

## **Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors Singapore**

At the height of the pandemic, we saw that there were many COVID-19 deaths in other countries. We did not wish to see the same thing happening in Singapore. We wanted to help keep the COVID-19 rate in Singapore as low as possible.

As evident in other countries, a surge in COVID-19 deaths overwhelmed the local funerals directors. Hence, by helping to reduce COVID-19 deaths, we were also preventing the funeral profession in Singapore from being overwhelmed.

The international consensus shows that COVID-19 vaccines help to reduce the severity of the disease and the death rate associated with it. Singapore Government, at the same time, was also launching campaigns to encourage the update of vaccinations and booster shots.

Hence, to help keep COVID-19 death rates low, Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors launched a campaign to encourage more people to get their vaccinations.

We ran a physical campaign using our company's vehicles. We pasted stickers with the messages "Vaccinate Now! Because we care!" on the sides of our vehicles. As the vehicles travelled around Singapore, we were spreading the messages of getting vaccinated.

Places the vehicles travelled to includes wakes and funerals held across the country. We also took pictures of the vehicles and launched a social media campaign on Instagram and Facebook with the pictures to spread the messages further.

The online campaign gained considerable traction. It reached over to 10,000 people and more than 1,000 likes over the course of a few weeks.

Our campaign was eventually noticed and covered by an online news website and a local newspaper. Local celebrities who spotted our vehicles praised us for playing a part in getting more people to get their vaccinations.

Members of the Public were also talking about our campaign on online forums which helps to bring the messages, even further.

By encouraging more people to get vaccinated, Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors was helping to build herd immunity in Singapore's population.

We were essentially helping to keep everyone and the community safe and healthy.

Our contribution in helping to keep people in Singapore healthy means that our staff were able to serve families with less worry about possibly being infected by the virus.

We were also helping to ensure our colleagues in the Funeral Profession were not overwhelmed.

The funeral profession in Singapore is still considered a "third world country" profession. By leading and showing that Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors is actively doing good, we were also contributing to uplift the funeral profession in Singapore.

## **Bailey Family Funeral Homes Wallingford, Connecticut**

Recognizing the importance of fostering relationships with our wider community, and respecting the idea that some people may be uncomfortable visiting funeral homes or interacting with those who work within the death care profession, we have worked to create opportunities to be present in the community in a way that is hopefully more appealing to the wider population.

We have implemented a "Free Speakers Program" where we offer our services to community groups, libraries, community civic organizations, fraternal organizations, religious communities and houses of worship, skilled nursing centers, assisted living communities, and any other group or organization that may wish to sponsor a program.

We have found that many of these entities seek to have outside speakers to provide information or entertainment for their membership or those that they serve. Often, they find that they have limited budgets for such programming and are nervous about the event turning into a "sales pitch" that will turn off their membership.

We collected and developed a series of programs and presentations on informational topics that are both informative and entertaining. No aspect of them has any effort at making a sale to the audience.

Among the presentations offered are:

The Story of Robert Newman:

Undertaker & Man Who Hung The Lanterns in The Belfry

A brief look at the undertaker who helped save us from British invasion.

Cocoanut Grove Fire: The Study of The Psychology of Grief

This program discusses the Cocoanut Grove Fire and the beginning of the academic study of the psychology of grief.

The Pioneer Innovators & Professors of Funeral Service Education & Mortuary Science

This program focuses on the beginning and founding fathers of funeral service and mortuary education.

The History of Funeral Home Ambulance Service

This program focuses on how funeral homes offered and ran ambulance services from 1870-1980

Today's Burial & Cremation Options

This program discusses the many options available to today's consumers for burial and cremation services.

Living Legacy: World War II

This program discusses the time and events surrounding WWII and the memorial in Washington D.C.

Celebration of Life

This program looks at modern day funeral services and new ideas on how you can honor your loved one.

Dr. Cicely Saunders: The Lady Who Changed The Way People Die

A brief look at the woman who is credited with forming the first hospice organization in the world

The Assassination & Funeral of President Abraham Lincoln

This program discusses the events leading to the assassination of the president and his funeral. (Two versions: 25 minutes and 1 hour).

Welcome Home: The Vietnam War

This program discusses the time and events surrounding the Vietnam War and the Memorial Wall.

The Death & Funeral of President George Washington

This program discusses the death and funeral of our first president.

The Funeral of Jefferson Davis

This program discusses the funeral of the president of the Confederate States of America (1861-1865).

The History of Civil War Embalming

This program focuses on the history of embalming during the Civil War.

The Evolution of the Modern Day Funeral Home

This program focuses on the use of funeral homes from the time of home funerals which were customary in the early century.

We offer additional programs as well. We created a brochure that summarizes the service and distribute it to those groups and organizations who we feel may benefit from the offering. This program has provided us access to groups and places that may otherwise not want us present. As a result, we have fostered new relationships and made our presence known within the community we serve.

**Chambers and James Funeral, Pet and Cremation Services, LLC  
Wellsburg, West Virginia**

Chambers and James Funeral Pet and Cremation Services joined an Art Hop on Saturday November 13, 2021, organized by the Top of West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau, Barn with Inn, and the Weirton Area Museum and Cultural Center. The Art Hop is our Best of the Best project for 2021 from the rationale of thinking outside the box to increase visibility of our organization.

The Top of West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau is an organization founded to encourage tourism and stimulation of the local economy. This organization is not something that you would think a funeral home would be able to assist in; however, thinking out side of the box, this was a perfect fit.

The rationale behind the idea was increasing traffic into the funeral home for an event no funeral related. We, as funeral homes, work everyday to show and to communicate to our communities that we are here as a center and as community resource for event space. So we heard about the Art Hop, we knew this was a fit for us. We hosted four artists in the funeral home from 10-4 pm on the day of the event, pottery and paintings by several local creators were on display at the James Funeral Home's visitation room. This event allowed James Funeral Home to serve the community in a unique capacity and enabled community members to experience the funeral home in a different context. We had contemporary music playing and over 50 people come through the doors of our newly remodeled funeral home, which help to show case that as well. Our Chambers and James Funeral Home of Follansbee WV is conveniently located on WV Route 2, the major road running through the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia; however, many local residents drive by daily without ever coming inside. The Art Hop gave people the opportunity to tour our historic nineteenth-century facilities and admire our original spiral staircase and Victorian fixtures while enjoying local art. We were "Cool." Can a funeral home be Cool? When you host an Art Hop you can. Events like this are important to welcome people into our funeral homes--especially those who might be nervous or see the funeral homes in a negative light--and show them that we are friendly, caring professionals devoted to helping the living.

Finally, as we mentioned before, the Art Hop put the Chambers and James Funeral Homes not just on a map, but our community was able to explore our facility, operation and staff deeper. Not just a funeral home with historical ties, but a modern design and friendly staff to help the community. This collaboration with the Top of WV helped to showcase our parking lot, staff and newly renovated facilities. Even more of a benefit we are now in talks with the Top of WV and the Art Council to remove all of our normal décor and showcase painting and pottery all year round for our community to purchase. We are a resource to hundreds of people coming through our funeral homes but now art gallery. "It is amazing to me how one little idea can turn your funeral home into the Best of the Best." said owner, Eric Fithyan.

**Cozean Memorial Chapel & Crematory  
Farmington, Missouri**

**JON COZEAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**

For many years, the principal owner and President of the funeral home, Jon Cozean, has given back to the community by showcasing the Farmington High School football program. In doing so, Jon has attended every football game both home and away for the past thirty years with his state-of-the-art camera equipment. Jon has been interested in photography all of his life and taking photos is a delightful hobby of his. He goes to great lengths to shoot action moments that seek just the right facial expressions on the faces of the players. Some of these shots are phenomenal. Then Jon spends hours sifting through each week's game photos for posting on our weekly website updates. Having a degree in journalism from Missouri University, Jon has honed the ability to post interesting and clever story lines and website comments with the pictures following the games. The families are always eager to log on to our website and see our comprehensive game coverage. At the end of each season he produces a video depicting the best photos from all the games and sends them to the team players and their families. This program has been more than rewarding for Jon because it has been a very fulfilling aspect of his adult life. The families of these players are highly appreciative as is the community at large. The cost of this program is free to the players and the coaching staff. This project has made Jon an inspiration to many of the players through the years and they often befriend him and stop by the funeral home to visit.

Sometimes decades later they stop by to see him and see if he remembers them from a football season back in the day.

One important benefit of the football photo project is that often times, the players and their families stop by our funeral home to thank us for "all the photos" we took and gave to the players. Unfortunately, almost every year family members of one of the players from years gone by tell us that their loved one has died and they ask "do you have any more copies of the pictures" of, say, "our dear Bobby who was the quarterback of the Knights in 1993?" All of the work that goes into this project is paid off when we see the expressions of happiness on the faces of family members when we are able to give them copies of their loved one who played football for the Knights back in, say, 1982.

Jon's purpose for this project has not, in any way, been associated with funeral home marketing but it has kept him in the public eye in a positive way and people respect him for what he does. So you might say it has been somewhat of an advantage for the funeral business as well.

Jon is no spring chicken at the age of 84, but come this fall he will be out there on the football field in possible cold and rainy weather shooting those action shots and he will be enjoying every minute of it. Again, the next day he will be drinking coffee and sifting through those pictures late into the night so he can post his article on the website for the players and their families to revel over.

**Duksa Family Funeral Homes  
Newington, Connecticut**

This year we decided to bring back our Free Shredding Event for our local communities. We implemented this idea after hearing from seniors in the community who were concerned with identity theft and disposing of sensitive documents. We thought this would give them the opportunity to do just that.

