

I. Basic Requirements/Best of the Best

A Tribute Fit For A King: Michael Jackson Memorial Tribute

- E. June 25, 2009 marked the end of a life well treasured in the hearts of millions of fans of Michael Jackson who were young, old, black, white and hailed from many different countries. The night of Michael's death, Roland Criswell (President/CEO) called the entire staff for a mandatory meeting for Friday, June 26, 2009 to plan a memorial service for the fallen King of Pop. The staff scheduled the service for Thursday, July 2, 2009, in which the community would be invited to pay tribute in honor of the legendary pop star. The highly anticipated service was filled to capacity within five hours of being announced. The service was advertised through a memoriam placed in Sunday's (June 28, 2009) newspaper along with an announcement on our website, face book and an e-mail blast sent to the funeral homes' distribution list. A press release was also sent to all media outlets.

Guests were required to RSVP for the event with the capacity set at 125 guests. A flood of online registrations as well as phone calls from the newspaper ad quickly filled the capacity level.

Due to the overwhelming response to the first service, a second service at our North Side location was added. Within three days, the second service was also booked. The funeral home also took this opportunity to launch its online funeral services for the event, allowing guests who were unable to register for the event, to watch the broadcast live from our website.

The tribute highlighted the accomplishments throughout Jackson's successful music career and featured his greatest hits and videos. *Naka Entertainment*, a local dance troupe for children under 18, performed a special dance tribute in memory of the *King of Pop*. Guests who attended the event also had the opportunity to share their favorite memories, stories and thoughts during a moderated discussion.

The service was complete with a 3ft. x 6 ft. memorial reflection print (*see miniature replica in attachment I-E*) that highlighted Jackson's musical career with each of his album covers as well as candid shots throughout his life. Participants signed two guest books (one to be sent to the Jackson family and one for the funeral homes' archives) and were given a program for the service. An 8 x 10 miniature memorial reflection portrait was available for purchase for \$20.

Coston Funeral Homes, Inc. was the only organization in the Pittsburgh region to offer a memorial tribute for Michael Jackson; therefore, the media was very instrumental in marketing the event. The tribute was featured as the lead story on the 11 o'clock news on WPXI and was a segment on both KDKA and WTAE (*see DVD in attachment I-E*). The event was also featured on the front page of the

Pittsburgh Post Gazette and covered by the Associated Press (*see attachment I-E*). Extensive coverage of the event was in all the major newspapers as well as the media outlets' websites. The media also covered the second memorial service added on July 10, 2009.

The event proved to be a success beyond measure. Our goal as a staff was met as we provided an outlet for the community to grieve and mourn the loss of one of music's greatest entertainers. The event also proved to be a big success due to the media attention received that aired many times throughout the day and night, reinforcing the Coston brand.
(*see attachment I-E*)

Pittsburghers show love at Jackson memorial



MEMORIAL TRIBUTE—A memorial tribute in honor of Michael Jackson was held July 2 at Coston Funeral Home in East Liberty. A group of dancers from Naka Entertainment performed for the crowd.



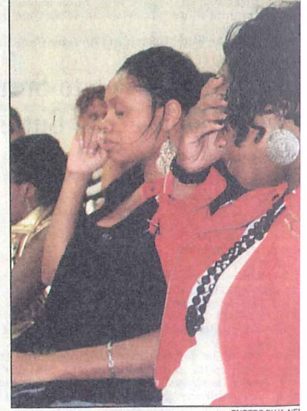
MJ MOVES—Delana Jerry takes a minute to show off a few of her favorite MJ dance moves to the pack at Coston Funeral Home.



JOY AND PAIN—Sharlene Younger tries to hold back her tears during the tribute as Ruthann Wood remembers the happier times during Michael Jackson's career.



MJ TATTOO—Tequiera Miller shows off her MJ tattoo.



