano, Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico; Parque Funeral Colonias, Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico; Recinto Guadalupano, Aguascalientes, Ags, Mexico; Valle De La Luz, Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico

In Mexico, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, 1 in 4 pregnancies is not achieved and 1 in 9 babies is born dead.

The social environment in which we live is not prepared to accompany a mourning for the death of a baby. Families who go through this loss find themselves with too much misunderstanding at a social level and minimization of the event and their pain.

In addition, the care they receive, from hospitals to funeral services, lacks sensitivity and tact, are inadequate and absent of emotional accompaniment.

For us it is important to give voice to the pain of families who silently suffer such a great loss that in many cases no one around them gives it the value and importance that they really suffer when they lose a child at whatever stage.

There are few support and training programs, the medical team and funeral staff do what they can from their human side and the family that accompanies them does so from the little knowledge of the subject.

So at Gayosso we implement funeral services that punctually attend the needs of these losses, by implementing safe, intimate and respectful spaces where, in a warm and private way, they can recognize the lives of their babies, generate memories with them, say goodbye to their lives and receive containment and emotional support.

Different products have been designed that are perceived as warmer and help to reduce the emotional impact of families, specialized care protocols and continuous training were generated for Gayosso employees in conjunction with the Respected Grief movement (consultants specialized in Gestational, Perinatal and Neonatal Grief) to sensitize them in customer service for this type of grief. In addition, support groups are opened for mothers and fathers. And on October 15 we joined the efforts that Respected Grief coordinates to generate empathy with families who are going through Gestational, Perinatal and Neonatal Grief as part of the Wave of Light illuminating the facades of the Gayosso agencies. This action serves as a powerful and poignant beacon of light that is meant to remind babies who have transcended.

Farewell ceremonies have been designed where, through introspection to interaction with mourners, they help to generate important connections and resignify loss. The whole family can participate in them, the main objective is to give a deeper meaning to that moment, provide moral and emotional support and accompany them to say goodbye to their baby in an emotional and respectful way.

Guaranteeing that each of our processes and throughout the client's journey is provided with psychological and thanatological follow-up.

Heath Funeral Chapel & Crematory, Lakeland, FL

Rationale

Heath Funeral Chapel strives to treat all our families as unique individuals and try to customize each experience to the family. Throughout the years, we have tried to help better serve different minority groups than we have in the past. In 2008, we built a new building to better accommodate individuals with mobility issues with having zero entry doors and more spacious bathrooms. A few years after that we made packages to better serve our Hindu or Buddhist population. This year we have decided to try to better serve our Spanish speaking population. We have seen the number of the Spanish speaking population increase in our area. According to the 2020 census, the Hispanic population in Polk County grew 10 percentage points from 2010. In 2010, the Hispanic population was approximately 17% and grew to 27% by 2020 in Polk County. We have also seen an increase in pricing phone calls and our at-need families who only speak Spanish. The at-need families had to bring a family friend to help translate for them. In 2024, we decided to increase our reach to our Spanish speaking community by bringing in our first Spanish speaking pre-need agent and hiring a Spanish speaking funeral director.

Detailed Description

In 2024, we hired acquired a new preneed sales agent as well as a new funeral director. We wanted both of these positions to speak fluent Spanish. We also started making a binder of Spanish versions of prayers, poems, and scriptures which before we only had in English. Jean Carlos Gift, our preneed specialist, has been reaching out to the different Hispanic communities, churches, and social groups to try to educate about the benefits of Preneed and using our funeral home.

Benefits to Funeral Home and Staff

The benefits to our Funeral Home is the ability to capture business that we would have lost by not having Spanish speaking. The additional Spanish speaking staff has also reduced frustration with our current directors. The need for translators caused a wall to be placed between our director and the family. This language barrier caused errors to occur when the funeral director and the family were not on the same page.

Benefits to Families and/or Community at Large

This will benefit out Spanish speaking families by allowing them space plan their funeral without the impediment of needing translators. Taking away the friction point gives the families more space to grieve or celebrate the life of their loved one. As our community continues to grow, we will be able to better serve those that speak Spanish.

Heckart Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Sedalia, MO

In the town in which Heckart Funeral Home operates, Sedalia, Missouri, we have two cemeteries which have been corporately owned for many years. Bought and sold many times over the years, passing from corporation to corporation, often packaged with other larger deals, our two cemeteries were neglected and mis-managed. At the funeral home, we used to dread a burial at either, and often commented that no matter how happy we made the family, sending them to the cemetery office after arrangements was sure to make them upset. This dissatisfaction reflected poorly on us, our community, and our profession as a whole. As a result, it became the goal of our president, Jeffrey Page, to return these cemeteries to local control. A feasibility study was done on the project and results very plainly stated that the cemeteries were "on life support." Very little had been done in the way of maintenance in recent history, the staff had very low morale, and the community had lost confidence.

Page, along with a business partner, Chris Dady, were able to reach a deal to acquire the cemeteries in August 2022. With a little press, immediately the community responded positively, with a renewed sense of optimism that the future of the cemeteries was viable. We got many phone calls and notes in the mail thanking us for investing in our community. Still to this day, we get compliments regularly on how nice the cemeteries look and how much better things are with local ownership.

Probably the main difference has been caused by maintaining and supporting a quality staff, giving them the autonomy to make decisions, and then supporting them in those decisions. We adjusted staffing somewhat to eliminate some problems and level out payroll.

A major capital improvement was the installation of a 48-niche columbarium. This has been well received. The renewed sense of vitality has boosted our plot, marker and bench sales tremendously. People just feel comfortable in investing in the cemeteries again, which cycles back and gives us more capital to make more improvements.

In summary, we were well pleased to make the investment in our beloved cemeteries and doing "the right thing" has paid dividends, both in community pride and in economic dollars. Though they may never be huge money makers, having properties that people feel comfortable with and have optimism for is a huge accomplishment not only for us as business owners, but more importantly for our community and the profession as a whole.

Holman-Howe Funeral Homes, Lebanon, MO

Historic Purchase Achieved

The Howe family has acquired a major firm in our state after a multi-year journey that was finally realized on June 1, 2024. The challenge was realized after multi-staff level efforts for nearly three years.

The Cozean Funeral Home, Farmington, MO was established in 1864 and is the second oldest funeral home in the State of Missouri. This firm has received the NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award numerous times and is also enshrined in the NFDA Hall of Excellence. The Cozean family moved into the Lead Belt of far eastern Missouri (80 miles South of St Louis) just prior to the Civil War. They began their work as wagon builders and cabinet makers and were very innovative in being trained in embalming at a very early time. The firm was contracted by the Union Army to retrieve and embalm on the battle field which was just a few miles from their town. The firm grew into a full service funeral home and has served the families of Farmington for 160 years.

