

Community outreach

- Cemeteries • Funeral homes • Pet death-care services

ICCFA ALL★STAR ANNUAL CONVENTION & EXPOSITION

- Keynote speakers Archie Griffin, Scott Deming and Steadman Graham
- Sessions on diversity, cemeteries, embalming, sales, hiring, aftercare, online presence & more
- Cremation Central
- Green Burial Council and JFDA programs
- PLPA's 5th convention

Registration form is on page 104



Hoff Funeral and Cremation Service welcomes the bereaved on Valentine's Day

• Laurel Hill has a love tour that draws people into the cemetery despite February snow

• Schoedinger Pet Services celebrates the animal-human bond

• Making the best use of celebrants in your outreach efforts

• 12 ways to promote your next event

• Thinking about outreach in a new way

• Roadside memorials

Plus lots of news updates:

- A book reading inside Santa Rosa's mausoleum
- Rest Haven Funeral Home & Memorial Park's therapy dog





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**ICCFA Magazine
author spotlight**

► Jones is a project manager for adfinity who has worked in marketing and advertising for more than 15 years.

www.adfinity.net

► Founded in 1999, adfinity, Tampa, Florida, is a full-service marketing and advertising agency that specializes in the funeral industry.

MARKETING/ADVERTISING

Coming up with a great idea for a community event, planning it and making sure everything goes right on the big day all amount to wasted effort if no one shows up. Today, there are more ways than ever to get the word out and bring people in.

12 ways to promote your next community event

Open houses. Lunch and learns. Preplanning seminars. Remembrance programs. Holiday pet photo sessions. Death-themed teas. Prom photo sessions. What? Yes, you read correctly. The number and variety of events being held at funeral homes and cemeteries these days is staggering.

Nevertheless, creativity in planning events isn't enough to build buzz and increase attendance (and therefore the number of people who have seen your funeral chapel/reception center/cemetery gardens/new mausoleum), especially with families you've never served but would like to get to know before they need your services.

The advertising checklist

Here are a dozen ways you can get your next event noticed by the community and increase attendance:

1. Press releases. Yes, this basic step is still a necessary one. Whether sent and posted

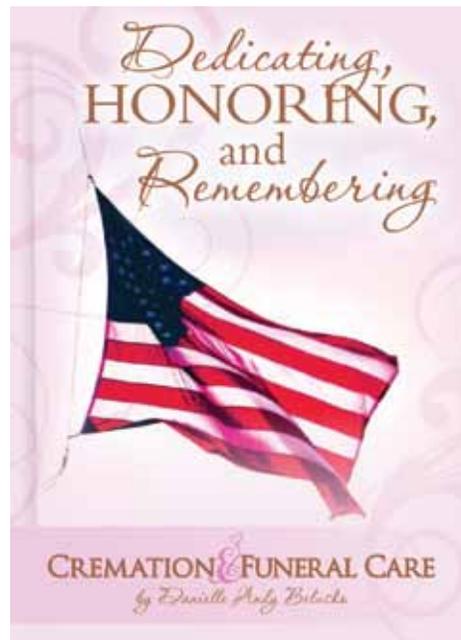
online or sent the old-fashioned way via fax or mail, press releases let you get the who, what, when and where about your event out to the public for free through calendar notices in your local print publications and on radio or cable stations.

If you have an exceptional speaker or event, make sure the community knows about it by highlighting it in your release. "Bringing in a retired four-star general, John Abizaid, as our guest speaker was a huge asset to the flag dedication ceremony we held this year," said Danielle Andy Belusko, Cremation and Funeral Care of McMurray, Pennsylvania.

In just a few paragraphs, explain your event and why people should attend. Next, send it to your local paper or news stations (especially if you are a regular advertiser) and then to websites like pr.com for an added boost in awareness and weblinks.

2. Invitations. Don't underestimate the power of a handwritten or formal invitation. When Tim Stewart Funeral Homes, based in

Right, the front and back of formal invitations created by adfinity for a flag pole dedication at Cremation & Funeral Care, McMurray, Pennsylvania.



Tim Stewart Funeral Home, Loganville, Georgia, promoted the traveling Eyes of Freedom art exhibit with coordinated marketing materials, including banners (above), postings on the company’s Facebook timeline (below left), flyers (below center) and formal invitations (below right). All materials were designed by adfinity.

Lawrenceville, Georgia, held an art exhibit event on-site, they wanted to let the entire community know about it, especially veterans and local government officials.

