

# *InComplete* THOUGHTS

A Newsletter  
*about life, death,  
and things  
in between...*



September 2023

*Inside the Issue*

Vol 6



## IN CONTEMPLATION

The staff at Complete Estate & Probate Law contribute and discuss what's on their mind..

## THINGS TO KNOW

We share updated information about estate planning, and things in the news that might affect or interest you.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

What we're reading, watching, cooking, celebrating or otherwise doing outside of work.

*Also included: Legacy Corner*

## IN CONTEMPLATION...

*by Polly Blomquist*

The alarm went off at 2:30 a.m. We packed over the preceding days and had all the morning grab and go's set and ready. I did one last check to ensure the passports remained tucked in the pocket where I always keep them for easy access. They were there and it was time to go.

My friend Fawn Brents, talked to me about Casa de mi Padre (My Father's House) for several years. She even wrote a book about it that I keep in my conference room. After hearing her rave about this wonderful children's home/orphanage in the mountains of Guatemala, I decided I wanted to go. When I told her she said, great, let's plan it. Over the next weeks, I discussed with my husband my desire to go, and he decided we should all go as a family. It turned out to be one of the best decisions we've made.

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**EXCITING NEWS:** We will be hosting our Second Annual Shred Event on October 21st from 10:00-1:00! Be sure to read more information below on how to reserve a delicious FREE Apple Pie in celebration of the fall season. Pies will be available by reservation only.

Please check out Legacy Corner for additional information regarding the provided FREE shredding services.



We are so happy to welcome Elder Law attorney, Maureen Lester to our firm. We hope you've enjoyed our build up to the BIG NEWS Complete Estate & Probate Law has to share!

We're letting Maureen get a little settled in this month but there is more to come in October's Newsletter. Please keep an eye out to learn more about Maureen, her experience and the passion she has for Elder Law.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*By Karen Schrock*

### **Giving Back and Paying It Forward**

Polly's trip to Guatemala has been such an inspiration to me and I hope it has inspired you too! Giving of our time, talents, financial support, or material donations doesn't just benefit the recipient but enriches our own lives, sometimes in profound ways like it did Polly and her family.

If we open our eyes, we don't have to look far to see the need all around us. Although I could list many wonderful charities, I believe in following your heart and giving in alliance with your values, passions, and interests.

Here are just few suggestions on ways to give back.

- **Financial Giving** – Remember when it comes to cash donations that every little bit helps so don't worry that you don't have a lot to give. Participating in fundraising or charity events is a great way to help others while also having fun.
- **Donate Tangible Items**– Cleaning out your home for items you no longer use and donating them is a great way to give while also decluttering. Local food drives are popular around the holidays, however when you see a good sale at the grocery store stock up on non-perishable items to give to a food pantry because their need is constant.
- **Volunteer** – Maybe you are in a place in your life where you have more time than money. If so, volunteering your time and talents is a wonderful way to bless the lives of others. Be creative!
- **Random Acts of Kindness** – This can give you an immediate sense of joy that will lift your spirits for days. Anyone can do this, and the opportunities are endless.
- **Give Through a Crowd Funding Site** – These are often set up for someone in your community experiencing significant hardship.
- **Ask** – If you know someone is struggling but don't know what to do, just ask.
- **Give Through Your Estate Planning** – This is a great way to leave a legacy.
- **Keep it Going** - Teach generosity to your children by getting them involved.
- **Love Others** – It goes without saying that this is the most important gift you can give anyone!

Unfortunately, there are fraudulent organizations and deceptive people who take advantage of good-hearted people so be sure to verify where your money is going and give wisely.

“We know only too well that what we are doing is nothing more than a drop in the ocean. But if the drop were not there, the ocean would be missing something.” Mother Theresa



## IN CONTEMPLATION...

continued

Like any person going on a mission trip, I wanted to do good for others. During my time there, I experienced blessing far greater than I could ever have given to any of the children there. I'm not sure what I expected. I knew going into the trip that a gentleman named Shane Sanderson, from St. Joseph, Missouri opened Casa de mi Padre in 2010 and that my friend Fawn thought it exceptional. I also knew that people can't adopt Guatemalan children because in years past, because of the extreme poverty, women sold their babies; so because of this, when children came to Casa de mi Padre, they came to stay. I suppose I thought it would be a place full of broken children with meager resources and exhausted, detached workers. That couldn't be further from the reality of Casa de mi Padre.

I found happy, healthy, fun, clean, well fed, obedient, kind, loving and affectionate children. This boggled my mind. Because of my years as a Family Court Prosecutor, I saw the worst of the worst when it came to child abuse and neglect. I've seen first-hand the effect child abuse has on kids. The scars are deep and life altering. How can the children at Casa de mi Padre be so different?

I always look at places that claim they help children with great skepticism, and honestly, I approached Casa de mi Padre with the same critical eye. Poor Shane had to endure my 6-hour interrogation during our drive from the airport through the chaos of Guatemalan rush hour traffic and then through the hairpin turns through the mountains (I've included some photos) to Casa de mi Padre. He answered each question with great patience with the level of detail I desired. Sorry Shane!

Children come to Casa de mi Padre through the court system, just like how they enter foster care in the U.S. They don't come the way I found them upon my arrival at Casa de mi Padre. They come broken, found in trash cans, sold into slavery and sleeping under a picnic table, beaten, burned, starved, used, abandoned... I could go on. Normally these stories would devastate my soul. Strangely, they didn't. Not because what happened to these children isn't tragic, rather what happened to them after is a miracle. They were scooped up out of the pit of despair and brought to a beautiful loving home, surrounded by safe people who love and care for them. All their needs are met, for shelter, safety, food, rest, fun, education, life skills, structure and most of all love. They were safe, loved, valued.

