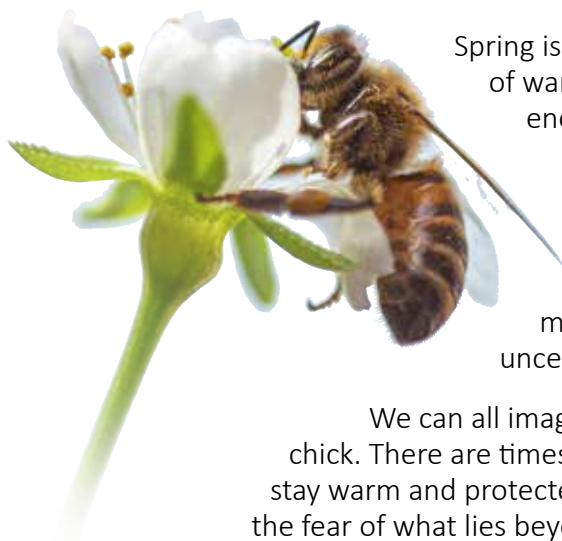


# TRANSITIONS

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## rejuvenation

by Andrea Ruggieri



Spring is a gratifying time of year. It promises the beginning of warmer weather, new life and rejuvenation. With refreshed energy and a sense of possibility, Spring offers hope for restoration in all aspects of life.

What came first, the chicken or the egg? Why ask the question? It is more important to simply contemplate the symbolism of life and renewal. This symbolism is present in many genres, but the metaphor of the chick emerging from its protective shell characterizes the uncertainties and possibilities that we all struggle and strive for.

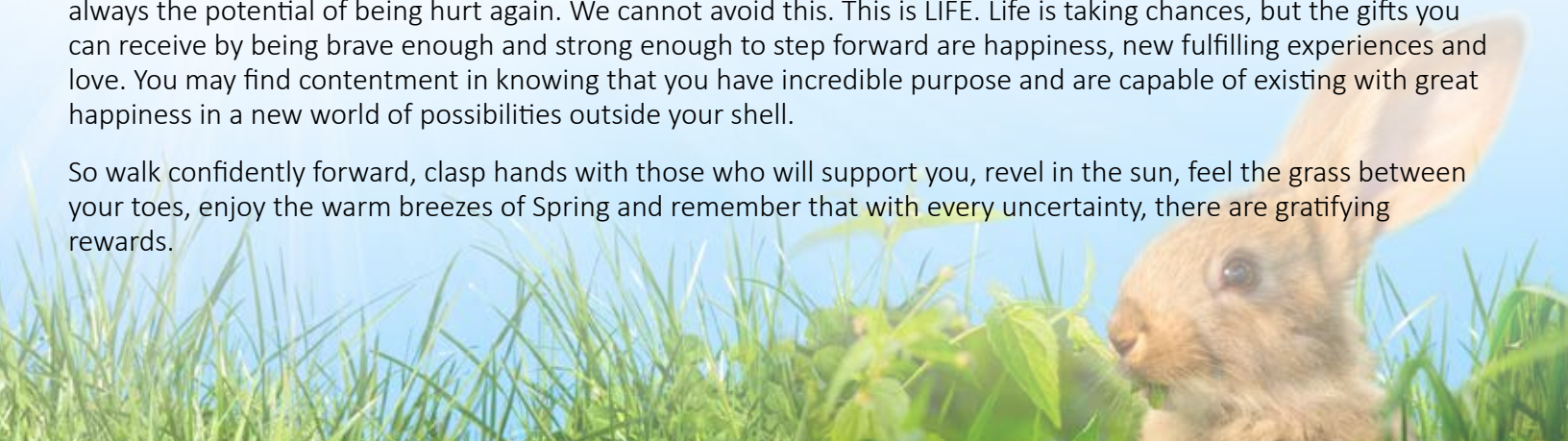
We can all imagine the feeling of warmth and protection of being inside an egg like a baby chick. There are times we all harbor ourselves from grief, guilt and making difficult decisions. We stay warm and protected inside our shell, avoiding what lies outside. It's comfortable. However, the fear of what lies beyond can hold us back from undiscovered joy and happiness.

As with the chick, it is an instinct, or in our case a thoughtful decision that compels us to move forward and open ourselves up to new possibilities. Pecking through that shell is not easy and can be a fear-filled process. What is on the other side of that shell? Can I handle it? Will I still feel safe and loved?

