

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



**Jessica's
House**

*Grief Support for Children, Teens,
Young Adults and Their Families*



A SAFE PLACE FOR HEALING



Dear friends of Jessica's House,

As we reflect on the past year, I am honored to share the impact and meaningful strides achieved by Jessica's House in our 2023 Annual Report.

Throughout the year, we witnessed remarkable stories of resilience and growth among the children and families who sought comfort at Jessica's House. Their journeys inspire us to continue our mission of providing a welcoming and safe place for healing.

Expression through art, music, and play have been cornerstones of our approach, helping children to express complex emotions of loss. These activities honor the memories of loved ones and empower children to find strength in self-expression, learn valuable coping skills, and find a sense of understanding and belonging.

Together we create an environment of comfort and connection, strengthening the bonds among grieving families, dedicated staff, wonderful volunteers, and generous supporters.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our exceptional volunteers who are instrumental in nurturing families at Jessica's House. Their selfless contributions make a meaningful difference in the lives of children who have experienced the death of a parent or sibling, as well as their adult caregivers who have experienced the death of a partner or child.

To our loyal donors, your continued support and generosity is greatly

appreciated. Together, with your financial support, we are focused on a sustainable and bright future for Jessica's House, offering hope and healing for all who seek support during their darkest days.

Thank you for your commitment to our shared mission. As we welcome another year, we do so with the collective strength that comes from supporting one another through life's most challenging moments.

With gratitude,

Erin Nelson
Founder & Executive Director
Jessica's House



HOW OUR MISSION DRIVES MEANINGFUL CHANGE



Our Mission

is to provide a safe place for children, teens, young adults, and their families grieving a death.

Our Vision

is that no child should ever grieve alone.

Our Values

are embodied in everything we do.

HOSPITALITY

We believe in providing an open and caring environment for people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs.

INTEGRITY

We believe in honesty, truthfulness, and transparency in all that we do.

EMPATHY

We believe in the healing power of compassion and understanding.

RESPECT

We believe in the dignity of each individual and respect the unique perspective and contribution of each person.

¹According to the 2023 Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model



HEALING HEARTS THROUGH PEER SUPPORT



Peer support groups at Jessica's House are organized by age, type of loss, and the relationship to the person who died. Adult caregivers meet at the same time as their children, and groups take place every other week for 90 minutes.

Facilitated by staff and trained volunteers, groups for parent or sibling loss provide a safe place for participants to share their stories and feel support from one another.



Jessica's House currently offers the following peer support groups:

- Parent Loss
- Sibling Loss
- HeartStrings (*stillbirth, infant and pregnancy loss*)
- Hope After Accidental Overdose
- Hope After Homicide
- Hope After Suicide
- Spanish Language
- School Groups (*select campuses*)

Jessica's House age groups:

- Pre-Littles (0-4)
- Littles (5-8)
- Middles (9-12)
- Teens (13-17)
- Young Adults (18-25)
- Young Adults 2 (26-40)
- Adult Caregivers



