OPPORTUNITIES FOR HELPING HANDS

A Reference List for Families
Following the Death of A Loved One
When Someone Asks, *"What Can I Do To Help?"*

Notifications

Contact
designated funerary agent, extended relatives, friends, associates, clergy, physician if not already involved, attorney, executor, business colleagues, insurance companies, etc.

Arrangements

Access previously prepared documents,
such as funerary guidelines, receipts for pre-paid arrangements, cemetery deed, etc.

Provide photos
for obituary, embalmer, funeral home website, printed programs, etc.

Provide personal information
for, obituaries, documents (such as death certificate, transport and/or burial/disposition permits), officiants, eulogizers, etc.

A signed death certificate is sent to the local health department (processed by funeral director, if involved in arrangements). Certified copies can be ordered (for a fee) to be used for filing applications for life insurance, veteran's benefits, Social Security, transfer of real estate and vehicle titles, probate of will, management of social media accounts, etc.

Paperwork

Access copies of death certificate
for managing financial affairs and for possible distribution
to guests for discounted airline tickets.

Start organizing files
for a data collection system.

Delegation…

Appoint people to:

Oversee gifts and caring gestures
(flowers, donations, calls, cards, visits, etc.).
Keep a list, so they can be acknowledged later.

Collect and process mail and package deliveries.

Care for children:
Provide meals, physical care, and companionship.
Convey explanations about events.

Care for pets:
Note location of necessities, such as water bowl, food, treats,
collars and leashes, ID tags, grooming supplies.

Clean residence:
Prepare home and yard for visitors.

Communicate:
Answer landline phone
or serve as a contact person via cell phone.
Oversee e-mail messages.
Greet visitors.

Coordinate food provisions
for funerary time period.
Plan meals, shop, prepare, and clean up.

Acquire hotel information
and recommendations for guests
or arrange alternative lodging.

Provide transportation
to and from airport, hotel, and for disabled individuals.

Make parking arrangements,
if necessary, with traffic control management.

Assemble and distribute instructions
for guests via emails and phone contacts.

Drive car:
Run errands, such as transporting flowers and other items
for funeral or memorial service.

Coordinate plans for a service:
Communicate with clergy or officiants.
Procure programs and other items.
Copy music and print materials.
Contact participants… speakers, musicians, videographer,
IT specialist, pallbearers, greeters, ushers, candle lighter,
guest book attendant, parking valet, etc.

Prepare displays of visual memorabilia:
Decorate sites for visitation, service, reception, etc.
Construct a photo board.
Prepare a life-narrative video using family photos.

Prepare or access musical resources,
such as playlists or CDs for events.

Operate electronic equipment
for a service or commemorative affair.

Manage floral displays:
Gather, arrange, place, and distribute following events.

Make arrangements for reception
or other social assemblage.

Manage finances:
Record expenses.
Gather receipts for tax deductible funerary expenses, including family transportation costs if an estate tax return will be filed.
Pay bills, honorariums to participant clergy, musicians, etc.
Oversee deadlines for bill payments and contact creditors for extensions, if necessary.

Arrange for a companion
to stay with bereaved family member if living alone and desires companion support.

Guard house
to prevent theft during funerary activities.
Notify police if no one is available to stay in home.

*****

Excerpt from the pre-planning book,
Pondering Leaves: Composing and Conveying Your Life Story's Epilogue
(no longer available)

Mary Ellen Markant
Signature Sunsets
ponderingleaves@gmail.com