

THE CRESTONE END-OF-LIFE PROJECT AND INFORMED FINAL CHOICES

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Who We Are

The Crestone End Of Life Project (CEOLP) is a community-initiated, non-profit organization established to support area residents in end-of-life choices, including home funeral, burial, and open-air cremation. Founded in 2006, CEOLP facilitates cremations at its beautiful, permanent, fully government-sanctioned site just west of Crestone. Through this work, CEOLP volunteers have come to know end-of-life as a sacred passage whose honoring includes the embrace and loving participation of family, friends, and community. CEOLP recently received a \$3,000 Saguache County Sales Tax Grant, which will be used for maintenance and improvements to the cremation site.

As a means of sharing information and practical knowledge on end-of-life matters, CEOLP has developed a related non-profit organization, Informed Final Choices (IFC). IFC provides educational and community outreach through its website, written materials, presentations, workshops, and other informational opportunities for individuals and groups. Saguache County recently awarded IFC a Sales Tax Grant of \$1,500, to be used toward county-wide educational outreach initiatives including advance directives, end-of-life choices, home funerals, establishing green/natural burial cemeteries, and developing local end-of-life support groups.

What We Do

CEOLP offers services to Crestone area residents and to out-of-town residents who own property in the Crestone area in these ways:

- Planning and assisting in home funerals, including local transport of the deceased back home and having friends and family prepare the body and create a beautiful, peaceful home environment for repose and visitation (for up to 72 hours)
- Liaison with the family of the deceased
- Planning a personalized ceremony for cremation or burial
- Liaison with Town of Crestone on burial at Crestone Cemetery
- For burials: assistance with home funeral, care of the body, completion of death certificate, transport of body to burial site, and other assistance. (Please contact CEOLP for a complete list of what CEOLP will and will not do in relation to burials.)
- Transport of the deceased to a mortuary for cremation, to a chosen site for burial, or to CEOLP's open-air cremation site
- Gathering of cremains to be given to the family, following cremation
- Monthly CEOLP meetings, open to the public, which invite volunteer participation at whatever level you are comfortable with

Please note: Open-air cremations are not always possible, depending on weather, availability of volunteers, and other factors. CEOLP strives to help fulfill end-of-life and disposition choices whenever possible, and will assist in any way possible in situations where the deceased's first choice is not an option.

IFC offers these services locally and wherever requested when possible:

- Workshops, presentations, and other forms of educational outreach in such areas as care of the body and home funerals; advance directives; end-of-life choices; establishing green/natural burial cemeteries; developing local end-of-life support groups; developing compassionate and practical bereavement skills; and The Art of Dying: exploring our mortality through contemplative and artistic self-expression.
- Death Cafés—informal, participant-driven events, free and open to the public, in which people gather over tea and cookies to talk about death and related topics in any way that comes up.
- Experienced CEOLP volunteers who can serve as speakers at conferences and other gatherings hosted by other organizations

How to Ensure Funds are Available for Cremation or Burial

CEOLP requests a minimum donation of \$500 to \$800 for its services. As a non-profit organization in Colorado, CEOLP is legally not able to accept any pre-payment of donation funds before services are rendered. To help ensure that funds for cremation or burial will be available when needed, CEOLP has established guidelines for setting up a payable-upon-death account, also called a funeral fund, at any bank or credit union. This separate savings account designates a payable-upon-death beneficiary, which may be CEOLP or another organization, business, or individual. **For details and a funeral fund form to complete, please contact CEOLP registrar Lorraine Cazier: 718-937-7802.**

What You Need to Know

Any Crestone area resident, whether property owner or not, is eligible to register with CEOLP.

If you decide to register with CEOLP:

CEOLP is only able to provide services to those who are already registered before the time of death. (Friends and family cannot register a deceased with CEOLP following death.) As part of the registration process, you must provide CEOLP with, among other things, a list of people who have agreed to serve as your representative following your death. Designated representatives must follow certain outlined procedures following your death, and must be informed of these and of your end-of-life wishes before agreeing to serve in this capacity. **For a detailed list of these requirements, please contact CEOLP registrar Lorraine Cazier: 719-937-7802.**

If you are an out-of-town owner of property in the Crestone area, or if you reside in Saguache County outside the immediate Crestone area:

CEOLP has legal permission to serve Saguache County residents outside the local Crestone area; however, it is up to CEOLP's discretion, on a case by case basis, to decide whether it has the volunteer capacity, and whether the required conditions have been met, in order to provide services. If you wish to register with CEOLP and do not live in the immediate Crestone area, the distance involved creates special conditions, including home funeral requirements, transport of the deceased, and completion of required documents, at the time of the registrant's death. **For a detailed list of these requirements, please contact CEOLP registrar Lorraine Cazier: 719-937-7802.**

What to Consider When Compiling Information in Case of a Medical or Other Incapacitating Emergency:

Regardless of whether your end-of-life choices include cremation, green burial, traditional burial, or traditional cremation, it is vital that loved ones know your wishes regarding resuscitation (Advance Directives), and disposition. It is equally important, especially in this era of privacy protection, that someone have access to your bank accounts, passwords, PINs, etc. Loved ones and CEOLP volunteers also will need to know about any electronic medical implants you may have.

After completing Advance Directives regarding financial issues, health care, and designating an executor, you should consider compiling a detailed list of information to which someone will need access following your death. This list can be kept with your executor or next of kin, in a sealed envelope, or in safety deposit box to which you have indicated in writing the person you wish to have access.

Among this vital information: contact information for key family members or friends; bank accounts and other financial information; insurance; property and vehicle titles; guardianship for minors or pets; lock combinations and locations of keys for safety deposit boxes, lock boxes, storage closets, garages, sheds, vehicles, etc. **For a more detailed (though not necessarily comprehensive) list of suggested areas to consider, please contact IFC by calling Stephanie Gaines: 719-588-7415 or ceolp.info@gmail.com.**

How To Get Involved

- Monthly CEOLP meetings: Held the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Topping House, 33 Sunset Overlook. Everyone welcome.
- Workshops: Contact CEOLP or IFC for topics, dates, and cost
- CEOLP registration parties: Held locally about twice a year. The next is set for Sat., Nov. 14 at 3pm at the Cloud Station followed by the premier public screening of *Open Air*, a 22-minute film by Adam Sekuler. (See separate article in this issue.)
- Death Cafés: Held locally periodically. Watch *The Eagle* for announcements.
- Donations (tax deductible) to CEOLP and IFC are always welcomed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.crestone-end-of-life.org

CEOLP, PO Box 1238, Crestone, CO 81131

Lorraine Cazier, CEOLP registrar: 718-937-7802 • ceolp.info@gmail.com

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