OVERWHELMED—Ebony Thompson and Tlesha McClurk are overwhelmed by the loss of Michael Jackson during the memorial tribute.

PHOTOS BY K. NE

DeMoney-Grimes Countryside Park Funeral Home Essay for Pursuit of Excellence

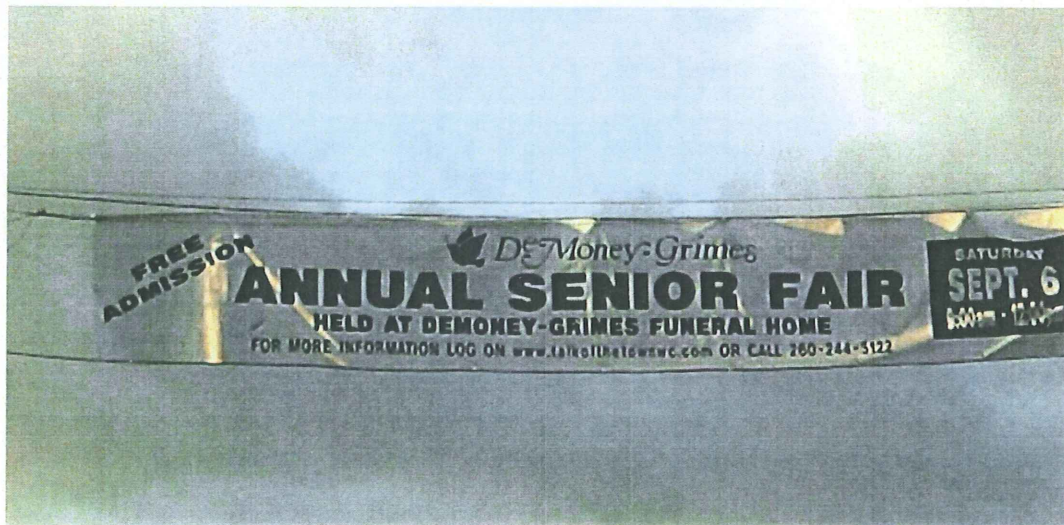
In 2007, DeMoney-Grimes Funeral Home noticed a lack of information available to senior citizens in the community on various resources that were available to them. After contacting the local Senior Center and meeting with the executive director, we decided that a county Senior Expo would be the best way to bring together seniors and those that offer services to them. We have continued to produce and underwrite this event each year since.

We worked with local providers of senior services and invited to them to the funeral home to set up a booth at *no* charge to advertise their services. DeMoney-Grimes placed advertisements in the local newspapers and internet news sites to invite seniors and or their care givers to the Expo. We also partnered with a local restaurant that is frequented by most of the seniors in the community and they handed out advertisement cards to each senior two weeks prior to the expo when giving them their check. We were able to get permission from the city to hang a large banner over a busy main street in town to advertise the event.

Again on **September 6, 2008**, 30 various businesses took advantage of our free expo and set up booth space in the funeral home. This was a large undertaking and commitment by the funeral home and its staff as we would not be able to have calling/ funerals the Friday night before the Expo or on the day of the Expo. All the furniture in the chapels was moved out to make room for the booths and create a more trade like show appearance. In addition to the trade show, educational sessions on issues important to seniors were presented. We utilized all local practitioners having an optometrist discuss senior eye health and a pharmacist discuss drug interactions that seniors should be aware of.

Entertainment was also a key part of the Expo. Each hour of the Expo, a different entertainment group was featured, all of which were seniors as well! We had the Red Hat Strutters, Tri-Lakes Barber Shop Quartet and the musical styling's of Evelyn Stemen on the keyboard. A local deli provided snacks to the seniors, and the funeral home provided coffee, punch, and cake.

The event has continued to grow each year and for 2009 we are looking at the possibility of moving the Expo out of the funeral home to accommodate more vendors and thus bring local seniors into contact with even more services that may be of benefit to them. So many seniors are unaware of services that are available to them, even though the providers advertise through various media aimed at the senior community. The Whitley County Senior Expo has proven to be a great way to bring seniors together with those that can help them with the various needs and services that they may have.



