

# FCA REPORT

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FCA-GKC



## Annual program to explore grief following suicides & other stigmatized deaths

When death happens under unusual circumstances such as suicide, the grief experience—and challenge of responding with loved ones, can be excruciatingly painful and awkward.

What do we say to surviving family members? Do we articulate the reality or avoid it?

And if you're one of the family members, it's normal to feel anger at your loved one, or guilt for not recognizing the seriousness of the situation. Worse, you wonder, did you somehow contribute to the cause? In too many cases, family members in these situations do not receive the fullness of emotional support they need from others.

### Experiencing and Responding to Grief

Tuesday, Nov. 1, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church  
4501 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.

In-person and live-streamed

Register at [www.funeralskc.org](http://www.funeralskc.org)

► **FREE CEUs! See back page for details.** ◀

Grief, in its myriad dimensions, will be explored by two professionals during the 2022 annual program of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City. They are *Sally King, LCSW, LSCSW*, a licensed clinical social worker and adjunct professor at the University of Missouri–Kansas City, and *Eric Sigler, LMSW*, a grief support specialist at Kansas City Hospice and Palliative Care. King will focus on grief surrounding a suicide; Sigler will focus on “disenfranchised grief,” the type that people experience in silence when others do not acknowledge it.

King, who has been trained to work with suicide survivors, is a qualified instructor of other social workers and professionals. She will address ways to love those left behind, what they are going through, what they need, and how a community can support them.

Suicide-related grief is a timely topic because the United States is experiencing an epidemic of suicides, especially among teens and young men. The isolation imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic is a definite factor. So is the delayed frontal-lobe development in male brains (23 or 24 years of age, compared with women at 18 to 20). A third



Sally King and Eric Sigler will present the 2022 annual program of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City.

factor is the availability of firearms.

King, a past president of FCA-GKC, will explain how our thinking about dealing with suicide has evolved. For example, “We urge people not to use the term ‘committed suicide,’ because that makes it sound like a crime,” King said. “Instead, say ‘completed suicide’ or ‘ended their life.’”

Also, the Kubler-Ross “five stages of grief” (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) have been increasingly challenged by therapists. A new model involves the four *tasks* of mourning: Accept the reality of the loss. Process the pain of grief. Adjust to a world without the deceased. Find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life.

Sigler will discuss the types of death that can result in disenfranchised grief, which is grief that others don't acknowledge. Those deaths could include suicide, drug overdose, alcoholism, murder, even old age. He described the phenomenon:

“When grief is disenfranchised, the grief itself is often stigmatized and the person's ability to grieve suffers,” Sigler said. “When society does not validate our loss, it inhibits our healing process. Society says we should not grieve this loss, so we don't talk about it, and it affects our mental health.”

See Annual, back page

## Surfacing above the waves of grief

# The trauma of a sudden death

By Joan Gladbach

*Editor's note:* Joan Gladbach is the mother of 28-year-old Megan Gladbach, who was killed on Memorial Day weekend when a drunken driver veered into oncoming traffic on a rural Missouri highway.

Where did *your* pain start? Was it a gradual process that first began in a doctor's office with a diagnosis of cancer? Alzheimer's? Heart disease? Ours was abrupt. I am not sure if easing into this process over time or overnight is better. Perhaps it really doesn't matter either way; it just hurts.

Police knocked on our door at 4:30 a.m. with news of our daughter's accident. The disbelief and confusion were disorienting. We could not process. It couldn't be Megan. She had Covid, she wouldn't have been out in public. What was she doing in Lebanon, Mo., three hours away?

But the officers were confident; they had found her driver's license and her dog. Her partner, Joseph, had not been identified, as his wallet could not be found, but "John Doe" was in a Springfield, Mo., hospital in the neuro-intensive care unit. We called family and friends to help us, then drove to Springfield to check on Joseph and pick up Megan's dog. I wanted to prepare her body for burial, but the funeral director in Lebanon was confident that that would not be a good idea. Instead, we visited the accident site and left flowers.

