



COMMUNITY VOICE



Welcome...

...to the Pearl Collective's *Community Voice*, a newsletter about living and dying. Pearl Collective is a gathering of death doulas who guide people through death and dying, using love, wisdom, knowledge, law, and strength.

We invite you to engage by reading and contributing to our community newsletter at **pearlcollective2018@gmail.com**. Help make this a larger Community Voice!

Inside

THIS ISSUE

- Local Death & Dying Conference Reviews
Event information
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INHALE EXHALE



A Confluence of Ideas by Kristin Meyer and Maggie Thompson



On a grey Saturday in mid-November, Window Seat Media kicked off a new project -InhaleExhale, an exploration of our stories about death and dying. The event was fashioned as a confluence of ideas - a coming together of community to connect on important topics. Window Seat Media is a collaborative of multimedia storytellers who work with organizations in the South Puget Sound region to amplify the voices of those who are underrepresented in our American narrative(s).

Is there a death related event or practice you want to share?

Please share your stories and photos for the next issue.

pearlcollective2018@gmail.com

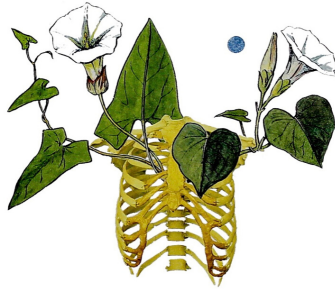
The day began with rituals and storytelling. Community members called ancestors' names into the space as we began the day of reflection and sharing. Although the flow of the day resembled a conference in terms of structure with plenary speakers and breakout sessions, the event was grounded by a connection and an intimacy that conferences often lack. Throughout the day speakers shared stories and ideas that brought forth their own deep experiences with death and dying. There was a lunch performance by Heartsparkle Players who used improvisational theatre to reflect the mornings moments of deep learning. Attendees had opportunities to take in art, learn new ways of connecting with those who are dying and with our ancestors, experience the care and shrouding of a body, take part in creative exercises, and re-imagine the possibilities of after death care.

Attendees also received a beautifully designed flow chart that distilled the ways one might navigate through the journey to death. *Cont pp 3*



Une Bonne Mort

In Review: What attendees said



"Topics were "outside" of the usual conversation. Alua's topic is a good example. Thank you for the opportunity to be strategically mixed in with those we seek specific connection."

"I enjoyed the overall theme in personal work we must do; exploring our privileges, bias, shadows, energy, and how that relates to clients and the ways we support them."

"The consistent high standard of the presentations. Not a minute was wasted - truly a day full of learning."

"Connecting with others at the table which was encouraged by many of the speakers. This furthered the learning and sharing. I really enjoyed all of the topics and speakers, all were thought provoking."

"Thank you for sharing your passion and gentleness with those of us unlearning. I appreciate your guidance with leaning into the prickliness of feeling uncomfortable - that will stick with me as I continue to grow."

"The combination of community, art, healing, and honoring that was present in every detail. You all showed so much thoughtfulness throughout this conference".

"Realizing how, in even this very liberal part of the country with women who want to do the right thing and be kind and supportive, there is so little understanding of white privilege."

"Thank you for bringing awareness to epigenetics, the need to do our inner work, identifying both our and client's triggers, and to release judgement."

Inhale Exhale Continued

Stories shared at the event are now available through a new podcast series on the Window Seat Media website. Their staff and volunteers have recorded the voices of community members reflecting on their experiences with death and dying and turned them into short (five minute) listening gems. If you're in the South Sound area check their website for upcoming death-themed film, dance and performance events:

<https://www.windowseatmedia.org/projects/inhale-exhale>



BREATHING ROOM

Community Do'ers , come breathe and take 2 hours for you.
1st Monday of each month
12 - 2pm POC only please

DEATH CAFE & ART NIGHT

Let's talk about death and get creative. BYOP or play with what we have.
2nd Tuesday of each month
7-9:30pm

CAREGIVER'S CORNER

A community for caregivers to share, grow and confide.
3rd Tuesday of each month
12-2pm

