

ALASKA END-OF-LIFE ALLIANCE

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2024

EOL CARE ADVOCATE
SPOTLIGHT:
Rachel Bernhardt



WANT TO START A
“DEATH CAFE” IN YOUR
COMMUNITY?
Read On!

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EOL Care Advocate Spotlight: Rachel Bernhardt

By Denise Hendrickson, Alaska End-of-Life Alliance Board President



Alaska End-of-Life Alliance Board Secretary: Rachel Bernhardt

Have you ever met someone who is driven to bring about change? Who is passionate and determined to share a new perspective or way to do things? Well, if you haven't, then you should. And, if you live in Alaska, then let me introduce you to Rachel Bernhardt.

I was lucky to meet Rachel two years ago when we were part of a small group of EOL advocates who co-founded the Alaska End-of-Life Alliance. Upon meeting her, I found out that she had big ideas. And it seemed fitting for an Alaskan-born to go big, but I just didn't realize HOW big.

Over a cup of coffee, Rachel shared that she wanted to "expand access and equity in deathcare services and create sustainable deathcare infrastructure for all Alaskans" - wow! Basically, she is busy letting Alaskans know that they can make their own decisions in deathcare services and educating them on just what services are available here in Alaska.

Rachel does this through her work, primarily, in her two EOL businesses: Alaska Natural Burial and her recently opened crematory, Flameless Cremations. She also promotes a death positive community which includes choice in EOL care and conversations about death and dying as a board member of the Alaska End-of-Life Alliance. Whew!

Ready to meet her and find out more?

Check out how she is advocating for a natural burial site in Anchorage by clicking [here](#) or how she has brought water cremation to Anchorage by clicking [here](#) (AK Public Media article).

Thanks so much for your wonderful work, Rachel!

"Making choices around death is personal and there's not one *right* way" - Rachel

The Power of a Death Positive Community

by Linda Johnson, Death Cafe Coordinator/Facilitator



Death Café is an integral part of a larger Death Positive Community. This community sees honest conversations about death and dying as the cornerstone of a healthy society. The Death Positive Movement is a social and psychological perspective that encourages people to speak openly about all things concerning death and dying.

Death Café 907 – Anchorage reopened this conversational space in January 2023, after being interrupted by COVID (2020-2022), and has gained significant momentum since its restart. It operates as a social franchise following the guidelines and model developed by Jon Underwood and Sue Barsky Reid (2011) ~ (www.deathcafe.com)

We believe that talking about death will teach us more about how to live than how to die. We feel compassionately that the opportunity to bring people together in a non-biased, non-scripted space is important and effective. We're convinced that there is a great deal we can do to promote a Death Positive environment for as many as possible . . . and that, we will do!

We are further convinced that talking about death will not kill you!



To date, there are reportedly, 18,758 death cafés in over 89 countries -- proof that the whole world wants to talk about death! After all, it is an appointment that we all have in common as the mortals that we are.

I'm reaching out for your assistance in widening the scope of this "sacred space" in all of Alaska!

If you would like to see and/or facilitate a Death Café in your area, please let us know.

**I am available to assist you.
(deathcafe907@gmail.com)**

Facilitator/Host information is also readily accessible at <https://deathcafe.com/>

**Yours Truly,
Linda**

I believe that we can erase the fear and lack of intentional consciousness in dealing with death, enabling us all to live more fully. -- Linda