For the past 40 years the firm has been led by Dr. Jon Cozean, Ph. D. and has overcome multiple hurdles and challenges. Jon had multiple siblings, and while his last surviving parent placed him in charge of the firm, he had multiple siblings who were constantly "back seat" drivers and minority stockholders. Just over 3 years ago, Ken Howe after watching and admiring the firm from a distance began a regular and intentional goal of making the Cozean firm part of the Howe family of funeral homes. Given the new era of smaller groups of funeral homes being a desired entity, the Cozean firm was an obvious fit. It was progressive and innovative despite the fact that the majority stockholder was now in his mid-80's and not at all sure that he was ready to retire.

The journey to convincing Mr. Cozean was an adventure to say the least. Not the least of which was the fact that various others through the years had expressed an interest in purchasing the firm. To make the matters even more interesting was the fact that Mr. Cozean had the beginning stages of dementia. He would meet and discuss the need to sell and then would say "Let's do this".... then the next day, forgot that the conversation ever took place. Over a several months leading into years, we would come close and then he would back out. Through this time, the leadership team of Holman-Howe worked together to make him know and understand that our relationship would be a good fit. The most interesting assignment was when we invited him to attend the NFDA Annual Convention in Baltimore. It was a great experience but on days when Mr. Cozean was having a bad day, he would wonder off and have to be retrieved from leaving the building. On good days, he enjoyed the meetings and exhibits with great enthusiasm. Matt Shannon, Brett Eidson, Kyle Lancaster and Taylor Howe all worked together with Ken Howe to earn Mr. Cozean's confidence, all the time knowing that we still might not get to purchase the firm.

Throughout the process multiple friends would predict the deal would never happen and that the firm would never sell until after Mr. Cozean's death. Some scoffed and said we were wasting our time and that Mr. Cozean's eccentricities would rule out any orderly transfer of ownership. Others pointed to the friction with other family stockholders would prevent any deal from happening. However, persistence paid off and as time moved forward and he became more reliant on family and caregivers, it was decided that it was time to sell the firm. Suffice it to say, after much effort and determination the deal was completed. Mr. Cozean will continue to work as long as his health permits (we extended a five year contract) and the legacy has moved to the next generation.

Howard K. Hill Funeral Services, New Haven, CT

Howard K. Hill Funeral Services, Hartford, CT; Henry L. Fuqua Funeral Service (A Division of Howard K. Hill Funeral Services), Bloomfield, CT

At Howard K. Hill Funeral Services, we take immense pride in our profoundly personalized approach to honoring the lives of our loved ones. Our innovative commemorative experiences, paired with the highest level of service, extend far beyond the traditional funeral. We focus on celebrating each unique individual, fostering a strong sense of comfort and connection for families and the community.

At Howard K. Hill Funeral Services, our commitment to personalization and community engagement leads us to incorporate unique elements into our services. These include stunning displays of personal items and visually captivating LED wall presentations. By weaving these elements together, we craft heartfelt tributes that authentically mirror the individuality and passions of those we serve, setting us apart from traditional funeral services.

To create a visually captivating backdrop that encapsulates the essence of a person's life, we have implemented LED walls that showcase custom-designed visual presentations. These dynamic displays feature a compilation of photographs, videos, images, and meaningful quotes, creatively representing the journey and milestones of the departed individual. This process involves close consultation with the family, ensuring that the final tribute reflects their loved one's life. The tribute remains concealed by a curtain until the casket closes, unveiling itself as a final homage to friends and family.

One of our newest innovations is vinyl personalization. We embellish all our caskets with custom vinyl graphics that speak to our loved ones' hobbies and interests, adding a special touch to their ceremonies. This ensures that every aspect of the service is a heartfelt and accurate reflection of the departed.

As a forward-thinking funeral home, we at Howard K. Hill Funeral Services fully embrace technology. We offer an AI obituary writer to families who need guidance and direction in capturing their loved one's essence. This tool streamlines the process, ensuring that every aspect of the obituary is a heartfelt and accurate reflection of the departed. Our use of technology not only enhances our efficiency but also allows us to focus more on the service and humanity our families come to us for. The more efficient our processes are, the more time we can dedicate to guiding, supporting, and healing every family that walks through our doors.

Our personalized approach to commemoration experiences is not just about the ceremony but about creating a healing environment for grieving families. By incorporating customized elements, we offer comfort and solace to families as they witness their loved one's life celebrated in a truly distinctive and meaningful way. This approach supports the bereavement process and fosters a sense of community and connection during loss. These innovative displays act as conversation starters, encouraging attendees to share stories and memories and fostering a sense of community and connection.

At Howard K. Hill Funeral Services, we infuse our services with as much love and personalization as possible. This creates an atmosphere that honors the individuality of the departed, providing comfort and healing to grieving families. Our efforts also foster a sense of

community support and engagement, bringing people together to remember and celebrate life's journeys. Our staff, who are no strangers to long weekends, early mornings, or late nights, take immense pride in what we do. We are honored to serve you and are dedicated to providing the most compassionate and personalized service possible.

J. García López Casa Prim., Mexico City, Mexico

J. García López Revolutionizes the way of Paying Tributes Through an Immersive Atmosphere.

- Infinite Experience represents technological innovation applied in funeral services.
- 2.6 millimeter Pitch LED technology, anti glare and clear ambient sound come together to create a unique atmosphere.

In the month of August 2023, J. García López, a leading funeral company in Mexico, gives an innovative twist to the way of paying Tributes to Life, in funeral services, where uses and customs prevail in society. Introducing technology to achieve an immersive atmosphere, through its new additional service Infinite Experience.

The impact that technology has on life is increasing. The digital age has reinterpreted the way in which people manage to close cycles when saying goodbye to their loved ones.

Manuel Ramírez, General Director of J. García López, explains that by fusing a state-of-the-art screen with 2.6 millimeter pitch LED technology, anti glare and clear sound, the most valuable memories captured in photographs and videos of those who will transcend in our memory, in an unrepeatable atmosphere.

With an investment of 8 million pesos, Infinite Experience is made available to Casa Prim Casa Prim families in a 3m x 3m format and 1152 x 1152 Pixel resolution, and three more of its Branches.

"With this ambitious project we reaffirm our commitment to being a company that adapts to new trends to create perfect tributes. Where families have nothing to worry about. In impeccable and comfortable facilities, with the option of additional innovative services that offer the possibility of incorporating all the necessary details to achieve an emotional moment, This is what Infinite Experience allows us to offer families," comments Oscar Padilla, CEO of J. García López.

The funeral home implemented this concept with the world's number one brand in LED video technology, which was installed on the stadium screens at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

The use of this technology is generally seen in advertising and consumption, for example, within stores or large billboards, however, implementing it in the funeral market is a complete innovation and a challenge so that each tribute surprises with the level of detail it involves. the service.

At the end of 2023, Casa Prim developed 85 services under the concept of Infinite Experience. Ceremonies full of emotion that in some way served as catharsis, to go through the grieving process in a more balanced way.

With these actions, the company reaffirms its commitment to continue investing in technology and installed capacity, to support families in the Tributes of their loved ones.

