What inspires me to give...

"Your volunteers were there for us when my husband chose to leave his wonderful life with dignity and at peace. Our family thanks you all very much and wishes you well in your important work and mission."

Your gift in the enclosed envelope makes it possible for End of Life Washington to continue providing our services for free throughout our state.

Thank you for your support!

Welcome to End of Life Washington

Effective October 12, 2015, our organization has changed its name to End of Life Washington. The Board of Directors has felt for some time that we needed a name that was more descriptive of our work. The previous name stemmed from the merger of two of our predecessor organizations. As a result they took one word from the name of each and arrived at Compassion & Choices. As the last remaining independent affiliate of the national organization, Compassion & Choices, it was a natural evolution for us to end our affiliate status, yet remain partners in the larger aid in dying movement.

New Name, Same Great Mission

"While our name has changed, our mission to provide information, advocacy, and support for choice at end of life is the same," according to John Eric Rolfstad, Executive Director of End of Life Washington. As the demand for our services continues to grow, the new name will enable people to better connect our organization with the services we provide. In addition to supporting people who wish to use the Death with Dignity law, we provide education and advance planning information to thousands of Washington State residents each year.

Message from the Executive Director

For many years I have been a donor and supporter of the work of this organization. However, in my first six months as Executive Director my respect and appreciation for the importance of the work that we do has grown exponentially.

End of Life Washington has many dedicated people who help us accomplish our mission. Not only do we have a great staff, but also deeply committed volunteers and board members. Of course none of this would be possible without the many generous donors whose financial support enables all of us to do this vital work.

I am honored and humbled to lead this great organization in such momentous times. With the passage of Death with Dignity in California, now one in six Americans has the legal right to aid in dying.

The challenge we face, however, is to protect access to that legal right as health care systems, politicians, drug companies, and others throw up barriers to make Death with Dignity more difficult for some to obtain.

To protect access to Death with Dignity, we must continue to educate, advocate, and fight to make sure that all Washington State residents have choice at end of life.

John Eric Rolfstad

Leave a Legacy

These are three ways you can help ensure that End of Life Washington is here for the people that follow you and for future generations:

• Remember End of Life Washington in your will with a gift amount or a percentage of your estate.
• Name End of Life Washington as your life insurance beneficiary.
• Name End of Life Washington as a beneficiary of your IRA or other qualified retirement plan.

For any of these three types of gifts, you will need this information:
Legal Name:  End of Life Washington
Address:   PO Box 61369, Seattle, WA 98141-6369
Tax Status:  501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization
Tax ID:   91-1412987

We would be glad to answer any questions you may have about including End of Life Washington in your financial and estate plans.
Contact Kathryn Jans, Associate Director.  Kjans@EndOfLifeWA.org  206.256.1636

End of Life Washington Fall Newsletter
End of Life Washington creates Vital Access to Death with Dignity

Here in Washington, we are fortunate to be one of five states that allow terminally ill, competent adults to request life-ending medication from their doctor. Sounds simple right?

Unfortunately, the reality can be much more complicated. Recently we had a client who was terminally ill with brain cancer. Despite having spoken with his oncologist over the course of two years about his desire for Death with Dignity, he found himself bedbound in a nursing facility still asking and not getting any results. He was competent, a resident of Washington, and terminally ill. He qualified for the law, but his providers and family were at a loss on how to make it happen. Finally a social worker in the facility called End of Life Washington. One of our volunteers went out to meet with him and his family.

Thankfully our volunteer was very experienced and able to help this man exercise his legal right to Death with Dignity. She helped him work with his oncologist and then found a second doctor to enable him to meet the requirements of the law. Our volunteer persevered, working with our volunteer medical director and the family to get all of the details in place.

Finally, this client got his medication, but then had to be taken home by ambulance to take it because the facility did not allow this to happen on their premises. He went home and died peacefully with his family around him in the way that he had wanted.

The reality is that the Death with Dignity law can be difficult to use, even now six years after it became law. Our staff and volunteers are vital in helping clients find two physicians who will support them, making sure paperwork is completed, getting established with hospice, and then finding a pharmacy that will dispense the medication after the prescription is written. Then, once the medication is in hand, it can be intimidating for families to help a loved one through the process of taking the life-ending drug. Our volunteers can support them as well.

Who are our volunteers? They are some of the finest people you will ever meet—people from all walks of life, ranging in age from 25 to 65. They know how to listen and care about choice at end of life. Our volunteers will drive all over the state to support our clients. They will get up in the middle of the night for that call from their client that says, “I am ready—can you come tomorrow?” Our volunteers are client centered. They do this on their own time, driving their own vehicles. They do this for free. Many of them have been volunteering for years.

Without these committed volunteers and staff, it is likely that most people would not be able to access Death with Dignity in our state. Last year, 96 percent of the people who used the law were clients of End of Life Washington. Your support of our organization helps us train and equip these volunteers to do this important work.