The days that followed were filled with purpose—planning and organizing. Two things were clear from the start: We would use the funeral home where my husband, Tim, had worked and which our dear friend owned, and Megan would be buried at Heartland Prairie Cemetery near Salina, run by friends Megan knew from her time at the Land Institute. But where to hold a service? How to organize it? What about the obituary, surgery for the dog, people coming into town?

I write about this sense of *purpose*—the planning for Megan's Celebration of Life and burial—because in so many ways it was the first stage of our grief. We made decisions always thinking about what *she* would have wanted. Megan fought for the environment, so the service was at a local park and her burial was a natural one. Megan loved to play music, so her bandmates played at her celebration. Megan loves her family and friends, so most of us participated in one way or another. Each decision we made felt right for Megan and captured her life and purpose as best we were able. That week we cried and planned and visited with family and friends who loved her, too.

Megan's burial was beautiful. Her brother, friends, and cousins carried her to her burial site—not in a fancy wooden box but in a white shroud. They lowered her into the hole that was dug by her Land Institute friends. Some



Megan Gladbach, 28, was killed by a drunken driver. Her mother writes of the family's grieving process.

participants shoveled the dirt back into her grave after her service, which provided a physical connection to her death and helped us to begin processing her loss.

Then the family and friends left town and we went back to work, back to "normal." But we didn't feel normal at all. A part of our heart was gone and somehow we needed to find a way to keep moving forward without it. During the first weeks it was hard to do anything. It was so hard to think, to process, that even doing the simplest of things was difficult. It was hard to go to the store, to see how the world was moving forward but we were somehow standing still. I was not ready to be in that world at all. Our jobs give three days of bereavement leave, and they think that is enough—but it is not even close to what is needed. A friend told me that in the Jewish tradition, for 30 days after the death of a loved one the family members are "not in the world." It has been about 90 days for me, and I still feel that I am not back in the world.

As the months have passed, many family and friends have reached out to help. One friend spent the day with me, repotting Megan's plants and teaching me how to care for them. Another friend has sent not *one* card but *five*, reminding us with each one that we are loved. Another friend has checked in almost daily, just asking how I am doing. Friends and family came to the Masses that were offered in her name, and Megan's friends reached out, too. Friends and family have invited us to dinner or drinks, which is kind but also at times really hard.

The one thing that has probably helped the most is having Megan's dog, Nasha, with us. She is an active dog who needs lots of attention and exercise. She gets me out of bed in the morning when I just want to lie there, and she brings joy to our lives. Yes, all of these things help, but there is still that hole in our hearts that will keep us from feeling whole. Several friends have suggested that we look into grief counseling. They are probably right. But just now I do not have the heart to do even that. □

*Joan Gladbach is an instructor at UMKC. She thanks all first responders and law enforcement officers who have the unfortunate duty of handling the consequences of tragedies like her family's.*

*An update:* Joseph's injuries were severe. He had many surgeries and remained in the hospital for almost two months. He has made significant strides in his recovery, and is living with his grandmother, working on physical therapy and walking with the help of crutches.

# Surfacing above the waves of grief

## When a therapist is hit by waves of grief...

By Michael Art

My longest, most difficult, grief journey began Nov. 1, 2017. That was the day my daughter Renee, at the age of 26, passed away. This event took me into a difficult and revealing journey about the process of grief.

I have been a clinical social worker for more than 30 years and have helped many of my clients work through their grief. I experienced tremendous grief when my father passed when I was 29, but losing my daughter so young was not the grief journey I was prepared to travel. She died from a brain tumor that was diagnosed four years before she passed.

I was pretty much in denial for most of those four years. In fact, at one point we thought she had beaten the tumor and our family held a great celebration. But months later the tumor returned, and then it was terminal. It still took a long time to accept that she would not survive. We did everything we could, including traveling to the most advanced cancer centers in the nation, searching for clinical trials, seeking out any treatment that could offer some hope.