“When we wanted to announce our Eyes of Freedom exhibit, the most effective ways were the 3-inch personal invitations and 8.5-by-11-inch invites,” said General Manager Jeremy Watkins.

“Of course, the entire campaign with concert-size posters and banners really helped, but the personal invites and flyer invites really got our foot in the door and got peoples’ curiosity going about the Eyes of Freedom event and our funeral home involvement.”

3. Flyers. Create a full-page color flyer for your event. You can use flyers as posters and hang them on telephone poles or hand them out to people at your next civic organization meeting. You can even include them in

presentation folders.

Flyers are a versatile marketing tool that are inexpensive and can be printed right on your in-house printer.

4. Postcards. Small (4-by-6-inch) color postcards can be mailed to the people in your community to announce your event and increase awareness about your funeral home.

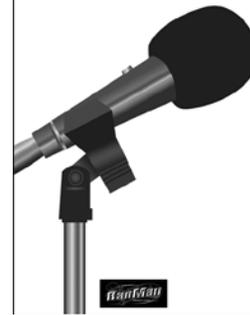
You can use your in-house mailing list, purchase a list or try the U.S. Postal Service’s new Every Door Direct Mail Program, which will deliver your postcards to everyone in a specific zip code, no list required.

5. Newspaper ads and inserts. An old standby, newspaper ads are a great way to promote events to families who aren’t in your contact database. With newspaper ads, you should start promoting your events at least a month in advance. If your newspaper only prints weekly, you may need to start a little earlier for maximum impact.

It’s time for Community Karaoke!

Sunday, August 25th
from 5-9 p.m.

Enjoy an evening in the Frank Kapr Family Gardens, featuring RANman Productions. Karaoke will be available for those who want to showcase their talent. (In case of rain, karaoke will be rescheduled at a later date to be announced.) Please bring your lawn chairs and blankets.



417 Pittsburgh St | Scottsdale
(724) 887-6110 | kapr.com

An ad (by adfinity) for karaoke at Frank Kapr Family Gardens, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, that also would work as a postcard. This combination operation also shows movies (with free pizza, drinks and popcorn) at the cemetery, as well as holding a traditional Easter sunrise service.

Bay Gardens Funeral Home in Hamilton, Ontario, runs weekly ads to promote its lunch and learns and seminars. People see the event announcements in the newspaper first, then Bay Gardens follows up via newsletters and email to reinforce the message.

Similar to ads, newspaper inserts are an affordable way to let everyone in your town know about your upcoming event. With more room, you can list a schedule of events or presenter information on one side of a newspaper insert and promote your firm on the other.

6. Website. Your website, particularly the obituary section, probably receives half of its traffic from people who have never heard of your funeral home (one reason it’s a good idea to run obituaries on your site). Promote your upcoming event via a button, banner ad or blog post that links to a page dedicated to the event and registration information.

7. Social Media. When it comes to promoting events for funeral homes, cemeteries and cremation societies, there are two primary social media sites to consider: Facebook and Twitter.

With Facebook, you can create an event and send invitations directly to contacts you already have. This can also be helpful when estimating attendance. Set the event up a month or two before the date and then post reminders in the weeks and days leading up to the event.

With Twitter, you can tweet about the event or share links to your Facebook or website event page.

HELLO.

Welcome to the November 2015 issue of *In Touch Online*. In honor of November being Remembrance month, and with an awareness that the holidays are around the corner, we have featured the article, *Handling The Holidays After A Loss*.

We hope you find this helpful. Should you need additional support, we invite you to connect or to speak with our In-House Bereavement Counselor at anytime. See Wilson, MS, BA.

The second is a workshop designed just for professionals and caregivers. "Companioning vs. Treating: The Mourner Exploring Principles and Practices of Compassionate Caregiving" in this 90-minute session, Dr. Wolfelt will discuss how to prepare others to deal with grief and the death of a loved one.

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If you have any questions or would like more information on any of the seminars or speakers, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Deborah

Laura Markey

Handling The Holidays After A Loss

The holidays are approaching. And while they are stressful for nearly everyone, they can be particularly difficult if you are grieving the death of a loved one.



The pain, sadness and loneliness that often follow the loss of a loved one may be even more acute during the holidays. This is especially true if it's the first holiday without your loved one.

Grief is a normal human reaction to the loss of someone important to our lives. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Every person grieves in their own way and at their own pace. Grief can affect nearly everyone, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Here are some suggestions for surviving the holidays while grieving.

