

We believe in the power of marketing, and of demystifying the funeral industry. We selected a location that isn't a traditional, stand alone building. Our funeral home is located inside a 3,000 square foot storefront (chapel, arrangement room, onsite preparation room, and selection room) in a former mall, on the campus of a mega church. Needless to say, we have been and probably will continue to be the talk of the town. It has been important to us to be perceived as being different, modern, comfortable and affordable.

When we wrote our business plan, we decided that one of the ways that the community would feel comfortable at our funeral home is by welcoming them in for non funeral related events. We thought that one of the best ways to accomplish this would be to host a variety of community education events that were not related to the funeral industry. Our first event was a bus trip to Galena, IL. Participants met at the funeral home for the departure of the bus. They arrived a half hour to 45 minutes early and ate pastries and drank coffee and conversed with our staff. Prior to our departure, we gave tours of the funeral home and answered questions about the services that we provide. We toured historic Galena, ate lunch as a group, shopped and then went to a local vineyard for wine tasting and tour. Over 40 people attended our inaugural bus trip.

We have a series of Community Education events that we schedule at least once per month. Heartland Hospice is a local hospice organization that provides a speaker and assists families with their Durable Power of Attorney and Living Will Documents. People who have attended have appreciated the complimentary advice, as well as the opportunity to discuss their end of life questions with a Registered Nurse and Social Worker. Two separate events have been hosted thus far, with an additional event planned for the end of June 2010. In addition to providing a venue for the hospice organization to speak at, we have been able to refer multiple families to their hospice and they have in turn referred families seeking funeral information to us.

Kristan McNames was asked to speak during the Money Smart Week Series put on by the Federal Reserve Bank on the value of pre-planning. She teamed up with a local Long Term Care and Medicare expert, Traci Fults and provided information to the community. Families in the area had seven different opportunities to hear about pre-arrangements and long term care and Medicare.

A member of a family that the funeral home served has a scrapbooking business. Kristan McNames asked if she would be interested in hosting a scrapbooking session for the community at the funeral home. There are several scrapbook weekend events planned throughout the year.

Kristan McNames met a local natural health practitioner in a networking group that she attends. After learning more about her business, Kristan offered her the opportunity to use the funeral home as the location for her health care talks to take place. Several meetings and events have been held at the funeral home, which has brought people who otherwise may not have come into the funeral home to see the facility and take a tour.

We have two AARP driving classes scheduled for 2010. These classes are 4 hours, over the course of two days. Seniors that attend can ask their insurance provider for a discount upon completion of the classes.

**We believe that the community has benefited from our “open door policy.” We have been able to meet many people in a non-threatening, non funeral environment. Our location in a former mall allows people to stop in and ask questions, obtain pricing and experience a funeral home environment unlike any that they have ever seen before. Offering classes, providing information and having fun activities has helped create a “buzz” in our community and is assisting us with growing our market share.**