I remember vividly the day I took her to meet with her oncologist, who told us what the dying process would be like for her. On that day I was the one who completely lost it in the doctor's office, while my daughter remained remarkably calm and actually comforted me.

I was able to put my clinical practice on hold and spend my daughter's last few months caring for her. What I experienced during those days was "anticipatory grief." It was helpful, in that we could share some wishes she had on her bucket list. The most amazing experience was giving her an opportunity to attend the "Tonight Show" with Jimmy Fallon, one of her favorite comedians. After the show she met him and bandleader Questlove, and got a back-stage tour. We cherish the photo of her and Jimmy.

I was at Renee's side at Kansas City Hospice House when she took her last breath. I was surprisingly calm. I think this possibly was because I had been experiencing grief all along. But then the grief wave hit, and it was nothing I could have expected. No book or teaching could prepare one for this kind of experience. Only people who have lost a child or spouse when they still had so much possible life ahead can truly understand this grief.

I have a friend who lost his son just a few months after I lost my daughter. We talk about belonging to "the club no one would choose to join." I already knew, before my daughter's death, that the Kubler-Ross stages of grief did not adequately describe the grief process. It is a journey that is unpredictable, intense,



Sisters Kristyn (far left) and Renee (next to her) with their parents, Linda and Michael Art, in Vienna, one of the places Renee had always wanted to visit.

and an emotional roller coaster. Now I am coming to understand that this grief is going to be with me for the rest of my life.

The months after Renee passed were pretty much a fog. I was breaking through the denial and realizing the reality that she was truly gone. There were experiences in which I felt she was connecting with us. A bird built a nest in a wreath hanging on our front door. In that nest the mother laid four eggs. It was beautiful to see this new life spring forth. The glimpse of a cardinal or a butterfly seemed to be Renee reaching out to let us know all was well. I held onto these experiences as a way to feel like there is still some kind of connection. In the beginning and throughout the next few years, it seemed she was always on my mind. Part of me did not want to *stop* thinking about her, fearing I would lose all contact with her.

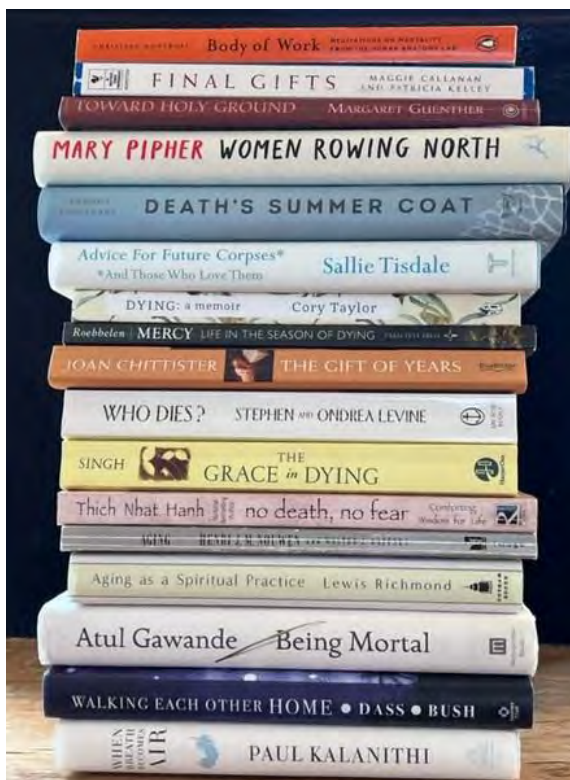
Friends and family did all they could to be supportive, but it was never enough—nor could it be enough. Before I experienced my daughter's passing, I don't think I knew what to say to anyone experiencing this kind of loss. But once you are in this club, there is a deep understanding. It is good to be with those who truly understand what you are going through.