Booths set up in our 3 Chapels



Comfort Keepers



DeMoney-Grimes
Funeral Home



Columbia City
Optometry



MonaVie

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Lyndhurst, NJ 07071**

Crisis Management Plan

Hurricanes, Terrorists, Swine-Flu, An Armed Intruder.... Today, schools need to be prepared for more than spelling bees, sporting events and standardized tests. When Ippolito-Stellato Funeral Home in Lyndhurst was told about the Crisis Management Plan that the Lyndhurst School District was required to submit to the State Department of Education, we immediately wanted to be involved.

Tracey Stellato, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, presented the funeral home with a list of items the Department of Education suggested to place in "emergency go-kits". These kits would contain items that teachers, students and administrators would need during situations that required them to evacuate the premises due to a fire, gas leak, hazardous material accident, aircraft disaster or terrorist attack, in addition, in the event of being locked in the school for an extended period of time due to a death on campus, hostage situation, intruder, hazardous material accident or shooting incident, these bags would be used.

Our staff met and worked with the school crisis management committee and local police representatives to decipher what the bags should look like, what items they should contain and how many bags are needed. After several meetings, our staff purchased these

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Crisis Management Plan

items needed. We used Ippolito-Stellato Funeral Home Canvas bags and included the following items in each:

1. Blankets
2. Writing Pads
3. Pens
4. Band Aids
5. Bandages
6. Anti-Bacterial Hand Lotion
7. Flashlights
8. Batteries
9. Rubber Gloves
10. Alcohol Wipes

It is our hope that these "emergency go-kits" will never be needed, but if they are, it is comforting to know that our schools are prepared and that we were part of helping the school district and police keep our children and faculty safe.





LippertOlson
FUNERAL HOME



A Family Owned Independent Funeral Home Since 1892

This year, the Lippert-Olson Funeral Home opened its doors in a way they have never done before. The funeral home has always been a welcome respite for those seeking guidance and comfort during a time of need. This is a given and something we have done for 117 years. But this year we tried something a little different. Instead of inviting the public in during a difficult time in their life, we welcomed them in for a light hearted evening of fine dining and entertainment.

In 2008, we hosted our first annual Mystery Dinner Party. This was auctioned off at a charity dinner at the John Michael Kohler Art Center in Sheboygan which in turn gives back to so many wonderful organizations in our community including many children's charities. People in the community had the opportunity for charity to bid on the auction for the chance to come to the funeral home, dressed in character, for an unforgettable evening of spectacle.

The process started with personalized invitations to 16 people who were each given a character description, costume suggestions, and instructions to be at the "Culinary Institute of America" (aka the Lippert-Olson Funeral Home) for an evening of intrigue and mystery.

"It is spring of 1948 and all were invited to gather to honor the Institutes great Chef Alan Davies who is receiving the highest award in the culinary world - the Edmond World Class Culinary Award. Some have been invited, others have forced their way in. Unfortunately, we have just received news that that Chef Davies was murdered this afternoon."

Now it was time for all the guests to figure out "who did it". Each guest was given clues which they were to reveal throughout the evening. This was done in four acts between the four courses of dinner. The funeral home staff spent months preparing the script and decor for the evening, helping to transform our home and chapels into a 1940's style supper club, and offering to serve the meal and be "extras" though out the course of the evening. Chuck took care of the normal daily business which gave the rest of the staff the opportunity to prepare. Jeff and Raymond set up the tables and chairs, Bernie did the flowers, and all help set the table. Jackie and Heidi helped in the kitchen and Jim and Clint were the butlers and did all the serving.

