Pursuit of Excellence

David C. Brown Funeral Home

Category I: E

Tree of Remembrance

Each year, near December 1st, the David C. Brown Funeral Home hosts a special holiday ceremony called the Tree of Remembrance. The evening service begins with an Open House with hot chocolate and cookies or donuts. After a half hour of meeting indoors, we invite everyone outside. A local pastor opens in prayer. Our Grief Management Coordinator welcomes everyone and invites them to the microphone to state their loved one's name who passed away the past calendar year. Then two of our staff members are near an evergreen tree, which a different neighbor donates each year, to help the guests hang an ornament for them to see as they pass by each day before Christmas. Other staff members then pass out candles and we have a local singer to sing a carol after a brief moment of silence in the decedent's honor. The program is then closed with a prayer from a local pastor.

The reason we began doing this service nearly six years ago was to help the people of our community get through the holiday season a little easier. We wanted to let everyone know that we understand this is one of the most difficult times of the year and that we have many caring people on our staff willing to help them through it. We use this day as an opportunity to educate the attendees on the individual appointments and group sessions we offer throughout the year to help anyone in our community, even after the funeral is done. Each year we are all deeply touched see nearly 100 faces, and broken hearts, gathered together. It makes each of our staff realize how much we help each other through grief.

Improvements made this year were as follows: As bereavement coordinator, Mary contacted all of the families from the past (2009) year, by letter. She also tried to call most of them on the telephone to personally invite them. This gave her the opportunity to see how they were healing after the funeral. This year we also publicized the event more. We advertised it in more newspapers, rather than just our local paper. We also put the ad in a few weeks in advance of what we did previously. Lastly, we've collected many emails since we began our website, and we also sent out invitation via the internet. This was also the year we had the most staff volunteer.