Another reason this outreach program came to mind, is that we are still in a time of COVID and cases still continue to climb. We believe the safest way to continue community events, is to hold them outdoors. This program helps to keep our staff and community safe while still keeping us involved in helping our community.

At the first event we had, we realized there was much more interest than we anticipated and had quite the traffic jam for people waiting to shred their documents. Therefore, one of the changes we implemented was having a box truck in one parking lot as a drop and go station. This station was for those who were comfortable leaving their documents and allowing us to overlook the shredding of them. We contacted the Masonic Lodge adjacent to our building and coordinated with them to have the separate area for the box truck. The drop and go was incredibly successful and the box truck ended up about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full which was great and indicated the trust that the community has with us.

The other option was to wait in the line to physically see their documents be shred. This worked very well and helped everyone move through much quicker. We also had many more staff members in anticipation of the crowd.

As we did last time, we asked for those who came to shred to bring non-perishable food items to donate to our local community food bank as well. This was a huge success and we were able to donate quite a few items.

Another improvement we made was including the shredding event in our radio advertising in addition to the newspaper. This definitely improved the turn out even more than we expected.

We also had signs made for the traffic this time which helped everything flow much better. We had staff at all parking lot entrances and exits as well as stationed at the drop and go area.

After the positive outcomes of these events and the expectation of the community, we have decided to continue this program annually. We will continue to improve on the event as well and hope that it helps to keep fostering our relationship and build even more trust in our community.

## **Dwayne R. Spence Funeral Homes and Crematory Pickerington, Ohio**

This was the "Year of the Dog (or cat)" at Dwayne R. Spence Funeral Homes. The funeral home is a major sponsor of the Pickerington Lions and Leo Clubs' PAWS 5K and 1 Mile Run / Walk with proceeds going to Pilot Dogs of Columbus, OH for their guide dog program. This event has occurred for many years at various locations around Pickerington but during the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 it became a virtual event. Individuals or families were to run / walk on their own and send photos to the Lions Club afterwards. Last year the funeral home organized a "virtual" walk at the Pickerington location parking lot with restrooms, water and benches available on every lap for the "mature" staff. Participants enjoyed last year's event so much that it was decided to repeat the event in 2022 with a new twist or two. First, Jeff Seaman, the managing partner, asked Funeral Directors Life to match the \$300 sponsorship donation through their "Helpers of People" Charitable Match Program which they did. The funeral home staff were sent an email invitation in March to participate in this event with their family members (two or four-legged). As they did in the year prior, Dwayne R. Spence Funeral Homes paid the registration fee for any staff member and their family members who wished to walk for a total of \$830 in entry fees. Every two-legged walker received a t-shirt and a goody bag from the Lions Club before the event day. The new twist this year was the funeral home staff were asked to bring donations of dog and cat food or other pet items to be donated to the Fairfield County Humane Society.

The Lions Club held their actual event on April 10th at Sycamore Creek Park. Two weeks later on April 23, 2022 at 1 PM, twenty-four two legged participants and their dogs met at the Pickerington funeral home's parking lot. Lions Club members came to set up sponsor signs and to cheer us on. The event began with the "meet and sniff" mixer to make sure all four-legged walkers were well introduced to each other. Once everyone was ready, the one mile journey around the building began. Spence staff member, Melinda Schnorrenberg who organized this event, knew from the previous year that a total of 8 laps around the parking lot would equal the one mile goal. Water stations were set up for ALL participants. The staff and their family members including fur-babies that participated were: Ed Babcock and his dog DJ, Barb Callihan, Keith Ebright, Mary Heister, Gary Madden with family dog Parley, Liz Marckel, Susan Matias, Tracy McAdams, his wife Tonya and their dog Meko, Melinda Schnorrenberg, Jeff Seaman and wife Joann, Melissa Siefker and husband Chris along with their children Logan and Tia and pups Sarge and Angel, Brent and Nancy Wilson with their daughter Mandi Rederstoff, granddaughters Penny and Charlie and family dogs and pups Dori, Bubbles, Lincoln, Frankie and Sylvie, John Wynkoop, wife Patty and son Ben with their dog Braxton.

As the event came to an end, a small awards ceremony took place where Melinda presented all of the youth participants with certificates and medals. The youth recipients were Penny and Charlie Rederstoff, Tia and Logan Siefker, and Ben Wynkoop. Everyone that participated was given a medal and ice cream treat while the pups enjoyed doggy biscuits. Donations to the Fairfield Humane Society from the staff totaled \$200 and many bags and cans of pet food along with stainless steel bowls, doggy car seats and other items.

The staff's generous donations gave off another spark of an idea - why not set up a Fairfield County Humane Society donation table at our Shred Day event. So on June 11, 2022, Melinda Schnorrenberg and Tia Siefker took in donations for the Humane Society. Those community members who came to Shred Day were also very generous and donated an additional \$225, pet food, cleaning supplies, paper towels, carriers, car seats, bowls, cages, toys and pet collars and leashes.

On June 20, Melinda and Emma Sillings loaded up the funeral home's big van with all the donations and headed off to the Fairfield County Humane Society in Lancaster, OH to deliver the supplies and money. When the Humane Society's volunteers unloaded the supplies it took 2 of their big wagons to get all the supplies into the building. They were also very pleased with the \$425 cash donation. Meanwhile Emma and Melinda had a hard time leaving the building without each of them adopting a dog and a cat. Funeral Directors Life will be matching the monetary donation with an additional \$425. Finally, keeping with the "Year of the Dog (or cat)" theme, the books the funeral home donated this year to the Pickerington Public Library all concerned pet loss.

## **Falco, Caruso & Leonard Funeral Home Pennsauken, New Jersey**

### **Pennsauken Location:**

On Sunday, May 22nd, 2022 we hosted families we have served within the last 6 months of both the Camden and Pennsauken communities for a free board and brush event. Our intention was to invite the families we have served back to the funeral home for an afternoon of painting and light refreshments, offering them a space to relax and enjoy themselves. We utilized our new café area by setting up tables and chairs for families to sit and follow the step-by-step instructions of the Hammer & Stain NJ Workshop instructors to create their new piece of home décor. Families were able to pre-register and select their own design, being able to customize them specifically to their liking. A few families decided to create a memorial design to honor their loved one. Families were first instructed to stain their boards with the color they chose when registering. They were then guided on how to sand the wood and apply the stencil of their design, after which they were able to paint their design using colors they chose. The instructors worked directly with the families to ensure their designs were progressing the way they wanted them to. Registration was free of charge. We did ask if families wanted to, they could bring a donation for a local animal rescue group. We received donations of food, treats, toys, blankets, etc. for both dogs and cats. The dog donations were brought to Woof Love Rescue, that focuses on rescuing and rehabilitating dogs who are in need. The cat donations were brought to the Animal Welfare Association. Our funeral home staff benefited by being able to converse and spend time with the families we have grown to consider part of our own without feeling the pressure of grief. We enjoy being able to follow up with families and see how they are doing. Not only were the families able to unwind for an afternoon, but they were able to take home their board and brush design as a new piece of art to add to their homes. It is our hope that by adding this piece of art to their home, they remember that we at Falco, Caruso & Leonard Funeral Home will always be there after their loved one's funeral services to support them with whatever they need. We hope to host more intimate events like this one soon to further benefit our community outreach.

### **Camden Location:**

On August 8th of 2021, our funeral home made a donation of a stove to the church of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception located at 642 Market Street in Camden, NJ. After volunteering with the church, our staff noticed the condition of the church's current stove. We saw that the church was in need of a new stove after their old stove was starting to deteriorate and was not working properly for the volunteers. The previous stove was needed for many activities within the church, so we realized how important it was for them to have a working appliance in their kitchen. It was used for cooking food not only for their parishioners, but also for cooking food for the St. Joseph House of Camden meal donations. St. Joseph's House of Camden is a charity organization located at 555 Atlantic Avenue in Camden, NJ. Their mission is to assist homeless people holistically and individually in gaining stability and control of their lives. Not only do they provide shelter and food for those in need, but they provide a safe haven, empathy, hospitality, respect, patience, and stewardship to the people of Camden. Our staff understands that in addition to shelter and food, those other qualities that this charity provides are very important for homeless people to thrive and to hopefully get back on their feet. This charity was founded in 2010 John Klein and Father Bob McDermott after they witnessed firsthand the abundance of homeless people in need in Camden. Every week the church organizes a volunteer activity where parishioners and members of the public can volunteer their time to help cook meals for this organization. Volunteers spend time doing the prep work for the food, cleaning and chopping vegetables. They then prepare the meals, including but not limited to salads, pastas, rice and beans, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, chicken, cake, and more. The food is then packaged and brought to the St. Joseph House charity where it is then made available for the people in need. The volunteers also clean the kitchen in order to keep it in perfect working order to continue to help those in need. The addition of the new stove has already made an impact in helping the volunteers better supply St. Joseph House of Camden with food for the homeless. Our staff looks forward to the weeks that they are able to volunteer with the church to help make a positive impact on the city of Camden.

## **Funeraria Del Hogar de Cristo Limitada Santiago, Chile**

Here in Chile, we have been dealing under the pandemic shadow already for the last 27 months. For us, and for the entire world everything is much more complex, sad and bittersweet. However, we do feel and think that every single day provides an opportunity to serve and give support in a more effective, challenging, innovative and definitely better way.

Therefore, we have not stopped reviewing, rethinking and taking a new perspective on how we can improve and make a greater contribution to our consumers and of course to our employees. All this, without losing sight of what our founder Saint Alberto Hurtado was looking for: "provide dignity and respect even after death".

