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Informed Final Choices — Crestone End of Life Project

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

Issue #5

CEOLP Registration Policy

During many hours of discussion over many months, the Crestone End of Life Project board determined that, as heartbreaking as it is for families, CEOLP is not able to make exceptions to its policy concerning eligibility for services. Specifically, only Saguache County residents who have resided in the county for at least 90 days prior to registration AND who were registered with CEOLP at the time of death are eligible for services.

Why only Saguache residents?
CEOLP is an all-volunteer organization whose volunteers put in hours of work for each cremation. As such, we have limited capacity to serve. This was recognized by Saguache County officials when CEOLP's initial residency requirement was instituted, in part to cap the number of cremations per year.

Why require registration?
Registration prior to death is a legal requirement that ensures there is no question about the wishes of the deceased. In addition, registration paperwork contains all the information necessary to fill out the death certificate and to enable CEOLP facilitators to jump immediately into action.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, any exception to the registration policy is likely to lead to the expectation of further exceptions. For example, the argument is often made that because the deceased or their family was well-loved and/or had longstanding roots in the community, their loved one should be served. However, CEOLP cannot grant exceptions based on merit, no matter how well-deserved the case may be.

While CEOLP's volunteers and the CEOLP boards would love to be able to provide every family with the kind of meaningful, beautiful ceremony and sense of closure their loved one, and every human, deserves, we have had to make this very difficult decision.

Wishing you a New Year of Love, Peace, and Happiness

News From the Board

- **Cremations:** CEOLP provided two beautiful services for Bo Wiberg on November 9th and Dennis Marshall on November 26th. A deep bow of gratitude to all who volunteered and offered to volunteer, particularly given the Thanksgiving holiday.
- **Death Café:** CEOLP held a Death Café on November 2 at the T Road Brewery in Crestone. Twenty-two people attended the event designed to increase awareness of issues surrounding death and dying.
- **Registration party:** About 15 people visited the home of Goldie Mariola-Gill in Crestone to learn more about CEOLP's registration process and receive assistance with essential forms.
- **New vests for parking volunteers:** Thanks to Fane Burman, CEOLP parking team leader, for recommending the purchase of new traffic safety vests, which will make it easier for parking volunteers to put on and improve visibility.
- **Parking lot extension:** At November's Baca Grande Property Owners Association (POA) board meeting, CEOLP was granted approval for extending the parking lot below the pyre site. This will allow for more spaces for visitors with mobility issues as well as more room for cars to maneuver.
- **Pyre re-enactment:** Students from Colorado College's "Music, the Supernatural and Other Worldly Realms" class visited the pyre site on December 4th to learn about the Crestone End-of-Life Project. Students heard the history of how the pyre came to be, were given an overview of the volunteer teams that come together to make a cremation possible and experienced the physical and psychological process of the cremation ceremony through an authentic re-enactment (minus the actual flames, of course!). Bruce Becker explained the sacred (Native American) flute music he plays at cremations and the Crestone Threshold singers offered a song bath of soothing, uplifting and inspiring harmonies that are also sometimes musical accompaniments to a cremation. By all accounts, the students were engaged and had great questions about the process leading up to the cremation as well as how filling the role of a CEOLP volunteer has changed their relationship with death.

- **CEOLP/IFC open meeting**: The next meeting will take place **Wednesday, January 8th at 7 p.m.** Mountain Time on zoom. Please join us for a conversation led by Tarron Estes of the Conscious Dying Institute. (Zoom link will be included with the forthcoming agenda.)