This was a wonderful way to the give the staff an opportunity to give back to the community in a way we are not always called to do. It built great team spirit and the staff still talks about it today. Most importantly, it showed those in the community a different side to our staff and to what we do. Many people think of funeral homes as stuffy, scary, or outright morbid. We were able to show a different, softer side and made people feel comfortable in an atmosphere in which they would normally not think of. We had so many people say that they had so much fun and if we as a staff put that much effort into a charity party, think of what we would do for them in their time of need! The whole experience was extremely rewarding for all those involved and we look forward to hosting another event next year.

Culinary Institute of America (Lippert Olson Funeral Home)



5 PM Cocktails and Murder



BEST OF THE BEST ENTRY

Following the death of his beloved grandfather Hartley Alden, funeral director Paul Hutchison and his family struggled with the idea of getting rid of grandpa's clothing. Knowing it would be difficult to never see him in his favorite shirt and jeans, the family came up with an incredible idea. They would turn his favorite shirt and jeans into a bear that the family could enjoy forever. The joy of seeing the completed bear led Paul to share this idea with our community.

Mattson Funeral Home & Cremation Service implemented the Heartley Bear Project (named after Paul's grandfather) in August 2008. It was the original intent of the staff to have one Heartley Bear Day on a Saturday in October where families could come to the funeral home, bring an item of clothing from their deceased loved one. The families would cut their bear out with help from the staff and other volunteers and sewing volunteers would sew their bear on site. Finally the families would stuff their own bear and leave with a completed Heartley Bear.

We knew a project like this was not something we could do on our own, so we enlisted the help of the Forest Lake Times (our local newspaper) to run a feature story about the Heartley Bears and to ask for the community's help in volunteering. The article also let the community know this event would be open to the public, not just families served by our funeral home. Three other local papers picked up the article as well as the Saint Paul Pioneer Press. The response was overwhelming. We had over 50 people with RSVP's, wanting to make over 70 bears! We had 17 sewing volunteers and numerous other non-sewing volunteers.

As we sat down to organize our thoughts, we decided to come up with a Heartley Bear packet each family would receive with a wooden heart (where they could write a message to their loved one or simply put their loved one's name on it) a heart patch (which the staff hand cut from fabrics) that could be sewn onto the bear's paw, and heart confetti to put inside their bear to fill it with love. We also made 30 copies of the bear pattern so each family table could have a pattern to work from. We knew we wanted this to be at no cost to the families who come to the funeral home. We asked local businesses for financial support to off set the cost of purchasing 30 pairs of scissors, fill for the bears and other misc. items for the day. The first event was a huge success! Of course we learned from it and decided to continue with this ministry. We held our second day in February 2009 and the third in June 2009. To date, the volunteers and families have made approximately 150 bears.

In addition to the planned dates, our volunteers are willing to make bears for families on an at need basis. One volunteer has made six bears this spring for families who have lost infants or have given birth to a stillborn child. At the time of arrangements we asked the parents if they had a sleeper or an item of clothing from a shower gift and if we could have a bear made for them. One teenage father held his bear so tight and told me he would never sleep without it.

At our most recent Heartley Bear Day, the Saint Paul Pioneer Press came to interview families about their experience. The story ran on the front page of the local news section two weeks later. From that article, the phones have been ringing off the hook. Families from 40 miles away from Forest Lake are signing up for our next event. Never in our wildest dreams did we think the life of a farmer, husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather from rural Iowa could touch the lives of people he never knew. It is a testament to a life well lived and how the grieving process goes on for the rest of our lives. To see a mother bringing in a robe from her beloved daughter who died thirty years ago or a daughter who has kept the bed sheets from her mother who died fifty years ago reminds us of the importance of what we all do on a day-to-day basis. How each life is so precious to so many. It has truly been a gift to each of us to see the joy on the faces of the families as their bear is completed and they go home.

Professionally, the benefits have been indescribable. For us to host an event like this and invite families including those we have not served to come to our funeral home and see who we are and why we do what we do is priceless.