- **Take care of yourself.** Spend your energy wisely, getting enough rest, and being careful not to overdo it, just as you would with activities.
- **Don't drink.** To avoid the stress of drinking, consider gift cards or cash this year.
- **Say no.** If you are feeling pressured to participate in activities you don't like, communicate with, say "no thank you." You don't owe anyone an explanation, the hard, but true, "no" is what helps.
- **You can't take the holidays.** Even if you take your mind and heart away, the holidays will take place. Instead, accept the fact that it's normal to feel sad and down at this time. Take your feelings and learn how to manage as best you can for the day.
- **Write something down.** Because the experience of grief are so unpredictable, it is hard to know if, advance if you will be having a good day tomorrow, or next Thursday. Therefore, if you are invited to a party or holiday meal, your response can be, "I would like to go, but give me a definite 'yes'." This gives you an opportunity to change your mind, if necessary.
- **Do only what is special and meaningful to you.** Stop and take a break when you feel overwhelmed. You can feel more comfortable and in control of your grieving process, you deserve to just yourself and monitor your spiritual level. If you are up for being out to business, enjoy them in moderation and to your comfort level.
- **Travel that you will make it through.** Even with the differences, you will find the holiday spirit. Trust that while the season will be tinged with many emotions, you will be able to celebrate more fully in the future.

If you aren't grieving, but miss someone who is, you can help by encouraging them to talk about their grief and share memories of the loved one who died. Listen to their story, hold their hand, sit with them as they cry. Respect their decision to not attend celebrations and their need to be alone.

The holidays bring a mix of joy and pain. Look inside and outside yourself for the support you need to make it through the new year.

"When There is a Will, We Know The Way"

November 5th - 11 a.m. * Burlington
November 5th - 11 a.m. * Hamilton



Please join us for a complimentary lunch while we discuss how to establish wills, trusts and powers of attorney, or to discuss questions you will learn how getting your affairs in order can protect your estate from legal issues and save taxes upon death. Our experts will also explain how to put your loved one's affairs in order. We will be looking for questions and questions in Burlington, our speaker will be Barbara M. Prater of Prater Law Office, in Hamilton, our speaker will be Linda Anne Sprague from Sprague Law, Hamilton and recent *IBCF* lawyer.

"Annual Remembrance Day"

November 9th - 11 a.m. * Bayview Cemetery



Join us at Bayview Cemetery for a morning service of prayer, music and symbolic candle lighting. Fresh roses will be available to place with your loved one. Refreshments will be served following the service.

Members of those who wish to volunteer will be lead during the service. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us to know when you *IBCF*.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

"Loving From the Outside In, Mourning From the Inside Out"

November 11th - 6:00 p.m. * Royal Botanical Gardens

Join us as an internationally known grief educator (Dr. Alan Wolfelt) conducts a special presentation on behalf of Bay Gardens Funeral Homes called *Loving From the Outside In, Mourning From the Inside Out* at the Royal Botanical Gardens. Dr. Wolfelt will explore what loss and grief have to do with us and explain why people need to mourn well in order to go on to live and love well again.

A published author, Dr. Wolfelt has frequently appeared on *Oprah* and *CBS* as a leader in bereavement care and health. He is the Founder and Director of the *Center for Loss and Life Transition* in Colorado and serves his teaching on a range of personal and professional.

In keeping with our community commitments, we are pleased to present this evening in partnership with the Royal Botanical Gardens. Ticket prices are \$10.00 with proceeds going to the *Living Well* (LW) program. The Royal Botanical Gardens' program provides education with award-winning education that connects heart to change, reduce and green spaces to heal while embracing those who grieve spaces for them to sit on. Seating is limited for this special presentation, so *IBCF* today!

About Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt

Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt is a noted author, educator and grief counselor. Recipient of the Association for Death Education and Counseling's Death Educator Award, he serves as the Director of the *Center for Loss and Life Transition* in Fort Collins, Colorado. He is also a faculty member of the University of Colorado Medical School's Department of Family Medicine.



He is the author of more than fifty bestselling books on grief and loss, including *Loving From the Outside In, Mourning From the Inside Out* (HarperCollins), *The Journey Through Grief* (Compassionate Caregiving), *A Social Guide for Grieving* (Compassionate Caregiving), *Grieving Heart* (Compassionate Caregiving), *Making a Person's Grieving Heart* (Compassionate Caregiving), *Making a Person's Grieving Heart* (Compassionate Caregiving), *Making a Person's Grieving Heart* (Compassionate Caregiving).

