March 2026

Informed Final Choices Crestone End of Life Project

Issue #13

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

Strength of Community

Since the start of 2026, CEOLP has conducted three open-air cremations for residents with deep ties to the Crestone community: Kiara Perkins on January 11th, Elizabeth Rabia Roberts on January 14th, and Shawn Maminakis on February 2nd.

Despite the rapid succession of services in harsh winter conditions, the outpouring of support from our volunteers was truly heartening.

CEOLP is a community-driven enterprise, powered by the commitment of volunteers. Their support allows us to remain a self-sustaining, not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving others. Much gratitude to our volunteers for showing up, giving back, and caring so deeply for the important work we do.

News From the Board

- CEOLP's next scheduled open meeting is **Wednesday, April 8th at 7 p.m.** Mountain Time. This hybrid gathering will be held in person at the Little Shepherd Fellowship Hall in downtown Crestone as well as on zoom.

  Guest speakers will be Reverent Mother Annalouiza Armendariz and Reverend Wakil David Matthews, hosts of the podcast, "End of Life Conversations: Normalizing Talk About Death, Dying, and Grief."

  Established in 2023, the podcast invites people to share their experiences with death, dying, grief, and loss from many different perspectives. You can find out more at their website: https://www.endoflifeconvos.com/

  Also check out the recent episode featuring CEOLP board member and longtime volunteer, Malina, discussing open-air cremation and green burial in Crestone: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6-4vrPXfMA

- ***"Sign Up Before You Sign Out!"*** Saguache County residents who desire CEOLP services MUST be fully registered before they die. To facilitate this process, CEOLP will hold its next Registration Party in July, date and location TBA. The Registration Party is also an opportunity for registrants to review and update old registration forms in light of new options (natural burial) and changes in state legal requirements. Please reach out to Blake Walton, CEOLP Registrar: blake.luminousjewel@gmail.com for more information.

Volunteer Spotlight: Elianna Krakauer

1. What volunteer role(s) do you take part in with CEOLP?

- I first began volunteering at cremation ceremonies by bringing a variety of musical instruments, such as my conch shell, didjeridoos, Native American flute, and Shumei Taiko drums. Among the roles I took part in were Care of the Body, Family Liaison, censer, emcee, altars, and Fire Team and wherever help was needed. Since leaving Crestone, I continue to assist by maintaining the CEOLP archive of those we have served.

2. About how long have you been volunteering?

- 18 years.

3. What first motivated you to become involved?

- I have always been drawn to a life of service especially since moving to Crestone. My first cremation with CEOLP occurred after assisting a friend through her end-of-life process. Not knowing what to expect or do, I shared my gift of peace and healing through music in gratitude, and I realized how much we are needed to support those in times of transition and grief.

4. What's most important and meaningful to you about it?

- What's most important and meaningful to me is being there for family members and helping them connect with the community in which their loved one chose to live. It's wonderful to learn about the person's earlier life and then for their families and friends to experience how much they were loved and appreciated. It's a very powerful healing process for families, friends, and for everyone.

5. What do you enjoy about volunteering?

- While living in Crestone, I enjoyed connecting with many incredible people who have committed their lives to serving others. I also enjoyed helping family members feel comfortable and to understand the services that CEOLP offers. It's amazing to witness the transformation as we process grief together. Getting up in the wee hours of the morning, dedicated to arriving early in service with other devoted volunteers was also a satisfying feeling. And now, I enjoy creating memory pages in our CEOLP history books and finding out what was important to people in their livee.

6. Is there anything that has challenged you about it, and if so, how that's helped you know yourself better or grow?

- I had not experienced death until I moved to Crestone and have since learned so much about compassion and grace from those in transition. Working with the Fire Team has been most challenging and rewarding in learning to respect the intensity of the fire and responsibly interacting with my team. Through that experience, I found my warrior spirit!