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EVAN W. SMITH  
Funeral Services

# BULLETIN

*Articles of Help & Healing for our Delaware Community*



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*We hope you enjoy this issue of our quarterly "Bulletin." Be sure to subscribe to our email list so you get monthly articles and announcements as well.*

*Thank you and God bless.*

*- Evan W. Smith*

# Why Are Funerals So Important to the Grieving Process?



Funerals, memorial services, and celebrations of life contain rituals that are central to the grief process. They are fundamental in a number of ways—from how we mourn, to how we say goodbye, to how we gather strength from our social ties during times of great sorrow. At their core, these final farewell ceremonies reflect what it means to love and deal with loss. Please read on for some valuable insight into the importance of funerals and how they facilitate the journey through grief and healing.

## **Express feelings of sadness and grief**

Losing a loved one brings a variety of emotions to the surface. The funeral provides an opportunity to express those emotions outwardly among loving friends and family without fear of judgment. Rather than keeping things bottled up inside, funeral rituals encourage the bereaved to release their pain. This often means crying, recalling precious memories, and even laughing as the stories are shared. The funeral or memorial can be a very cathartic event for those who are mourning.

## **Find comfort through familiarity**

Funeral and memorial services tend to follow a particular order and contain many customary elements. The details may vary but the circumstance for gathering and the general pattern remains recognizable. The predictability of funeral rituals helps participants find solace during a time of great stress and chaos.

## **Share fond recollections and reflections**

Funeral services allow family and friends to take time to acknowledge, remember, and recount cherished memories. Each person's life is made up of a series of relationships, interactions, dreams, and activities. At the remembrance event, attendees have the opportunity to revisit notable happenings in the departed's life and discuss their impact with others.

## **Get on the path to acceptance**

When it comes to the grief process, there are no shortcuts. The pain of loss must be faced in order to move forward. The funeral or memorial service provides an opportunity to confront the reality of loss. The physical presence of the body of the departed or the cremation urn encourages the bereaved to accept what has happened and move toward healing.

Rich in history, tradition, and symbolism, the funeral service enables people to lay their loved ones to rest. It brings family and friends together to provide support for one another and share memories of the departed. It's no wonder funerals are seen as a critical part of the grieving process and an essential part of the healing journey.

# Protect Yourself from Identity Theft and Credit Card Fraud

The Department of Justice estimates that 17 million Americans suffer some form of identity theft each year.

Many of those cases involve credit card fraud, which occurs when someone steals the card itself or obtains the account information to make purchases. Full-blown identity theft is far more serious. In this situation, the thief uses the victim's personal information to open accounts or take out loans in their name. For the victim, the fight to get their credit restored and their name cleared is an arduous process that can take months or even years to complete.

What steps can you take to minimize your chances of being preyed upon? Implement these practical, no-cost measures to protect yourself against identity theft and fraud:

- **Change your logins and passwords often.** Create complex passwords that include a mix of numbers, symbols, and uppercase or lowercase letters. Make it a habit to change them each month.
- **Use your credit card for online purchases.** Credit card purchases have better protection under federal law than debit cards or online payment services.
- **Secure your social security number (SSN).** Don't carry your social security card in your wallet or write your number on your checks. Only give out your SSN when absolutely necessary.
- **Be alert for phishing.** "Phishing" is a form of fraud used by cybercriminals. The attackers masquerade as legitimate banks or businesses to obtain personal information, which they use to access accounts. Always verify that you're on a familiar web site with security controls before entering any personal data.
- **Collect mail promptly.** Check your mailbox daily and place a hold on your mail if you are going to be away for several days.
- **Monitor your bank and credit card statements.** Check your accounts regularly so you know when something's

awry. If you find any unfamiliar activity, notify the financial institution or credit card company immediately.

- **Check your credit report regularly.** By law, you're entitled to a free report every year from each of the three bureaus, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. Carefully review your report for accuracy and look for abnormal activity, such as accounts or credit cards you didn't open.
- **Shred sensitive documents.** Regularly shred old bank statements, medical documents, bills, and anything with your personal information on it before throwing it in the trash.