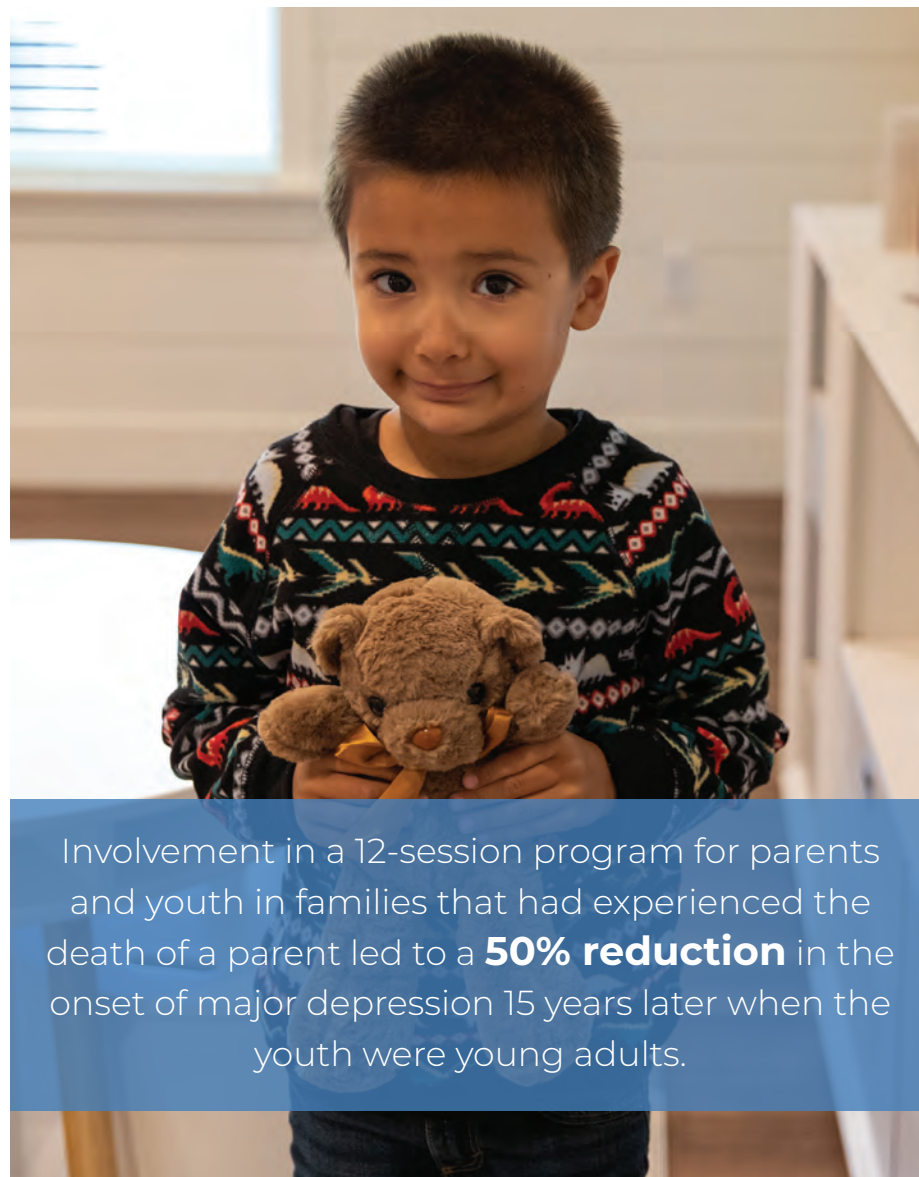
NURTURING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN



Experiencing the loss of a parent or sibling is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). Such losses lead to long-term effects on mental health. Peer support groups, such as those offered at Jessica's House, help children cope with grief through art, music, and play, improving their overall well-being as they grow.

A recent study² provides new evidence for the prevention of long-term depression experienced by bereaved children. In a randomized trial, researchers found that involvement in a 12-session program for parents and youth in families that had experienced the death of a parent led to a 50% reduction in the onset of major depression 15 years later when the youth were young adults. This is the first study to demonstrate that a program for bereaved children prevented the development of major depression when they reached adulthood.

Groups at Jessica's House help nurture resilience in children after the death of a parent or sibling. By providing opportunities for understanding and connection, emotional expression, coping strategies, and a loving and supportive peer support network, children are learning to manage their grief in healthy ways, setting them up for a successful future.



Involvement in a 12-session program for parents and youth in families that had experienced the death of a parent led to a **50% reduction** in the onset of major depression 15 years later when the youth were young adults.

²Arizona State University study published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*

STIGMATIZED DEATHS ON THE RISE



Stigmatized deaths, such as suicides, homicides, or substance-related fatalities, can intensify the grieving process for those left behind.

At Jessica's House, **28% of program participants are impacted by deaths from accidental overdose, suicide, or homicide.** Enrollment in our *Hope After Suicide*, *Hope After Homicide*, and *Hope After Accidental Overdose* groups continues to grow each year. We are committed to providing a safe place to help families navigating the complex emotions with these types of loss.



For Americans ages 18-45, **fentanyl overdose** is among the **leading causes of death.**³

In 2023, the **overdose death rate** topped **112,000**⁴ in a 12-month period in the U.S.

