

A Sacred Choice Houston, Texas

A Sacred Choice and Texas Senior Estate Concierge are the new Houston Chapter Directors for Twilight Wish Foundation. Twilight Wish Foundation is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to honor and enrich the lives of deserving elderly through wish granting celebrations connecting generations.

Our vision is to make the world a nicer place to age, one Twilight wish at a time. Since the founding of Twilight Wish, we have granted the lifelong wishes of over 4,500 deserving senior citizens throughout the United States. Now, Houston has the distinct honor of being a part of this Legacy.

Twilight Wish grants wishes to seniors, 65 and older, earning less than 200% of poverty level, or who are a permanent resident of a nursing facility. The types of wishes we grant include Simple Needs, such as a hearing aid or lift chair, Living Life to the Fullest such as visits to a reunion, Celebrating Life such as taking a hot air balloon ride, and Special Designation for Veterans Wishes.

The goal of the organization is to celebrate our senior population by granting wishes that they themselves could never make happen. Our wish recipients report that their wish granting improved their outlook on life, that having their wish granted changed their life positively and that they felt cared for and respected.

As of July 12, 2022 we have a wish where a 96 year old widow wants to visit Italy where a memorial statue has been erected for her husband. He was a veteran of WWII and she has not been able to visit. The community in Italy is very involved and we are looking for organizations that can sponsor lodging, flights, vehicle etc.

Our first step will be to meet with her and her son to establish if she is mobile enough or will need a wheelchair. As part of the Senior Estate Concierge we can provide these items at no cost to the family by applying for grants through multiple organizations in Houston. We also have members who are willing to donate these items. Step number two will be to establish a timeline and confirm who will be travelling with her. Step number three will be to speak with our colleagues at different airlines and see who is willing to help. Many thought this would be the hard part but it was fairly simple once they understood what we were trying to accomplish. Our members of Rotary Club are willing to help in Italy and we will keep you updated as this wish becomes a reality.

Gunderson Funeral and Cremation Care Monona, WI

This year, 2022, marks one hundred years of Gunderson Funeral Homes in the Madison area. One hundred years of serving individual families and the community as a whole. While the funeral home has remained strongly committed to providing excellent and compassionate service, a lot has changed since Elmer Gunderson first started the company back in 1922.

As a team, we are honored to be able to celebrate this huge milestone. Together, we recognize that this would not have been possible without the steadfast loyalty of the amazing community that we have served. In recognition of this privilege, we looked back on the ways in which our community has changed and the ways that our company has changed with it. Gunderson's has weathered wars, pandemics, and vast social change. With this in mind, the funeral home has begun sponsoring educational visits as part of a mini-series to senior centers in the Madison area. These visits are designed to be educational, so that when the time comes, the members of our community have the ability to make an informed, comfortable decision for themselves or their loved ones.

These visits have been provided by our Aftercare and Advanced Planning team and were implemented post-COVID. The senior centers that we currently work with are in DeForest, Verona, Oregon, and Madison. The community has received these visits very positively, and we are looking into expanding this program to other senior center locations. This mini-series has been delivered as four separate presentations, each presentation with a special topic relating to funeral service.

The first topic is titled "The Seven Sins of Funeral Planning" or "Funeral Planning 101." This topic delves into the most common mistakes that families make when planning funerals. These topics range from opting to forego preplanning to mistakes when ordering flowers and catering.

The second topic that we present is titled "Have the Last Word." This presentation serves as an obituary workshop for those in attendance. Those who attend are advised about what to include and what to leave out when the time comes to write an obituary. Many are very grateful for this opportunity. Our funeral home often hears that one of the most daunting tasks when planning a funeral is distilling the entirety of someone's life into a few short paragraphs. The goal of this workshop is to alleviate some of that anxiety for our community.

The third topic showcased is "Green Burial Options." For this presentation, we collaborate with Shedd Farley, coordinator of Natural Path Sanctuary in Verona, Wisconsin. In his talk, he offers information on alternative burial options that are more environmentally friendly. Many members of our community are very interested to hear about options that are different from the more typical cremation or burial options. Gunderson Funeral Home recognizes how important it is to educate our community on what their options truly are.

Our final topic is on veteran's benefits. We have coordinated with Department of Veterans' Affairs as well as Envision to create a packet that contains potential benefits that veterans may qualify for, as well as any form that they may need to fill out to acquire those benefits.

Each of these presentations and workshops have been incredibly well received within our community. Many families are very grateful to have access to this information before a death occurs, which ensures that they have the time they deserve to ruminate and decide what their or their loved one's wishes are.