J. García López is a 100% Mexican company, which currently has a 35% share in the private services market.

Jones-Wynn Funeral Homes & Crematory, Villa Rica, GA
Jones-Wynn Funeral Homes & Crematory, Douglasville, GA

Innovating Staff Engagement: The Jones-Wynn Funeral Home Online Staff Portal

At Jones-Wynn Funeral Home, we recognize that our most valuable asset is our dedicated team. To ensure that our staff remains connected, informed, and well-trained, we have custom-built an innovative online staff portal. This portal is a one-stop destination for all Jones-Wynn Care needs and answers, providing a comprehensive platform for training, communication, and engagement.

Training and Development

The cornerstone of our online staff portal is its extensive library of training videos. These videos cover a wide range of topics essential to our operations and the high standards we uphold. We have meticulously curated content that includes training on Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulations, ensuring that our staff are well-versed in compliance and ethical practices. Additionally, we provide specialized training for removals, ensuring that our team handles these sensitive tasks with the utmost care and professionalism.

Customer service is another critical area covered in our training videos. Our staff learns the best practices for interacting with grieving families, offering compassionate support, and maintaining the dignity and respect that our services require. Furthermore, we delve into phone etiquette, training our team to handle inquiries with sensitivity and efficiency, ensuring that every interaction reflects the quality and care that Jones-Wynn Funeral Home is known for.

Centralized Communication and Support

Beyond training, our portal serves as a central hub for communication and support. Recognizing the importance of spiritual and emotional well-being, we have incorporated a prayer request feature. This allows staff members to share their prayer needs and offer support to one another, fostering a sense of community and mutual care.

The portal also includes a calendar of upcoming events, keeping our staff informed about important dates, training sessions, and community events. This feature ensures that everyone is aware of their responsibilities and opportunities, promoting a cohesive and well-coordinated team environment.

Service and Activity Execution

Our funeral home prides itself on executing services and activities with precision and heartfelt care. The online staff portal enhances our ability to deliver these services by providing detailed guides and checklists for each type of service we offer. From the initial contact with families to the final arrangements, our staff has access to step-by-step instructions and best practices that ensure consistency and excellence.

For instance, during removals, our staff can reference specific protocols to ensure that they handle the process with sensitivity and respect. Customer service guidelines help our team navigate the complexities of supporting grieving families, offering tailored assistance that meets their unique needs. These resources are readily available on the portal, making it easy for staff to refresh their knowledge or seek guidance in real-time.

Innovation and Recognition

The creation of the online staff portal is a testament to our commitment to innovation and excellence. By providing a centralized, easily accessible platform for training, communication, and support, we have empowered our staff to perform their roles with confidence and compassion. This initiative not only enhances our internal operations but also elevates the level of service we provide to our community.

Kerrville Funeral Home, Kerrville, TX

Kimble Funeral Home, Junction, TX; Krestridge Funeral Home, Levelland, TX

At Kerrville, Kimble and Krestridge Funeral Homes, we pride ourselves in working with the whole family. From the oldest to the youngest members, the goal of the KFH staff is to ensure that all family members' needs are met during the visitations and services of their loved one.

Many parents disagree on whether children should attend funerals. Some families feel that it would be too emotional for the little ones and they would not understand, while other families include their children in all aspects of life – including death. Thus, young children's experiences with death are greatly influenced by those around them.

All three funeral home locations are equipped with tools to help children during the uncertainty that surrounds a funeral service. Krestridge has a "cry room" that provides more than a place for crying babies, it gives younger children a location where they can talk to family members and still be a witness to what is going on in the service.

To help preschool and elementary age children understand what is happening and give an opening to parents to assist their child in expressing what they are feeling, KFH has books available that parents can read to their children explaining death and dying. One such book is "A child Asks What Does Dying Mean" by Lake Pylant Monhollon. This book uses the analogy of an astronaut wearing a spacesuit to a living person having an "earth suit" and no longer needed it when death occurs. Coloring books are made available for children to have to help them through the process of the funeral. These are available for all children in English and Spanish.

Several years ago, a young boy and his mother donated close to 100 stuffed animals to our Kerrville location to be given out to grieving kids. These animals all wore a tag that explained how a stuffed animal had been given to this boy when his father died and how it assisted him to "not feel so alone and scared" during his time of grief. These stuffed bears and other animals were shared with all three locations and are given to children who are experiencing a difficult time coping with their bereavement during funeral visitations and services.

According to various studies the anti-stress, calming effect of hugging plush toys can be explained by the release of oxytocin in response to the feeling of a soft, warm material. Oxytocin is a hormone that promotes comfort and stress relief. By giving these stuffed animals out, grieving children are able to reduce developing anxiety and begin their journey of healing.

Primaveras, Guarulhos, São Paulo, Brazil

The Primaveras Corporate University (UCP), founded in June 2023, was created with a clear and transformative purpose: to improve the technical skills and develop the personal skills of all employees of the Primaveras Group. This project aims to ensure that everyone executes their work processes in a standardized and productive way, achieving better results for the company and promoting the well-being of employees.

UCP uses a learning management platform, allowing employees to access and take courses at a distance. This tool makes it possible to insert and monitor the performance of employees, ensuring that everyone is always up to date and in constant development. In addition to online courses, UCP offers the opportunity to participate in face-to-face courses, lectures, and training, although on a smaller scale. This combination of digital and face-to-face learning provides comprehensive, flexible, and cost-effective training.

The rationale behind the creation of the UCP is robust and multifaceted. Firstly, it aims to ensure that all employees are trained in a uniform way, following the same standards and procedures. This not only improves operational efficiency but also raises the quality of the services provided. The standardization of processes is crucial in a sector as sensitive and important as the funeral home, where excellence in service and empathy are fundamental.

The benefits for the funeral home are numerous and significant. With UCP, the company can count on a highly qualified team that is constantly updated on the best practices and innovations in the sector. This translates into a continuous improvement of the services offered, ensuring that customers always receive excellent service. Constant employee training also contributes to talent retention, as it provides opportunities for professional growth and development, increasing employee satisfaction and engagement.

For employees, UCP represents a valuable opportunity for personal and professional development. Through the courses and training offered, they can improve their skills, acquire new knowledge and prepare for new challenges within the company. This appreciation of human capital is essential to create a positive, motivating and productive work environment. In addition, the flexibility provided by online learning allows employees to train at their own pace, better reconciling their professional and personal responsibilities.

The benefits of UCP are not restricted to the company and employees. The families served by the funeral home and the community in general also reap the fruits of this investment in education and training. With better informed and educated employees, service becomes more welcoming, efficient, and humane. In a time of pain and loss, it is essential that families receive empathetic and quality care, and UCP contributes directly to this. By raising the standard of service, UCP strengthens the funeral home's trust and credibility with the community, creating a positive and lasting impact.

In addition, UCP reinforces the Primaveras Group's commitment to social responsibility. By investing in the training and development of its employees, the company demonstrates its commitment to the well-being of employees and to the continuous improvement of the services offered to the community. This commitment is reflected in all interactions with customers, fostering a culture of excellence and empathy that benefits everyone.