It will be five years this Nov. 1. She passed on All Saints' Day. I do believe she is with the saints. I still think about her every day, still have grief showers and moments when it feels like she is still with us. Whether she is with the saints or has moved onto her next life, no one knows. No one knows what happens when we pass on, but I feel she is in an amazing and wonderful place.

The opposite of grief is joy. To cope with her loss, we joyfully give back to our community in her name. We raise funds by walking with her friends and family in the annual Head for the Cure walk/run for brain tumor research. We award an annual scholarship to a high school senior in her name.

I have discovered that grief is a part of life, and I hope I never stop grieving until we are reunited somewhere beyond this world and all is well again. □

# Death and dying: Books to inform, support & challenge



*Editor's note:* There's a world of good reading out there about aging, dying, and death—books that will pique your interest, challenge your assumptions, support your emotions, and provide practical advice. Here are some:

**When Breath Becomes Air**, by Paul Kalanithi • A young neurosurgeon's thoughts between his diagnosis with lung cancer and his death.

**Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End**, by Atul Gawande • A surgeon examines the limits and failings of the medical profession as life comes to an end, and urges us to ask what the dying truly want and need.

**Women Rowing North: Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing as We Age**, by Mary Pipher • "If we can keep our wit about us, think clearly, and manage our emotions skillfully, we will experience a joyous time..."

**Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communications of the Dying**, by Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley • Stories about how dying people communicate their needs and reveal their feelings. We just have to pay attention.

**Toward Holy Ground: Spiritual Directions for the Second Half of Life**, by Margaret Guenther • How the aging process can teach us lightheartedness, detachment, and a tolerance for ambiguity.

**Aging As a Spiritual Practice**, by Lewis Richmond • A

road map for aging, acknowledging our fear, anger, and sorrow.

**Aging: The Fulfillment of Life**, by Henri J.M. Nouwen and Walter J. Gaffney • How to start fulfilling our lives by giving to others.

**Mercy: Life in the Season of Dying**, by Peter Roebelen • How life and healing can actually be part of death for those approaching life's end and those walking with them.

**The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully**, by Joan Chittister • Embracing older age as a part of life that is both active and contemplative, productive and reflective.

**No Death, No Fear: Comforting Wisdom for Life**, by Thich Nhat Hanh • Living fully in the present as a path to the end.

**The Grace in Dying: A Message of Hope, Comfort and Spiritual Transformation**, by Kathleen Dowling Singh • Dying is safe. You are safe. Your loved one is safe.

**Who Dies? An Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying**, by Stephen and Ondrea Levine • Divesting the "death melodrama" of its frightful power.

**Advice for Future Corpses (And Those Who Love Them): A Practical Perspective on Death and Dying**, by Sallie Tisdale • Intimate anecdotes from the author's work in palliative care.

**Dying: A Memoir**, by Cory Taylor • A plea for autonomy in death and acceptance of the randomness of life.

**Walking Each Other Home: Conversations on Loving and Dying**, by Ram Dass and Mirabai Bush • What would it look like if you could approach dying with curiosity and love rather than fear?

**Body of Work: Meditations on Mortality from the Human Anatomy Lab**, by Christine Montross • The history of cadaveric dissection and our relationship with the dead.

**Healing After Loss: Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief**, by Martha Whitmore Hickman

**How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies**, by Therese A. Rando, Ph.D.

**It's OK That You're NOT OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand**, by Megan Devine

**Permission to Mourn: A New Way To Do Grief**, by Tom Zuba

**The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully**, by Frank Ostaseski □

## ***More learning options!***

# **The National FCA Online Conference**

The annual conference of the National Funeral Consumers Alliance will take place Friday, Oct. 7, through Sunday, Oct. 9. All events will take place by video on Zoom. Those who register will receive an email with links to meetings. For those who cannot participate live, recordings of the conference will be available to registrants for viewing at their convenience.

