Cremation is the second most popular form of preparation for memorialization in the United States. Have you ever wondered about the cremation process? Did you know that ashes returned inside an urn to families after cremating their loved ones are not always everything that remains after cremation? Do you know that non-human remains such as hip and knee implants, dental prosthetics, surgical pins, and screws, are removed from cremated remains after cremation? Have you ever given any thought to the fate of these left behind metals and the manner of their disposition?

Now more than ever, cremation is becoming the option Americans are choosing for their dearly departed. With the national cremation rate at around 40%, more than a third of the 2.5 million Americans who die this year will likely be cremated rather than buried due to high cost of traditional funerals, the diminishing space for cemeteries, and the environmental concerns.

Before cremation can take place, a “Cremation Authorization and Disposition Form” must be signed by authorizing agent. This form, which contains important provisions and disclosures, must also disclose the manner of disposition of orthopedic implants, dental prosthetics, pins, screws, and other metals recovered after the cremation process so that families are informed whether these metals will be recycled, sent to the landfill, or buried at the cemetery.

Orthopedic implants (hip, knee, shoulder, and elbow) are metallic medical devices used to replace damaged or troubled joints. The surgical procedure for each implant involves removal of the damaged joint and an artificial prosthesis replacement.
The significant rise in cremation coupled with the sky-rocketing use of implants across the United States has resulted in the frequent appearance of these metals in U.S crematories, thus presenting unprecedented ethical and environmental disposition challenges for the 2000+ crematories operating across the nation.

Up until the early 2000s, crematories across the nation were either storing these metals, burying them at a cemetery, or sending them to landfills. Such disposition practices proved to be very inefficient, inadequate, and environmentally unfriendly due to the fact that these metals are fabricated from non-renewable natural resources, they do not decompose with time, take up finite land space permanently, and could become a source of contamination.

As many crematories nationwide expressed strong interest in recycling metals recovered after cremation, they had no choice but to utilize the services of profit-driven implant recycling companies that were giving back a little or nothing to charity from their substantial profits. A large percentage of crematory owners, however, declined to join any recycling program, though environmentally irresponsible, due to the absence of a non-profit recycling option.

Thus, the establishment of the nation’s first-of-its-kind 501 (c) (3) non-profit crematory recycling program, Alternative Solutions USA, came in response to growing public demand for ending the commercialization of recycling at U.S crematories, and also in response to industry demands for introducing a solution with regard to the distribution of profits generated from recycling these metals.

Alternative Solutions USA embodies the legitimate wishes and rightful demands of decedent’s family members with regard to recycling the left behind implants of their cremated beloveds. It also represents a significant milestone in the history and objectives of recycling at U.S. crematories by ensuring that implants recovered at hundreds of crematories nationwide are recycled strictly for charitable purposes, and not for private gain or corporate profit.

The introduction of Alternative Solutions USA has dramatically increased interest in recycling at America’s crematories, thus saving and protecting our environment, preserving our non-renewable natural resources, and generating substantial financial support for charities that are extending to many needy Americans the possibility of a life with some measure of dignity.
Because recycling at the crematory in the United States is fairly new, the general public and many crematory owners are not well informed about the different types of orthopedic implants and dental prosthetics recovered after cremation, nor are they aware of the fact that substantial profits are being generated from recycling these metals due to the following reasons:

1) Metallic orthopedic implants and dental prosthetics recovered after the cremation process are fabricated from valuable high-grade metals.

2) Every year, hundreds of thousands of pounds of these metals are given away to recycling companies by more than 1,400 crematories nationwide.

3) The sale of these metals to different precision metal casters and medical implants manufacturers by recycling companies has generated millions of dollars of revenue over the past few years.

On average, our recycling operation is generating $1000 for charity every year on behalf of each crematory that joins our program. We are striving diligently to involve the more than 2000 crematories nationwide in this most honorable cause and generate around 2 million dollars for charity every year on behalf of our cremated loved ones and the death care industry.

**How can I become involved?**

Though most funeral homes across the country do not own or operate a crematory, the majority of cremations in the United States are arranged through a funeral home. All we ask of you, your family, friends, relatives, co-workers, etc., is to contact your local funeral homes, crematories, cremation service providers, etc., to express your strong opposition to the commercialization of recycling at U.S. crematories and stress your strong support for our non-profit recycling solution.

You can also contact local state associations such as Funeral Directors Association or national associations such as Cremation Association of North America (CANA), International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA), and National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA), to voice your opinion with regard to this critical matter.
The focus of this altruistic alliance between our non-profit crematory recycling program and the death care industry is to highlight the cyclical nature of a giving life which does not cease at death. Through recycling the left behind implants of our cremated loved ones, substantial funds are generated to feed those facing hunger, help our wounded and disabled veterans, support the fight against cancer, provide shelter for the poor, offer compassionate care to the terminally ill, free parents from the crippling financial burdens of burying a precious child, and much more.

Your help will bring about permanent change to the objectives of recycling at U.S. crematories worthy of our modern society and reflective of our American values and ideals.

*Thank you!*