



Jessica's  
House

# Annual Report 2018





## MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **Erin Nelson**

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Thanks to the generosity of donors throughout the region, Jessica's House grief support groups benefitted 971 individuals in 2018. During a time of unimaginable heartache, groups provide grieving children, youth and their adult caregivers with moments of connection, expression through art and play, and opportunities to share and practice coping skills. Groups provide comfort, support and a safe place to grieve.

Donations to Jessica's House also provide funding for our HopeBringers Team, which in 2018 responded to critical incidents for 166 children and teens affected by the death of a fellow student or teacher. Throughout the year, we also worked alongside law enforcement to bring much-needed comfort to those affected by violent deaths.

In 2018, individuals and businesses rallied to support the mission of Jessica's House through fundraising events like Festival of Trees, Dancing With The Turlock Stars, Golf for Jessica's House, and the Bee Positive Foundation's Kayla Bernardi Fun Run and Walk. Several other community fundraisers, along with the generosity of individual donors, raised a total of \$281,463.00 for grieving families.

The results from our annual family survey showcased the impact of our services. Children were helped well beyond what families anticipated with improvements in school performance, restful sleep, grief expression, family communication and an overall sense of well-being. Research shows that unsupported grief during childhood adversely impacts physical and mental health. This assures us that the work we are doing makes a difference. Our staff and volunteers are highly respected for establishing an atmosphere of trust and genuine caring.

2018 was also a year when our leadership looked to the future, with vision and resolve to increase and strengthen our capacity to deliver best-practice grief support. Our work and our growth would not be possible without you. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Erin Nelson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Erin Nelson



In  
2018

**Jessica's House made a significant difference for hurting families:**

971 Grief support groups served 971 children, teens, young adults, and their family members

166 Our HopeBringers crisis response team provided grief support to 166 individuals

75 We provided grief training to 75 schools, community organizations, and county family resources

270 Resources were shared with 270 hospitals, churches and funeral homes

141 And, 141 amazing volunteers supported grieving children

6,158 Jessica's House volunteers donated 6,158 hours in 2018

*"Jessica's House is a healing and hopeful place for kids and their families. I love being part of Jessica's House."*

*"Walking into Jessica's House is like walking into a warm hug."*

*"Nice to know I'm not alone in my journey."*





## School Support Groups 2018

### HILMAR

ELIM ELEMENTARY

HILMAR HIGH SCHOOL

HILMAR MIDDLE SCHOOL

### TURLOCK

CROWELL ELEMENTARY

CUNNINGHAM ELEMENTARY

DENNIS EARL ELEMENTARY

DUTCHER MIDDLE SCHOOL

JULIEN ELEMENTARY

OSBORNE ELEMENTARY

PITMAN HIGH SCHOOL

SANDRA T. MEDEIROS ELEMENTARY

TURLOCK HIGH SCHOOL

TURLOCK JUNIOR HIGH

WAKEFIELD ELEMENTARY

WALNUT ELEMENTARY

WALTER M. BROWN ELEMENTARY

### CERES

DON PEDRO ELEMENTARY

SAM VAUGHN SCHOOL

VIRGINIA PARKS ELEMENTARY

WALTER WHITE ELEMENTARY

## Sharing Grief, Healing Together

**Jessica's House support groups offer community and hope for families grieving a death.**

Organized by age and type of loss, all groups are facilitated by trained volunteers who are in turn coordinated by the professional staff at Jessica's House. Groups incorporate trauma informed practices with sensory based art activities that create peer support connections and foster expression.

As one of our moms recently expressed, "Being in group is like taking a deep breath. It's the only time I feel truly comfortable talking openly about my grief. My heart rests knowing my children are getting the support they need after the loss of their dad."

In 2018, 620 children, teens, young adults and their family members attended bi-weekly support groups at Jessica's House. Groups offered include: Sibling Loss, Parent Loss, Hope After Suicide and Hope After Homicide. We also offer monthly groups for grandparent loss and "HeartStrings," for stillbirth and pregnancy loss.

Additionally, 351 students attended weekly groups in our local schools.