### **QR Code Program (technological innovation)**

Among various innovative initiatives, we have incorporated the concept of "Interactivity in Funeral Services". We have integrated a QR code at every funeral service that is linked to our digital obituary on our web page. Through this QR code everyone can access directly and in real time to the obituary of a particular service in order to:

- Light a virtual candle,
- Send a virtual hug,
- Write a condolence message,
- Send a donation to our owner foundation (Fundación del Hogar de Cristo),
- Share funeral service information among relatives and friends.

With this, we are enhancing the consumer experience by giving a swift connection between friends and relatives who wish to give support to the grieving no matter how far they are nor how high pandemic barriers are in place.

### **Sewing Workshop Program (innovation through B activities)**

In addition and always keeping in mind the essence and social responsibility of our founder Saint Alberto Hurtado, we are proud and happy to say that we have successfully structured a Sewing Production Partnership with a Women's Correctional Center here in Santiago.

As part of FHC's constant commitment to support the most vulnerable with dignity and respect, the challenge of integrating with the community through a support network was created.

Through this manufacturing project we have provided not only sewing skills to this group of 10 inmates but provided the equipment and materials and most importantly, we are giving them the opportunity to produce for us different items we utilize in our funeral services such as pillow cases, memorial medal bags and other items.

From this program, these women at the correctional facility center are able to earn a monthly income which is very important for their needs and to help their families. All the inmates that participate in this program are mothers and their children are taken care of by relatives.

We are convinced that we are giving respect, dignity and hope to these women and mothers and above all, the opportunity to reintegrate to the society once they have served their sentences.

Sister Nelly, chaplain of the Penitentiary Center and one of the promoters of this project, has said: "When they contacted us from the Funeral Home (Funeraria del Hogar de Cristo), it was a tremendous joy. God has set his sights here through the Funeral Home to be able to make this reality visible".

Cecilia, one of the inmates that participates in this program has said: "We don't need to be pitied or singled out, we need concrete opportunities to get out of the circle of crime and the only way we have to achieve that is by getting a decent job. We are immensely grateful to be part of this project... it is a job in

which we put all our love because we know that it will reach the hands of people who are suffering at that time. We want to send them a little of our courage, of our strength through the work we do every day.”

For all the above explained, we are convinced that we are on the right path to fulfill our purpose and continue to be a better company for our employees and for the world.

**Funeza**  
**Mexico City, Mexico**

### **Embracing families**

Do we know how to embrace? This question may seem easy to answer, and in Funeza we asked ourselves this question last year, seeking to find a clear and sincere answer. In 2021 we reinforced our commitment to honor and celebrate the lives of the families who trust us, with this in mind we created a comprehensive and informed exercise regarding our priorities as an institution and as support for one of the most painful and important events for all families who have gone through the loss of a loved one. Strengthening our service and communication pillars was fundamental for the creation of new initiatives to improve our performance in all aspects:

- Year after year we design a robust line of valuable content to create awareness, care, and support after this event.
- We implemented improvements in the experience of families from the first moment of contact, as well as in the process of their funeral service and subsequent care in coping with grief through different tools.

And starting from this process of renewal and continuous quality, we asked ourselves: How to create a real and palpable connection to our interest in supporting Mexican families facing a loss? This led us to evaluate our results and it was from the customer satisfaction index, the feedback we gathered from our digital community, and all the suggestions compiled from the families who trust us, that we confirmed that it was time to take the next step and structure our "Emotional Wellness Program" through an annual plan of content, support and initiatives that would serve all members of the family, both adults and children, and that would also consider from all sides the needs in content, which on the one hand would touch the hearts of people by addressing their emotional well-being and on the other hand, would provide valuable information along with specialists in various subjects, adding challenge, which was the adaptation of our formats and the adoption of a new format of communication, since technology in recent years opened the doors to provide quality information, accessible and autonomous.

That is why we defined that in Funeza an embrace is not only the action of hugging, instead, it is providing support, it is transmitting energy, it is a symbol of respect and protection, one embrace that also gives you a smile that creates moments to remember and comforts you, one embrace that accompanies you in a difficult moment. The embrace as a guiding axis was implemented in all communication and actions towards the families that were and are in contact with our communication channels both in agencies, digital platforms, and special activities. From this idea "AL RITMO DEL CORAZÓN" was born, our free emotional wellness program that aims to embrace families through a contact channel and information, originally digital and gradually moved to special initiatives in public spaces and foundations.

#### **Our voice embraces**

We created the first podcast in Mexico in the funeral industry, which was a challenge because, among the wide variety of topics to offer from the needs identified, we decided to focus on 3 pillars:

- Specialized emotional care. Through psychologists and thanatologists who provide tools and the first level of care to contain the overwhelming pain of the loss of a loved one.
- Talking to the youngest members of the family, who are also going through the loss and often do not receive adequate guidance to understand and heal their emotions.
- Provide answers to questions that no one wants to ask in a normal conversation but knowing the information can eliminate certain stigmas regarding our services, procedures, and area of business.

We are clear about the potential of this initiative, as more and more people consider that the information provided through this channel offers them value in terms of time, convenience, and information.

According to a study conducted by El Economista, it is forecasted that this year 34 million people will listen to a podcast, and by 2025 more than 40 million will do so in Mexico alone\*.

From these ideas, our podcast AL RITMO DEL CORAZÓN is born under 3 different subjects with 18 exclusive contents at the moment:

- Abrazando el corazón (EMBRACING THE HEART). Learn with specialists, about everything related to grief: detachment to people; pet thanatology; loss of family members; processes and answers. In this podcast, you will solve doubts, and receive advice and thanatological tools to heal.

We have special guests who, like us, also believe in the project and share our commitment to educate and support through sensitive and valuable content.

- Los colores de la vida (THE COLORS OF LIFE). The colors of life are stories for children and adults who need emotional support and understanding in that specific situation.

We are the first funeral company in Mexico to develop accounts with exclusive narratives to introduce the loss of a loved one and the grieving process.

-Zona Desconfort (DESCONFORT ZONE). It is a space to talk about what nobody wants to talk about.

Characters who live daily with losses, tell us about their perception of life and their relationship with death, touching on points of debate, unusual questions, and how to learn to live better.

Using the microphone and through collaborations with professionals in the sector, Foundations, and social activists, we give voice to the approach of common situations to share life and its relationship with loss from another point of view.

- Thematic Playlist In addition to exclusive content, we also create playlists with melodies to support families on commemorative dates.

### Embracing with actions

Within our program of activities, we contacted families in different spaces to carry out initiatives on important days such as Women's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Children's Day; for instance, we have given away roses, pins, photo, dinners, movie tickets, all of these have been ways to show our appreciation to the families, give them something thoughtful to share as a family or with the people they love the most and create an unforgettable memory. To turn a regular occasion into a unique experience has been an important goal for those of us who are part of this program, we managed to bring smiles to the faces of more than 1400 families.

In addition, of course, to provide sessions with specialists that address specific needs through their professional service to families that are part of our support network, both online and on-site, reaching more than 105,000 people with our message.

To embrace has a new meaning for us, we do it to leave a mark in every action we carry out, we want to bring the message of good living to as many people as possible, and we know that today is the best time to enjoy what we have and also to enjoy with those who support us, we know that we do not have to wait for tomorrow to appreciate and show our love and gratitude to those who have made our way through this life the best experience we could have had. Now comes the next stage of the challenge, which is to make thousands more people know about this great initiative and adopt it as their recurring value content.

In Funeza we are families serving, helping, and embracing families.

**Hazel Green Funeral Home  
Hazel Green, Alabama**

**Super Roy**

"On a busy street, in a little town, lives a real Labradoodle named Roy."

Super Roy was an idea that developed as a way to show appreciation to individuals in the community who help others. Hazel Green Funeral Home began working on this community recognition program in 2021 and implemented it in January 2022. The funeral home comfort dogs were already well-known and loved in the community, and the staff wanted a way to allow them to be a part of the community service project. Laura Whisenant, funeral director at Hazel Green Funeral Home, decided to write a children's book about one of the comfort dogs. Thus, Super Roy was born!

A local high school student, Rowan Gafford, was tasked with illustrating the book. Although this was her first illustrating project, she was excited to take on the challenge and contribute to the community recognition project. Once the book was completed, it was published and available online through Amazon and at the funeral home office. The book features an authentic "pawtograph" from Roy.

Super Roy, The Comfort Dog is a story about a comfort dog who goes to work every day and sees others doing things to help people. Roy sees doctors, nurses, funeral directors, teachers, and other people he calls heroes. Roy wants to be just like them! During the story, Roy quietly continues to do his job at the funeral home, and along the way, he realizes that he is a hero, too.

After publishing the book, Hazel Green Funeral Home began the recognition of Super Roy's Heroes. Heroes were selected from many sources. Families served at the funeral home could nominate a special caregiver. Community members could ask to recognize someone in the community. Funeral home staff could also suggest someone for recognition.

One of Roy's first heroes was a law enforcement officer who worked at the funeral home visitations. During visitations, the officer always took extra time and visited with the children to hand out junior sheriff badges. Roy also recognized a local teenager who started a program to help feed and care for the homeless. Hazel Green Funeral Home has also recognized hospice workers, nursing home social workers, and volunteers for local non-profits. And they are just getting started! Roy hopes to recognize more and more heroes next year.

Each of Roy's Heroes is visited by Roy, wearing his Super Roy cape and bandana, and presented with a \$100 gift card, a copy of his book, and some sweets to share with family or coworkers. Roy also recognizes the hero on his social media pages.

In addition to recognizing heroes, Roy also visits schools to share his book. The author and illustrator read Super Roy to students and share about heroes, funeral home comfort dogs, and more. Hazel Green Funeral Home donates copies of Super Roy to every classroom and library Roy visits.