One of the best ways to protect yourself from identity theft is to be aware of the indicators that your identity may have been compromised. These signs could include getting bills for services you don't use, having your debit card declined, seeing unauthorized bank transactions on your summary, or noticing unfamiliar activity on your credit report. If you think you've been the victim of identity theft, or are especially concerned about it, consider placing a fraud alert on your credit report and using a credit monitoring service. Above all, stay alert and be vigilant in protecting yourself from identity theft and other forms of fraud. The sooner you detect a problem, the sooner you can fix it.



# Aging in Place? Here are Five of the Best Home Renovations for Seniors

**According to a 2021 study by AARP, nearly 90% of senior citizens plan to remain in their own homes for the next five to ten years. Medical advances are keeping people healthier and more active than ever, but aging still comes with its share of challenges.**

Eyesight and hearing often diminish, falls occur more frequently, and a walker or wheelchair may be needed for mobility. Ordinary features such as bathtubs, stairs, and rugs can be hazardous or even deadly. If you or an elderly loved one is considering aging in place, start by evaluating your home's features and what improvements may be necessary. Here are five popular and helpful aging-in-place remodeling projects:

**Bathroom makeovers.** According to the National Aging in Place Council, the bathroom is the most likely place in the home for people to slip and fall. Because falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for seniors, make the bathroom a priority in your home renovation plans. Standard tubs or showers with high sides can be difficult to enter and exit, creating a hazard. While walk-in tubs range from \$3,000 to \$7,000 on average, their low entry points greatly reduce the likelihood of tripping. A less-expensive fix is to install handrails near the tub or shower, as well as a grab bar inside to provide support while entering and exiting. Place padded non-slip rubber mats outside and inside the tub or shower, as well.

**Kitchen improvements.** The kitchen is full of hazards for seniors. It's also where people spend much of their time, so it should also be near the top of your home improvement list. Drawers and cabinets with knobs can be challenging to open, especially if arthritis is an issue. D-shaped pulls are much easier to grasp when range of hand motion is limited. Pull-down shelving in upper cabinetry reduces the amount of reaching required to access remote items. Changing out standard faucets to those with lever handles can make them easier to turn when arthritis or lack of strength is an issue.

**Handrails, stair lifts, or elevators.** If the home is two or more stories, navigating the stairs may eventually become a challenge. Installing assistive handrails on both sides of the stairwell can provide support, making the trip easier and less dangerous. If climbing the stairs becomes too difficult, a stair lift may be necessary to access the upper levels. The price for a stair lift ranges from \$3,000 to as much as \$20,000 depending on its features and the configuration of your stairwell. An elevator is pricey but may be needed if the

stairs can't accommodate a chair lift. Having an elevator installed costs approximately \$40,000, on average.

**Give lighting a boost.** There are many easy ways to improve residential illumination. Replace any burned-out bulbs and install additional lighting with lamps or light strips if the area is still too dark. If current light switches are the traditional toggle type, replace them with rocker-style switches, which are easier for older adults to use. Is the exterior entrance well-lit? Consider installing a motion-sensor light that turns on automatically when entering or exiting the residence.

**Non-slip flooring.** As mentioned above, falls are a leading cause of death and injury for older Americans. One way to reduce the risk of slipping or falling is to replace standard flooring with a non-slip, padded surface. A variety of economical options exist, including rubber, slip-resistant vinyl, and cork, which offer traction and/or cushioning and cost less than \$6 per square foot.

Through renovations that optimize mobility, safety, and functionality, seniors can fully enjoy their homes for many years to come.



# Fill Your Plate with These Tasty, Inflammation-Busting Foods

Chronic inflammation is like too much of a good thing.

We need the body's inflammatory compounds to do their job from time to time, killing bacteria and preventing infection. But chronic low-grade inflammation actually triggers disease. Your immune system is in action but instead of fighting foreign bacteria, it silently attacks your own body. Stress is one known culprit in raising inflammatory compounds, along with obesity and genetics. Diet plays a large role, too. Consuming too much white flour, sugar, and fried foods, and not enough fruit, vegetables, and fish raises inflammation. While diet can cause inflammation, it can also make a big difference in fighting it. Rally your body's defense mechanisms with these seven inflammation busters.