As with any struggle, overcoming these fears can ultimately be counteracted by rejuvenation and hope. Once you have taken that step over the threshold of fear, you are giving yourself permission to new possibilities and growth.

In doing this your shell of protection must be shed, making yourself vulnerable. For every new step taken, there is always the potential of being hurt again. We cannot avoid this. This is LIFE. Life is taking chances, but the gifts you can receive by being brave enough and strong enough to step forward are happiness, new fulfilling experiences and love. You may find contentment in knowing that you have incredible purpose and are capable of existing with great happiness in a new world of possibilities outside your shell.

So walk confidently forward, clasp hands with those who will support you, revel in the sun, feel the grass between your toes, enjoy the warm breezes of Spring and remember that with every uncertainty, there are gratifying rewards.



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# grief & dementia

by Andrea Ruggieri

The Mayo Clinic characterizes dementia “as a group of symptoms affecting memory, thinking and social abilities severely enough to interfere with your daily life.” Grieving the loss of a loved one is hard. Adding in the complexities of dementia can be a struggle you weren’t prepared to handle.

Imagine the loss of your mother while dad is suffering from dementia. How do you help him grieve when his ability to process information is compromised? It can be a stressful situation at the very least. For the well-being of all involved, composure, humanity and tenderness are needed.



Because this disease also influences how emotions are presented, your loved one may act out in ways you’re not used to. The range of awareness of a death, swings from one end of the spectrum to the other. Long-term memory is typically the last to be affected, often causing them to think their loved one is still alive, and then a point of clarity surfaces the next day bringing them back to reality. Keeping up with this dichotomy requires incredible patience and acceptance. Don’t have expectations from your loved one with dementia. Patiently interacting with them about what has happened can, in turn, help you with your own acceptance of death and grief.

## What you can do to help:

**Be Calm.** First and foremost, accept that they will grieve differently. The sooner you allow yourself to admit that they are not capable of easily processing the death, the better off you will be. If you are resistant and continually upset with your loved one who has dementia, this will slow down the mourning process for you both. When they are having a day of lucidity, let them express their feelings and share memories knowing that this may happen many times over.

**Be Empathetic.** Take a minute to envision yourself as the one who is unable to remember what has happened. In their eyes, they don’t recall what they’ve said or not said, they simply don’t remember. Always keep in mind that they too, have lost someone very important to them.

**Be Inclusive.** The progression of dementia ranges from high to low functioning. Using your best judgement include your loved one with dementia where you can in funeral arrangements and services. Allow them to choose music, a reading, or a flower arrangement if possible. If they are low functioning, try and plan a private viewing for them or have a service in a location where they can more easily attend. Perhaps an outing to the final resting place makes more sense. It’s more likely that they will preserve the knowledge that someone special to them has died if they are not left out.



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**Be Practical.** Use visuals. Put together a photo montage of their loved one that they can see and re-connect with the images they're seeing. Continue sharing stories to help bring those memories forward. Certain triggers, such as a music, a movie or a tradition may also help. Regardless of what practical tactics you use, always remember to talk with them in past tense when referring to the person who has died. It helps them when you are honest about the death.

**Be Compassionate.** Actively listen when your loved one with dementia is expressing their feelings. Readily join in when they are recalling and sharing their memories. When they reveal clarity, this is when you each can collectively care for one another in your grief.

Dr. Alan Wolfelt is a nationally known death educator and grief counselor. Much of what is outlined in this article draws from his advice. He aptly describes the reality of grief with those affected by dementia:

*"Helping a loved one with dementia grieve will not be easy, but it is beneficial. Dr. Wolfelt believes: 'Patience, honesty, and, most of all, empathy and love are the keys to helping a person with dementia after someone loved dies. Always remember that though dementia may destroy a brain, it cannot destroy a soul. The soul is where love and grief live, and any efforts you undertake to help the person express what is in their heart and soul will honor what has been most meaningful in their life.'"*

\*Source: Supporting Mourners with Dementia, Dr. Alan Wolfelt, August 2019



**Reference articles:**

[www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dementia/symptoms-causes/syc-20352013](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dementia/symptoms-causes/syc-20352013)

Wolfelt, Dr. Alan; '5 Tips for Helping a Person with Dementia Grieve,' [www.funeralbasics.org/5-tips-for-helping-a-person-with-dementia-grieve/](http://www.funeralbasics.org/5-tips-for-helping-a-person-with-dementia-grieve/)



## An option that takes away the burden of paying for a funeral.

Figuring out how to pay for a funeral is an added stress on top of an already difficult and emotional time. Bartolomeo & Perotto is pleased to now offer funeral financing to help.