The conference is open to the public for a registration fee of \$90 for the full conference or \$30 per day. Register at [funerals.org](http://funerals.org). Some program highlights, all times Central:



A green burial. The session on funeral alternatives will explain and provide examples.

### **► OCT. 7**

#### **Opening Remarks (Noon–12:30 p.m.)**

Join FCA executive director Josh Slocum for a discussion of funeral topics, including the fact that fewer than one-fifth of America's funeral homes voluntarily disclose their prices online. What you can do to encourage more transparency.

#### **Death and Free Speech (12:25–2:00 p.m.)**

A panel discussion with the plaintiffs and attorney for an important suit against the State of California. At issue: Two women teach families how to hold a home funeral. California wants to put them out of business for practicing funeral directing without a license. They're fighting back.

#### **Good Grief: The Art of Writing a Condolence Letter (2:15–3:30 p.m.)**

If you ever sat down to write a condolence letter and were at a loss for words, you're not alone. This workshop will review condolence letters from writers throughout history to find the inspiration we need.

### **► OCT. 8**

#### **Funeral Alternatives: The State of Play (Noon–1:15 p.m.)**

Educator and author Lee Webster rounds up the nontraditional body disposition options becoming available. Green burial, home funerals, alkaline hydrolysis, and more.

#### **So You Wanna Buy a Casket? (1:30–2:30 p.m.)**

Scott Ginsberg and Josh Siegel of Titan Casket, one of the largest third-party casket retailers in the country, will explain the Federal Trade Commission's Funeral Rule, which requires funeral homes to accept caskets purchased elsewhere at no extra charge.

### **► OCT. 9**

#### **Taking Responsibility for the End (1:30–2:30 p.m.)**

FCA executive director Josh Slocum believes that consumers and families bear half of the responsibility for ensuring that a funeral meets their needs and budget. But few Americans take that seriously; it's easier to complain about "greedy funeral directors." Learn how to avoid common mistakes.

#### **The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (2:45–4:15 p.m.)**

Dr. Gregory Redhouse is a military veteran, a resident of the Navajo Nation, and an assistant professor of economics at Diné College. He will explain the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, including how it originated and what it accomplishes. □

## Confused about funding requests?

By Kate Sargent  
FCA-GKC President



*Editor's note:* FCA-GKC president Kate Sargent recently sent the following letter to 21 of our Kansas City area supporters who had donated to the national Funeral Consumers Alliance. We share our mailing list with the national organization, which solicits donations here, and later lets us know from whom they received contributions. The letter explains the rest.

Dear Friend:

Our local FCA-GKC board discussed you and the fact that you made a contribution to national FCA. For that we wish to thank you.

We are one of 50 local funeral consumer groups affiliated with national FCA, headquartered in South Burlington, Vt. We depend on them for their national perspective, advice, and advocacy in Congress. We also support national FCA, sending them 15 percent of our donations. It's in our best interest (yours, too) that national FCA remains strong.

I write today to clarify the difference between us and national in case you didn't know. Our names are so similar—national's Funeral Consumers Alliance and our Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City—they could easily be confused. We suspect some of our donations may be going to them by mistake.

I also want to assure you of the vibrancy of our local FCA-GKC board members and volunteers. They are the boots on the ground in our metropolitan area, truly on behalf of families dealing with the deaths of loved ones. They collect the prices charged by all 113 funeral homes here, publish them, and post them on our website free of charge for all. They stage our annual program each November for social workers, health-care professionals, and our neighbors down the street. They publish our bi-annual newsletters and offer presentations to groups. They investigate complaints and receive no compensation for their efforts. Simply, I couldn't be prouder of them.

Sincerely,  
Kate

## Preplan, but don't prepay

Funeral homes like to see families arriving ahead of time to plan funerals, and FCA does, too. But the funeral home will try to sell a prepaid plan, and we advise against it. Preplan, we say, but don't prepay.

