

SIGNATURE SUNSETS

Initiatives To Advance Learning About End of Life



POINTS of INTEREST

National Humor Month

Just for laughs...

"Felt uncomfortable driving into the cemetery. The GPS blurted out, you have reached your final destination."

National Walking Day

April 2nd

Cemeteries designated for natural burials offer opportunities for walking amid the beauty of nature. They are sanctuaries for all *living* beings, too, not just the deceased individuals buried there.

UPCOMING ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

Tuesday, April 8th, 7:00-8:15 pm EDT

2025 Update on Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD)

Third program in a three-part series about initiatives for assisted dying

Presented by Sara Elkins, Compassion and Choices Northeast Campaign Organizer, and Rabbi Emeritus Elias Lieberman, Compassion and Choices Cape Cod Action Team

Sara Elkins will give an overview of what Compassion and Choices is/is not, review the Medical Aid in Dying legislation, the progress we've seen and the incredible role of Roger Kliger, M.D. in everything we have accomplished thus far. Elias Lieberman will share his personal story of support for the Massachusetts bill, and his journey with folks nearing the end of their lives.

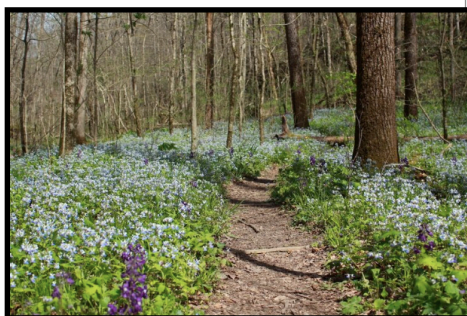
For instance:
Like many conservation burial grounds, Larkspur Conservation at Taylor Hollow in Westmoreland, TN (48 miles north of Nashville) is designed for mindful recreation, such as hiking, bird watching, nature study, or meditation. The preserve is open to visitors 365 days a year from dawn till dusk.



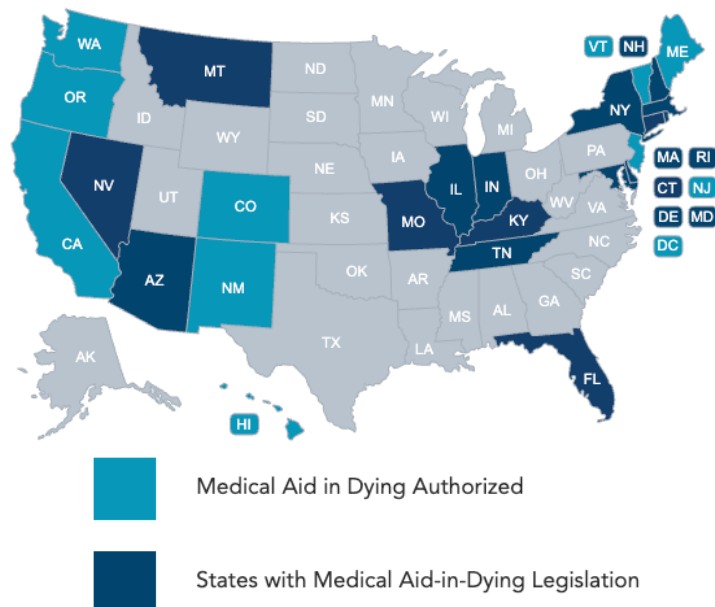
Map with bountiful network of trails:



<https://larkspurconservation.org>



Compassion and Choices is an organization dedicated to embracing expanded options for end-of-life care and empowering everyone to chart their end-of-life journey.



Read the MA MAiD bill summary [here](#)

Sara works to move medical aid in dying legislation forward, with the goal of ultimately passing bills in the northeast. She comes to this work with a background in lobbying and received her degree in political science from the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Rabbi Elias Lieberman served Falmouth Jewish Congregation as its rabbi for 34 years, retiring as Rabbi Emeritus in June of 2024. During his time on Cape Cod he was active in a variety of communal activities, including Hospice of Cape Cod, the Falmouth Clergy Association, the Jewish Federation of Cape Cod, and the Upper Cape chapter of PFLAG. He served as Chair of the Gay and Lesbian Equity Fund of the Cape Cod Foundation and was an inaugural member of the Barnstable County Human Rights Commission, appointed in 2005.

For 14 years, Rabbi Lieberman served on the Board of Directors of the Falmouth Service Center and was an active member of Falmouth's HIV/AIDS Community Partnership. He was a member of the Steering Committee of No Place For Hate²—Falmouth.

California Poppy Day

April 6th

A popular wildflower, the red poppy, is recognized for its symbolic association with death and remembrance.

Since ancient times, poppies have been placed on tombstones, alluding to eternal sleep.

They are used around the world to remember those who died in military service.