## Berries

Berries may be small in size but they're packed with fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Dozens of varieties exist but the most common and healthy choices include blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, and strawberries. Berries contain antioxidants called anthocyanins, which give them their robust coloring. These compounds have anti-inflammatory effects that may reduce the risk of disease.

## Fatty fish

Fatty fish is a great source of protein and the long-chain omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA. EPA and DHA reduce inflammation that can lead to metabolic syndrome, heart disease, diabetes, and kidney disease. Although all types of fish contain some omega-3 fatty acids, the best sources come from salmon, sardines, herring, and mackerel.

## Cruciferous vegetables

These nutritional powerhouses are brimming with antioxidants that are associated with a decreased risk of heart disease and cancer. They're rich in sulforaphane, an antioxidant that fights inflammation by reducing levels of cytokines and NF-kB, which drive inflammation. Fill up on crunchy veggies such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and kale.



## Avocados

These delectable, versatile superfoods contain potassium, magnesium, fiber, and heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. They also contain carotenoids and tocopherols, which are linked to a reduced cancer risk.

## Green tea

You've probably heard that green tea is one of the healthiest beverages you can drink. It reduces the risk of heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, obesity, and other conditions. Many of its benefits are due to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, especially a substance called epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG). EGCG inhibits inflammation by reducing pro-inflammatory cytokine production.

## Extra virgin olive oil

As one of the healthiest fats you can eat, extra virgin olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fats and is a staple in the Mediterranean diet, which provides numerous health benefits. Studies link extra virgin olive oil to a reduced risk of heart disease, brain cancer, and other serious health conditions. Extra

virgin olive oil offers far greater anti-inflammatory benefits than those provided by more refined olive oils.

## Dark chocolate and cocoa

Dark chocolate is delicious, rich, and satisfying. It's also packed with antioxidants that reduce inflammation. Flavanols are responsible for chocolate's anti-inflammatory effects and they keep the cells that line the arteries healthy and pliable. Be sure to choose dark chocolate that contains at least 70% cocoa to reap these anti-inflammatory benefits.

It's also important to limit your consumption of things that can promote inflammation. Fast food, frozen meals, and processed meats have been associated with higher levels of inflammatory markers. Fried foods and partially hydrogenated oils contain trans fats, a type of unsaturated fatty acid that has also been linked to increased levels of inflammation, while sugar-sweetened beverages and refined carbs have also been shown to promote inflammation. Steer clear of these culprits and reach for more nutritious choices instead.

# Seven Clever Tricks to Beat the Heat

When summertime swelter strikes, rising temperatures often mean mounting cooling costs.

Whether you lack AC or just want to use it less this season to save money or for environmental reasons, there are many ways to beat the heat and cool your home more efficiently. Best of all, you likely have everything you need already on hand.

**1. Keep the curtains closed.** Sunlight coming through windows can heat the inside of your home quickly. During the day, keep your window shades and curtains drawn to keep things cool. If your curtains are dark, line them with lighter fabric or hang a lighter-colored sheet on the side that faces the window. This will help reflect the light.

**2. Use fans strategically.** Turning on a fan can help circulate air inside your home, offering a nice breeze and relief from the heat. However, you'll want to turn it off when you leave the room because fans don't actually alter the temperature of the space. Box and portable fans work best when the air outside is cooler than the air inside. Use these fans at night near an open window to pull cooler air in from outside.

**3. Go low.** If you live in a home with more than one story, spend more time on the first floor or even the basement. Because heat rises, these rooms tend to be naturally cooler than those above them.

**4. Keep the stove and oven off.** Opt for foods that you can eat directly from the refrigerator and that naturally contain lots of water. Salads, fruits, and sliced vegetables are examples of light summer fare that will keep you hydrated and won't add to the heat in your home.

**5. Choose your clothes carefully.** The goal is to allow sweat to move quickly away from your skin so it can evaporate. Thin fabrics and loose, billowy clothes allow air movement next to the skin and help with evaporation. Lightweight cotton fabrics are a good choice, as are synthetic fabrics like Coolmax designed to help you stay cool, wick away sweat, and prevent that sticky feeling. Bamboo clothing is also formulated with cooling properties.

**6. Drink lots of water.** Don't wait until you feel thirsty to reach for a glass of water. It's important to keep your body hydrated throughout the day to replenish any water you may have lost by sweating. You can enhance the cooling sensation by adding a sprig of fresh mint or a squeeze of lemon.