The funeral home staff have enjoyed participating in the Super Roy program. Staff say they are happy to interact with the kids at the funeral home and break the ice by offering them a book about Roy. The staff also appreciates being able to recognize people who help them do their jobs, such as pastors, law enforcement officers, and caregivers.

The funeral home families also benefit from the Super Roy program. Families are encouraged to let staff know about people they would like to be recognized as one of Roy's heroes. This gives the families the opportunity to talk with staff about special helpers and say a special thank you to those people.

The community as a whole has quickly embraced the Super Roy program. People stop by the funeral home every day wanting to get a copy of Super Roy: The Comfort Dog. The staff has had to place several more orders due to running out of copies. Roy has been invited to community events, schools, and featured in the local paper. Most importantly, the staff of Hazel Green Funeral Home has been able to connect with more people, show appreciation to more people, and serve more people due to Super Roy.

## **Hughes Family Tribute Center Dallas, Texas**

Fathers are many times the foundation of the family. They spend their lives building and supporting their children, creating memories, and teaching lessons that will last through generations. At Hughes Family Tribute Center, we wanted to celebrate fathers past and present in a special and meaningful way, so we held our first annual "Father's Remembrance Classic Car Show" on Saturday, June 18, 2022—the day before Father's Day. Our classic car show helped many families and brought the community together in such a unique and special way.

So why did we decide on a classic car show to celebrate dads? Throughout our years in celebrating fathers in our funeral services, we realized a lot of the dads in our communities bonded with their families over their cars and trucks. So many grown children sat across from us during arrangement meetings and told us stories of how their dads spent time fixing a special car or doing their own maintenance on a beloved truck. Sons got their hands dirty helping dad change the oil. Daughters learned how to drive in "dad's" car. The families and the stories kept coming in about so many fathers being passionate about automobiles, so we took what we were hearing to heart and decided that the most healing thing for our families around Father's Day was to hold a car show in honor of dads.

Like many of our events, this event was especially special to one staff member who got behind the proverbial wheel and took off with this event. Kate, one of our fantastic funeral directors, lost her father at a young age. Her father impacted her life in so many ways, but one way in particular was her love of cars. Together, they worked on cars and talked about cars—it was their special "thing" together that they could bond over. When her father passed away, she was disappointed that the funeral director and the funeral service didn't celebrate her father or honor his life or passions. She decided then and there that she was going to become a funeral director to help families honor their loved ones' lives and celebrate the things that made loved ones unique and so dearly loved. In a way, this car show was a tribute to her own father and the special bond they shared. Kate contacted various car clubs in the Dallas area to see who was interested in joining us for the car show. A car club, known as the Dallas Area Classic Chevy Club, expressed their interest and agreed to participate. We offered them in return free food from a food truck we hired to attend the event as well as free beer that we were going to give to adults who agreed to fill out pre-need questionnaires. Kate organized an award and trophy to go to the People's Choice for Best Car as well as a web-based voting platform for easy voting access. We spread the word about our Father's Remembrance Classic Car Show through our social media platforms, and we even had families we had served in the past wish to bring their own cars to participate. Our newest team members, John, even brought his own car that he has been working on to the show. With the cars from the Dallas Area Classic Chevy, the families, and our funeral apprentice, we had almost 20 cars in attendance. Throughout the event, we estimate that 100-150 people came from our social media announcements, by walking or driving by, and from the surrounding houses and neighborhoods.

Our Father's Remembrance Classic Car Show benefited many people including our staff and our community. For our staff, it was a special way to honor fathers. Over the past years, we have tried to come up with special ways to honor fathers like cookouts, movies, candle lightings, and more, but nothing seemed quite right. It wasn't until we had our current staff members like Kate and John, that we realized that this car show was an event that could really get behind and mean something special to all of us. It also helped our staff grow in trying new things. Many of us joked that we never envisioned entering into the funeral service industry and one day having to organize a car show for work purposes. We grew together as a team as we tried to think of ways to engage the community as well as make the event worth-while for the participating car owners. We also had the benefit of connecting as a staff as many of our staff members revealed their passion and love for cars. As a funeral home, we connected more and more with members of our community, neighborhoods, and city. We collected many questionnaires in which we can reach out to families to promote pre-need funeral arrangements to further help families as well as grow our business. We also developed a great relationship with the Dallas Area Classic Chevy Car Club who is interested in coming back again next year. This event greatly benefited our staff and our business, but it also benefited our community as a whole. This event was free and open to the public, and many families came out to look at cars with their fathers. It was great to see so many families gather in

one place and connect with people they never would have met otherwise and bond over their love of cars. Many people asked if this would be an "every year" event, and we were happy to tell them "yes." As mentioned above, we had families we had served in years past request to bring their own cars to the event. One family in particular was a man who had lost 2 of his children and had their services through our funeral home. He brought 2 of his classic cars and had the opportunity to talk with others and share his story which brought healing. We were able to use our event to not only let him display his passion for cars, but also honor him as a father who was still a father even after the loss of his children. Another man, who actually won the People's Choice Award for Best Car, also got to share his story about losing his father and how he found healing through his car. Apparently, his father only ever owned 1 new car and it was a green, 1954 Chevy Bellaire. It was the car that all the children were brought home in the hospital in and the "family" car for many, many years. Unfortunately, the car was involved in an accident when a family member borrowed it and was totaled. For years, the winner's dad, who was called "Buddy," talked about how much he liked that car and all the stories associated with that car. As years went by, the winner's dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and later passed away. By that time, the winner had already established his passion for classic cars. A couple of years after his father had passed away, on a whim, the winner looked online for Chevy cars from the 1950's. He wasn't even interested in buying a new car, but just wanted to see what was out there. One of the first cars that popped up as being available for sale was a green 1954 Chevy Bellaire. The winner had to do a double-take and even messaged his uncle (who wrecked the original Bellaire) if that was just like the car his father had owned. The uncle replied that it was the spitting image of the original car. With that, the winner knew he had to purchase the car. He became the new owner of the same type of car that his father had loved so much, and he even named the car "Buddy the Bellaire" in honor of his father. Our staff didn't know the story about his car until after he had won the People's Choice Award, but we all agreed that his car was meant to win on our inaugural Father's Remembrance Classic Car Show. It was the perfect representation of what our event was all about—honoring the dads that meant so much to us.

Dads are a lot like cars in some ways. They help get you from one part of life to the next. They help take you on amazing journeys and create so many memories. You form an attachment and bond with them that can seem so normal and comfortable, that you never fully appreciate them until they are gone. We were so thrilled and honored to celebrate dads through our first annual Father's Remembrance Classic Car show. Not only did it help our staff and our community, but it celebrated the dads in our lives in such a personal and memorable way.

**James Funeral Home & Northlake Memorial Gardens  
Huntersville, North Carolina**

Sam James, the funeral home owner, was president of his Rotary Club this year. Sam and the funeral home staff worked alongside of Rotary on the Wine Spectacular—a large auction to benefit so many wonderful charities in the community. Each organization that was a beneficiary also helped with the wine-auction. From procuring items, to setting up to working the event and cleaning up, the funeral home staff was involved and the event would not have been the same without the partnership between the Rotary Club of Lake Norman and James Funeral Home. I want to be clear that this event was not owned by either James Funeral Home or the Rotary Club but it was a true partnership that led to a true success. The planning for the event (which was held in October 2021) began in June 2021. By the week of the project, we were meeting weekly with the club to work out the logistics and details behind this event. Northstone Country Club was extremely generous in their contributions to this project as well. This event has happened before but our staff partnership really allowed us to step it up to a new level and create an unparalleled event. This one evening allowed us to give away (after all expenses paid) over 100,000.00 to these local beneficiaries. This event not only raised a lot of money but was very enjoyable to attend. It was not a stuff event but one where you left proud to be a part of something larger. The food, drink and entertainment were all top shelf. I am so proud of the commitment the staff gave in this partnership. Their dedication and hard work certainly paid off in what we were able to gift to our community. It is my hope that this partnership will continue in the future. We do not just want to be a sponsor of an event that attends and goes home, but it is our goal to really make a difference in our community. Our community is very affluent and we are thankful for that. Even still, there are those in the community that are overlooked and underserved. This funds went to organizations like the Lake Norman Free Clinic to offer medical care to those that cannot afford it on their own. Again, I am very proud of our staff and the commitment that this work showed to our community!

**Jennings-Calvey Funeral and Cremation Services, Inc.**  
**Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania**

**Mats for the Homeless**

Homelessness is a devastating situation and on the rise throughout the county. Post Covid-19 has contributed to this this public crisis. In Lackawanna County the effect of this situation is witnessed daily with individuals and families living along the Lackawanna River. They camp there for shelter and for access to water under tents and other makeshift shelters or often without either. There is rarely bedding, and most are sleeping directly on the ground in all kinds of weather. Jennings-Calvey Funeral and Cremation Services collaborated with several community members to help the homeless.

Chris Calvey, Jr. believes it is important for community businesses to act as leaders in addressing social inequities. He is an active member of the Rotary Club of the Abingtons, having held various offices and currently serving on the board, he learned about a creative solution to address some of the challenges faced by the homeless. A group of women in the area found a way to aid the homeless and address environmental concerns. The women collect plastic grocery bags that would have otherwise been disposed of and wound up in a landfill or in the ocean, compromising our delicate eco-system. They then take these bags and fashion them in a way where they create spools of plastic yarn, or "plarn", which are crocheted into plastic mats for the homeless to lay on where they choose to make their home. Because the mats are made from this plastic material, they are resistant to the elements and would not become saturated with water should it rain. They work with local groups that they make the special mats to donate to the homeless through organizations like Keystone Mission in Scranton.

