

Two Windom businesses team up to offer 'Aftercare Program'

■ Two separate sessions will run on Tuesday nights and Wednesday mornings.

Dealing with grief after the death of a loved one can be difficult. However, a pair of Windom businesses are teaming up to make that journey just a bit easier.

Dr. Myra Heckenlaible-Gotto of Crossing Life's Bridges and Joel LaCanne of LaCanne Family Funeral Service are offering two opportunities to take part in an "Aftercare Program." One group will meet for six Tuesdays, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., starting July 25 and running through Aug. 29. A second group will meet on six Wednesday mornings from 9 to 11 a.m., beginning July 26 and running through Aug. 30.

A fee is involved with either session and there are still openings in both groups.

To sign up or for more information, call LaCanne Family Funeral Service at 831-1526.

The Aftercare Programs are sponsored in part by LaCanne Family Funeral Service as a continuation of care for those the local funeral home has served.

Those taking part in either Aftercare Program will have the opportunity to:

- Be listened to, cared for



CITIZEN FILE

MYRA HECKENLAIBLE-GOTTO of Crossing Life's Bridges is leading two sessions of an Aftercare Program, sponsored in part by LaCanne Family Funeral Service in Windom.

and supported in the present moment.

- Connect with others who are adjusting to the loss of a loved one.

- Share their story and hear the stories of others.

However, there is one difference between the two groups — the evening group sessions will involve horses.

"I'm trying two different options to see if there's a

need — so there's one with horses and one without," explains Heckenlaible-Gotto, who is a Certified Equine Gestalt Coach. She is offering a program without the use of horses for people, who may have allergies or may not be able to walk in the sand of the riding arena.

Those Wednesday morning sessions will be held in Heckenlaible-Gotto's air-conditioned meeting room, located next to her riding arena along County Road 17, east of Windom.

The evening sessions, meanwhile, will be held in her riding arena. However, no horse experience is necessary to benefit and those taking part in the program will not ride the horses. Instead, the horses' gifts are shared with participants on the ground of the arena.

The Aftercare Program is the brainchild of the two businesses.

"One of my big things I like to do is transition work and one of the transition things is grieving and going through loss," Heckenlaible-Gotto explains. "It could be loss in any area, but loss, as in a death, is something I understand. So, I wanted to give back, but wanted to see what the community may need, what they could benefit from.

"So, I called Joel to see

what kind of aftercare program they have. At that point that didn't have one, so he, Tonya (Mortenson) and Kari (Hanson) came out to make sure this was a right fit for them."

It was and, consequently, LaCanne Family Funeral Service, as its continuation of care for the people they serve, is sponsoring part of this Aftercare Program.

Heckenlaible-Gotto likes to focus on two things through these sessions: learning how to live with the loss and learning how to grow from the loss. If those are issues with which people are dealing following the loss of a loved one, this program is for them.

"Some people don't need outside things — they're fine. But sometimes it's nice to have a group of people who have experienced the same emotions. That might be a spouse, compared to a child, compared to a grandparent or parent. They're all very different, but yet there's a common ground of understanding and that you don't have to go through it alone," Heckenlaible-Gotto continues.

"We want to make it more of a process of healing and moving forward."