**7. Use a cold washcloth.** Taking a cool shower can provide you with instant relief from the heat but you can also get a similar benefit by using a wet washcloth. Wet the washcloth in cold water and put it in the freezer for a few minutes. Then, apply it to pulse points on your body (the back of your neck, under your armpits, on your wrists, or groin area). Doing so will cool your body down more efficiently.

Remember that extreme heat is no joke. Overheating is especially dangerous for children under four and adults over age 65. Be sure to check in with people you know who are in these vulnerable populations, particularly in a heatwave. If you feel at any point that you or someone you know are suffering from heat exhaustion or potential heatstroke, consult with a medical professional or, in an emergency, call 911.



# Community Focus

## Helping Grieving Families Find 'A Healing Place'

Funeral providers are called upon to provide comfort for the grief-stricken, offering compassionate care, helpful resources, and access to qualified professionals amid times of great suffering.

To that end, Evan W. Smith Funeral Services is now offering grief counseling and other mental health services to the greater Dover and Wilmington communities in collaboration with Leslie Holley, a celebrated, nationally-certified Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

"A Healing Place" is a series of workshops offered on a quarterly basis during which Ms. Holley will facilitate sessions to help participants learn about the grief cycle and how to move through the grieving process in a healthy way.

Leslie Holley is a Nationally Certified Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC - MD, IL) (LPC - MO, DC, VA) (NCC) who earned her Masters in Community Counseling from DePaul University where she also taught masters level clinical counseling courses as an adjunct professor. Currently, she works with clients at her private practice, Healing-Circle, LLC in downtown Silver Spring, MD and provides mental health presentations throughout the D.C., Maryland, Virginia (DMV) area.

Leslie offers counseling for adults and couples suffering from trauma, anxiety, depression, post baby issues, co-dependency, life transitions, and addiction. She helps clients establish boundaries and practice

healthy communication strategies through their mental health journey. She specializes in Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Internal Family Systems (IFS), and has been extensively trained in trauma and how it affects the brain.

Moreover, she completed her Masters thesis, with distinction, on the help seeking behaviors of African American men.

Leslie has presented on mental health topics for the American Counseling Association (ACA), the Illinois Counseling Association (ICA), Northwestern University, DePaul University and the Maryland Counseling Association Multicultural Division (MAMCD), to name a few.

Leslie has shared her mental health knowledge on Chicago WGN Radio and on the online radio show, Let's Stay Together, during their monthly mental health segment. She has been a contributing writer for about.com and UrbanBalance.com, covering her work with couples in counseling, anxiety coping tools, and understanding depression to name a few.

Some of the many topics she has presented on include therapy 101, anger management, trauma in children and adolescents, how to manage a crisis, conflict resolution, bullying in the workplace, assertive training, and thriving in a multigenerational workforce. She is the Past President of the Maryland Counseling Association Multicultural Division.

## *A Healing Place*

With Leslie Holley, MA, LCPC, NCC

In collaboration with Evan W. Smith Funeral Services

- Grief Counseling & Mental Health Services
- Quarterly Workshops (in-person & virtual)
- Monthly Blog Articles
- Weekly Social Media Posts & Videos





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# Featured Recipe: Scrumptious Summer Corn Dip

This easy, flavorful corn dip is the perfect dish for your next party or backyard barbecue. It's versatile, too! Serve cold or hot with corn chips or tortilla chips.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 tsp garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp coarsely ground black pepper
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 11-ounce can of corn, drained
- 11-ounce can Mexicorn, drained
- 10-ounce can Rotel, drained
- 4-ounce can diced green chiles, drained
- 1/4 cup chopped green onions
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, combine the sour cream, mayonnaise, garlic salt, and black pepper.
2. Add the shredded cheese, corn, Mexicorn, Rotel, green chiles, green onions, and cilantro.
3. Stir well to combine.

4. **To serve cold:** Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
5. **To serve hot:** Spread in a greased 8 x 8 casserole dish and bake at 350°F for 30-40 minutes, until hot and bubbly.
6. Serve with corn chips or tortilla chips.

**YIELD:** 5 cups

## Two locations to serve our Delaware community:



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