

Skype Allows Family Members to Grieve Together, Half a World Away

Technology is playing a bigger role in even the most basic, inevitable things in life – such as death.

One way funeral homes are now able to accommodate family members who can't make it home for a loved one's funeral is by utilizing technology to stream services online or via interactive video-conferencing tools such as Skype.

Last November, a son living in Australia was unable to attend his father's funeral in Fort Wayne. The funeral director at D.O. McComb and Sons Funeral Home's Pine Valley Chapel suggested Skype. The son was able to participate as his brother carried around a tablet with the feed, so he could hear from relatives and family friends.

"He was able to meet some of the visitors by way of Skype and it was so beautiful, because his brother walked him around to acknowledge the death, the flowers from Aunt Mary and Uncle Bill, and he explained and showed it," recalls Dave McComb, president of D.O. McComb and Sons Funeral Home.

"You could hear him and his family members, small children in the background. It's heartwarming. It is an example of how technology can help bring us closer together at a difficult time. He truly couldn't be there."

In some religions, burial is required within 24 hours of death. In those cases, particularly if the death is unexpected, it can be difficult to make travel arrangements. Additionally, those that are unable to travel due to poor health or a physical inability would now be able to participate in services.

McComb reports that no one else has requested Skype since November, but that it is a free, existing service. Additionally, the funeral home offers video casting for military personnel that are stationed away from home.

"I think it's our job to serve families in as many ways as we possibly can; it's part of our servant's heart, to fulfill the ability to accept love and condolences."



RESOURCE: Dave McComb, D.O. McComb and Sons Funeral Home, at www.mccombandsons.com



John Niser teaches Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne students and community members the fine art of etiquette during formal dining events.

IPFW Students Learn Proper Etiquette at Dining Events

Ever stared at a four-course meal setting and wondered which fork to start with?

The Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) semi-annual Dining Etiquette Dinners teach students and members of the community how to handle such formal social occasions.

Dinner host John C. Niser, chair of the IPFW Department of Consumer and Family Sciences, notes that etiquette can serve students in interviews and business settings.

"Fundamentally, etiquette is what you take with you in every circumstance ... in each case, you're going to have to stay yourself and have (that) integrity, but a sensitivity for the environment and people and circumstance," Niser explains. "The dinner was kind of an excuse to create a practical situation that allowed us to get that message across."

Students experience a mocktail setting with appetizers and a chance to network. Then, a four-course meal is served, in which Niser admits to picking out particularly difficult foods to consume in a formal setting. A designated tweet monitor at each table also collects questions for Niser to answer throughout the dinner, making the presentations interactive and informative.

Following the meal, which is always held off campus, Niser presents a topic, such as choosing the correct communication tool. For instance, young people may not be aware of the settings in which it is improper to text or email someone.

At the end of the dinner experience, students are given surveys. He maintains there is one main takeaway for most.

"The self-confidence bit, that's the one that comes consistently, 'Now I feel more confident going into different situations,' which is really what we're looking for," he shares.

RESOURCE: John C. Niser, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, at www.ipfw.edu

By Charlee Beasor

Houston's Recycling Plan Would Eliminate Recycling

A proposed plan in Houston, Texas would essentially jettison the idea of traditional recycling, allowing residents to put all recyclables and trash into the same bin. The materials would be picked up and sorted by the city in a new \$100 million plant.

The "Total Reuse: One Bin for All" plan, according to proponents, could potentially increase the city's record from a dismal 14% to near 75% of all recyclables being diverted from landfills.

That jump in recycling rates is enticing. However, Carey Hamilton, Indiana Recycling Coalition (IRC) executive director, notes one very large problem with Houston's unique plan – it puts recyclables through a "dirty" process by allowing the combination of trash and recyclables.

"About 30% of our waste stream in Indiana is paper. If you put that paper in with the trash, coffee grounds, dirty diapers, it's obvious it's going to be a lower grade product at the end. Grade pricing fluctuates dramatically from the best to the worst in pricing, \$150 a ton to \$10 a ton. And you would see a significant drop within that range if you were to put paper through this dirty process," Hamilton contends.

Another issue with the idea of putting trash and recyclables into one bin is the social responsibility of recycling that gets lost.

"Recycling is a gateway to environmental stewardship and conservation; it's one of the few things that everyone can do every day simply to make a difference," Hamilton stresses.

In Indiana, six million tons of material are disposed of each year, and 92% of that is recoverable, compostable or reusable in some way,



according to an IRC study. Hamilton points to research that shows if just 25% of those six million tons were recovered, it could create 10,000 new jobs in Indiana through the collection, processing, sorting and transporting processes.

As of press time, legislation had passed the Indiana House of Representatives that would establish a goal of recycling 50% of municipal waste by 2019 in Indiana, as well as increase recycling data collection.

RESOURCE: Carey Hamilton, Indiana Recycling Coalition, at www.indianarecycling.org



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