Prepaid contracts can be restrictive and can make you vulnerable. We suggest opening a bank or credit union savings account jointly with a trusted friend or relative who knows your wishes. □

6 Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City

## Saluting our donors

Twenty-six supporters contributed a total of \$4,165 to FCA-GKC from March 2022 through press time. Donations to this nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization are tax deductible. Thank you, thank you. We cannot function without you!

Deborah Altus  
Lynn Anderson  
Don Baken and Adrie Present  
Gary and Carol Bloomer  
Corynn Corcoran  
E. and B.H. Cummings  
Diane Etzel-Wise  
James and Janice Grebe  
Richard and Kay Griggs  
Angela Howard  
David Johnson  
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Steve and Marcia Nicely  
Virginia L. Powers  
Amy Ringstaff  
Angelina Sanchez-Vinson  
Monica Schroer  
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth  
Robert Timmons  
Eric Walter  
John Wubberhorst  
Jayden Zamora



## Let us help educate your members

Are you part of an organization that would benefit from an unbiased presentation about important practical aspects of funeral planning and myths/facts about funeral and burial practices?

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City has speakers who are eager to share and educate. Call us at 816-561-6322 or email us at [fca.gkc@gmail.com](mailto:fca.gkc@gmail.com). We'll line you up with one of our members for a visit—at no charge, of course.

We look forward to meeting and interacting with you! □

## A new take on cremation urns

Many funeral homes and crematories have a wide selection of urns, from the plain to the ornate. But the funny thing is, any attractive piece of pottery seems to jump in price the moment the word "urn" is affixed to it. A similar container sold for another purpose might be just as suitable, and cheaper. One woman's family put her ashes in a favorite cookie jar—a fitting tribute to a grandma who prided herself on her baking. Think about finding a container that has meaning in a family member's home. □

# Meet our dedicated board!

Today's nine-member FCA-GKC board of directors is one of the strongest we have had in years. Four of them are social workers, two are multi-media artists, two are journalists, and one is an accountant. Six are retired, five hold advanced degrees, and two are college instructors. It's a remarkable thing that this all-volunteer organization has functioned continuously for 61 years, representing the interests of consumers dealing with funerals and other end-of-life issues.

## OFFICERS



**President Kathryn (Kate) Sargent**, Kansas City, Kan., is a retired school social worker. She holds bachelor's degrees in education and psychology with a certificate in death and dying. She facilitated an addiction recovery group for five years. Her graduate studies include course work at the St. Paul School of Theology.

*Retirement is freedom to commit to a worthy cause. An FCA board president's invitation allowed me to see our remarkable volunteers and their passion to help their neighbors with end-of-life decisions. I wanted to be part of that.*



**Vice President Diane Etzel-Wise**, Lenexa, Kan., holds a master's degree in health services administration and more than 50 hours toward a doctorate in social work. Although she is retired from full-time employment in academia and mental health

services, she consults and trains in mental health and trauma issues for non-profit organizations and government agencies.

*Steve Nicely and Lyle Van Vleet introduced us to FCA about four years ago. As a social worker and educator, I was drawn from the beginning to the mission of supporting informed decisions about funerals.*



**Secretary Jacquie Amweg**, Independence, Mo., is a licensed clinical social worker at Kansas City Hospice and Palliative Care, where she coordinates the Passages Counseling Program. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in social work.

*I attended a workshop by a former FCA board member and learned about the organization. I wanted to be part of this organization and its mission of providing needed resources for the community.*



**Treasurer David J. Johnson**, Kansas City, Mo., is retired. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Kansas State University.

*I was invited to become a volunteer by another FCA board member in 2016. I am a retired accountant and felt I could use my skills with numbers to facilitate FCA's finances and its funeral home price survey.*

## MEMBERS



**Lynn Anderson**, Moab, Utah, holds a master's in journalism from the University of Kansas. Now retired, she was an editor and writer with the *Kansas City Star*, the University of Kansas, and *The Best Times* newspaper for Johnson County

government. She is an ad hoc board member who edits and lays out this newsletter.