The idea started at Taylor Community Library two years ago and then expanded to the Abington Community Library, Covenant Presbyterian Church in Scranton, and more groups throughout Lackawanna County and beyond. Chris Jr. was inspired and touched by the innovation of this project and the dedication of the group to taking action to address a challenge the homeless face. He wanted to work with the group to help them expand this innovative project which gives the homeless the human dignity and to amplify their story to increase public awareness of homelessness in the area and encourage others to become involved. He works directly with the libraries and other local organizations to provide resources and assistance.

The stories he hears about the impact of this project are profound and deeply moving. The volunteers say they enjoy helping the environment by recycling plastic and lending a hand to the homeless by giving them something dry to sit or lay on. "I had the pleasure of dropping bags off at Keystone Rescue Mission, and a homeless gentleman was stopping there for services, and he saw me unloading the mats, and he saw me and said, 'Are those for the mission?' And I said 'yes,' and he said, 'Can I have one, please? They are super.' I could have cried," said Leah Ducato Rudolph of Abington Community Library's Caring Hands group.

Loretta Heffernan of Taylor Library notes, "I knew there were a lot of homeless veterans, and I'm retired military, so that's originally who my mats were going to, and I think it's just fantastic when it spreads. you know knowledge when it spreads."

"It's hard to even imagine carrying all your worldly possessions with you, but that's what they do and to have something like this that's lightweight but insulates them from the cold is a really great idea," said Marti Rotherforth of Clarks Summit. These volunteers say their work may be especially important now.

Families served by the funeral home are introduced to possibly participate in this very worthwhile project. It has been shared with us that this activity of sorting and cutting the bags and rolling into plarn has helped them feel good again and find there is a purpose after their loss.

This effort also addresses another important issue, which is near and dear to Chris Calvey Jr. as he is an avid scuba diver, which is reducing the number of plastic bags that travel from reaching landfills to oceans

directly. There is a huge problem in our oceans, rivers, and other waterways with plastic making its way and polluting these already compromised eco-systems. According to Sylvia Earle, and American Explorer, "Why is it that scuba divers and surfers are some of the strongest advocates of ocean conservation? Because they've spent time in and around the ocean, and they've personally seen the beauty, the fragility, and even the degradation of our planet's blue heart."

Plastic bag donations may be dropped off at several places that will collect them, including Covenant Presbyterian in Scranton. Jennings-Calvey Funeral Home provides a reusable tote bag in exchange for plastic bags dropped off at the funeral home. "In this kind of environment that we're in, any sort of positive footprint that we can leave is a great thing," said Chris Calvey of Jennings Calvey Funeral and Cremation. To learn more, check out the Mat Makers of NEPA group on Facebook."

This program can be easily implemented by any firm especially in areas with high homeless populations like Atlanta and other major cities. Firms could partner with local churches or senior centers to coordinate a team of folks who have the ability to crochet. The funeral home locations can act as collection centers for plastic bags (i.e. the only raw material required), drop off the bags to the location at which they will be fashioned, and either have homeless support groups pick them up, or the funeral home staff could pick them up and drop them off at local shelters. This program generates a lot of goodwill for the funeral home with the churches and groups that do the crocheting and also the homeless support groups who will be involved with distribution. It involves little effort and makes a world of difference.

## **Kerrville, Kimble and Krestridge Funeral Homes Kerrville, Texas**

Levelland, Texas is a small west Texas town with a population of 13,500 located 39 miles from the New Mexico state line. Despite its size, Levelland is home of South Plains College which touts alumni from Waylon Jennings to the Dixie Chick's Natalie Mains to Sheryl Swoops of the WNBA. Farming and Petroleum related occupations provide the main sources of income for local residents; thus, the yearly town's celebration: Cotton and Crude Fest.

For many years, Levelland had two funeral homes. One had been there for decades and its owners had been established members of the community prior to their passing. When Krestridge Funeral Home was just an idea, finding the right building was essential, as this new business would be competing with those previously founded.

Residents of Levelland tend to embrace the past. "Old Settlers Day" was a yearly event, bringing together many senior citizens who spent hours reminiscing and sharing memories about the town, it's structures and its people.

As late as the early 1980's, the current location of Krestridge Funeral Home was the site of the local Furr's grocery store. Upon renovation of the building, shadowy marks on the floor still showed the location of several of the store's isles. In 1993, Krestridge's building reopened, this time as a bowling alley. Young and old held memories of strikes and spares along with disco music and the bowling alley's gawdy black light carpet. However, in 2016, the building at 505 Austin Street took on another life.

On September 1, 2016, Krestridge Funeral Home opened its doors. In its first five years, Krestridge was able to provide the community with a level of service that had not been experienced before. Staff at this funeral home gave, and continue to give, personalized attention to every family and go above and beyond to meet the needs of the bereaved. Due to the size of the community, funeral home staff frequently knew a member of the family being served and often the deceased was a friend or acquaintance.

On Saturday, August 28th, 2012, the staff of Krestridge Funeral Home was able to celebrate five years of service to the people of Levelland and Hockley County. The funeral home hosted a free hot dog cookout and encouraged people to bring lawn chairs to sit outside and enjoy the band playing under the front awning. Funeral directors, who make arrangements and conduct funerals dressed in suits and ties or black dresses, served hot dogs and chili wearing shorts and t-shirts. The comfortable atmosphere gave way to a new perspective of a solemn location that previously may have only brought sad memories. Levelland's citizens were able to sit in the shade of the funeral home and remember the times they came to this location to buy groceries or to just have fun bowling with family members. And despite this location being the focus of one's ending of life, it also became a place to celebrate with friends, good music and food.

Through this event, Krestridge Funeral Home was able to thank the people who support the and give back to the community in a positive way.

**Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home, Inc.  
Hamburg, NY**

**City of Good Neighbors**

Natural disasters are an unfortunate part of our world. Various natural disasters – tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, and deep freezes cause extensive damage to communities and take many lives around the United States every year. While Buffalo has been fortunate enough to have not experience many large-scale natural disasters in recent memory, other areas of the United States are not so fortunate. Throughout December 10-11, 2021, an EF4 Tornado, the second most intense and dangerous type of tornado on the Enhanced Fujita Scale devastated many areas of Western Kentucky and surrounding states. This particular tornado system caused many deaths, injuries, and vast devastation on the communities within the target zone such as Mayfield, Princeton, Dawson Springs, and Bremen. The staff of Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home, Inc. keeps a close eye on various aspects of national news to keep in tune with our families and country's needs. When our staff learned of this event, we immediately thought to our fellow Order of the Golden Rule member and colleague, Tom Hemmerle, of Barnett Strother Funeral Home in Madisonville, Kentucky. We reached out to not only check on Tom, his family, and staff, but also the state of his community. While Tom's family and staff were safe, his community had been destroyed by the tornado. In Buffalo's "City of Good Neighbors" fashion, we wanted to help our fellow colleague and friend. After a few conversations between our staff and their staff, we came up with the idea of doing a drive for support supplies. With the idea in place, Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home, Inc. was eager to work with Barnett Strother Funeral Home to support the Western Kentucky community.

With the rationale of assisting our fellow funeral home and community, like we have done so many times for our own community, Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home, Inc. launched our drive for Kentucky Tornado Relief. After spreading the word through the community vocally and to the families we were serving at the time, we posted a simple Facebook post asking for donations. We had determined with Tom Hemmerle that the Kentucky area was in need most of dry and canned food items, blankets, clothing of all sizes and ages, personal hygiene items, and paper products to help those who had lost their homes and personal items. Therefore, these were the particular items we requested. We allowed community members to drop off items Monday through Friday 9 AM to 4 PM and Saturdays 9 AM to Noon from December 13th, 2021, to December 23rd, 2021. As stated in the Order of the Golden Rule article from the Spring 2022 edition below, we had no idea how much we would collect or how we would deliver these goods to Madisonville, Kentucky. However, our community members came to our aid. Not only did the families we serve and other community members come together and donate why more items then we could have suspected, but multiple Buffalo area businesses stepped up to the plate. Goya Products, a food distributor, donated 80 cases of canned goods to the cause. In addition, Corrigan Moving Systems not only donated boxes and pallets to pack all of our donations but also covered the cost of shipping of all the items from Buffalo to Madisonville. On the last day of receiving donations, our staff shifted through all the donations, which filled our garage, and separated them by category. For a few hours, we worked to pack everything in the boxes provided by Corrigan Moving Systems. The next day, one of Corrigan's trucks came and we loaded all the pallets of products and sent them on their way to Kentucky where they offered support and aid to those affected by the tornado's devastation.

Overall, the experience was quite beneficial to all parties involved. The drive not only offered need to those affected by the tornado in Western Kentucky, including those of Tom Hemmerle's community in Madisonville, but was inspiring to our staff and our local community in Buffalo, NY. As a long-standing member of our community, Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home, Inc. has always strived to offer assist to local causes in the Buffalo area from our involvement with fighting the Opioid Crisis in Erie County to our Operation Toy Solider to benefit active military members to provide Christmas for their children. However, it is important to remember that while our community is important, supporting our fellow man is just as essential to a healthy and fulfilling life. The drive gave us the opportunity to do good, which is always a good thing. Our staff was happy to have the opportunity to also interact with our community members once again as they dropped off donations. For those in the community, they had the chance to interact with our staff on terms that isn't the usual funeral planning process – it allowed us to show them our humane side and that the funeral profession are not the stereotypical scary men in dark suits here to

cheat you out of your hard-earned money that the media will sometimes feed the general public. We could demonstrate that we are normal people who are here to not only better our own home, but to assist those in need of us. It also fostered a deeper and special connection between our funeral home and the families we serve. As Charles A. Castiglia discusses in the OGR article below, families entrust us with their loved one which is deeply intimate. We do all we can to help these families during their times of need. However, this program allowed the families we serve to come to assist us in our cause, connecting us back together again in this special relationship.