I thought I'd want to take them home with me. While this crossed my mind especially with a little boy named Crispin (see photo) who just wanted to be held tight every moment I was with him. I knew that taking them meant they would leave Casa de mi Padre. A place where they had 22 brothers and sisters to play with, a school that tailored learning to their special needs and Guatemalan house parents who were giving their lives to love and care for these amazing children. The children love it there, so it was easy to leave knowing they were safe and loved in their own country.

My takeaways from this trip:

- There is healing beyond brokenness. Love is the answer. Love has hands, feet and time. Love comes in the form of people, and in my opinion God, which I observed in a very real way.
- Teenagers need to see life outside their circumstances. We took our two teenagers on this trip and it impacted them deeply. It gave them perspective into their own situation, how blessed they are and demonstrated how they can overcome adversity.
- "Do for one what you wish you could do for many." My mom always said this to me. There are hundreds of thousands of charities out there. Some good, some downright terrible. My family has chosen Casa de mi Padre as our "one." If we spread out our time and money to several worthy causes, our impact on each will be small like pebbles thrown into a pond. We want to make a big splash, so we are throwing a big rock into Casa de mi Padre to make a big impact. We've seen the impact it is having on the children there and know our resources will be used for good.

Perhaps your family needs a mission where you can make a big splash. If you have questions about Casa de mi Padre, I'd love to discuss it with you.



# THINGS TO KNOW

By Anne-Linton Pond Hendrickson

## Be Proactive, Not Reactive

I have been connected to the estate planning world in my practice for over 20 years, and fully immersed for the past 3. Despite this being my area of practice, the saying that the cobbler's children have no shoes is also very true in my case. I did have the basics done – but my will left everything to my mother (and not my husband) and named her as my attorney-in-fact for medical and financial decisions, because I last updated my documents before my marriage, which was in 2010. My documents were also problematic because my mother died in 2021. This issue is further complicated by the fact that my husband had nothing done – he did not have any durable powers of attorney or estate planning completed. Even though I have known this for years, I just didn't get the basics done – just like thousands of people across the nation.

In my side of the practice, I handle the going to court stuff – and I KNOW first-hand how not having your documents done creates a multitude of time-consuming and expensive problems. This came to the forefront for my family on July 7, 2023 when my husband ended up in the emergency room and had to undergo a triple by-pass at age 45. Never in my dreams would I have expected this to occur – we are young (relatively!) – and it never occurred to me, despite what I do for a living, that we would be in the position to need our estate planning done immediately. Now, I am beyond lucky to do what I do and to practice with an amazing partner, Polly, and our wonderful team. With very little turnaround time, we were able to get Ryan's documents done and signed right before his surgery. If I was not in the position I am in, our (my!) procrastination would have cost my husband and I thousands of dollars more than the estate planning itself because of the emergent nature of what we needed. If we had not been able to get things done and something bad had happened, I would have been looking at having to probate my husband's estate, and setting up a conservatorship for my son, because he would have received assets because my husband didn't have a will. It would have been a mess and the last thing I would have wanted to deal with, while I was mourning the loss of my husband. I see so many people having to do this very thing and it can be devastating.

There are many reasons people wait – age (I'm too young!), fear of death (I don't want to think about it), not enough assets, belief that there won't be any disagreements, estate planning is expensive, it's too much trouble – but none of these will be of any comfort when you are looking at trying to fix the lack of estate planning when it is too late. If you make an appointment with our firm, you want to have that meeting with Polly or Maureen, because that means you are tackling the issue of your assets well in advance, which is the best way to proceed. This doesn't necessarily mean you won't ever see me – but we want that to be a function of doing everything right, as opposed to doing everything wrong, or doing nothing at all.

When I was sitting at the hospital, worried about my husband, worried about my son, worried about in-laws – the last thing I needed to be worrying about was our estate planning documents. Because, however, of my misconception, I did have to worry about it when I was already under a lot of stress and pressure. We were able to solve the problem, but we should have been proactive and not reactive, and I urge you to do the same.

## Legacy Corner

*Where we share our family traditions, recipes, and other ways, we are passing on our legacy...*

This year, on October 21st, we are thrilled to host our 2nd Annual Shred Event for our friends of the firm. We invite you to swing by and dispose of all those 'classified' personal documents. Last year was a huge success and we've learned a great deal about traffic control. No one would ever ask us to direct traffic during an emergency though!

Our shred provider will be accepting unlimited shred of documents. We will not be able to take the following items:

- Three Ring Binders
- Metal Hanging Folders
- Electronic Media

A promotional poster for a 'Paper & Pie Shred-it Event'. The background is a light beige color with a decorative border of autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red. The title 'Paper & Pie' is written in a large, dark blue, cursive font. Below it, 'Shred-it Event' is written in a smaller, dark blue, cursive font. The date '10 | 21 | 2023' is displayed in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. In the center, there is an illustration of a golden-brown lattice pie on a wooden board, with a red apple next to it. To the left of the pie, the text 'WHEN 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM' is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font. To the right, the text 'WHERE 10401 Holmes Road Kansas City, MO 64131' is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the text 'Register Today to reserve your FREE Apple Pie!' is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

We will be offering hot beverages, water and doughnuts served right to your vehicle. You're also welcome to stretch your legs and get to know members of the firm. We will be out in full force wearing out official Complete Estate & Probate Law t-shirts.

Come get rid of anything which might cause talk if it was found at your house! Our resident chatterbox and office manager, Rachel, is excited to answer any questions you might have so please give her a call at 816.601.1234 but don't tell her we said she talks too much!