In summary, the Primaveras Corporate University is a strategic and visionary initiative that brings substantial benefits to the funeral home, its employees, the families served and the community in general. By investing in the continuous training of its employees, Grupo Primaveras not only enhances its services, but also strengthens its position as a leading and innovative company in the funeral industry, committed to quality, empathy and social responsibility.

Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory, Coal City, IL

Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory, Gardner, IL; Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory, Morris, IL; Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory, Wilmington, IL

ESSAY #1

Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes are four brick and mortar stand alone funeral homes serving the rural communities of Coal City, Gardner, Morris and Wilmington, Illinois. Each funeral home is within a 20 mile radius and we are approximately 60 miles southwest of urban Chicago, Illinois. Our communities range in populations from 1300 to 15000 people and our owner Matt Baskerville and then entire staff comprise of local residents whom have called these communities their home for a lifetime.

Many years ago, Matt took away an idea from attending a NFDA Convention, (one in which he was initially hesitant to utilize because he thought it could be misconstrued as too melodramatic) - however has proven to be a wonderful sentiment. The practice of leaving a rose on the bed following a transfer, truly has demonstrated to be meaningful for so many families.

Over the years, (particularly since we acquired and began operating our retail florist) we have elevated the practice with "real feel" roses and have even on multiple occasions been told by families that they didn't even realize the flower we left was artificial until they noticed it wasn't drinking any water from the bud vase they placed it in!

In an effort to take this to another lever - last year we had a family that posted on social media a photo of our rose that we left after the transfer of their mother. In the photo was the family cat sitting by the rose... In addition to the heartfelt sentiment of how meaningful it was, the social media post went on to say that pets grieve too...

This photo (which is attached) was so impactful - we started thinking of how can we address this as a funeral service provider? Our entire staff is pet friendly. In addition to our grief therapy dog, Katie, all of team members have fur babies of their own at home!

We took this opportunity to begin to remember pet family members at the time of transfers... And, here is what we have come up with!

When we now do a transfer from a residence where there are pets (dogs or cats) - in addition to the rose, we now leave a little tin of locally made and sourced treats. We acquire these handmade treats from our local Trinity Barkery. This nonprofit organization is dedicated to helping people with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses. Each treat handmade and all natural.

Along with the tin of treats we also include a little card expressing that "All beings grieve..." and it is from Katie (our Grief Therapy Dog) - a fellow four-legged companion.

It further states that most dogs and cats are exquisitely sensitive to the emotions of their social companions. As household people grieve and adjust to their own loss, dogs and cats can sense their sadness and display signs of their own grief!

This has had such an amazing impact... Families in today's society seem so much more involved with their pets and literally include them as a part of the family. It is such a nominal gesture that makes a significant statement. In addition to showing that we care for the entire family - even the four legged members, we are also supporting a great organization in our community through Trinity Barkery.

The cost of this program is nominal:

- We purchase the metal rectangular tins in bulk for less than 50 cents each.
- The 'Fritters for Critters' treats are purchased in bulk and a \$6.49 package can be made into 20 individually sealed and wrapped treats for each small tin.

- We have the attached sentiment cards printed as our memorial/prayer cards which average 67 cents each.
- Finally we sticker the tins with a custom logo "Forever In Our Heart" that we created in house and cost 34 cents each.

As you can see for less than \$1.85 each, the impact and sentiment is priceless!

We have also had to start keeping these on hand at each location too as the word is getting out - pet families are inquiring about them and we give them out at arrangements - particularly if transfer was from a location other than home or skilled care where family would be returning to the place of death. Attached are photos of the card and presentation that is left.

This is a tremendously meaningful practice that any funeral home could replicate for little cost with a big return.

ESSAY #2

In 2024, Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes is celebrating our 100th anniversary. It was in 1924 that Wilfred and Anna Reeves dream of relocating their family from Massachusetts to Coal City Illinois and opening Reeves Funeral Home came to fruition. This was truly a business venture that Mr. Reeves embarked on, having come from a career working as an executive with the railroad – and Coal City being a stop that was in need of a funeral service provider.

Initially the funeral home began as a storefront operation and Mrs. Reeves also sis seamstress work out of the business. Wakes were held in the homes and it wasn't until 1938 that the Reeves family opened the first stand alone funeral home of it's kind to the area. Today we continue to operate out of the 1938 building and as the 3rd generation aged – the Reeves family sold the business to Matt Baskerville in 2003.

Matt is proud to be carrying on the 4th generation of funeral service and operating the oldest business in the community. In addition the funeral homes over the past 6 decades expanded to include locations in Wilmington, Illinois, Morris, Illinois and most recently under Matt's direction – Gardner, Illinois. Our 100th Anniversary has been on the topic for many years now and we wanted to commemorate this milestone in a manner that was meaningful outside of showboating our long standing continuation of the business...

After much consideration, it was decided upon by our whole team that there was no better way to showcase our century of service than to honor others who are also celebrating this 100 year milestone... So here's what we have done!

Our first honoree is Mrs. Lucille DeGulie. A beloved member raised in our Wilmington community and later completed a truly successful career in teaching in our Coal City community. Matt Baskerville and the curator of our local Carbon Hill Museum set an appointment with Lucille where she was interviewed and had the opportunity to share all about her life and love of community.

Matt then took that information and researched community and genealogical photographs and completed a Life Story on her. Our funeral homes are already known for the Life Stories that we create for the families that we serve, and it wasn't a surprise that we could honor a member of the community with the same literary format.

Once the life story was created, we then put it together in a publication form and presented it to Lucille honoring her and her birthday milestone. With her permission we have also presented the Life Story to the local libraries for their archives and the local historical museums for their keeping.

The library was so impressed with the publication that they have invited Mrs. DeGulie to a summer event to honor her and allow the community to celebrate her.

In addition our life story is also being published in the local paper commemorating her in honor of our century of service.

I am attaching the life story publication for review, and we are also in the process of soliciting for additional member in the communities that we serve to honor in the same fashion throughout the year. It has been such a wonderful way to commemorate our anniversary by celebrating and honors others in the community! It cost only time, some creativity and good will and is so easily duplicated for a host of reasons. This I believe in addition to being an exceptional public relations program, has been informative to the community, created substantial content for historical purposes and was simply a feel good program.

Return Home, Auburn, WA

TerraCon 2024: Pioneering Community Engagement through Terramation

Rationale behind the Idea

TerraCon 2024 was born from the team at Return Home's deep desire to educate the community and deathcare professionals in a safe, imaginative space. As a family and staff owned funeral home in Washington, we recognized the urgent need for inclusive, sustainable, and environmentally friendly funeral practices. Traditional burial and cremation methods have significant environmental impacts, and terramation, or body composting, offers a more eco-friendly alternative. This aligns with the increasing public awareness and demand for eco-friendly options supported by studies highlighting the environmental benefits of composting human remains over conventional methods (Source: Green Burial Council). Additionally, through our active presence on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, we saw the community's need to learn about terramation while addressing their fears and misconceptions about the roles of funeral directors and death care in general. Hosting the first-ever terramation conference was Return Home's way of fostering an environment filled with education, innovation, and heartfelt conversations.

