

FALL NEWSLETTER/SEPTEMBER 2023

# ALASKA END-OF-LIFE ALLIANCE

There's always something going on.

It's the subtle changes of a season that remind us that beginnings and endings are always happening. As we say "goodbye" to Summer (was it?) and "hello" to Fall, we pause to consider people, if not ourselves, who are at the end of their lives.

We hope that all have been offered end-of-life care and support. We hope that all are experiencing the end of their lives as they hoped and maybe planned to.

For those who have not been offered end-of-life care and support, know that the Alaska End-of-Life Alliance remains committed to bringing it to you this Fall and many seasons after.

## Contact Us

### EMAIL

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### WEBSITE

[www.alaskaendoflifealliance.org](http://www.alaskaendoflifealliance.org)

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Alaska End-of-Life Alliance  
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LET'S TALK ABOUT DEATH AND DYING.  
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

LINDA JOHNSON, DEATH CAFE COORDINATOR



If you could pick anyone to sing at your memorial service, who would it be, and what would they sing?

If you could control only one thing about the place where you spend your last hours of life, what would it be?

Interesting questions? Thought so! Join us!



CAN YOU BE WITH ME IN THE COLD MORNING OF  
DYING?

WHEN THE FIRE IN ME IS OUT AND NOTHING WARMS MY  
BLOOD

CAN YOU WATCH ME WITH THE EYE OF A MOTHER?

WHEN THE CANDLE IS BURNT AND THE FRIENDS HAVE  
GONE?

CAN YOU JUST BE, NOT WISHING ONE MORE BREATH IN  
ME?

AND WHEN MY EYES ARE CLOSED SHUT,  
GLAD OF THE LONG, QUIET REST  
WILL YOU THEN TRAVEL STILL WITH ME?

AS I CLOSE THIS DOOR BEHIND  
AND OPEN INTO THE OPEN HEART OF DEATH  
SWEET LOVE CALL THAT BROUGHT ME BIRTH,  
NOW CALL ME SAFELY BACK IN EARTH.

GAELIC POEM FROM "A CELTIC BOOK OF  
DYING";  
BY PHYLLIDA ANAM-AIRE

## DEATH CAFE 2023

*The goal of the Death Café is to provide a judgment-free environment where participants, often strangers, can openly engage in discussion on the topic of death and dying. The discussion is moderated, but without a predetermined agenda or theme.*

NEXT DEATH CAFES

OCT 23, NOV 27

@5:30-6:30PM

LOUSSAC LIBRARY  
3600 DENALI ST, ANCHORAGE

DEATH CAFES FACILITATORS:  
LINDA JOHNSON AND KRIS  
GREEN

CONTACT  
DEATHCAFE907@GMAIL.COM



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As doulas, we companion rather than treat.  
As doulas, we meet others where they are.  
As doulas, we practice unconditional positive regard.

You may have heard of birth doulas, but did you know there are similar offerings to us and our caregivers at the end of life? End-of-Life (EOL) Doulas are there to support their client, their family and friends, and medical caregiving team. We may be called on to offer services to one or all of these groups in certain stages of our life. Many of us don't only show up to those in times of illness or to sit vigil, and are able to initiate and create legacy projects, assist with advance directives, and connect clients to resources within the community for people of all ages and in all stages of life.

In my End-of-Life Doula training with the University of Vermont, it was explained there are three general categories of support doulas provide: planning, preparing, and processing. I'll use this to explain more about the range of services doulas may offer.

#### PLANNING

Doulas provide non-medical, non-legal, nonjudgmental emotional/spiritual support, and soothing physical comfort measures. We may assist in drafting advance care forms, including directives and supplemental questionnaires related to ones values or ethics, and in the daily minutiae like coordinating meals and running errands, so that loved ones may be more present at the bedside. We are also asked to assist with "death cleaning" and/or bequeathing treasured items.

#### PREPARING

Preparing includes assisting in the arrangement of our client's space for their desired comfort and of their support network for an optimal living and vigil experience. We connect clients and caregivers to resources in the community, such as grief support groups, pet care, or therapeutic musicians, when services fall outside our role and scope. Lastly, we assist clients with living their days to the fullest by developing wishes for care together, arranging visits, and encouraging the preservation of energy for what is most important.

#### PROCESSING

We support our client with the purposeful work of documenting life reflections, storytelling, and legacy projects. We are story catchers. We listen deeply. Some may offer guided imagery, meditation, relaxation, and/or breath practice.

This is heart-centered work and we recognize the tremendous honor that it is to journey with another on this path. This skims the surface on the range of services doulas offer as some of us offer after-death care or may serve as a home funeral guide.

We look forward to sharing more about our doula work in the next newsletter and hope this piqued your curiosity!

Till next time, Bre!