- **No commitment, easy application process**
- **Quick pre-approval**
- **You decide your loan terms and monthly payment**
- **6 months interest-free loan**



**Questions?** We're happy to help. Call Bartolomeo & Perotto Funeral Home at **585-720-6000** or visit our website: [www.bartolomeo.com/a-solution-to-take-away-the-burden-of-paying-for-a-funeral/](http://www.bartolomeo.com/a-solution-to-take-away-the-burden-of-paying-for-a-funeral/)



# FEMA

# funeral assistance for COVID19-related deaths

It is a well-founded fact that no one has gotten through the COVID19 pandemic unscathed. Whether the effects were to your physical health, mental health, financial strain, or the ultimate loss of someone you loved, we have all been dealt a hand that no one was prepared for. In fact, with the relentless chatter on the subject, be it the nightly news, social media, or articles like the one you're reading right now, it may leave you feeling overwhelmed. It's hard to believe still, that a solitary virus could affect so many, in so many ways.

For those who were forced to say goodbye to someone special as a result of the virus it is especially heartbreaking. Bartolomeo & Perotto has handled many pandemic funerals. As an organization who cares for families on their worst day, during a time when businesses were essentially shut down, it was a helpless feeling to not be able to give families what they needed.

To counteract some of the suffering on this account, the government is offering relief. Nothing can replace your loved one but if you aren't already aware, The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing assistance with COVID-related funeral expenses. No one knows how long these reimbursements will be available, so if you have had a death in your family that is related to COVID19, you may be entitled to financial help and should apply sooner rather than later to attain these funds.

## FEMA Funeral Assistance for COVID19 - Related Deaths Here are some basic facts and tips:

- For the initial application, you must CALL the [COVID19 Funeral Assistance Helpline](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance) (9a-9p EST): 844-684-6333
- The person applying for assistance must be the person who funded the funeral
- If more than one person contributed to funeral expenses, all should apply with a single application as applicant and co-applicant
- A funeral home cannot apply on your behalf, but can help guide you and supply needed documents
- Eligible families may be reimbursed up to \$9000 per funeral
- Eligible families may be reimbursed for more than one funeral, up to a maximum of \$35,000
- Reimbursements are determined by a variety of factors and is fully determined by FEMA
- Approved reimbursements will be directly deposited into your bank account or a check will arrive in the mail, whichever option you choose
- If FEMA does not approve you for assistance you may appeal within 60 days of your decision letter

## Who is Eligible?

Anyone can apply, but FEMA determines who is reimbursed and how much they will be reimbursed.

## The general criteria for receiving funds are as follows:

- The COVID19-related death occurred on, or after January 20, 2020
- The COVID19-related death occurred in the United States, which includes U.S. territories and District of Columbia
- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, a non-citizen national or a qualified alien

## What Documents are Required?

- **Funeral Expense Documents** – These can be supplied by the funeral home and should include: applicant's name, decedent's name, dates of funeral, and amount of funeral expenses incurred
- **An Official Death Certificate** - Showing death occurred in the United States and that the death had cause from COVID19
- **Proof of Funds Received** – You must provide documents showing any ancillary funds that were used to pay for funeral expenses, such as Funeral pre-plan trusts or assistance received from voluntary agencies, government programs or other similar sources

## Beware of FEMA Scams

- To curtail fraud, FEMA will not contact anyone until someone has formally called and applied for funeral expense assistance
- If for any reason you take an unrequested call or email from FEMA, remember to NOT give away pertinent information like social security numbers or birth dates for any deceased family. If you are unsure, it's always best for you to call FEMA directly.
- If you feel someone unauthorized has contacted you, posing as a FEMA agent, hang up and report it to FEMA's helpline at 800-621-3362 or The National Center for Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721, or call your local law enforcement agency.

It is uncertain how long the emergency funds provided by FEMA for Funeral Assistance for COVID19-related deaths will be accessible, so keep abreast of the latest news on FEMA's website and call to get your application started today.

**Further Questions? Call us: 585-720-6000**

## Information Sources:

FEMA website: [www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance)

FuneralBasics website: [www.funeralbasics.org/applying-fema-covid-19-funeral-reimbursement/](https://www.funeralbasics.org/applying-fema-covid-19-funeral-reimbursement/)