Detailed Description of the Program

TerraCon 2024 was a comprehensive, multi-day conference dedicated to educating both funeral professionals and the public about terramation while emphasizing the important role of funeral directors. The event, attended by over 230 people in person and 350 more virtually, including local mortuary students and was broadcast into mortuary school classrooms across the world, and featured:

Educational Workshops and Panels:

The Science of Terramation: Presented by our lead scientist John Paul and Operations Manager Chris Stone, this session delved into the science behind how terramation works. John Paul passionately explained the scientific principles that underpin Return Home's terramation process. He also shared a deeply personal story about the death of his son and his burial experience, expressing how he would have chosen terramation for his son if it had been available and how he plans to choose it for himself. Chris Stone provided a detailed account of each terramation procedure, sharing how he has ensured Return Home has a process that is safe and gentle, allowing for family interaction with the process and full transparency. He also emphasized that every terramation is unique, explaining the science behind these differences.

How it all Started: Sponsoring, Drafting, and Approving NOR Legislation: Representative Pam Marsh from Oregon shared her personal journey of pushing for legislative change to allow for terramation. Her story was particularly poignant as she recounted how, just a year after the legislation passed, she found herself needing the services of Return Home following her husband's death. Her heartfelt testimony underscored the real-life impact of terramation and the importance of legislative support.

Funeral Director Roles: This heartfelt panel featured three seasoned funeral directors sharing their personal experiences with terramation. Gary Sultz, an old-school funeral director from Revelstoke, British Columbia, moved the audience to tears as he recounted how he accompanied a 19-year-old wildfire firefighter on an airplane with her siblings for a laying-in at Return Home. He freely displayed his emotions as he described how Return Home's transparency and compassionate care made him feel comfortable with the process. Jamin Mohler spoke about his experience with the family of Fritz, an 18-year-old who died in Eastern Washington. Fritz's family and friends came to Return Home for a laying-in, and a video of Fritz's mother covering him with organics garnered over 50 million views on TikTok, illustrating the powerful impact of accommodating family requests and decedent's wishes. It was Fritz's last wish to "go viral" and because of inclusive and forward thinking services, he got his last wish. Russ Weeks, a funeral home owner, shared how he brought a close family friend to Return Home and emphasized the profound experience for the family, advocating for more funeral homes to strive for such excellence.

Panel: Regulating Terramation Facilities: This engaging panel featured members from the Department of Licensing, the Funeral and Cemetery Board and the Department of Health discussing the pioneering regulations in Washington, the first place in the world to allow terramation. They shared insights on how they crafted these groundbreaking regulations and the challenges they overcame to set a global precedent.

Building Europe's First Terramation Facility: Pablo Metz shared his journey of establishing Europe's first terramation facility in Germany. He and his partner Max traveled all the way from their home country to speak and participate in the conference. He talked about the interesting differences and challenges he has encountered, including navigating various cultural attitudes towards death and funeral practices, as well as the logistical and regulatory hurdles unique to Europe.

Panel: Hear from the Terramation CEOs: Moderated by Jeff Jorgenson, this panel featured insights from leading terramation CEOs Micah Truman, Seth Viddal, and Pablo Metz. They discussed their visions, experiences, and the future of terramation in a candid and inspiring session. The CEOs shared how this important work has moved and changed them personally, describing deathcare as their most beautiful adventure, helping them to understand what an amazing profession it is.

Redefining Sustainability: The Deeper Impact of Terramation: Brie Smith and Katey Houston discussed the profound impact of terramation on the funeral industry. Brie Smith shared her journey of being a Senior Executive and Founder of Return Home and the significance of creating new rites and rituals from scratch through the eyes of a funeral professional. Katey Houston spoke about the individual service to families and how it is transforming funeral service. She shared her experience of being revitalized by the unique and personalized services developed at Return Home, which often include the presence of the body, a practice uncommon in their state. This rejuvenation has renewed her passion for the funeral industry and its future.

Respecting Tradition: Cultural and Religious Perspectives on Terramation: Moderated by Rev. Susan Cutshall, this highly anticipated panel featured Rabbi Daniel Weiner, Pastor Dan Lloyd, and Reverend Jessica McKimmie. They discussed how each religion views terramation and how it aligns with their scriptures and doctrines, offering invaluable insights into the cultural and religious acceptance of this innovative practice.

Family Panel: This heartfelt panel included a family from The Natural Funeral and two families from Return Home, with one family still having their loved one in the terramation process at Return Home. They shared their experiences with the terramation process and the funeral professionals involved. Their stories highlighted the compassionate and transformative impact of terramation on their grieving process, providing deep emotional insights into how terramation helps families heal.

Keynote Address by BJ Miller: BJ Miller delivered an inspiring keynote that discussed the link between hospice and deathcare, emphasizing the importance of mental health in both fields. His talk underscored the critical role of holistic care and compassion in end-of-life services.

Tours: Two separate sets of 40 attendees toured our terramation facilities to witness the process firsthand, understanding every step and how it works. This was the first time a terramation facility has been opened in this capacity, allowing people to delve deeply into the process. Each tour was a two-hour event that ended in a luncheon.

Networking Opportunities: The event provided a platform for funeral directors, environmentalists, and community leaders to network, share ideas, and explore collaborative opportunities. Funeral professionals had the chance to talk with legislators to understand how to get the ball rolling in their states. The public also engaged with funeral professionals from all walks of life, highlighting the role of the funeral director and proving that funeral professionals are here to serve families and meet them where they are.

Community Engagement Activities: Interactive sessions both in person and virtual allowed community members to ask questions, share their thoughts, and learn more about how they can support and participate in green funeral practices.

Benefits Provided to Funeral Home and Staff

TerraCon 2024 significantly benefited our funeral home and staff by positioning us as leaders in sustainable funeral practices. It allowed professionals in deathcare and the community to get to know the faces of the professionals who will care for the families who choose this service. It provided an opportunity to share ideas with those in traditional deathcare and vice versa, and to mingle with people and legislators looking to get terramation legalized in other states. The event also allowed our staff, mortuary students, religious leaders, and scientists to discuss mental health in deathcare and how we can support each other. Additionally, it served as a springboard for mortuary students who attended to find out more about the profession, learn from both experienced and new directors, and discuss how to maintain mental health in deathcare.

Benefits Provided to Families and the Community

For families, TerraCon 2024 offered invaluable information and reassurance about the terramation process. The educational sessions and facility tours demystified body composting, making it a more accessible and acceptable option for those seeking sustainable funeral practices. The community at large benefited from increased awareness of and engagement with environmentally friendly alternatives, contributing to a broader cultural shift towards sustainability.

Improvements and Future Plans

While TerraCon 2024 was our inaugural conference, we have already identified areas for improvement. Future iterations will include more interactive sessions, expanded networking opportunities, and greater involvement from international experts. We plan to make TerraCon an annual event, continually refining its format and content based on attendee feedback and emerging trends in green funeral practices.

