

Geisen Funeral, Cremation and Reception Centre, Crown Point, IN

THE GEISEN PET LOSS CENTRE *Pet Photo Contest Calendar*

We've been operating our Pet Loss Centre (which includes a state-of-the-art pet crematory and a beautiful pet loss room) for years now, and it still amazes me how some people in the community still don't know we offer pet cremation services.

We have done many things in the past to reach our local pet community. We have participated in pet expos, judged pet costume competitions, handed out hundreds of "dog bone pens" (which are a huge hit, by the way), and more. We're always asking ourselves how we can improve, though, and one of our funeral directors came up with this great new idea: a pet photo contest calendar.

We decided we would hold a pet photo contest and put all of the entries in a calendar, with 12 winners headlining each month. We would print 1,000 calendars and distribute them throughout the community for free.

We have been doing this contest for 6 years now, and we have promoted this contest a number of ways. We pass out flyers at pet expos and community events, post flyers in pet-related businesses, but most effectively we use social media to help spread the word. We create an event on Facebook where people can upload a photo of their pet.

The fantastic thing about using Facebook to promote the contest is that our contest entrants interact with each other. They comment on each other's pets, "Like" each other's pets and create a pet community dialogue within our contest event. It's fantastic to see this level of interaction and excitement from our pet community.

We ask a different veterinarian office to do the judging every year. Each year the number of entries grows; the 2016 calendar had over 500 entries. We put every single entry in the calendar somewhere. The entries that are not selected as one of the 12 winners are displayed in the "days" sections of the calendar or on one of the photo collage pages.

The calendar is a huge hit: we have heard hundreds of times from people elated with the contest and many have said that they will use Geisen Funeral Home when the need arises because they have been impressed with our community outreach efforts.

We are now known for this calendar. When we work pet expos, lots of folks walk by our booth, see who we are and say, "Oh! Geisen's! You guys do the calendar!".