In conclusion, we believe this program not only benefitted those in Kentucky by providing aid, but also fostered a growing relationship between our funeral firm, our community, and the businesses in the Buffalo area. As the City of the Good Neighbors, this program let us truly live up to the name. We hope to continue to have opportunities to support communities close and far and continue to be a beacon for the true nature of our procession through acts of compassion and humanity.

**Leo P. Gallagher & Son Funeral Home  
Stamford, Connecticut**

Of our five funeral directors, four of them are women. Many of our other team members are women as well. We are proud of how many female directors and support staff we have on our team. As a funeral home, we embrace the idea that women are strong and capable and are an important part of our industry. We also recognize that many more women are entering into the death care field than ever before.

As a team of funeral professionals, we are always looking at new ways to connect with our communities. We have spent the last couple of years exploring how to best reach our communities through social media. We have used our Facebook page to celebrate holidays, talk about community events and share inspirational messages. We have found this to be a helpful tool to share more about who we are as a funeral home and to better connect with local organizations and community members.

Since Mother's Day is in May, we chose that month to celebrate the women in our lives with a flower delivery program that would be shared through our Facebook page. When we came up with the idea to celebrate women for the month of May, we did not want to focus solely on mothers. We wanted to be sensitive to the idea that many men and women have mothers who have passed or never had a mother who was part of their life. We wanted to celebrate ALL women, including, but not limited to, grandmothers, sisters, aunts, teachers and co-workers.

Through this program, we encouraged community members to email us and let us know who they would like to nominate to receive a special delivery of flowers and why. Each week, we chose one special woman from the entries to receive an arrangement of flowers. We created artwork for the program and shared it on our Facebook page. We also shared it to a community Facebook page which has over 6,000 members.

We were touched by the nominations that came to our email. A couple of entries were especially meaningful and stuck with us for quite some time. One woman wrote about her mother who had worked night shifts while raising 10 children. Once her children were older, she helped to raise her grandchildren. She recently suffered the loss of her adult son while in the midst of caring for a husband with Alzheimer's.

Another woman nominated her sister who had been a preschool teacher for many years. This woman had dealt with multiple surgeries which had made the last couple of years particularly difficult. Her sister pointed out that despite these challenges, she had remained positive and had been an inspiration to so many.

After each week, as these women received the flower arrangements, we received follow up notes of thanks. One note stated, "This is such a nice gesture that you guys are doing! I've been telling everyone about it!"

Our flower delivery program was one that was relatively simple yet very effective. It gave us a way to reach out to our community and connect with many families. This program also allowed us an opportunity to let our community know that we care about them. We are looking forward to doing this program again next year and are confident that it will have a positive impact on our town and our surrounding communities.

Attached pictures include the artwork that was used in our Facebook posts and one of the beautiful arrangements that was delivered during this program.

**Macz Funeral Homes  
Centralia, Illinois**

Macz Funeral Homes hosted an amazing evening on Monday, April 25, 2022, partnering with Kyniesha Overall of Kolorful Strokes to host "Coffee & A Canvas" at the Rail Coffee Room in Centralia, Illinois. While those in attendance participated in a complimentary grief therapy paint session, an informational, engaging presentation was given on the benefits of prearranging a funeral. We were inspired to utilize the wonderful resources on youth and funerals and the Grieving Alone and Together brochures provided by the NFDA during our event. The casual, welcoming atmosphere created the perfect opportunity to speak to those in attendance on a topic that has the potential of making the listener uneasy. It was a privilege to be the rainbow in someone's cloud and take away a bit of the heaviness of grief and alleviate any future arrangement concerns with the introduction to setting up their prearrangement.

Those in attendance were able to benefit in two ways from our event. With the assistance of Kyniesha and her compassionate demonstration the painters were gently guided through a way to express and cope with their grief. A process that was shared with others that were also exploring how to heal their broken hearts. This gave the participants common ground and offered a chance for them to share their stories and lean on each other for support.

The second benefit came by the way of the prearrangement presentation, as many questions and concerns were put to rest for those in attendance by our caring funeral directors. Personal connections and stories were shared that were able to show the community our heart for our communities.

The benefits from our "Coffee and A Canvas" event for the funeral home were numerous. The support and outpouring of interest from the community was a welcome benefit. There were several in attendance that could no longer procrastinate, choosing to make an appointment to prearrange their funeral. The funeral home made connections within the community that would not have been made. The gift of prearranging with Macz Funeral Homes and allowing us to offer our intentional care was a benefit to the funeral home. As always, our team grows together and bonds closer during these events, further uniting our team so we can give our all to the families we serve.

Macz Funeral Homes would highly encourage anyone to investigate creating an event like this and making it their own. The ease of the event was an attractive aspect. It truly ran itself and allowed Macz Funeral Homes' team to utilize their skill set, make relationships with members of the community, and grow in effectiveness as a team.

**Memorial Funeral Home  
San Juan, Texas**

**SOUTH TEXAS LITERACY COALITION  
FALL SPECTACULAR CORPORATE SPELLING BEE**

On Thursday, November 11, 2021, Memorial Funeral Home sponsored the South Texas Literacy Coalition's Fall Spectacular Corporate Spelling Bee. Through fundraising efforts such as the spelling bee and loteria nights, the South Texas Literacy Coalition is able to continue providing outreach to families in our community, as well as resources that can play a role in transforming students into socially engaged citizens. This event, held during National Family Literacy Month, supports the coalition's mission to enhance and enrich the quality of life for those in our region through literacy. National Literacy Month gives families an opportunity to read together and celebrates the coalition's work to empower families through literacy.

Memorial Funeral Home decided not only to sponsor the spelling bee, but they also had a team compete. The team consisted of Veronica Moreno, Gloria Salinas, and Karina Valdez, who competed against several other teams including Doctors Hospital at Renaissance, South Texas Health System, County Commissioner Ellie Torres.

A few weeks before the competition, the teams were given a study guide of words that could be used. There were three different levels of difficulty for the words, One Bee (beginner), Two Bees (intermediate), and Three Bees (advanced). Each team was given a turn to select their word level of difficulty and then the moderator selected a word from the list that they had to spell. If spelled correctly, the team was awarded points based on the level they selected. For those teams who spelled their word incorrectly, they were able to purchase "spelligans" to get another chance. Once the team ran out of spelligans they were out of the competition however, if they spelled the word correctly, they continued to the next round. Memorial Funeral Home's team took turns spelling the words they were given and, with the help of two spelligans, the girls were able to advance to the final round.

The last two teams in the final round were Memorial Funeral Home and DHR Health (Doctors Hospital at Renaissance). Both teams selected words from the most difficult level, Three Bees, and after a few turns and a stressful final round, Memorial Funeral Home was declared winner of the South Texas Literacy Coalition's Fall Spectacular Corporate Spelling Bee.

The team members had a fun time participating and the staff present enjoyed the evening cheering them on. Memorial Funeral Home was honored not only to have participated in and won the spelling bee, but to have been able to participate in such an event that benefits families in our community. We received praises from many in attendance and were awarded individual medals and a team trophy which is currently displayed in our lobby.

## **Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes Coal City, Illinois**

As we entered the third quarter of 2021, Matt Baskerville was approached by a local resident of Coal City, whom the funeral home has served, and she also works regularly with the funeral homes to provide music for funerals. Marla O'Keefe to say the least is purely just a good soul... She called and asked for a meeting just her and Matt.

What the meeting entailed, was of how Marla felt as though there was such a heavy air in the community. Marla stated that regardless whether she was at church, a restaurant, the grocery store, at a school event or anywhere out and about in the community – the conversations always circled around to loss... Loss of a family member or friends; loss of a job because of the pandemic; loss of a friendship over politics, and generally just a loss in normality as our lives have changed since the pandemic.

She asked if I would be able to brain storm with her as to how we can address with the community, and possibly provide some hope, help and healing...

We initially talked about having a community ecumenical service, incorporating all the local churches, however our concern was the fact that everyone was still not comfortable in being in large gatherings and groups. Matt then took the idea to the whole funeral home team and together came up with putting together an online series...

Matt could coordinate with the Pastors, Rob is experienced and has the equipment to professionally record them, and the rest of the team was happy to support in any way necessary.

Matt initially proceeded to reach out to all of the churches in the community of Coal City (where Marla lives, and of course where we serve). The Coal City United Methodist Church, Assumption Catholic Church, New Hope Presbyterian Church, Coal City First Baptist Church and Christian Life Assembly of God Church all were called. Upon speaking to each Pastor, it became immediately evident that each was thrilled to partake in such a program, and were also eager to be a part.

We then scheduled through the month of November time slots for each Pastor to give a 5-10 minute message to provide hope and healing to the community. We also took it one step farther and asked if the churches wanted to incorporate music by either video or live musicians within their congregations. The tapings all went extremely well, and then we began to push the advertising of this online series not only through our funeral home social media, but the churches social media and community outlets such as Chambers, municipalities and county groups like hospice, hospitals, etc.

Since we had five churches, and there were five Wednesday's in the month of December – we opted to broadcast them at 10:00 a.m. each Wednesday of the month of December. It was a great way to reflect on the year past, and give inspiration to the new year coming in.