## Community Resources

Jessica's House also provides grief education, training and onsite support if a death impacts a school or organization. Below is a summary of resources we offer the community:

**SCHOOL TRAINING:** Training for teachers, school administrators, and county agencies. Prepare your place of education with issues of grief and trauma or if a tragedy should occur.

**SERVICE CLUBS:** We welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge as a guest speaker at one of your upcoming events or meetings.

**COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM:** Our CRT consists of highly trained personnel who work alongside law enforcement and emergency responders in times of critical incidences involving children.



## A Family's Story

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### Mike, Genesis and Mariah

Mike began taking his daughters, Genesis, age 10, and Mariah, age 8, to Jessica's House following the death of their mother, his wife Zenaida, in 2018. Zenaida received a very late stage diagnosis of cancer. Mike and Zenaida met at church through a mutual friend. She was hardworking, earned a master's degree in business and worked as a CPA. "She was loving, happy, and she loved life," Mike remembers. Zenaida loved spending time with her daughters and family, as well as traveling, being at the beach and hiking in the Carmel area.



The family was devastated when Zenaida died and Mike realized his family needed a place to heal. Mike learned about Jessica's House, and after taking them there for support, he noticed a change in his girls immediately. They met friends and realized they were not alone. It gave the family an overall sense of hope. The girls participate in a group where all of the children have experienced the death of their mom. Mike also finds comfort in a support group with other adults who can talk about the loss of their spouse.

"The thing I like best about Jessica's House is that I get to be with other kids who also lost somebody they love," says Genesis. "I've learned that you should always talk to people when you are feeling sad, and that's what I do at Jessica's House. Also, the food helps me feel better."



*"I get to be with other kids who also lost somebody they love." – Genesis*

While playing in the playhouse, Mariah shared that she wanted to talk about the people who live in her house—her dad, sister, grandma, two dogs and a cat. "I've learned to be kind because other people here are kind," Mariah says.



*"I've learned to be kind because other people here are kind." – Mariah*

# Financial Report

During the past year, Jessica's House began planning for the growing needs of grieving families in the Central Valley. We have identified the resources needed to transition Jessica's House from a small, rented space, to a permanent home that can meet the needs of the community long term.

Our business plan aims to achieve the following impacts:

- More children, teens and families in grief will get the support they need.
- Jessica's House will be more sustainable, with a lower cost per person served.
- Jessica's House will be more effective, modeled after a best practice environment for child bereavement support based on leading programs nationwide.

We look forward to sharing the business plan with contributors to Jessica's House during the months ahead.

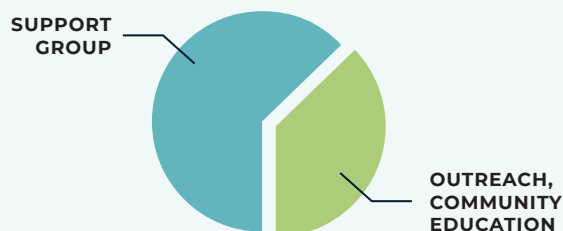
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2018 Actuals</b>
Annual Fund Contributions	\$82,000.00
Events and Sponsorships	\$143,500.00
EMC Health Contribution	\$297,600.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$523,100.00</b>

<b>EXPENSE</b>	
Building Costs – utilities, maintenance, insurance	\$9,600.00
Rent	\$30,000.00
Marketing and Communications	\$40,000.00
Other Operations Costs – supplies, equipment, other	\$41,500.00
Direct Program Costs – food, supplies, equipment, other	\$77,000.00
Personnel (Incl. tax and benefits)	\$325,000.00
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$523,100.00</b>

## ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

63% Support Group Programs (ON-SITE)

37% Outreach, Community Education (OFF-SITE)



*Jessica's House launched through Emanuel Medical Center in 2012. Since the sale of the clinical side of the hospital in 2014, Jessica's House continues as a department of EMC Health, Inc.*

# Volunteer Voices



At Jessica's House, volunteers play a vital role in every aspect of the organization, including facilitating grief support groups, helping staff special events, setting out food for groups, creating a warm and welcoming environment for families, and office and administration work. For more information about Jessica's House volunteer opportunities, please call 209-250-5395 or email [info@jessicashouse.org](mailto:info@jessicashouse.org).