1 in 5 children⁵ experience the death of a parent due to accidental overdose. This accounts for **21% of bereaved children** in the U.S.

7% of children bereaved in the U.S. were due to a parent's **death by suicide.**⁶

³ Source: DEA.gov

⁴ Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

^{5,6} Source: Judi's House/JAG Institute 2023 Pandemic Impact Report

THE THERAPEUTIC POWER OF PLAY



Play is a crucial tool for children to express and process emotions. Through play, children at Jessica's House can make sense of their experience, while building resilience and developing coping skills.

Throughout our **14 unique therapeutic spaces**, children find a safe place for expression, play, and exploration. This includes art, music, sensory activities, dramatic play, and sand play. Expressive activities are a vital part of healing as children discover new ways of coping.



EXTENDING OUR REACH



In 2023, Jessica's House hosted three Community Education Trainings on *Supporting Children Who are Grieving*. We provided grief education to educators and mental health professionals, sharing trauma-informed practices, calming strategies, and sensory-based expressive activities with those working in healthcare, education, and various community support agencies. We welcomed **100 attendees from 9 school districts and 4 behavioral health agencies**.



We also offered training for first responders and chaplains on *How to Inform a Child of a Death* as well as a resource for families on *Supporting Your Child After a Death – The First Few Days*.

Thanks to donations, these trainings were offered at no cost.



RESOURCING OUR COMMUNITY



We launched 21 new resources in both English and Spanish in 2023 and plan to translate these resources into additional languages to further support families in our community. You can find the resources on our website at jessicashouse.org to download and share with others.

We provided local funeral homes with our *Supporting Children with Funerals* brochure along with *Supporting a Child After a Death – The First Few Days*.

In May, we delivered over 7,000 brochures on *Supporting a Student Who is Grieving – A Guide for Educators*, to administrators and teachers located within our 19-zip code service area.

COMING SOON!

In July of 2023, Jessica's House announced a book deal with Baker Books, securing a much-needed resource for families grieving a death. The book will expand the reach of Jessica's House by supporting parents raising grieving children who don't have access to grief support in their community. **The book will be released in Spring of 2025.**

VIRTUAL HEALING



Jessica's House extends its reach through social media platforms and quarterly newsletters, building awareness for grief support and program offerings.

Our social media sites provide a safe space for support, comfort, and education. At Jessica's House, we embrace diverse grief experiences, creating a more understanding online community, and extending our reach.

9.6K

Social Media Followers

1.1M

Social Media Impressions

701K

Social Media Profile Reach

8.1K

Quarterly Newsletter
Subscribers

Be sure to follow us on social media for the latest news from Jessica's House.

 @jessicashouseforgrievingfamilies

 @jessicas_house

 @jessicas.house

 @jessicas_house



A GROWING NUMBER OF LIVES CHANGED



In 2023 at Jessica's House:

912

individuals participated in peer support groups

528

calls received from families seeking grief support or resources

201

new families attended a New Family Orientation

38

surrounding cities with families that traveled to Jessica's House for support

1,128

group hours offered

STUDENTS SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH GRIEF



We know not everyone can make it to groups at Jessica's House, so we take Jessica's House on the go. Our school groups provide a safe environment where students who are grieving meet on their elementary, middle, or high school campus with others from their school who have also experienced the death of a loved one. Groups meet every other week for one hour.

30

School Campuses

250

Students Supported in 2023

6

School Districts in 2023

35

School Group Volunteers

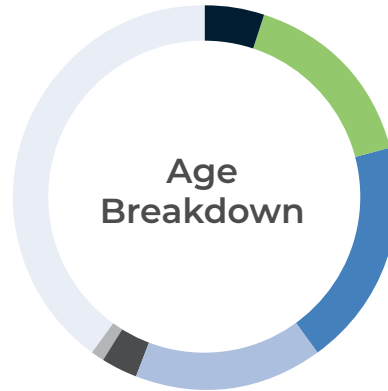
663

Volunteer Hours

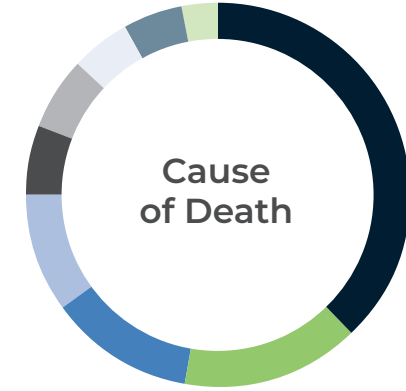
OUR PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE



- **78%** Stanislaus County
- **14%** Merced County
- **6%** San Joaquin County
- **2%** Other (Madera & Tuolumne)



- **5%** Pre-Littles (0-4)
- **16%** Littles (5-8)
- **19%** Middles (9-12)
- **16%** Teens (13-17)
- **3%** Young Adults (18-25)
- **1%** Young Adults (26-40)
- **40%** Adult Caregiver



- **38%** Illness
- **15%** Accident
- **12%** Suicide
- **10%** Homicide
- **6%** COVID-19
- **6%** Overdose
- **5%** SIDS/Pregnancy Loss
- **5%** Unknown Causes
- **3%** Cancer



- **73%** Parent/Caregiver
- **24%** Sibling
- **3%** Other



- **43%** White
- **43%** Hispanic
- **6%** African American
- **4%** Asian American
- **2%** American Indian
- **1%** Middle Eastern American
- **1%** Pacific Islander



MAKING GRIEF SUPPORT ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL



Because of our caring community, a family in grief never needs to worry about paying for the support Jessica's House uniquely offers.

This generosity extends beyond free peer support as group participants are always served dinner before group nights. These meals allow families, volunteers, and staff to come together around the table before groups begin.

Gifts of all sizes, along with grants, make grief support at Jessica's House accessible for all.



HELPING HEARTS



Volunteers are the heart of Jessica's House. Their commitment is a testament to the healing power of compassion. Together they create welcoming spaces where healing begins for children and families at Jessica's House.

Working as greeters, in hospitality, or as group facilitators, volunteers pave the way for brighter tomorrows.

Volunteers also support office tasks and community outreach events throughout the year, bringing awareness to our services in the community.

Our Youth Ambassadors are current or former program participants, who are active throughout the year sharing their personal stories of loss by speaking at community events and donor gatherings and Tours of the Heart.

Our support is possible thanks to our faithful volunteers and youth ambassadors who give so generously of their time.



175

Active Volunteers

12

Active Interns

11

Active Youth Ambassadors

8,314

Volunteer Service Hours

\$264,385

Estimated Value*

105

New Volunteers Trained

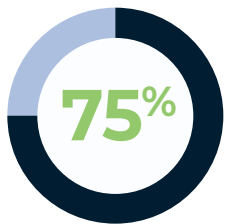


*Do Good Institute's 2023 value of \$31.80/hour.

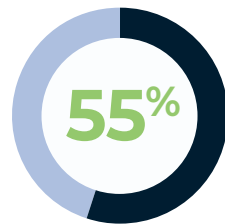
UNDERSTANDING OUR IMPACT



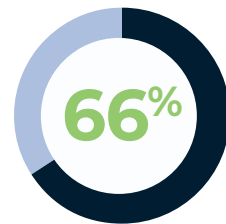
Through our Jessica's House surveys, we measure our program's effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement. Here's what we heard from families at Jessica's House in 2023:



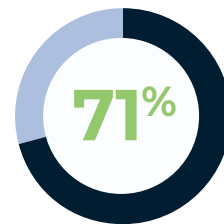
Adult caregivers in our program felt less alone in their grief.



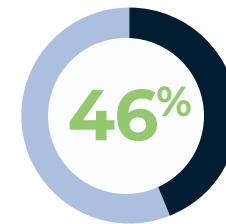
Adult caregivers say they can express their feelings.



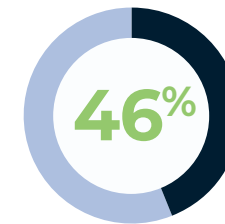
Adult caregivers say their sleep has increased.