This program was so successful, that the first presentation, which was given by Coal City First Baptist Church and one of their talented musicians – exceeded the exposure of more than the entire population of the Coal City Community within the first day. As the weeks went on, and even more people by simple word of mouth heard about the programs, which they also had the opportunity to go back and watch on-demand through our website – the numbers kept increasing.

To date we have had the exposure of over 65,000 views, locally, nationally and internationally. Matt received calls from other funeral homes from as far as California asking for programming details, and our mailbox started to become flooded with acknowledgements of this program.

For a small town funeral home serving out of the Coal City location roughly 75 families annually and a total population of only 5,500 people in a county of only 25,000, which is predominantly rural – I call this program a tremendous success.

In addition to the rave of what good will it provided, it also was positive for the community to get a "taste" of all of the different churches in the community. The Pastors, their churches, their preaching style, and even their music.

Our funeral home's intention is to put together another online series similar this coming year, but focus on one of the other communities, in which we service.

Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes, were proud of this successful program, and continue to remain grateful to Marla O'Keefe, who presented us with the need, and are humbled by her trust, as she stated from day one... "You are the experts in helping people in this community heal..."

## **Return Home Auburn, Washington**

Return Home has completed its first year of operation and like all new funeral homes is looking for all of the ways that we could reach out to our community.

Return Home from the beginning has been committed to creating a movement of open, transparent, and gentle deathcare. With that in mind we decided we would try to release a video or two on social media to correct some of the misconceptions about our service of Terramation and take on some of the industry misconceptions put out there by other internet morticians.

Many companies cater to funeral homes and how to reach their communities via social media sites such as Facebook but Return Home decided to launch our first video on TikTok on september 9, 2021. Waking up on september 10 to hundreds of thousands of views was more than a shock. That first video now has over 1.3 million views.

With the knowledge that there was an audience out there that wanted to know about the value of a funeral director, what happens at a funeral home and what this new service of Terramation is, we decided that maybe we had a few other videos we could make.

Return Home believes that we can show the funeral profession's value to the general public in an easy to access way that also reaches millions of people without compromising the respect and dignity we show to the loved ones in our care and without any kind of shock factor.

Very quickly our Tik Tok channel gained momentum and as of writing this has over 500,000 followers and has over 47 million views. Our videos have been shared by funeral homes and deathcare related industries all over the globe, reported on by national and international media outlets, inspired hundreds of visitors to our funeral home and facility, encouraged hundreds of thousands of people to have end of life discussions with their families and rocketed our preneed sales, so much so that we have people as young as 21 years old taking out policies with Return Home from all 50 states and canada.

As part of our at need arrangement conferences or follow up surveys with families we always ask where they heard about us. It came as quite the surprise as more and more families in need began to tell us how they had chosen Return Home because of our Tik Tok videos. Loved ones would walk in the door or make that first daunting call to us already knowing our names and feeling comfortable with exactly who would be taking care of their loved one. The stigma surrounding death had been lifted from them and the fear of the unknown no longer existed to tarnish their funeral experience.

What came as the biggest surprise to us as a result of our Tik Tok videos was how many people comment and email us directly to let us know that our videos have helped with a sometimes crippling fear of death, have brought peace to a worried mind and have allowed families to openly have conversations.

Return Home has videos recorded and planned with our local donor networks. Seattle Seahawks players, religious leaders and most importantly our partner funeral homes. We truly believe that education is key to future success as a profession and TikTok gives us easy access to a huge audience of people across the globe both young and old, to encourage them to make informed, empowered deathcare decisions.

We even had a video about our attendance of NFDA 2021 nashville!

## **Shain Family Funeral Service Durant, OK**

#1 Story: Our family company, believes strongly in existing to serve people in our local communities. It is most refreshing when the teams at each location partner with other organizations that exist to serve people. We have seen a surge in opportunities as we all rise from the isolation experienced in the post-pandemic world. Here is a sample from our northern location:

Rice Funeral Service always looks to find new ways to help in the community. We heard of a non-profit organization called SafeNet, which offers assistance, protection and shelter to battered women and victims of domestic abuse. They allow people to stay in their housing for as long as they need to "get on their feet", then they will provide resources to find employment and housing. This is for men as well. If anyone is in a violent or dangerous situation at home, SafeNet will take them in where they are protected by law enforcement at all times. They offer services to single mothers and services for child care.

We called and asked what we could do to give back to them. They provided us with a list of items that the women could use; things such as baby formula, protein bars, and toothbrushes. We decided to run a two week supply drive and advertised in the community that anyone could drop off supplies with us. The local newspaper, Claremore Daily Progress, also assisted in getting the word out. The newspaper interviewed development specialist Allison LaFever, who stated, "inflation is causing rising grocery costs and the formula shortage have SafeNet struggling to keep the supplies necessary for its residents. To give perspective, we probably go through five gallons of milk of week, and a large container of laundry soap," LaFever said.

The staff at Rice felt this was one of the most rewarding ventures we have been on. We felt that we each benefited greatly from the opportunity to help others in need, so close to home. Being able to help our community during such a troubling time and helping to give hope to those that need it most was greatly rewarding for our staff.

Per Manager Daniel Collier & Team

One of the new operations managers stopped by during the supply drive, noting that the Claremore community had responded with positive efforts. A large floor space in the funeral home was overflowing with the generous donations.

It is evident that when one person commits to action with a true heart motive of compassion, our world becomes a little more wonderful.

#2 Story: In 2010, Shain Family Funeral Service purchased the old Haynie Clinic building, which is directly across the street from the Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home. The original intent was to build a new chapel, community building, and a few offices. During the demolition stages, it was discovered that there was asbestos in the walls of the building, and demolition had to be halted until the asbestos was removed. The funeral home's vision for the lot changed to something that would benefit the whole community more, a food truck park. This would help us convey good will to the public and whole community, not just the family requesting our services. It would also bring good publicity for the funeral home, A local news channel, K-Ten News, came out and did a story on the food truck park, and posts on Facebook about it. The community was excited about the food truck park and looking forward to it opening.

During the construction phase, extensive dirt work had to be done, concrete pads and walkways had to be formed. Electrical lines and plumbing had to be ran, bathrooms were also installed. (See attached pictures) Even though the City Council was in favor of the food truck park, we still had to appear before the council to request that several of the permit issues be addressed for the food trucks. The goal of the

food truck park was to provide the surrounding community with five or six different food vendors to choose from where they could sit outside and enjoy their meal. A few examples of the food trucks that are in the park are 'Saveur Des Caraibes' and 'Rancheros'. 'Saveur Des Caraibes' serves Caribbean foods, the family is originally from Haiti. 'Rancheros' serves authentic Mexican food.

With the food truck park located directly across the street from the funeral home, it is convenient for the funeral home staff and for the families that we serve, who wish to go and get something to eat or drink. The outdoor dining area is equipped with covered tables, this allows the funeral home staff to get out of the office and into the community. There are also string lights hung up (see attached photos) which allows for well lit areas, so if families want to get dinner after a family hour, they have that option as well.

Recently, we were contacted by the Durant Chamber of Commerce about hosting a "Family Night at the Movies", at the food truck park. The goal of this is to set up a large screen and have families park and watch movies, free of charge, like the drive-in movie theaters. We have also been contacted by several local church and other singing groups about performing at the food truck park.

Our vision for the food truck park is to bring the community together as a whole, where we can demonstrate good will towards each other, provide a destination point for the city of Durant by providing different dining options and live entertainment. This way we are able to offer unique services and experiences to the community, by providing more than just funeral services.

We have attached pictures of the food truck park during the construction phase, all the way through to the final product.

**Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Homes and Crematory  
New Castle, Delaware**

**SPICER-MULLIKIN INITIATES PROGRAM FOR UNCLAIMED CREMATED REMAINS AND  
PURCHASES MAUSOLEUM**

Among the thousands of cremations that take place every year, a handful of cremains remain unclaimed in safe storage at funeral homes and crematoriums around the United States. In early 2022, Spicer-Mullikin was in possession of unclaimed cremains for more than 50 individuals and decided something had to be done.

Matthew C. Smith said that he knew the funeral home needed to provide a dignified resting place for these unclaimed cremains and working with the Catholic Diocese, set out to establish a private mausoleum for these and future cremains.

After collaborating with many members in the community including the All Saints Cemetery manager, the Diocese and local priest Monsignor Steven P. Hurley, Matthew secured a mausoleum and set about planning for a dedication ceremony.

Spicer-Mullikin held a dedication ceremony for the unclaimed cremains on May 12 at 1 p.m. at All Saints Cemetery on Kirkwood Highway in Wilmington, Delaware. This was to be their final resting place. The service included a committal ceremony performed by Monsignor Hurley, and the Bishop of the Diocese of Wilmington was in attendance. The ceremony also included a bugler from the Delaware National Guard playing "Taps" to honor those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Several members of the Delaware Legislature were invited, as well as those of the Delaware National Guard. The media were welcome to cover the private dedication. (See links below for media coverage)

A proclamation from Delaware's Governor and Lt. Governor honoring the mausoleum space was included as part of the program.

Spicer-Mullikin's staff benefitted from this dedication ceremony by being able to understand and respect the right that everyone deserves to have a final resting place. "The dedicated space allows for the dignified interment of cremains that had been unclaimed at our funeral home. These individuals deserve a resting place and this is beautiful way to honor their lives," said Smith. "It is very personal for me to do this, to provide a final, peaceful resting place."

Benefits to the community include an awareness of the concept of unclaimed remains as well as "some degree of access should someone step forward to accept cremains in the future," said Smith. "It is our hope that the mausoleum may now bring a sense of peace, knowing that the deceased, even if they are nameless, have an honorable resting place.