In conclusion, TerraCon 2024 was a groundbreaking event that not only educated and engaged the community about terramation but also reinforced our commitment to sustainable funeral practices. By fostering a dialogue around environmentally friendly options and emphasizing the critical role of funeral directors in our profession, we have set a new standard for community engagement and environmental stewardship in the funeral industry. Additionally, Matt Baskerville wrote a feature-length article about his experience at TerraCon 2024 in the May edition of the NFDA Director Magazine, further highlighting the event's impact and success.

Robinson Funeral Home & Crematory – Downtown, Easley, SC

Robinson Funeral Home & Crematory – Powdersville Road, Easley, SC; Duckett-Robinson Funeral Home & Cremations, Central-Clemson Commons, Central, SC

At the beginning of 2023, the company started having quarterly meetings called "CX Huddles" (Customer Experience Huddles) to discuss the different stages of customer interaction. These meetings help staff members focus on ways to go above and beyond customer expectations. These meetings came about after Chris Robinson heard a presentation by Jake Johnson of Johnson Consulting on the book by John R. DiJulius III entitled *The Customer Service Revolution*. Jake talked about the book's main theme of the emphasis and importance of businesses built on employees maintaining good customer relations and the challenge of maintaining customer loyalty through excellent customer service.

Chris, along with assistance from Johnson Consulting Group, created a "Steering Committee" comprised of seven staff members from each location and different positions. The Steering Committee coordinates quarterly meetings for staff members to provide us with suggestions to exceed customer expectations and also feedback on items that we need to correct or better.

Since the creation of this committee and the CX Huddles, the focus has shifted to a larger scale of customer interaction and service. The committee has not only continued to meet and discuss ways to exceed customers' expectations in the services we offer when the families have a need, but also to the community as a whole before there is a need. The group focuses a lot on community outreach and involvement as well as the subject under which it was created initially, excellent customer service.

Ever since the focus has shifted, the committee has reached out to several leaders in the Pickens County community for potential events and ideas where the company can assist. They have also reached out to the many other staff members at the quarterly meetings for feedback and ideas. The committee has received substantial suggestions and positive comments from fellow associates and the community.

Here are just a few examples of events the company has participated in since the larger focus in community outreach:

In October of 2023, the company participated in two Halloween themed events in the city of Easley. One was for the City of Easley and the other was for Tremont Church of God.

At the start of 2024, the company has taken on two routes with the Pickens County Meals on Wheels. The first and third Wednesday of every month will be an Easley route handled by the Downtown and Powdersville Road locations and the second and fourth Wednesday of every month will be handled by the Duckett-Robinson location.

In March of 2024, the company held a blood drive at the Downtown location. The Blood Connection brought their blood bus and parked it at the end of the parking lot closest to the street, advertising to all that passed by.

On March 23, 2024, the company sponsored a hole for a local church's annual golf tournament to assist with their student ministries.

On May 18, 2024, the company co-hosted an event by a local organization to raise awareness for fentanyl abuse.

On June 5, 2024, Robinson Funeral Homes hosted an appreciation lunch for all first responders in Pickens County. It was a BBQ lunch prepared and served by Robinson Funeral Home staff members at our South & West Event Venue across the street from the Downtown location. Flyers were sent to the department heads of the Pickens County Emergency Services, Pickens County Sheriff's Office, City of Easley Fire and Police Departments, City of Pickens Fire and Police Departments, City of Liberty Police Department, and the Pickens County Coroner's Office. The lunch was held to honor fallen Easley Police Officer, Matthew Hare. Hare was killed in August of 2023. While saving a woman's life from being hit by

an oncoming train, he was hit by the train. His heroic efforts received national coverage and was deemed a true hero in the Easley community. We assisted the family with his funeral arrangements and wanted to honor him and all first responders in a way to show we truly appreciate what they do for us. The lunch was covered by the local NBC affiliate and local newspaper in Easley.

These are just a few examples of community outreach that has taken place in the past few months. There are several other events in the near future that the Steering Committee have reviewed and discussed along with the constant suggestions from the other associates. Just judging by the constant flow of positive feedback from the community, there will only be more community outreach items to add to the list. Currently, the committee is comprised of Chris Robinson, Funeral Director/Embalmer and Managing Owner, Anna Robinson, Funeral Director/Embalmer Apprentice of the Powdersville Road location, Jimmy Wilson, Funeral Director and Operations Manager, Greg Rice, Funeral Director/Embalmer and Duckett-Robinson General Manager, Maggie Whalen, Funeral Directors/Embalmer of the Duckett-Robinson location, Nathan Miller, Funeral Director/Embalmer of the Downtown location, Allison Gantt, After-Care Coordinator, and Steve Crowe, Part-Time Funeral Associate. This committee will continue to meet monthly to discuss upcoming events and opportunities in which the company can participate to continue to exceed our customers' and potential customers' expectations in every aspect.

Señoriales Corporación de Servicio, Guatemala

A tribute to Guatemala's legacy

In an act of celebration and coexistence, Señoriales Corporación de Servicio is pleased to present the progress of its New House of Tributes, Tribute to the legacy of Guatemala, an innovative space designed to honor and celebrate life.

The New House of Tributes offers an infrastructure designed to provide comfort and serenity, with cutting-edge technology and spaces designed to provide peace and comfort to families.

Every architectural and functional detail has been carefully planned to create a welcoming and respectful environment, a true tribute to the life and legacy of those who left an indelible mark on us.

More than infrastructure, this new extension is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellent service, rooted in deep respect for Guatemala's roots and traditions.

For three days, we have witnessed an inspiring celebration, where the majestic quetzal, the vibrant güipil, the colorful fairs and other emblematic elements of our culture have been the source of inspiration.

The atmosphere has been permeated with marimba music, melodies that resonate with the very essence of our identity, accompanied by a delicious sample of Guatemalan gastronomy.

Welcome to the narration of this exciting and significant event!

Benefits to families and community

A Space to Honor and Remember

The New House of Tributes is designed to provide a dignified and respectful environment where families can honor the lives of their loved ones.

Each Tribute Room offers a unique space that combines respect for cultural traditions with an atmosphere of peace and reflection. This approach allows families to pay tribute to their loved ones in a way that resonates with their values and cultural heritage.

Culture

Art has the power to bring people together. In our new House of Tributes we have created a space to offer access to art and provide Guatemalan artists with a place where they can exhibit their works. We aspire for the citizens of Guatemala to cultivate a deep pride in their identity and roots, celebrating the artistic and cultural wealth of our country.

For these reasons, we have designated a special area for the art exhibition, a magical corner where the works of our talented artists can shine and where every visitor can feel inspired and moved. This space is not only a tribute to Guatemalan creativity, but also a bridge that unites hearts and celebrates the beauty of our shared identity.

A Frontage of Cultural Elegance

The frontage of the House of Tributes is a masterpiece that combines elegance and tradition with its exterior decoration with stones that simulate a loom and others arranged in a special way to emulate the weaving of a typical Guatemalan textile. This architectural design not only beautifies the building, but also pays homage to the country's rich artisanal heritage.