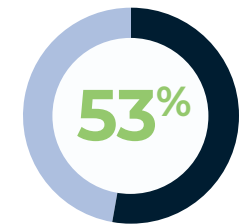
Adult caregivers say their children now express their feelings about the death.



Children in our program feel more supported in their grief.



Children feel less alone in their grief.



Children feel their sleep has increased.

UNDERSTANDING OUR IMPACT (CONTINUED)



We also asked families how Jessica's House has helped them since the death of their loved one.

“My child is learning that she is not alone during her grieving process and that she has a safe space to express all the different emotions that she is feeling and going through.”

“The group discussions are so helpful. Listening to others express their feelings and where they were in their journeys gave me hope. It's a safe place to talk if you want to, or just listen. Facilitators are very empathetic and compassionate.”

“Jessica's House has provided a safe place to vent my frustrations and be validated. To really be heard and understood.”

“My son enjoys being around other people where he can open up freely and say 'my daddy is dead' and not get the look of 'oh my goodness why is this child saying that!'”

“Jessica's House has helped my child in so many ways: offering her inclusivity, building her confidence and giving her skills to help her process her big feelings based on her age.”

“Jessica's House has helped me so much. Attending a group with other parents who understand my grief is something that is needed to be able to survive with so much pain. Going to a place where I know I am not going to be criticized regarding my grief has helped me in my journey. Knowing they understand is very helpful.”



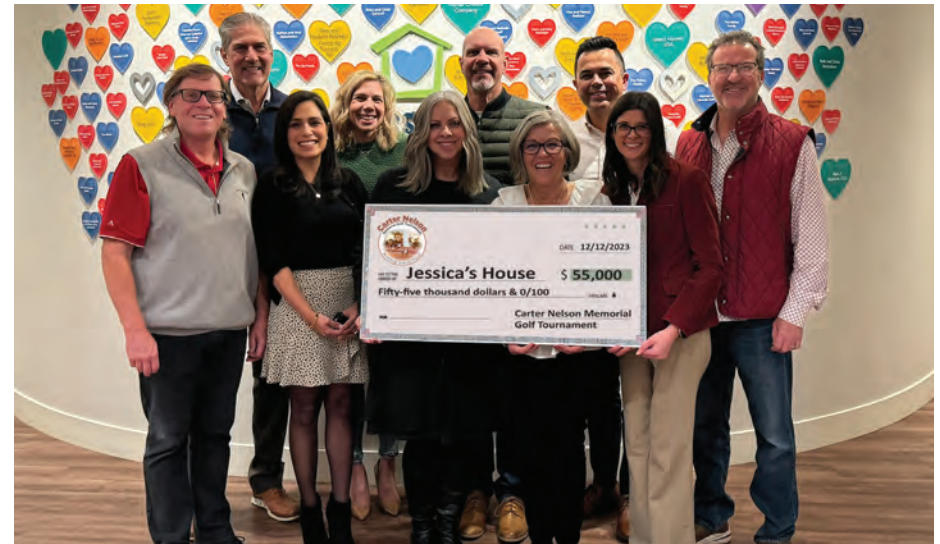
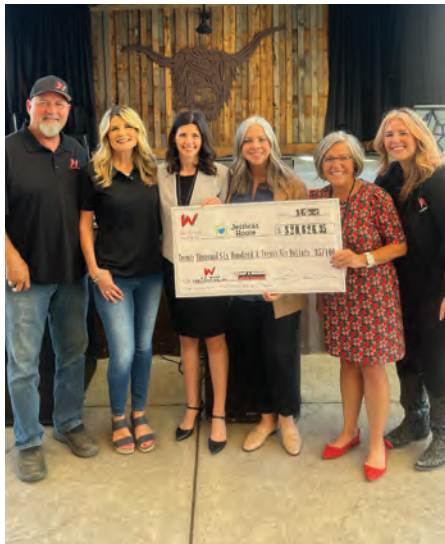
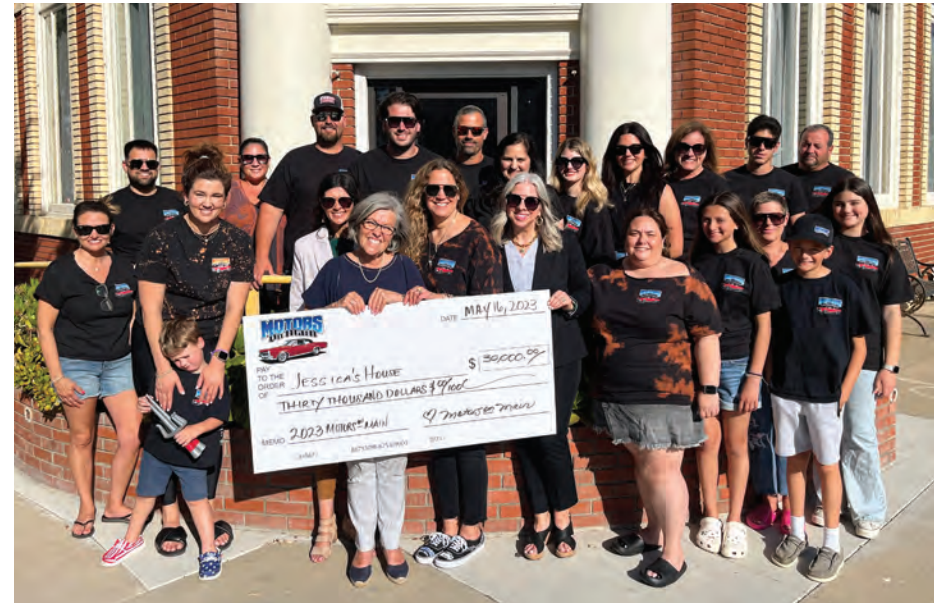
A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY



We are grateful to be part of such a dedicated community in Central California. In 2023 businesses and organizations came together with a shared commitment to raise funds for Jessica's House.

Events such as The Carter Nelson Memorial Golf Tournament, the D.A. Wood Construction Baggin' & Braggin' Cornhole Tournament and Motors on Main in Gustine raised more than **\$105,000** combined for Jessica's House. Giveback days from Dutch Bros. and Nothing Bundt Cakes, along with several local business fundraisers, totaled close to **\$10,000**. Service organizations such as the Rotary Club of Turlock and Kiwanis of Greater Turlock also generously supported the needs of Jessica's House in 2023.

Thank you to all who played a part in giving in 2023!



HEARTFELT GIVING



Jessica's House would not be possible without the generous support of our donor community.

Gifts of all sizes make the mission of Jessica's House possible. The collective generosity throughout the year from memorial gifts, grants, community fundraisers, year-end giving, and in-kind gifts, ensures that families at Jessica's House continue receiving grief support at no cost.

\$105,036.80*

General Donations

+

\$90,500*

Grants

*Ahead Grant, Legacy Health Endowment,
Make Dreams Real and Raymus Foundation*

+

\$15,745*

In-Kind Donation Value

496

Unique Donors

415

Household Donors

81

Business Donors



*Fiscal Year 2022-23 (October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023)

BUILDING A BRIGHTER TOMORROW



We are so grateful for our Heart Circle community. Together with their generosity, we are building a sustainable and bright future for Jessica's House. These important 5-year pledges allow us to provide grief support at no cost to families while never starting from zero to reach our annual fundraising goals.

These gifts of hope and healing make the mission of Jessica's House possible by ensuring a sustainable future for free support.

Our 2023 Heart Circle Drive successfully raised **\$1,017,009*** in new pledge commitments. Our collective Heart Circle Drive campaigns brought in pledge payments totaling **\$632,857.86** during the 2023 fiscal year. This significant milestone would not have been possible without our loyal community of supporters, and our 2023 Heart Circle Council. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to serving Jessica's House.