Dr. Wolfelt and his wife, Lisa, a family physician, are parents to three children. They live in the beautiful city of Fort Collins, Colorado, and are close to the Center for Loss and Life Transition.

SPECIAL WORKSHOP

"Companioning vs. Treating: The Mourner Exploring Principles and Practices of Compassionate Caregiving"

November 12th - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. * Bay Gardens Hamilton

This inspiring workshop will help members of the grieving community who want to further develop their knowledge and skills surrounding the art of "companioning" people during times of grief and loss. Dr. Alan Wolfelt will explore a model of bereavement care that recognizes grief as a normal and necessary process that is fundamentally a journey of the heart and soul.

Among the content areas to be explored in this program are the following:

- Introduction: Acknowledging the special needs of the mourner
- Exploring a Bereavement Framework for Layfolks!
- Exploring the Concept of "Compassionate Caregiving"
- Recognizing Bereavement: Exploring the Mourner's Understanding of Grief and Loss
- Foundations of "Companioning": Your Fellow Human Being
- Exploring the Requested Mission: Treating Grief and Mourning
- Introduction to "Companioning": Mourning and the Epitaphs of "Compassionate Caregiving"
- Discussion of the Importance of Self-Care for you as a Companion
- Closing: Challenge, Remembrance, Hope

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a best-selling author about how to integrate grief into your life, your living, and your loving. Come join us and learn more about being truly present to the mourner, seeking a temporary respite of the soul. *IBCF* today!

"Hamilton's Death Cafe"

November 16th - 7 to 9 p.m. * Bay Gardens Hamilton



Please join us at our Death Cafe. At this event, people drink tea, eat cake and discuss death in fun and creative ways to an effort to increase awareness of death to help people make the most of their living lives. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. To register, contact *Deborah* at 905-876-1800.

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Handling The Holidays After A Loss

The holidays are approaching. And while they are stressful for nearly everyone, they can be particularly difficult if you are grieving the death of a loved one.



An email newsletter (left and above, in close-up) from Bay Gardens Funeral Home, Hamilton, Ontario. The newsletter highlights upcoming programs, includes biographical information about speaker Dr. Alan Wolfelt and also includes an article about handling the holidays after a loss, providing value to recipients whether or not they are interested in attending any of the programs.

8. Billboards, banners and signs.

If you have the budget, consider posting your event information on a billboard. This can be especially easy and effective if you are already running ads on a digital billboard. You can simply ask your billboard company to put the event billboard into your regular rotation in the weeks prior to the event.

If a billboard isn't a possibility, try a smaller banner announcing the event that you can put outside your funeral home or cemetery. For their Eyes of Freedom exhibit, Tim Stewart Funeral Homes posted six large vinyl banners with event information outside of their funeral homes. Frank Kapr Funeral Home in Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, has a color marquee just outside the funeral home where event information is posted when there are no services to announce.

To reach the families you serve, consider making a smaller version of the billboard or banner to use as a table tent in your lobby or arrangement room.

9. Email. If you have a database of email addresses for the families you've served in the past, emails are an inexpensive and easy way to communicate your program information. You can track who has opened your emails and then follow up with those who didn't in the days leading up to the event. Ask them to forward the email to their friends and family as well.

10. Newsletters. Print or email newsletters are another great way to announce events to your community. "Every month, we send out an email newsletter highlighting our lunch and learns and upcoming speaking

engagements," said Laura Markey of Bay Gardens Funeral Homes. "The emails include a link to our events page where people can RSVP instantly, which saves our staff time and increases efficiency."

One caveat for those of you who have a quarterly newsletter: Be sure to schedule events far enough in advance that you don't miss the opportunity to promote them.

11. Radio and television. If time and budget permit, consider a radio spot or television commercial. "We run banner-type ads each month on our local cable channel promoting our upcoming events in addition to our services," said Kapr. "We have definitely increased attendance at our community karaoke and movies in the park events by promoting them on television."

12. Online event sites. Another possibly free option: Online event sites let you post the details of your event and are usually free. Most newspapers have an online edition with event listings.

Patch.com and craigslist.org are also great places to list your program or seminar. Your neighborhood homeowner associations, churches or civic groups also may have events pages you can post on.

Events are a great way to get people into and talking about your funeral home or cemetery. Using multiple marketing vehicles to promote your events will increase the chances that people who haven't heard of your firm in the past will attend an event and form a good impression of your buildings, grounds and personnel.