HARM REDUCTION

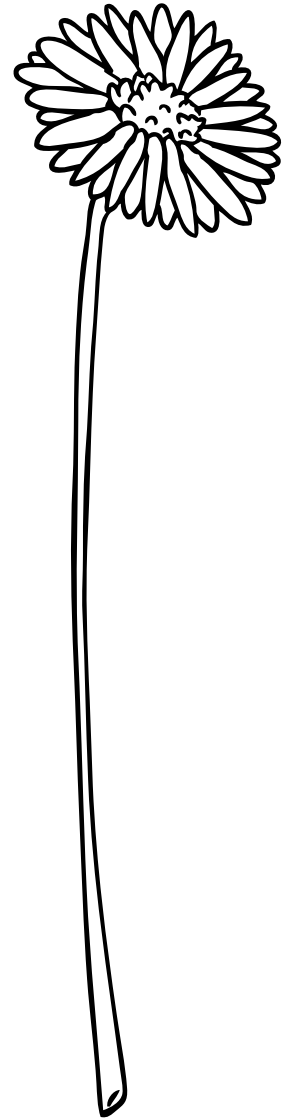
Community Harm Reduction Topics are announced the month prior
4th Thursday of each month
7 - 9pm

MOVIE & DISCUSSION

February 7th, June 5th, October 2nd
Movie Announced the month prior
5:30 - 9:30pm



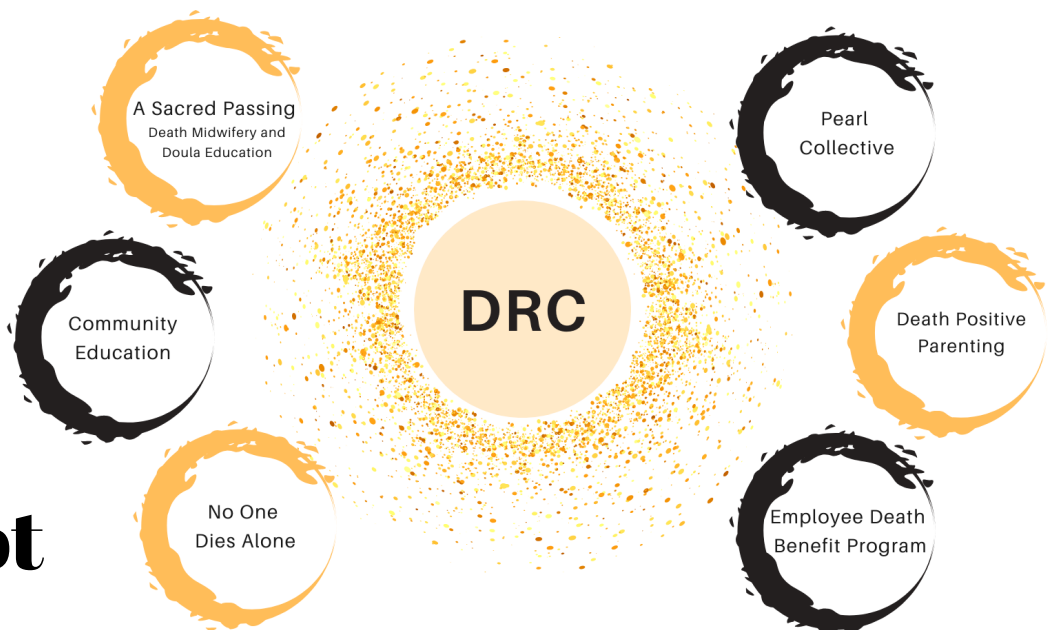
All events are held at the
South Park Idea Lab
1251 S Cloverdale St
Seattle, WA 98108
Enter through the backstairs by Resistencia Coffee's Garage Door.