“Following the Napoleonic wars in the early 19th century, the land was destroyed as it was left desolate, arid and infertile. Shortly after, red poppy flowers magically grew around the bodies of the fallen soldiers. Poppies then became a symbol of hope and peace with an underlying meaning that the sacrifice of soldier’s lives were for the greater good. Again in 1914, the fields of Northern France broke out in fighting as World War 1 began. Once the world war was over, one of the only plants to regrow were red poppy flowers.”



The red poppy is a beautiful, universal symbol.

https://sourcetacticalgear.com/red-poppy-flower/?srsltid=AfmBOoo_MP3pWqlefMUvYFBtmhLUySvjOqSydHkz_r-8-phLsd771jsr

In 2023, he was appointed to Falmouth’s Commission on Substance Use, reflecting a longstanding concern about addiction-related issues and honoring the memory of family members who lost their lives to substance use disorder. He is currently active in the effort to bring the right to medical aid in dying to Massachusetts as a volunteer for Compassion & Choices.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86718678083>

Meeting ID: 867 1867 8083

Sunset Cafeteria

Tuesday, April 29th, 7:00-8:15 pm EDT

Like a death cafe, but with a predetermined topic to spark the conversation...

Hosted by Mary Ellen, from Rochester, NY

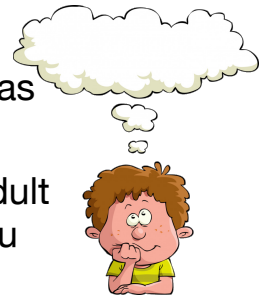
Should Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy Come To Town When Someone Dies?

Is It Acceptable To Lie To Children About Matters of Death?

Fictitious premises are aplenty when explaining the end of life to children.

What do you remember being told as a child?

What comments to a child by an adult in a funerary circumstance have you witnessed?



What impressions would you want your grandchildren or other beloved young relatives to form upon your death?

Do you know if their parents’ attitudes and approaches align with your own?

How might you help shape perceptual foundations in concert with parental approval?

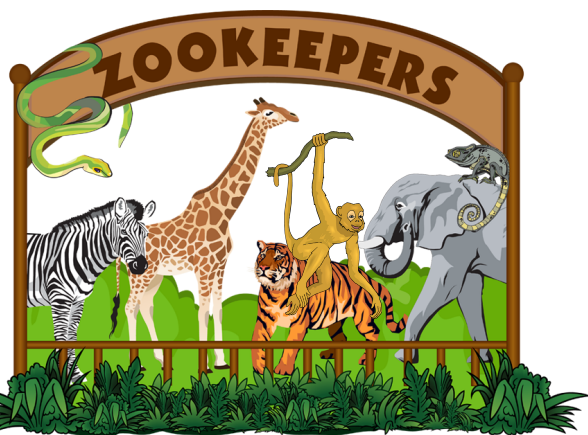
Are euphemisms useful?

Do you think it’s appropriate to expose your own³ expressions of grief in the presence of a child?

Zoo Lover's Day

April 7th

Have you ever attended a funeral at a zoo?



Scroll down to the supplemental pages to read about a novel commemoration that took place at a venue the decedent had frequented throughout life. It includes descriptions of memorial stations at different points on the property.

Scrabble Day

April 13th

Harriet had loved playing Scrabble with family members. Upon her death, a replica of a Scrabble game was constructed by a friend and affixed to her casket. After proceedings, it was saved and given to her family as a keepsake.



Let's share our personal experiences, including childhood impressions that may have led to our adult perceptions about death.

Let's talk about conversations we may have had with children while experiencing end-of-life circumstances, whether they were effective or could have been handled differently.

Let's explore ways to deliver explanations to children that are apt to contribute healthfully to their attitudinal development.

Psychology Today Article:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/navigating-grief-and-loss/202310/should-children-be-told-when-a-death-occurs>

Sesame Street Video - Talking To A Child About A Relative's Death

<https://sesameworkshop.org/resources/explaining-what-happened/>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88906015278>

Meeting ID: 889 0601 5278

OTHER HAPPENINGS

Wednesday, April 9th, 7:00-8:15 pm EDT

Let's Learn: Finding Strength in our Struggle with Illness

HOSTED BY REIMAGINE, LISA KEEFAUVER, MSW,
REV. BARBARA BECKER

We kick-off this Reimagine series with four guests who share their stories and their wisdom in their journeys with chronic and serious illness.

This panel discussion features some of the most articulate and passionate voices in patient empowerment, spiritual care, and grief education, advocacy, and literacy. Guest speakers include author and interfaith minister Barbara Becker, entrepreneur and advocate Nitika Chopra, Grammy Award-winning musician and producer Brian Kennedy, and grief activist Lisa Keefauver (moderator).