Nancy Daley
Chair

Bryan Saint
Co-Chair

Nick Arakelian

Steve Hollinger

Carol Etcheverry

Matt Thomas

Bernie Medeiros

Christina Langley

Jacquie Dyt



*Fiscal Year 2022-23 (October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023)

OUR GENEROUS HEART CIRCLE COMMUNITY



VIOLET

Contributions of \$250,000
or more

Carter Nelson Memorial Golf
Tournament
Dancing with the Turlock Stars
EMC Health, Inc.
For Healing Hearts Steering
Committee Members
Select Harvest USA and Grower
Associates

JADE

Contributions of \$100,000
up to \$250,000

Legacy Health Endowment
Telcion Communications Group
The Victor Medeiros Family-
Motors on Main
Robert and Dana Nicholson
Phil, Alan and Dominic Vallarine
Porges Family Foundation
Bill and Carolyn Ahlem Family
Ken and Lori Braden
The Clauss Family
E. & J. Gallo Winery and Family
Barbara Garcia and Family
The John and Jeani Ferrari
Family Foundation
The Foster Family
Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc.
The Rogers Family
Dorothy J. Rohn
Bob and Brenda Schmidt
Charles Ahlem Ranch

AMBER

Contributions of \$50,000
up to \$100,000

Cody and Belle Alldrin
D.A. Wood Construction, Inc.
Emanuel Medical Center
Gemperle Family Farms
Bob and Natalie Runyan
Zenith Agribusiness Solutions
Michael and Alison Allen
Kayla Bernardi BEE Positive
Foundation
Ken Bethel
Kevin and Melanie Chiesa &
Ron and Jane Martella
Dick Cunningham
Dean and Liz Doerksen
The Garton Family
J & T Cattle Company
McCulla Family Foundation
In Loving Memory of Al and
Patti Mendes
MK Electric & Design, Inc.
Robert and Shawna Nunes
Spycher Brothers
Matt and Maria Swanson
Richard and Andrea Swanson
Doug Ulrich
The Vieira Family
Steve and Arlene Vilas
Anonymous

POPPY

Contributions of \$25,000
up to \$50,000

Tam Cordray
Nancy Daley
Integral Wealth Management
Kiwanis of Greater Turlock
Lander Veterinary Clinic
Mitch and Terisa Logsdon-
United Equipment Company
Duane and Barbara Matheron
John K. Miles and Priscilla Peters
Rodney and Nancy Sakaguchi
Robby Sra and Bedi Brothers
Stephen J. and Sandra L. Vieira
Western Valley Insurance Associates, Inc.
Harold and Marlene Agresti Family
Jim and Carol Ahlem
John and Rebecca Arellano
Dr. and Mrs. Gary Baker
Aaron and Stephanie Hackler
Ladd and Christine Hackler
Nicholas and Jill Hackler
Dr. Filipe and Melissa Lima
Al and Carol Litfin
Victor and Angela Martino
Neil Sims and Timothy Lucas
Larry and Candy Smith-
Smith Chevrolet Cadillac
Winton-Ireland, Strom & Green
Insurance Agency
David and Elizabeth Woods
Anonymous (3)

INDIGO

Contributions of \$10,000
up to \$25,000

Grant and Melissa Ahlem
Nick and Janine Arakelian
The Frank Assali Family
The Barber Family
Beard Land Improvement Company
Brett, Sky, Malia and Mehana Brewer
James and Gena Brenda
Ernest Gong and Tai-Li Chang
Covenant Living of Turlock
Danielle's Gift
Darrell and Michelle DiGiovanni
The Flowers Family
Stephen Gemperle and Alison Morr
Gemperle
Janelle Gray
Patti Greer
Eileen Hamilton
Jim and Kathy Heller
Magda Hernandez & Mark Hernandez
Brett and Camy Honoré
Fred and Judi Honoré
Ryan and Kristin Hust
Joy Ingram
Mike and BettyAnn Ireland
The Family of Kent and Ginger Johnson
Dr. Joseph and Jenny Kolody
Paul and Paula Langley
Lifestyle Realty
Tom and Gay Locke
Craig and Denise McIntire
John and Dorothy Menezes Family
Bob and Lanita Moen
Joe L. and Velma Nunes

OUR GENEROUS HEART CIRCLE COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)