Death Resource Center

It's the Spot

deathresourcecenter.com



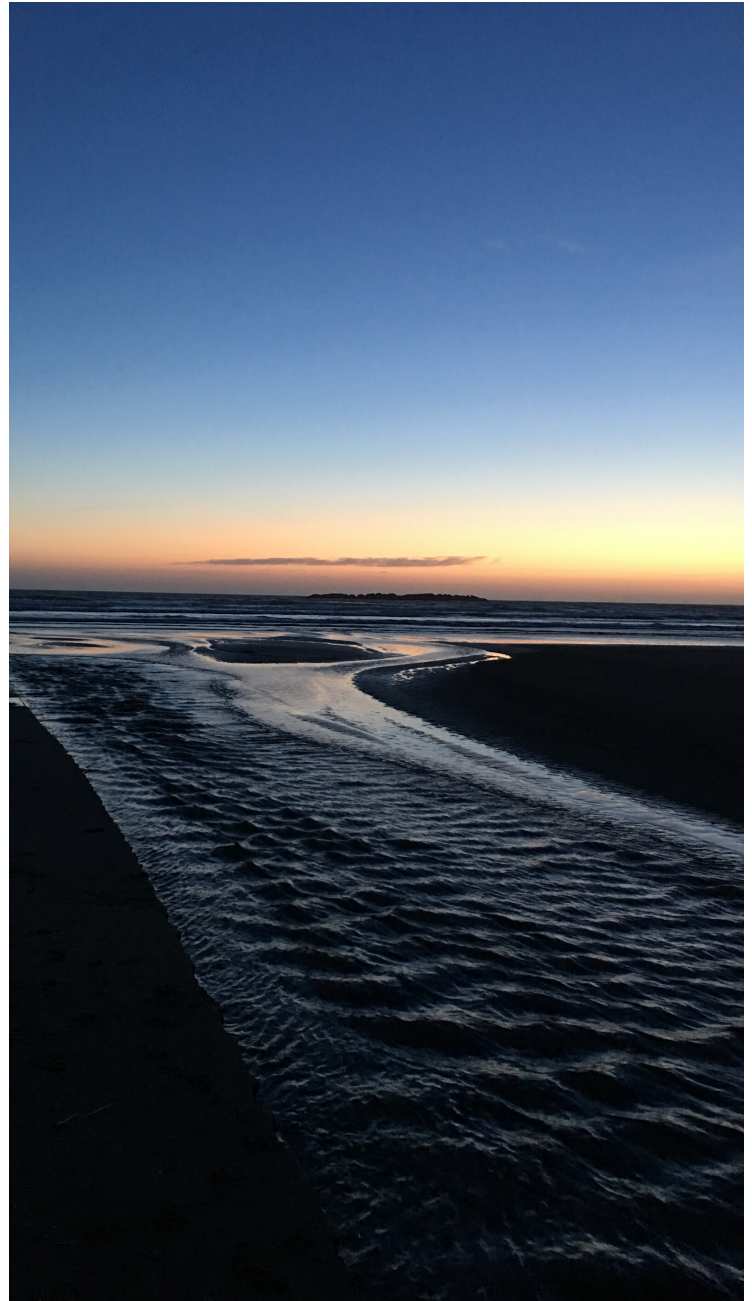
Endwell Design Day

Oceana Sawyer

At the recent Endwell Design Day, which followed the Endwell 2019 Symposium in San Francisco, a select group of attendees got creative about solutions to some of the issues that were discussed during the previous day. One small team working on the challenge of normalizing the conversation around death and dying at multiple social levels (individuals, families/friends, communities, general public) came up with a social media campaign called #talkdeathchallenge. This simple idea invites conversation on death and dying via the answer to three simple questions, below:



Photography By Jacqui James



Otter Rock California

While camping among the giant redwoods, I followed a path to the mouth of the river. It was dusk, that magical moment when the sun slips below the horizon and all is glowing for a matter of seconds; and then there was the tug of the tide heading out – all seemed to pull in the same direction, away from me.

Lamb Bones at Leidaendi

Carrie Redway

I have one foot resting on the dirt and one foot
sunk under.

