

'Community Means Everything'

For Steve Trevino, being involved in the community isn't something you just do, it's part of who you are.

"This is our home for 35 years," Trevino said of Parker, Colorado, "and our community involvement means everything to us ... from our church to our civic organizations, our involvement through our kids' participation in school and everything that they did, so it's always been important. It has become the fabric of our community involvement.

"We like to be known as Steve and Nanci, who participate in everything in the community, and by the way, they happen to be funeral directors, and oh by the way, they happen to own a funeral home, so that it is almost being the funeral directors and owning the funeral home was secondary," Steve added.

Ponderosa Valley Funeral Services was founded in 2003 when Steve and Nanci Trevino fulfilled their dream of opening their own funeral home. Having moved to Parker in 1987, the Trevinos immersed themselves in the Parker community well before starting their own firm.

"We have been committed to giving back through volunteer service and community involvement from the start," Nanci Trevino said. "That has never stopped."

In many ways, that commitment grew more significant with the opening of Ponderosa Valley.

"As a funeral home, we sponsor a lot of different things," Nanci said. "We put

on an annual Memorial Day ceremony at our local cemetery, and that's become very popular; the veterans in the community look forward to that event every year, so that's probably our biggest showcase."

As the couple, who are both licensed funeral directors, learned early on, when you're a small business, it's hard to separate the personal from the professional.

"Steve is very involved in Rotary and has been very successful in chairing a lot of different events for Rotary," Nanci said, "and the community doesn't know whether it's Rotary or whether it's Ponderosa Valley. They just know it's Steve Trevino."

The Trevinos (and Ponderosa Valley) have done a lot with the local senior center (Nanci has served on the board) and has hosted different events at the funeral home or the coroner's office and hospice, among other organizations.

"We're constantly doing community outreach, which is necessary in today's world," Steve said. "I think just being visible in the community is probably our biggest asset because we attend a lot of events. It doesn't necessarily mean we attend them with the Ponderosa Valley shirt on, but everybody knows who we are and what we do, and so I think it's just gone hand in hand."

Steve jokingly laughed that when he tells his wife he's going to Walmart or the supermarket, she knows it will be a while before he gets back ... for a very good reason.

"You get stopped by people, and you visit with them because you've served these families in your community, and you can't help but stop and visit and talk about life," Steve said. "People detect sincerity, and they do not look at us as approaching a sales effort.

"I can tell you, though, that it does lead to a lot of preneed sales because they say, 'Oh hey, by the way, we got to get together, I know we got to complete our plans.' So, just a simple visit at a supermarket leads to the inevitable preneed sale," Steve added.

For her part, Nanci says she can't count how many preneed brochures she's brought to exercise classes or Bible studies. "It's really hard to divide when you're selling because you are so ingrained in your community," she said. "We've been fortunate because Parker was a small, intimate community outside of Denver when we started out. Then it's just grown, and the population has exploded."

While the community has grown, the Trevinos have continued to put families' needs first. "One of the first things we did, and we continue to do, is we take away that anxiety (about discussions about death) by offering to come to people's homes to talk to them ... whether there's been a death or if they want to discuss preplanning we'll go to their home," Nanci said. "When you're sitting at their kitchen table, you're really empowering them because you're in their space.



PONDEROSA VALLEY FUNERAL SERVICES HOSTS A MEMORIAL DAY VETERANS' SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE EACH YEAR AT J.S. PARKER CEMETERY IN PARKER, COLORADO. RIGHT: FOR NANCI AND STEVE TREVINO, COMMUNITY MEANS EVERYTHING. (PHOTOS COURTESY OF PONDEROSA VALLEY FUNERAL SERVICES)



“We’re happy to meet people at the office, but if they feel more comfortable, we will gladly travel to their homes,” Nanci added. “What we created is brand awareness of Ponderosa Valley Funeral Services, and in our advertising and marketing, we always said we will make arrangements in the comfort of your home. A lot of people have taken us up on that, and we love it because we get to know the family even more because we’re in their environment and it brings us closer to them.”

It’s also intentional that many events hosted by Ponderosa Valley Funeral Services take place outside the funeral home.

“We put together events with local churches and we’ll bring an attorney and estate planner to talk to families about what they can expect and answer any questions,” Steve said. “When you think about it, when is it that you get to have a funeral director, an estate planner and an attorney all at the same time to answer your questions?”

These open forums have become so successful that it’s not uncommon for the Tre-

vinos to get requests from clergy asking them to come to their parish and assemble a program.

“We love it,” Steve said. “It’s our opportunity to answer the questions so many people don’t feel comfortable asking in a telephone conversation.”

In 2019, the Trevinos decided to sell their Ponderosa Valley Funeral Services to Foundation Partners Group. While the couple could have stepped away from the business, there was no chance they would.

“We could have just taken the money and gone away, but it’s in our hearts, in our DNA to continue,” Steve said. “When we go to a supermarket and people see us, we want to assure them they’ll still receive the same seamless care we have always provided. Yes, we’re going to be there for your family; yes, we can help you with the pre-need; yes, we’re going to do the Memorial Day program ... we’re going to continue doing everything we’ve ever done; maybe even more.”

What joining Foundation Partners Group has allowed the Trevinos to do is

step back from day-to-day operations and focus more on serving families – and the community.

A perfect example occurred last winter.

“I got a call in the middle of the night on a very stormy, snowy night, and it’s the mayor saying, ‘Steve, I just had a family member die and there’s nobody else that I would like to have help us. When you send your person out, I’ll be waiting here,’” Steve recalled. “Of course, this is Steve and Nanci, and no, we’re not going to send staff. We know the mayor personally; we’ve worked with him. Guess who gets up in the middle of the night in this storm, puts on a suit and goes there personally? This is how much our community means to us.”

To be able to find a career that aligns with your values is remarkable, the Trevinos believe.

“It’s just a beautiful thing because you have no inner conflict,” Steve said. “You know you’re doing the right thing for people, and you’re doing the right thing for yourself. It’s just that simple.”