Tribute Rooms with Cultural Significance

The New House of Tributes houses a series of Tribute Rooms, each with a name that evokes essential elements of Guatemalan culture and significant aspects of the country's life and environment:

Sala Cafetales: The inspiration for its name arises because in Guatemalan coffee plantations, the history and presence of our loved ones are intertwined with each bean grown. His legacy, like the eternal

greenery of the coffee plantations, nourishes and endures in each harvest, reminding us that love is the bond that unites the past with the present.

Telares Room: This name is given in honor of the Guatemalan looms, which weave stories, traditions and the essence of the town. Each thread and color reflects the past and identity, creating a legacy that endures over time as a living testimony of the connection between generations.

Cocoa Room:

The room is named in honor of Guatemalan cocoa, an ancestral legacy that contains the essence of the land and the spirit of the people. Just as cocoa transforms into chocolate, the memories of our loved ones inspire us and always accompany us, nourishing our souls with their eternal love.

Volcano Room: Named after the majestic volcanoes of Guatemala that symbolize the force of nature and the permanence of love and memories. Like them, what we love transforms but never disappears, remaining solid like the rock on which they sit.

Eternal Spring Room: This room receives its name, highlighting the temperate climate and exuberant biodiversity that characterize our land in the mountains of Guatemala, where spring blooms eternally, reminding us that love endures beyond farewell. Each flower is the promise of a reunion and the constant rebirth of life, instilling hope in every heart.

A Memorable Event

Recently, the new House of Tributes of Señoriales Corporación of Services, was presented to the public in several Open House events attended by the honorable members of the Board of Directors, authorities and heads of the Corporation, administrative and operational employees, the personnel of the force sales and clients.

These events were not only an opportunity to showcase the New House of Tributes, but also to reaffirm Señoriales Corporación of Services commitment to excellent service and the celebration of Guatemalan culture.

Activities Planned benefits for the company and its staff

Thank you breakfast and Open House for administrative and operational staff

In a warm and pleasant atmosphere, we brought together teams from all areas to enjoy a delicious Guatemalan-style breakfast. During this meeting, we shared memories of the beginnings of the construction of our House of Tributes.

The comments of those present reflected the emotion when contemplating the beauty and magnificence of our New House of Tributes.

In addition to presenting the progress of this work, we wanted to express our sincere gratitude to each member of the team for their commitment and dedication. Your work shoulder to shoulder, one of our core values that has been crucial in turning this dream into a reality.

In an emotional ceremony, each participant received a pin with the legend "I am part of History", a recognition that was received with great emotion and pride.

The highlight of the morning: It was the presence of Javier Pliego, coach and motivator, who presented an inspiring song titled "The Way of the Sherpas", in which he highlighted heroism and love for others. Relating these values to the work we do when accompanying families on the most difficult day of their lives, the loss of a loved one.

Javier culminated his presentation with an emotional ceremony in which everyone present mixed grains of rice, beans and lentils.

This symbolic mix represented unity and mutual support, showing how each of the members of the different teams contributes with their strength and dedication to the well-being of families in moments of deep pain.

This final act reminded us of the importance of solidarity and love in our daily work, reaffirming our commitment to be present and provide comfort to those who need it most.

An afternoon of Cocktail and Open House Aimed at the Board of Directors and Sales Force

On a distinguished cocktail afternoon, the honorable members of the Board of Directors joined the 100 best family advisors from the Sales Force at an Open House to celebrate the progress of the New House of Tributes.

Upon entering the New House of Tributes, attendees were greeted by an impressive collection of paintings created by talented Guatemalan artists, courtesy of Fundación Paiz. Visitors were delighted with these works of art, which reflect the foundation's commitment to the development and formation of Guatemalan society through educational, cultural and artistic programs.

The experience was also marked by the inspiring talk of Javier Pliego, who offered a new perspective on his talk by highlighting the essential role that family counselors play both in counseling, as well as in supporting and caring for families.

His emotional message resonated deeply, reminding them of the importance of each piece in this noble work, which not only impacts emotionally, but also contributes significantly to the company's revenue through their dedication and service.

After the motivating talk, the Logistics and Operations Manager of Señoriales Corporación de Servicio Diego Aguilar, personally, guided those present on a tour of the facilities, making each place visited come to life with their descriptions.

The tour began on the first level, in front of the space where an exclusive Café Lounge will be located, which is projected to be a comfortable and elegant place where people can relax, socialize and enjoy drinks and light meals; a space that combines comfort and sophistication, with a calm atmosphere and contemporary design, where people can enjoy an informal but refined dining experience, with special attention to the setting and service.

The tour continued towards the area where the Art Gallery will be located, a space dedicated to celebrating the cultural legacy of Guatemala through national art.

Diego Aguilar also explained the focus of the main area, where an imposing work of art created by a Guatemalan artist will be placed as the centerpiece of the decoration. This work will be selected through a competition, calling on artists from all over the country to present prototypes of their creations.

While they were at that point, Diego Aguilar asked those present to look up, where they could see the roof of the New House of Tributes. The triangular pieces arranged in an overlapping pattern not only offer beautiful decoration, but also have the function of isolating outside sound, creating an environment of silence and peace inside.

The tour continued to the second level, where the first five beautiful Halls of Tribute are located: Looms, Cacao, Cafetales, Volcanoes and Eterna Primavera. Diego Aguilar explained the non-visible details that were considered so that families experience an atmosphere of peace and calm during the service.

Since the New House of Tributes is located in a busy area of Guatemala City, windows with soundproof glass were installed, that is, glass designed to reduce or isolate outside sound to ensure that the bustle of traffic does not interrupt the serenity of the place.

In addition, each Room will be equipped with air conditioning, high-fidelity sound and three screens strategically located to allow optimal viewing at the time of the presentation of the Tribute of Love from any angle.

In addition, all services are automated and can be controlled through a tablet managed by the Tribute Coordinator or the family themselves; from the intensity of light, air conditioning, TV screens and audio. At this point he also mentioned that there is Wi-Fi available in all areas.

One of our top priorities is the comfort of families, who often arrive exhausted after the medical care of a Loved One, coupled with the pain that invades them from the loss.

Thinking about their well-being and comfort, each Tribute Room includes a special area for them with private toilets and showers, a spacious and elegant room, and a private living room with comfortable sofas and television, ideal for children or for adults. They have a space to reflect and vent in private.

At the time, Señoriales Corporación de Servicio was a pioneer in Guatemala by presenting Tribute Rooms with rest rooms for the main mourners.

This time, we are introducing a new innovation that we will call the Loved One Gallery.

This space is intended to house your loved one, carefully located in a space within the Tribute Room, protected with glass doors simulating a display case where the chest will be placed on a diamond-shaped marble rock, symbolizing that there lies the most precious jewel of the family.

The space will also be adorned with specially designed floral décor, and glass doors will allow the family to decide whether they want to keep them open or closed for moments of privacy.

During the tour through the wide corridors that connect the common areas, Diego Aguilar highlighted the presence of three coffee bar stations, where various coffee specialties prepared by expert baristas will be offered.

