

Career opportunities in funeral services by Heidi Riley

A career information session was held recently at Belvedere Funeral Home in Charlottetown. Local professionals and industry experts described the abilities and attributes needed to work in funeral services, and the career opportunities available on PEI.

Twenty funeral homes are licensed to operate on PEI. Some are large operations, where staff have defined roles, and some require each staff member to wear many hats.

Job titles at some funeral homes

- Funeral Director/Licensed Embalmer
- Funeral Director's Assistant
- Receptionist
- Vehicle Detailer
- Reception Host/Hostess
- Organist/Pianist
- Cremator Operator

Belvedere Funeral Home has been in operation for 26 years. There are four full-time and four part-time staff members.

"A good time to get into funeral service is after you raise your family, because the hours are long, but the rewards are there," says **Faye Doucette**, Owner. "You need to be caring, social, and you need to love people."

Belvedere Funeral Home is looking to hire people who are adaptable and willing to work part-time or on-call. Formal training is not required, specific training is done in-house, and working hours are flexible.

Who could be a fit for this type of work?

- Students
- Retired people
- People looking to change careers
- Military, police officers, fire fighters, and paramedics

To apply for part-time work at **Belvedere Funeral Home**, email **Faye Doucette** at faye@belvederefh.com. Attach your resumé and indicate whether you are interested in a career in this field or looking for part-time work.

Many duties in funeral services

"My funeral home is a one-man operation," says **Nathaniel Lamoureux**, Owner of **Dingwell Funeral Home** in Souris. "I do 60 to 70 calls a year. I handle everything from cleaning mirrors and scrubbing toilets to washing the hearse, embalming, cosmetology, meeting with families, and conducting funerals."

For more about **Dingwell Funeral Home**, visit www.dingwellfh.com



An information session about jobs in funeral services was recently held at the Belvedere Funeral Home. On hand to talk about their experiences were (from left) Nathaniel Lamoureux, Faye Doucette, Bill Sampson, and Codi Shewan.

Staff work together

"There is such a great support group within funeral services, and we are all there for one another," says **Bill Sampson**, Atlantic Canada Representative of the Dodge Canada Chemical Company, which retails embalming supplies.

Bill also teaches short education courses related to the field.

For more about **Dodge Chemical Company**, visit www.dodgecan.com



Rewards and challenges

Codi Shewan is President of **Everlearn Associates**, a consulting firm which works in the death-care profession.

He spends much of his time speaking and consulting on leadership, employee development, and best practices around workplace culture.

"One of the part-time roles needed at a funeral home is Funeral Director's Assistant," says Codi.

"Duties, among the many meant to help in the overall operation of the funeral home, include assisting funeral director(s) with ushering people to their seats in the chapel, giving people direction as to where to park, greeting people inside the doors and providing guidance, helping with the removal of the deceased from the place of death to the funeral home, taking calls in the office, vacuuming, and washing vehicles."

"It is all about providing crystal clear communication in a calm and organized fashion, so the family can go through this experience and trust you in their time of need."

"It is incredibly rewarding to be able to partner with families on the journey of their loss," says Codi.

"The challenges are also many. This business operates 24/7, 365 days a year. Nothing in this building is automated. People do all the work. When the phone rings at 3 am, a real person answers the phone."

For more about **Everlearn Associates**, visit www.everlearnassociates.com



Education options

Funeral Service programs offer a combination of online and hands-on learning and practicums. The course of study prepares students for work at a funeral home, and for related jobs in hospitals, pathology, or a medical examiner's office.

- Funeral and Allied Health Services program, Nova Scotia Community College, Kentville: www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/programs/PlanDescr.aspx?prg=FNRL&pln=FUNSERV
- Funeral Director Embalming and non-Embalming programs, Humber College, Toronto: healthsciences.humber.ca/programs/funeral-director-class-2-non-embalming.html
- Funeral Service Education, Mount Royal University, Calgary: www.mtroyal.ca/ProgramsCourses/ContinuingEducation/CentreforExtensionCredit/OccupationalPrograms/funeral/FuneralServiceDiploma/index.htm
- Rosemount College, Montreal, Quebec: www.crosemont.qc.ca/programme/techniques-de-thanatologie/ - French language instruction
- Canadian College of Funeral Service, Winnipeg, Manitoba: www.cafs.ca



For more information about a career in funeral services

- Funeral Service Association of Canada: www.fsac.ca
- Prince Edward Island Funeral Services and Professions Board: www.peifuneralboard.com



For the full interviews, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Funeral Services**.

