The Children's Room

Since 1989 The Curtis-Britch Converse Rushford Funeral Home has offered the services of The Children's Room to the families and to the communities it serves. When there is a loss of a loved one within the family structure, children are often forgotten people who need guidance and education to process a death. The Children's Room is designed for children of all ages, and it enables them to express their emotions using age appropriate materials. Crystal M. Britch is the Director of The Children's Room, and she has developed a detailed lesson plan to assist children and their families on how to begin to understand loss and bereavement.

Families are asked to bring their children to the funeral a half hour before calling hours begin so they can have private time with their loved one. During this time, Crystal uses The Giant Book of Life to explain the physical death of their loved one, the My Friend Doll to help children identify feelings, and she uses two small teddy bears that she gives to each child. She explains to the children they can keep one teddy bear, and they can put one in the casket with their loved one. The use of the teddy bears helps children to transition to the casket with a sense of understanding of what happened to the person who passed. Crystal also takes the opportunity to explain to the children what will happen at the calling hours, the funeral, and the cemetery along with answering any questions the children may have.

The Children's Room has become a resource for the local community, and Crystal has been called upon to work with children from local schools, private homes, and local agencies. She has worked within the school setting at the high school when a student experiences a loss of a family member or when a student has died from a sudden death. Recently she worked with three children from an elementary school who were having a difficult time understanding the concept of death, and they were unable to appropriately express their feelings. In January, she went to a private home to work with four children whose father committed suicide. Not only do local schools and private homes request her services, but local agencies such as Hospice and the hospital call upon her to present information on death, dying and bereavement when dealing with children.

The National Funeral Director's Conference also scheduled Crystal two different years to present to other funeral directors the concept of The Children's Room and how it can have a positive affect on funeral service, the family and the community. During these presentations, Crystal offered information on how to start a Children's Room, how to present information of death, dying, and grieving to children, and how to incorporate the whole family into the services of The Children's Room. Crystal shared her techniques with those who attended the sessions, and she stressed the importance of using age appropriate materials.

The staff from the funeral home believes The Children's Room has given the children and their families the opportunity to begin the process of understanding the complex concept of death. Many of the children will bring their teddy bears to the funerals, and from observing the children, they seem better adjusted. The Curtis-Britch Converse-Rushford Funeral Home values the needs of the community, and it works closely with their families and local agencies to ensure correct information is disseminated to those in need.



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Infant Memorial Garden

Several years ago, a dear friend of the Davis Funeral Home suffered a miscarriage in early pregnancy. It was through her that we discovered that fetal death records in the State of New Hampshire were only kept for one year. After that time, the records were destroyed and the family was left with nothing that even marked the passing of this young life.

Through the help of the two local hospitals, a new service was offered to those families whose pregnancies tragically ended with miscarriage. In the case of fetal deaths under the age of 20 weeks gestation, the family now has the option to have the baby cremated at no charge through the funeral home. This was previously treated as "medical waste" and was devastating to many mothers, who had begun to plan for and expect a baby.

The cremated remains are kept at the funeral home until the service is scheduled in mid-May. At that time, invitations are sent out to those families that have desired the final disposition at the Infant Memorial Garden in a local cemetery.

During the service there is a wreath with ribbons attached to it with the baby's names on them. Prayers and poems are read and the families are given the opportunity to speak if they so desire. Several families over the years have also brought flowers, teddy bears and balloons to the service.

The cremated remains are then placed in the earth, a song is played and the names are read. At the conclusion of the service, the ribbons are removed from the wreath and attached to a card for the family to bring home as a keepsake that a life, albeit tiny and known to few, was lived.

A granite marker, donated by a local monument company and a small evergreen bush designate the area in the cemetery at the Infant Memorial Garden. This gives the families a place to come to visit their babies if they find comfort in doing so.

This service has become quite important to these families whose baby's death is often overlooked and misunderstood by other friends and family members.





IE. Basic Requirements

On Thursday, June 28, 2007, a service was held at United Lutheran Church in Red Wing, Minnesota for an infant that was found in the Mississippi River on March 26, 2007. The Mahn Family Funeral Home, in Red Wing, took part in the service along with local clergy and community volunteers. All funeral expenses, including the funeral home charges and merchandise were donated. The cemetery costs, the use of the church and those who participated in the service also donated their services. The service was held to make sure that this infant had a proper burial. Even though it was abandoned by its parents, the community of Red Wing wanted to make sure that this infant was cared for in a dignified and respectful way.

This is the third infant that has been found in the Mississippi River near Red Wing. The first one was in 1999 and then in 2003. Mahn Family Funeral Home in Red Wing handled the previous two services and also donated their services for those infants

This might not be considered a unique service, but it is a service that that does not occur very often, if at all. It was a service of care, concern and compassion. As funeral providers and community residents we are very concerned that this baby was not forgotten. Hopefully, if the parents saw the newspaper articles, they too know that the Red Wing community is very concerned and showed compassion to a human that did not have the chance to live.

An Essay on an Innovative Program Developed by Roller-Chenal Funeral Home



Cherub Memorial Folder cover provided at no cost to families of deceased infants

The Roller Funeral Home staff believed that there was a need to provide no-charge services and merchandise to families of deceased infants from 0-1 year old. It was felt that these families, after going through the devastation of losing a baby should not have to have the additional concern of having to pay for a funeral service. It was felt that this was also a way to bring our funeral services before the public and might result in increased business of

adult funerals.

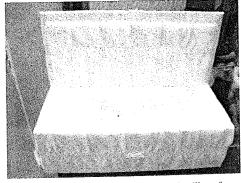
Roller-Chenal provides families with any of our services (embalming, vehicles, facilities and staff for a visitation, graveside or chapel service, transfer of remains, and dressing and casketing) at no charge to the family.

The funeral home also provides merchandise at no charge to the family including a cloth covered wood infant casket of the appropriate size for the infant and a "cherub" register book, memorial folders, and acknowledgement cards. If the family desires a more protective casket, they may purchase a "Loved and Cherished" in-

fant casket at close to the funeral home's

cost for the casket.

If the family desires, the funeral home provides a burial space at no charge in our "Garden of Innocence" located within Riverwood Memorial Gardens in Maumelle, Arkansas. Riverwood is owned by Roller Funeral Homes and the



Infant casket provided at no cost to families of deceased infants

"Garden of Innocence" is a special area within the cemetery reserved for babies. If the family uses Riverwood, opening and closing of the grave and all cemetery fees are provided at no charge.



Cameo Infant Urn available to families who desire cremation

If the family desires that their cherished infant be cremated this service is also provided at no charge. The family may also purchase an infant Cameo urn at close to the funeral home cost.

When God calls little children to dwell with Him above, We mortals sometime question the wisdom of His love. For no heartache compares with the death of one small child Who does so much to make our world seem wonderful and mild. Perhaps God tires of calling the aged to His fold, So He picks a little rosebud before it can grow old. God knows how much we need them, and so He takes but a few, To make the land of heaven more beautiful to view. Believing this is difficult still somehow we must try The saddest word mankind knows will always be "Goodbye." So when a little child departs, we who are left behind, Must realize God loves children, Angels are hard to find.

In Loving Memory Of Taylar Brumfield Born Little Rock, Arkansas Thursday, June 14, 2007 Died Little Rock, Arkansas Thursday, June 14, 2007 Graveside Service 11:00 A.M., Monday, June 18, 2007 Garden of Innocence Riverwood Memorial Gardens Maumelle, Arkansas Officiating Reverend Jeff Walker Interment Garden of Innocence Riverwood Memorial Gardens Maumelle, Arkansas