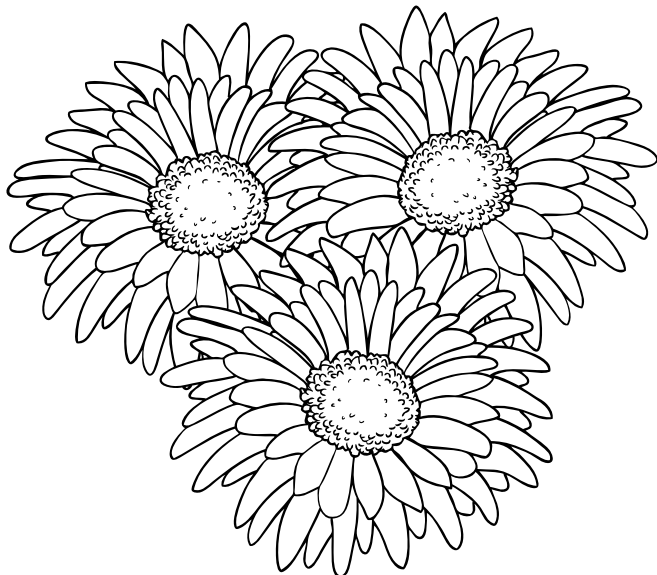
A few feet inside the cave, lamb bones clean,
rested in a sacred lava bowel. We question
existence.

Maybe the lamb fell through a crack in the
rock, running from her shepherd. Maybe the
lamb grew weary in the pitch dark as she
wobbled farther from the cave opening.

I feel the world shrug.
I sit by her still, linger with lamp light in hand.

Oh, my thin skin, decaying. Oh, my short
breath, rotting. Oh, my little bones, rattling.

Some of my bones lay still in the world, but a
few will shake out of it.



"It's a big fucking deal,"

Frank Ostaseski
on minimizing feelings.
Endwell 2019

A Storm Brewing.



Taken at a small lake near Longmont Colorado with the
snow-capped Rockies in the distance and a storm
brewing. Reflections. Mirror image. Peaceful. Printed
on palladium print (archaic photographic process).

Jacqui James

Remembering Dad

Kate Smith

My father was a rebel for his time. He wore wildly-colored Guatemalan vests to business meetings, where he advocated for the elderly who recovered in one of his many nursing homes in Colorado. One of his motto was: no one should ever die alone. So us kids - all 12 of us- grew up walking the halls of nursing homes, shaking old people's hands - and if someone had no family, one of us older kids would be expected to sit with that person until their final breath.

My dad died in August, 2016, at home surrounded by his beautiful wife - the mother of us all - and several progeny. I was not able to be there, so i instructed my siblings over the phone what to do, (I have a funeral director's license). Though we all knew my dad would want a radical, alternative way to leave his home of 50 years, my sibs had a very hard time resisting panic and not calling the funeral home. "No", I said calmly, "You really don't have to do that. It's really okay." I guided my little brother, Mike, through it, (since he has an interest in funerals- making urns), and over several hours, my sibs dressed my dad in his favorite vest, one of his favorite bollos and one of his many colorful caps. They found a long board and placed him on it. "It's okay", I kept saying. "Process him outside and around the yard." And they did - our big yard facing the beautiful Rocky Mountains, walking slowly, singing "Red River Valley." They laid him on one of the picnic tables that entertained hundreds of people over the years.

He would organize picnics, running around with his apron on and his big smile, cooking up the barbecue. My dad loved people and parties. My little niece scrambled up a tree to capture the below photo. Then, they placed my dad in my brother's van, but not before someone got hurt: Mike was pulling on some masking tape with his teeth to keep the board secured inside and the force of that damn stuff took out one of his front teeth. Ah, what we do for love - alive or dead.

The van drove slowly around the special village of 400 people we lived in. Then, they took the road into Denver, the one my dad drove countless times to work, to be the great provider he was. We all have memories of being packed in a station wagon or van, flying around as he flew down the road. Going fast was the only way you raise 12 children. Now it was his turn for the ride of his life, just the way he'd want it.

Kate is working on a book about her experience of working as a hospital clown at Seattle Children's Hospital and returning as a mother.