*"I enjoy every part of volunteering at Jessica's House! I am finding deeper understanding of grief and the tools to work with different age groups."*

*"Thank you so much for the opportunity to volunteer at Jessica's House! It has been one of the best experiences of my life."*

## Legacy Health Endowment Funds 2018 Summer Camp



Thanks to a generous grant from the Legacy Health Endowment, 89 children and teens and 35 adults participated in the organization's family day camp in the summer of 2018. Campers engaged in a wide array of therapeutic activities made possible by volunteers and businesses who partnered with Jessica's House to make the camp a reality. Activities included karate, yoga, dance, drum circles, painting, poetry and more. Families also loved interacting with two therapy dogs. An overnight camp will take place in Summer 2019.



**Douglas**  
*Beloved Therapy Dog*

We are grateful for the volunteer support from the Turlock Garden Club. Thank you for tending to our garden, which is a source of comfort for our families.

# Donor Recognition

Our services for grieving children, youth and families would not be possible without the support of caring individuals, businesses and organizations throughout our region. Thanks to all who support the work and mission of Jessica's House, including the following 2018 donors:

## **\$5,000-\$10,000**

Crestwood Manor – Modesto  
Emanuel Medical Center  
Janelle Foster  
John Gonsalves  
Legacy Health Endowment  
Kayla Bernardi Bee Positive Foundation

## **\$1,000-\$4,999**

Allan & Carla Merrill  
Barbara Stensether  
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Brenda Athletic Clubs  
Cal Coating Asphalt, Inc.  
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Robert & Dana Nicholson  
Scott Severson  
Tam Cordray

The Merck Foundation  
Ulrich Real Estate Inc.

## **\$500-\$999**

Crossroads Church  
Denair Lion's Club  
Eric & Tina Ellefson  
Eric Bickley  
Fred & Judy Honoré  
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Joe Freeman  
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Kirk Larson Construction  
Mark Swanson  
Mary Lou Cederlind  
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The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
Tower Pharmacy  
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## **\$100-\$499**

Allan & Susan Mord  
Amy Harmon  
Bart Muller  
Beatrice Cipponeri  
Beau & Drew Williamson  
Bernardete Lobao  
Bessie Tavernas  
Candace Smith  
Carol Parks  
Craig & Cheryl Manlove

Crowell Elementary School  
Dave & Jolene Rabara  
Delta Mu Phi  
Doug & Beth Kirkpatrick  
Duarte & Diane Xavier  
Gary & Cecelia Almeida  
Gary & Dawn Mallory  
Inese Radzins  
Janice K. Hammond  
Jim Frunz  
John Gilbert  
John Mayne  
Josie A. Neely  
Julie S. Burke  
Kathleen Michener  
Lanita Ward  
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Philip & Becky Robnett  
Post Family Counseling, Inc.  
Richard & Joanne McFerron  
Richard Cunningham  
Rick & Sandy Adams  
Robert K. Wild  
Sandra Ash  
Sandra C. Silveira  
Stanislaus State Fall 2017 Nursing Class  
Sunshine Club of Turlock

Susan Helm-Lauber  
Terry & Terri Rodger  
Theodore & Linda Dykzeul  
United Way of Stanislaus County  
Walter & Norma Gemperle  
WestAmerica Bank – Matching Gifts Program  
Woods Furniture Galleries

## **FESTIVAL OF TREES SPONSORS**

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Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc.  
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JP Marketing  
MK Electric  
Nyman Brothers Dairy  
Signature Event Studios  
Turlock Sales Yard  
Wahl, Willemse & Wilson, LLP, CPA's  
West Coast Sound & Light

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Many thanks also to our event sponsors for Golf for Jessica's House and Dancing with the Turlock Stars. Combined, these events raised more than \$170,000 for Jessica's House in 2018.