The Tour concluded when Diego shared about the comfort and safety that people will have when visiting the New House of Tributes with its large parking spaces that are located in the three basements. The Tour of the new House of Tributes was an enriching experience that not only allowed us to admire the architectural and functional beauty of this space dedicated to remembrance, but also invited those present to reflect on the importance of honoring the life and legacy of our beloved.

Every carefully designed detail, from the spacious common areas to the intimate tribute rooms, demonstrates Señoriales Corporación de Servicio's dedication to providing comfort and support to families in their most difficult moments.

It is worth mentioning that operational and administrative employees also had the opportunity to enjoy this Tour at their event.

Recognitions and Celebrations

After concluding this exciting journey, everyone present celebrated these achievements with an awards night for the one hundred best sales advisors.

In addition, several recognitions were granted to the founders of the House of Tributes and the Top twenty most outstanding sales advisors.

These carefully selected gifts reflected Guatemala's indigenous roots and underscored the deep connection to the country's cultural identity. Attendees were able to feel and appreciate the dedication and respect for Guatemalan culture in every detail of the event.

The closing of the night was equally memorable, with a pleasant cocktail party where a champagne toast was made in celebration of the progress, accompanied by canapés and sandwiches.

The celebration culminated with a dance full of conviviality and fun, creating indelible memories and reaffirming the spirit of community and mutual support that defines the New House of Tributes.

This event was not only a significant moment on this journey, but it also strengthened the ties between everyone present, filling us with pride and hope for the future.

Presentation of advances New House of Tributes and Open House aimed at clients

The day after the emotional presentation of the progress of the new House of Tributes to the advisors, the expected moment arrived to invite their clients to meet.

The Open House for customers was celebrated with a morning Brunch, from 8 am to 12 noon, designed to give them a warm welcome while they were presented with the advances and the new product Transcender, whose name evokes the promise of exceeding all expectations with every detail. During the event, the advisors shared special moments with their clients, guiding us to explore every corner and novelty of the House of Tributes. This time each of the advisors was the tour guide for their clients.

A model Tribute Room captured the attention of visiting families, showing them the elegance and comfort that characterize the Tribute Rooms.

In a deeply moving tribute to Guatemalan talent, a Tribute was made to Maestro Froilán Rodas Santizo, an illustrious marimbist whose compositions have elevated the sound of the marimba at a national and international level. The altar dedicated to his memory displayed priceless artifacts and accolades, including his first marimba, adding a touch of deep meaning to the event.

The atmosphere of the event was transformed by the Marimba Chapinlandia, loved by many Guatemalans, whose melodies enveloped the attendees and even led them to dance spontaneously. This marimba, founded by Maestro Froilán and now directed by his son with the same name, created an atmosphere of joy and national pride, highlighting the rich musical tradition of Guatemala.

Customers walked away with deep satisfaction and admiration after witnessing the fruit of their investment.

This event marked the closing of a series of activities dedicated to presenting the New House of Tributes to each of the segments involved and interested, underscoring the commitment of Señoriales Corporación de Servicio with the roots, values and virtues of each individual celebrated.

Tribute to Froilan Rodas Santizo

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/jVpGbMt6g9zfo9f3/?mibextid=D5vuiz>

Commitment to Excellence

The strength of Señoriales Corporación de Servicio has always been its commitment to excellent service.

This commitment extends to the new House of Tributes, where every detail has been thought out to provide families with a viewing experience that is not only respectful and dignified, but also deeply connected to Guatemalan culture.

The combination of impeccable service and a culturally significant setting ensures that each tribute is a fitting celebration of life and traditions.

The new House of Tributes of Señoriales Corporación de Servicio is positioned as a beacon of respect and admiration for Guatemalan traditions, offering a place where the lives of loved ones can be honored with the dignity and respect they deserve. With its attention to detail and its deep respect for cultural roots, where it not only celebrates life, but also the rich heritage of Guatemala.

Twiford Funeral Homes, LLC & Albemarle Crematorium, Elizabeth City, NC
Twiford Colony Chapel, Manteo, NC

Twiford Funeral Homes, LLC has spent much of the last year focusing a great deal of energy and effort promoting pre-need insurance. The reason for the extra emphasis is because we believe strongly that people who have prepared for their funeral arrangements benefit in myriad ways, as do their families. Those who pre-plan their "after death care" have peace of mind that their wishes will be followed and that their families will not be burdened with excessive decision making. The fact that there are different levels of planning and payment options to fit every budget means everyone can take advantage of pre planning options in some way. Presley L. Ely IV has conducted many seminars in Northeast, North Carolina to address this issue, utilizing pamphlets, Power Point presentations and worksheets to help families determine their needs. The pamphlets from the National Funeral Directors Association, Selected Independent Funeral Homes, the Federal Trade Commission and Homesteaders Life Company, among others, open peoples minds to the possibilities available for disposition, as well as sparking conversations within families about after death options.

Having been in the funeral business for over 90 years, Twiford Funeral Homes, LLC has seen the changes which have occurred regarding funeral arrangements. It has always been our goal and our honor to provide our client families with whatever they need to help them through what is arguably one of the hardest times of their lives. Having a family member make as many of the decisions as they are comfortable with ahead of time, allows the surviving family the opportunity to grieve without wondering if they made the right choices or how they will pay for everything. Of course, there are many stories of the opposite happening; the loved one dies without telling their family anything about how they want to be cared for after death. This is often devastating to families, as they try to figure out how to honor their loved one and how to suddenly access a significant amount of money to pay for their choices. Unfortunately, money is often a deciding factor in what families choose to do, especially if there is no life insurance or a pre-need in place. The guilt and regret following such a situation can be debilitating and can also cause serious family strife.

Another point in favor of pre-planning is it can be done with as much or as little detail as a person wants. Talking about death is still a somewhat taboo subject in many cultures, but everyone in the world will have to deal with that reality at some point. If an individual has difficulty thinking about the details of planning their own service, they can simply have a life insurance policy which would cover whatever their family might choose. To guarantee the cost of services and merchandise, a very simple pre-need can be done, as well. If one feels more comfortable with making detailed decisions, they might plan every aspect of their funeral or memorial service, going so far as to sign their cremation authorization in states which allow this. Memorializing their life through pictures or memorabilia chosen for display can be very comforting to individuals nearing the end of their lives. It allows a person to have some control over how their story is told, as well as relieving the family of one more task.

As a funeral home, many people assume we are emphasizing pre-need sales to ensure our bottom line. While that may be a part of the point, in reality, we feel very strongly that we are doing our community a valuable service. For the sake of the families we serve, and our community at large, we are convinced of the importance of helping people see the many benefits of pre-planning. To that end, Twiford Funeral Homes, LLC has hosted many programs throughout the year to offer information and options surrounding funeral pre-planning. "Lunch and Learn", "Ask the Director" and "Dinner with a Director" events held throughout the year have sparked conversations in the community about options available for after death care. We at Twiford Funeral Homes, LLC believe this can only be a good thing.