Information and registration:
<https://letsreimagine.org/76768/lets-learn-finding-strength-in-our-struggle-with-illness>

Wednesday, April 9th, 6:00-7:00pm EST

In person at the Pittsford Library in Rochester, NY

Jennifer Sanfilippo will explain how writing helped her cope after her husband's death. She will give an account of integrating her mind, body, and spirit into the writing of the book, *"Our Last Walk Home: Love, Cancer, and the Agony of Letting Go."*

For information:

jennifersanfilippo32@gmail.com

Thursday, April 10th, 7:00-8:00 pm EDT

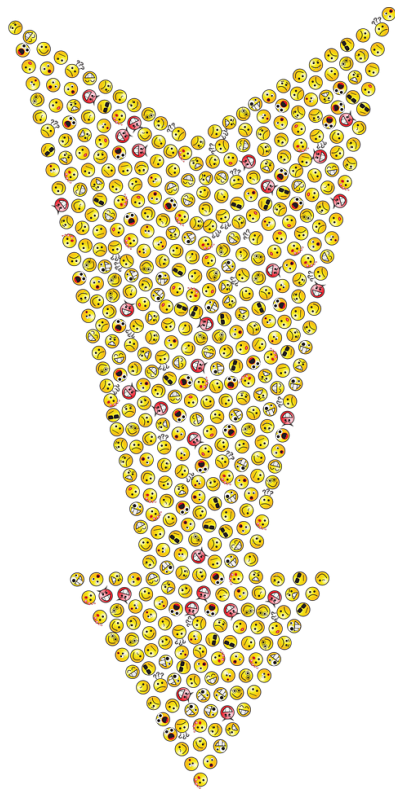
Personal Possessions: Sorting, Thinning, & Repurposing

Managing Personal Possessions: What to keep, what to share, and where to begin with your or your loved one's possessions.



Personal possessions tell a beautiful story of a person's life regardless of age. But when we find that we have accumulated too much or a loved one passes, the process of sorting through the items can be overwhelming. Join Rachel for a zoom-side chat sharing personal stories while learning the best approaches to thin, repurpose, and redistribute these possessions in a meaningful way to cherish the memories and pass the connection on to future generations.





The workshop will embrace remembering those who are no longer here, through honor, memories, and actions. In addition, sharing possessions prior to a loss will allow friends and family members to prepare for the loss with a greater connection and lasting impression. The program will provide the audience with the opportunity to share, engage and learn how to sort, thin and repurpose personal possessions.

Information and registration:

<https://letsreimagine.org/76768/personal-possessions-sorting-thinning-repurposing-5>

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 7:00-8:00 PM EDT

Compassion and Choices Volunteer Strategy Forum series

We'll open the floor to advocates statewide (New York) to share strategy and ideas, and coordinate efforts for advancing end-of-life options.

To Register:

https://join.compassionandchoices.org/a/nyvsf2504?sourceid=1086432&utm_campaign=ny&utm_medium=email&utm_source=stateadvocacy&utm_content=250327nyeevents&emci=4fcd96fd-0205-f011-90cd-0022482a9fb7&emdi=9179786d-630b-f011-90cd-0022482a9fb7&ceid=2058086



A Funerary Event In A Zoo Milieu



Dave McBurnett's life had been marked by his love of animals and safari adventures with his wife, Margaret. So it was fitting for his funeral and burial to take place at a zoo. Initially, guests met with his family and were served coffee and cocktails under a tent outside the entrance gates. Memorial folders with the agenda and pictures of different stages of Dave's life were distributed. Zoo trains then transported everyone to different sites on the grounds for a series of ceremonial observances.

The first was in front of an outdoor bear pavilion. There, several enlarged photographs of animals taken by Dave flanked a podium. His wife told of his animal devotion and their safari excursions, after which guests were invited to share their own recollections.

The next stop was at a lion pavilion, where enlarged articles about Dave's work were displayed. An exhibit of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) awards along with donation envelopes were on a table. A close friend introduced someone who spoke of Dave's little-known accomplishments while working on behalf of animal rights. Again, guests were able to add their remarks.

Marriage was the theme at another station, where pictures illustrated the couple's experiences and Margaret reviewed their fifty years together.

The train then took the group to the zoo arboretum where chairs faced a large screen for viewing of an eight-minute slide presentation chronicling the span of Dave's life from childhood to the present, including safari pictures. The final photo, a close-up image of the man's face, was held on the screen as a telephone rang. The voice of Dave was heard by way of the last message he had left on his home answering machine: "Hi, this is Dave. I'm on a safari, leave me a message and I hope to meet you along the trail somewhere someday."

Afterward, each person was given an index card to write a message to Dave and/or his wife. As part of the proceedings Dave's grandchildren acted out a play about his life; they also had constructed one of the stations.

Everyone then had an opportunity to view the casketed body that was positioned amid the arboretum foliage and flowers. Margaret stood by it and greeted the guests, at which time the cards bearing messages were presented to her.

Guests gathered in the parking lot for a procession to the zoo cemetery. The body was transported slowly atop Dave's beloved seventy-five-year-old elephant, Tranzago, followed by guests on foot. At the graveside committal service a family friend who was a follower of Buddhism related Dave's animal devotion to spirituality. Afterward, Tranzago refused to leave the burial site until the grave had been filled with dirt and the process had been completed.

Next Gen Memorials





MARY ELLEN MARKANT

Signature Sunsets

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