

Lorton Valley Star



Drawing of Lorton Station

Calendar Good All Month

Volume 15, Number 2

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February 2014

The Conversation That Gives Peace of Mind?

By George Reilly, PLC

"Quality family time" is a phrase often heard in the period from Thanksgiving to New Year's, sometimes even with air quotes, to describe what many people believe to be a necessary, but not enjoyable, time of family togetherness. Don't get me wrong, many folks truly love having their families come together from near and far during the holidays and look forward to it every year. But there are those who view this togetherness as an obligation to be endured and look at the clock or calendar longingly to see when it will be over. Whatever your perspective on this "quality family time," chances are that for most of you it was a missed opportunity to discuss very important matters with your loved ones—namely what happens in the event of disability or death; who takes care of what; a parent's (or grandparent's, or your own) wishes on end of life medical care and funeral/burial/cremation choices; your wishes on guardians for minor children; and other critical, but admittedly sensitive and gloomy topics.

In other words, did your family engage in "the Conversation" as it is called by a growing movement called the Conversation Project. The intent of this Project is to encourage families to have these important discussions before it is too late, and to provide them with the tools to make having this conversation a bit easier—using what they call the "Conversation Starter Kit." Why is this conversation so important? Consider these statistics:

60% of people say that making sure their family is not burdened by tough decisions is "extremely important."

Yet 56% have not communicated their end-of-life wishes.

70% of people say they prefer to die at home.

Yet 70% die in a hospital, nursing home, or long-term care facility.

82% of people say it's important to put their wishes in writing.

Yet 23% have actually done so.

You are starting to see the reason for the Conversation Project—providing families with the tools they need to help them change these statistics and give all of the family the peace of mind of knowing that there is a plan, that everyone knows it (and knows where the legal documents are located), and that they will be ready and

able to carry out the wishes of their loved ones when necessary.

Having this conversation and then taking the legal action needed to put the plan in place is a way to avoid additional pain and anguish in an already difficult time. For example, there have been families who did not know the burial wishes of a loved one and made a decision that was later learned—when a Will was discovered—to be contrary to the deceased's wishes. In other cases, where families did not know their loved ones intentions regarding end of life care, and/or did not have the legal authority to act, they were obligated to authorize extensive treatment to keep the family member alive when it was later discovered that was not their intention.

One way to start your own conversation with your loved ones is to get your own legal plan in place and discuss it with them. Recent surveys show that more than half of American adults do not have any of the most basic estate planning documents, including a Will, a Living Will/Advance Medical Directive, and health care and financial Powers of Attorney. These are the foundational elements of a Peace of Mind Plan available from Reilly Law, PLC, your local law firm in Occoquan. Getting your own legal readiness in order allows you to start the Conversation with a "do as I did, not as I say" approach and emphasize the peace of mind you now feel having taken care of these important matters. Think of it like the safety briefing on an airplane—if the oxygen masks drop you should put your own mask on before helping others. Getting your own legal plan in place is a great way to demonstrate the importance of this process and you are then ready to help your loved ones.

Reilly Law, PLC specializes in comprehensive Peace of Mind planning. We offer free initial consultations and special rates for military, veterans, and civil servants, as well as young family specials intended to get you on the right path. Reilly Law, PLC is a member of the WealthCounsel network of estate planning attorneys. If your parents or other loved ones live outside the greater Washington, DC area we have the ability to offer referrals to well-qualified network attorneys across the U.S.

Learn more about Peace of Mind planning at www.MyPeaceOfMindPlan.com or at www.ReillyLawPLC.com and learn more about the Conversation Project, and get their "Starter Kits" at www.TheConversationProject.org.

Reilly Law, PLC is located at 300 Ellicott Street, Suite B, in Historic Occoquan. Our phone number is 703-579-1936. We know you are busy so we offer evening and weekend appointments. For convenience we accept major credit cards.

As one client put it recently, not only did he get his legal affairs in order, he earned miles towards their next family vacation! Have the Conversation in your own home and then contact us to get the process started. We guarantee you will appreciate having your own Peace of Mind Plan in place!

You may not need an "Estate Plan," but here are a few good reasons to have a Peace of Mind Plan should something happen to you.



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Historic Occoquan

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