Spicer-Mullikin was honored to partner with the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington to secure the mausoleum space in their cemetery, and to join with the Delaware National Guard for their bugler contribution as well as those in attendance. "We're grateful to the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington and All Saints Cemetery for collaborating with us on the mausoleum and ceremony," Smith said. "Having members of the DE National Guard at the dedication was especially meaningful. Together with our community partners, Spicer-Mullikin was honored to be able to make this final resting place a reality."

**St. Peter Chapels  
Quezon City, Philippines**

Babies are blessings from Heaven. Having a baby is indeed life changing, but losing an infant child is devastating and truly heartbreaking. The trauma, shock, sadness, anger, and guilt when losing a baby are among the emotions that parents would feel on top of grief.

The death of a newborn infant is probably the most difficult experience that parents may undergo. In some cases, there are babies who were not even given the chance to be born due to miscarriage, stillbirth, health complications, and more. No matter what the cause of death is, the pain of losing a child will never go away. The current infant mortality rate in the Philippines, or the number of infant deaths before turning one year old, is about 17.96 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Memorial services for infants will surely incur additional costs for parents who have already experienced financial hardships from hospitalization costs for their babies, only to lose them in the end. Most Filipino families are struggling financially and do not have the capacity to pay for such unforeseen expenses. As of the first semester of 2021, an estimated 23.7 percent or 26.13 million Filipinos belong to the indigent sector whose income is not even enough to meet their basic needs.

To help parents, especially those who belong to the indigent sector, in light of such financial hardships, St. Peter Chapels offers free memorial services for infants under its Gift for Angels program, which is one of the St. Peter Group's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. The free memorial service for infants includes retrieval of the infant body, embalming, viewing equipment, the provision of an infant casket, and the use of a hearse for the interment.

The St. Peter Gift for Angels program aims to provide these indigent families not only a free memorial service for their infants but also to allow them to properly grieve and hold an honorable and dignified service and ceremony to their little angels, because these babies deserve to have a decent and dignified memorial service.

The very first free memorial service for an infant was personally assisted by St. Peter's founder, Francisco M. Bautista (fondly called "Tatay" which is Filipino for "Father") more than 40 years ago. During the first week of operation of St. Peter Chapels - Quezon Avenue in Quezon City in the mid 70's, a still-born baby was brought to the chapel by a grieving grandmother. Tatay did not hesitate to accept the baby and offered a free memorial service. Since then, the free memorial service for infants was introduced and offered to all St. Peter Chapels nationwide and was later formalized as the St. Peter Gift for Angels program.

To keep Tatay's legacy, we are continuing to provide free memorial services for infants who died at 1 (one) month and below. From July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, we have provided a total of 2,839 memorial services for infants.

They say babies become angels when they die. At St. Peter, we also believe that for every infant that we provide with a free memorial service, we are also guided and blessed by little guardians who are happy with our humble act of service. Below are testimonials from parents who have lost their babies.

As we continue with this program, we also pray for the souls of these infants. We also pray that all parents who have experienced losing a child may find peace in their hearts and the strength to move forward.

## **Thomas McAfee Funeral Home Greenville, South Carolina**

For 109 years, Thomas McAfee Funeral Home and its staff have been a vital part of the Greater Greenville Community. Even today, people tell stories of how Thomas McAfee, Sr. and Thomas McAfee, Jr. helped the community by donating to local churches, supporting civic organizations, helping the poor, and never turning anyone away who needed the services of the company.

Our dedication to serving our community is seen in the Mission Statement of Thomas McAfee Funeral Homes where it is clearly stated that we "SERVE" the families and communities of Upstate South Carolina. While we provide fine funeral services and merchandise to our neighbors, we realize we must serve in other ways as well. In order to accomplish that objective, we needed a staff member to oversee exploring creative ways of service, enlisting, and engaging our staff, as well as having fun while serving. Licensed Funeral Director, Wendy Smith-Thames, was tasked with these efforts in fulfilling that part of our mission.

Over the past year, our staff stepped up to the plate and served willingly throughout our community. There were snacks for public servants, fund raising for Alzheimer's research, collection of school supplies, preparing and serving meals in a soup kitchen, collecting medical supplies and personal grooming products for relief in Ukraine, and blood donations in partnership with The Blood Connection.

Licensed Funeral Director, Sabrina Patterson, has a heart for public servants - especially since her husband is a retired police officer. Realizing these unsung heroes put their life on the line every day without even the expectation of recognition or appreciation, she took snacks to law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical technicians on September 11, 2021. Even this small gesture expressed our appreciation for their service.

Wendy Smith-Thames and Leah Bagwell led our participation in the Memory Walk, which is a major fund-raising event for the local chapter of the Alzheimer's Society. On October 5, 2021, 10 Thomas McAfee staff members and their families put on their walking shoes and were off to finish the course through our downtown area. Our team raised funds by asking for donations, selling tee shirts designed for the event, as well as engaging in various games and contests among the staff family. At the end of the day, the TMFH team raised a total of \$3857.61. Not only did this event raise money for a good cause, but it also provided a bonding opportunity for those who walked, as well as those who cheered the team along.

Each year during July and August, we collect school supplies as a part of our partnership with United Way. In each of our locations, a large poster and collection bin are placed in the lobby. We also publicize this on the TMFH Facebook page and send emails to the staff. Often the bins are filled to overflowing and have to be collected several times. While this event ultimately benefits the underprivileged students in the area, it brings many people into our facilities. Just last week, as I was walking a family out, two elderly ladies came in with many bags filled with notebooks, pencils, crayons, glue, erasers, etc. This provided a wonderful opportunity to visit with these generous ladies.

Project Host is a local charity that provides not only meals, but job skills training to many citizens in the area. During March, April, and June of this year, several Thomas McAfee staff members spent many hours preparing and serving meals for this organization. Yes, this activity provided food for the hungry, but it also produced a sense of camaraderie and purpose among our staff.

One of our staff members learned of a local church collecting medical supplies and personal grooming products for the people of Ukraine. Knowing the generous spirit among the TMFH staff, Licensed Funeral Director, Grant Berdan, organized an effort to not only collect these supplies but raise needed funds as well. Posters and collection bins were placed in each location for a period of four weeks. More than \$1000.00 was raised and a large collection of products were delivered by Mr. Berdan and his wife.

For many years, Thomas McAfee Funeral Homes has partnered with the local blood bank, The Blood Connection. Four times a year, one of their bloodmobiles known as "The Vessel", is prominently parked at

our downtown location. Even though donations are made by the TMFH staff, there are always many donations from passersby on Main Street. This interaction provides not only needed blood, but also an opportunity to get to know our neighbors from the North Main neighborhood in Downtown Greenville.

Part of the criteria for the POE essay is that the idea benefits the community and is easily replicable by other funeral homes. While our activities are not original or costly, they benefit our community in tangible ways and create excitement and friendship among our staff family.

**Vila Memorial - Centro de Velório São José  
Natal, RN, Brazil**

### **Vila Memorial Innovates Stillborn Funerals**

Every loss generates the grieving process and the loss of a family member generates even greater pain. When we lose a parent, it is a very great feeling of loneliness, however, nothing compares to the pain of losing a child. A child produced and generated by the parents, a love that blooms for 9 months and they haven't even seen or held their child, the expectation increases the love, which can be considered as an unconditional and infinite love. And when the most awaited moment of their lives is shaken up by the news that this love cannot be lived in person? This is the pain of parents who lose their baby during or as a consequence of childbirth, called stillbirth.

The idea came from an internal request, as Renato Campos, Executive Operations Manager of Vila, tells us:

"In February 2021 Operations Supervisor Kaliana Silva called me and asked me to help her sister who was in the hospital and had just lost her baby. I immediately contacted the bereaved mother and said that I would offer her the necessary support, so she asked me only one thing: "Let my husband hold our child in his arms", and I answered "He will". However, I was wondering how to do this, so I decided that we would not decorate the baby with flowers, we would just prepare the base of the casket with satin linen.

And so we did, besides we did not send a hearse, but a corporate car, so that the mother would come home as if she were with her child alive, just like all other mothers arrive after delivery.

In a meeting with all the leaders, I called everyone together so that we could think about how to ease the pain of a mother who had lost her baby, and then supervisor Suzana Nobre asked me "Why don't we wake the babies in a Moses basket?". And the idea was promptly accepted."

The Psychology of Grief played a fundamental role in the development of the idea to understand the main points that this change could affect in the grieving process of parents and family members. Thus, the development of the service started in July 2021.

We decided to apply the Design Thinking methodology to develop this new service with a focus entirely on the benefits offered to our customers. First of all, we carried out the empathy stage, where we collected all data and information about specific protocols for funerals for children and stillbirths. The storytelling, a narrative developed based on the previous experience of our supervisor Kaliana Silva's sister, was essential for us to understand the real needs of our client. Afterwards, we held a brainstorming meeting with all operations area main leaders to present ideas and define the service. We then acquired the necessary items and started prototyping the service, followed by several tests focused on offering the best experience for families. The service is currently undergoing continuous improvement, where we intend to delve deeper into surveys and questionnaires with our customer, in addition to analyzing trends in relation to what our segment offers.

After almost a year of evaluation and major changes, we were able to achieve results that generated a great impact on the families served, mainly because today parents can hold their children in their arms, as they always dreamed, it doesn't matter if just for a little while and for the last time, and then bury them and keep the experience of touch for a lifetime.

Officially, there is no registration of this service in our state and region. This is a pioneering protocol of the Vila, since Brazilian funeral homes continue to apply the wake/burial format in caskets. However, due to the simplicity of the service and the beneficial impact on those involved, the idea can be easily replicated to provide greater care for families in need.