*Shortly after being hired at The Best Times, I heard from Steve Nicely, who regularly submitted important articles. My respect for the FCA-GKC, and the people who sustain it, continues to grow.*



**Carol Condon**, Shawnee, Kan., retired, holds a commercial arts degree.

*I joined FCA-GKC after I learned more about it while creating its website. I was hooked, and still am. It's a great organization and information resource for everyone, since we all die.*



**Angelica "Angie" Martinez**, Independence, Mo., is a multimedia artist and full-time student in art therapy at Avila University. She is a volunteer group facilitator with BeHereNow KC, has completed death doula training, and is

working toward certification.

*Being a part of FCA-GKC allows me to weave death-related education and advocacy into my career. In turn, I am able to use FCA-GKC's social media to help families and individuals make informed death-related decisions that align with their values and culture.*



**Steve Nicely**, Mission, Kan., is a retired *Kansas City Star* journalist who holds a bachelor's degree in journalism.

*Past FCA-GKC president Bev McGill asked me to edit the organization's newsletter when I retired from The Star in 2001. She asked until I said yes. I'm glad I did. The writing and editing of this newsletter helps keep me functional and adds meaning in retirement.*



**Amy Simmons**, Liberty, Mo., is an associate teaching professor and MSW Program director at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She holds a master's degree in social work, is a licensed clinical social worker, and is a candidate for a doctorate in education.

*Kate Sargent invited me to join the board. It's an area of interest for me, so it's a good fit! □*



**RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED**

## **FCA-GKC Board of Directors**

### **Officers**

*President:* Kate Sargent  
*Vice-President:* Diane Etzel-Wise  
*Secretary:* Jacque Amweg,  
LSCSW, LCSW  
*Treasurer:* David Johnson

### **Members**

Lynn Anderson (ad hoc)  
Carol Condon  
Angelica Martinez  
Steve Nicely  
Amy Simmons

## **A lifeline for those in crisis: 988**

If you or a loved one are struggling with life and feeling overwhelmed, help is available at any hour of any day.

988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which is now known as the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** and is active across the United States.

When people call, text, or chat 988, they will be connected to trained counselors who are part of the existing Lifeline network. These trained counselors will listen, understand how the callers' problems are affecting them, provide support, and connect them to resources if necessary.

The previous Lifeline phone number, 800-273-8255, will always remain available to people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.

The Lifeline's network of more than 200 crisis centers has been in operation since 2005, and has been proven to be effective. The counselors at these local crisis centers answer the contacts the Lifeline receives every day. Numerous studies have shown that callers feel less suicidal, less depressed, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking with a Lifeline counselor. □



## **Annual, from page 1**

Most of us have experienced disenfranchised grief. Have you been left by someone you cared for? Lost a job? Lost a pet, and received lots of advice to just get another one?

"Covid certainly affected everyone's ability to connect," Sigler said. "Fortunately, many found ways to communicate through technology, but there is no substitute for physical presence. Without the recognition and validation of our losses, we feel marginalized. What can we do to mitigate these circumstances? We can promote dialogue where empathy can thrive."

Social work is Sigler's second career. The hospice care his mother received inspired him to earn a master's degree in social work after 30 years in news-media advertising and marketing sales.

### **Continuing education credits for FREE!**

The program is open to the public both in-person and live-streamed on Zoom. Continuing education hours are available for professionals, including two hours of Suicide credit and .75 to one hour of additional credit for the Disenfranchised Grief portion.

Social workers, health care providers, ministers, and other professionals will complete a survey at the conclusion of the program to earn the CEUs.

For our planning, we encourage you to register online at [www.funeralskc.org](http://www.funeralskc.org) whether you will attend in person or through streaming.

There are no charges or fees. This is our gift to the community. □



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**Experiencing and Responding  
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