

The Best of the Best 2010-2011

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CLERGY RELATIONS PROGRAM

Desmond Funeral Home is honored to be of service to a large metropolitan community, which is very diverse in its culture and traditions. The religious demographics vary from the traditional religions that we were always accustomed to, but now including Hindu services as well as Muslim and Buddist religions. Because of the tremendous need for communication as well as education we developed a program that enabled our firm to embrace all of these cultures.

The advantage of being a rather large firm, we were able to have each one of our directors assigned to 15 clergy and or churches. The directors called on the clergy and set appointments for a meet and greet, either at their facility or for a lunch. The directors then set another appointment to sit down with the clergy and start fact finding. Questions of what exactly can we, Desmond Funeral Home, do to help them, either with the funeral service, grief programs or advanced funeral planning. We developed a questionnaire which is completed and returned to the funeral home, to be placed in a permanent Reference Binder. A copy of the questionnaire is also left with the clergy, in the event that there are changes or issues on their end.

This program has been very successful and very well received by both the clergy and the community at large. Our entire staff is very grateful that we have implemented the program, because it enables us to add value to all of the families that we serve. We are better prepared and more educated in regards to their needs and cultural wishes, which provides us with the knowledge that we are truly the professionals in our industry, a fact that Desmond Funeral Home is very proud of.

Please see attached folder for the clergy visits

Serving our community since 1917 with dignity, compassion and value.

Arrington Funeral Directors

Jackson, TN is located in the center of West Tennessee with a population base of 150,000 people. Our city population is 60,000 with surrounding communities adding an additional 90,000 population. We have a very diverse area of both urban and rural agriculture lifestyles with the urban population consisting of approximately 80 percent to 20 percent rural. Our religious demographics are similar to others that are located in the "bible belt" with a strong concentration of protestant congregations.

Arrington Funeral Directors, since its inception in 1995, has been very committed to building a positive relationship with the area clergy and has strived to be a leader in providing them local venues that educates and informs. One venue that we have developed is a minister's breakfast that is held once yearly. Each December approximately two hundred invitations are sent to the area ministers with active churches, hospice, hospital chaplains and retired ministers, inviting them to the funeral home for a catered breakfast as a time of education and fellowship. It is a very relaxed time in which the ministers are provided a buffet breakfast and are free to openly discuss issues on various topics with each other, as well as renewing and establishing friendships.

It is very important to our staff to nurture these relationships as they play a vital role that continues to enables us to provide superior service to their families. The time that our staff is able to spend and interact with the clergy is very beneficial not only to ourselves, but we feel the clergy as well. We annually continue to receive praise from the ministers and the churches that they serve for our willingness to be innovative and not afraid to think outside the box in the area of death care, as well as being a leader in the community.

We feel the relationships that we have developed with the area clergy over the course of the last sixteen years have played a large part of the success that we have had in providing superior service to our families, as well as providing the clergy an opportunity to come together as a body of believers for a meal and fellowship.



★ JOSEPH VERTIN & SONS FUNERAL HOME

Serving families, since 1904

I. Basic Requirements H~ Innovative Idea

Funeral Service provides a unique opportunity to associate with many different people. Among those that we are privileged to serve with are the clergy in our community. The pastors and priests offer their compassion and support to the families we serve. Like hinges straining from a great weight, so is the burden that families bring as they walk through our door. Often times, the clergy are a sort of first responder. They ease the heaviness of their grief by being ready to offer spiritual guidance in planning the funeral service and to pray with the family. Because of all that the clergy and their support staff does on behalf of those we serve, we wanted to make sure they knew how much we appreciate them.

In October—the month set aside to honor clergy—our funeral home decided that we could best honor them by investing some of ourselves into what became known as "Project Appreciation". Our plan was to bake homemade pies and deliver them to the respective churches. As you can imagine, setting a day and time to do Project Appreciation proved to be a task of insurmountable odds. As luck would have it, we knew of a local church that makes homemade pies and sells them as a fundraiser for their youth program. It was a perfect scenario! They would be helping us out of a tight jam with father time, and we would be helping to support them.

Phase one of Project Appreciation was to take a staff photo and design a suitable thank you that would accompany each pie. With that accomplished we could begin phase two. We needed to get our pies baked. Once again, a local church, attended by one of our staff members, came to our rescue by agreeing to let us bake them in their commercial kitchen: Twenty five pies and four hours later, we had completed phase two. Our third and final stage was to get them delivered. On the morning of October 11th, we called each church to make sure that the pastor would be there and told them that we had a surprise for them. Not only were we able to give them a tangible expression of our appreciation for their roll in ministering to our families (a mouth-watering piel), but we were able to verbalize it in a conversation and hand shake.

By the time "Project Appreciation" was done, we realized that giving of ourselves to say thanks in a special way helps us to be mindful of how fortunate we are to be in our business. The opportunity to partner with the clergy in our community is truly a privilege.

(Pictures included)

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I. Basic Requirements H.

Ladies Appreciation Luncheon

The Paul-McBride Funeral Chapel in Norwood Young America, Minnesota serves a rural community with a strong German heritage. There are several churches in the community; Emanuel Lutheran and St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church, All Saints Lutheran Church, Church of the Ascension, Church of Peace, St. John's Lutheran Church and Church in the Maples. For quite a while, our funeral home staff felt that the ladies from these churches, who volunteer and give up time with their families, were not given enough recognition. Most of the time the honorariums which they are given by the families, are given back to the church in some way. Usually any donation is put into a general fund and is used for events and projects for the church.

Robert Hantge, Funeral Director and owner of the chapel, suggested that since these volunteers are constantly serving other people, perhaps a way to show them how much we appreciate their volunteer service would be for our staff to serve them. We picked a date and location for our luncheon and then sent out the invitations to the local churches.

On May 5, 2011, we held a luncheon at the Pizza Ranch in Norwood Young America, Minnesota. Several of our funeral directors, Richard Hantge, Sherri Stamps, David Sprik and Dana Makepeace, as well as two visitation staff, Lois Droege and Melvin Byer, and bookkeeper, Christie Hantge, were at the luncheon to serve as wait staff and make sure the volunteers were well taken care of. Our staff members were pleased to be able to do something to show these fine members of the community how much we appreciate their efforts.

We had over 65 volunteers who attended this luncheon. The volunteers had a good time and expressed that they were happy to be acknowledged in this way and also enjoyed getting to know our staff better.