Carol Anne Salado Fox
Mike and Dana Schmidt
Smallwood Familia
Stephen and Kathleen Smith
Tanis Family
Turlock Memorial Park &
Funeral Home
Jeffrey and Debbie Reagor
Valley Heritage Realty
Arlon and Susan Waterson
Toni Ward
Jack and Pat Wilkey
Mark and Lindsay Ahlem
Dr. Christopher and Sarah Akin
Cederlind Farms–
Mary Lou, Jeff and Cindy
Nathan and Amy Dabulewicz–
Dabulewicz Insurance Agency
Jay and Melinda DeGraff–
The Greenery Nursery
Fred and Kelli De Jong
The Dirkse Family
Michael and Danielle Everett
Brian and Linda Genzoli
Grizzly Nut, LLC
Brad and Lori Hansen
Kurt and Kelly McKenzie
Allan and Carla Merrill
Oak Valley Community Bank
The Pallios Family
Tom and Debbi Sperry
MacKenzie Spycher
Van and Nancy Switzer
Ulrich Management & Consulting
The Stuhmer Family
Darryl and Gloria Woods
Anonymous

SCARLET

Contributions of \$5,000
up to \$10,000

Hemanta Agarwala– Alpha Poultry
& Livestock Equipment, Inc.
Alegria Performing Arts Academy
The Amarant Family
Scott and Nancy Atherton
Balswick Quick Smog
Mike and Tina Brem
Dennis and Caryl Brewer
Jim and Carrie Burden
Julie Sano Burke
Caloy Natural Oils
Canal Veterinary Hospital
Tom and Debbie Chaplin
Chipponeri Electric, Inc.
Larry and Judy Christoffersen
Chris and Christine Colston
The Creeger Family
Michael and Jonette Crowell Family
CVAR Turlock Council
Ron and Lynn Dickerson
Bob and Carole Fernandes
Norma Fernandes
Russ and Anita Garman
Mike and Kristi Gemperle
Peter and Jeanine Gemperle
Jilbert Gevargizi– CalWest Insurance
Agency
Ralph and Beth Gonzales Family
Harmon-Redfern Family
Jim and Julie Herr
Sabino and Lindsey Herrera
The Hoch Family
Steve and Kelly Hollinger
Clark and Diana Hulbert

Dr. Trevor and Jessica Irish
Robert and Carla Johns
Larry and Judy Johnson
Garth and Kathy Jolliff
Robert and Carrie Kelley
Keyes Truck Center
Aaron and Tiffany King
Kris Klair– EXIT Realty Consultants
Scott and Alison Kuykendall
Keith and Diane Landmeier
Steve and Frannie Lay
Little Red Door
Bernardete Lobão and Family
Ana Machado
Gary and Dawn Mallory
Glenn and Cindy Jo McFarland
Galen and Melba Miyamoto
Modesto Irrigation District
Berj and DeeDee Moosekian
Colleen and Christian Montague
Off Center Thrift & Gift
John Paul Padilla– Johnny Big-Ears
Jim and Diane Parker
Guy Petzold and Judi Dumas
Brad and Lori Quillen
Damian Suarez
Jack and Marcia Shafer
Marc and Jeanette Sanders
Joe and Megan Silveira
Tom and Patti Soiseth
Kipp and Shelly South
Mike and Angelica Stanfield
Stante Family
Troy and Cassie Starn
State Farm Insurance– Dee Hernandez
Carol Stephens
Tracee and Kevin Storms
Bret and Sheri Sutterley
John and Janene Temple–

Inspirations Salon
Valley Children's Healthcare
Mary Van Till
Josh and Meredith Weimer
The White Family
Jill Wickstrom
Vernon and Mary Wickstrom
Dr. Michael and Miss Sue Wright
Chris and Constance Anderson
Curt and Julie Andre
Dr. Harsha and Amy Bingi
Dr. Patrick Donovan and Cynthia Byers
Debbie Determan
The Dyt Family
insureCAL Insurance Agency
Flora Jacob
Rod and Randee Jorritsma
Rich and Joanne McFerron
Don Morelli
Bryan and Kirsten Saint
Francis and Dumarina Sarguis
Joseph and Bethany Simile
Filomena Sousa
Alan and Diane Tate
Turlock Lions Club
Steve and Mary Volk
Yosemite Farm Credit, ACA
Anonymous (4)

2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Support & Revenue Sources

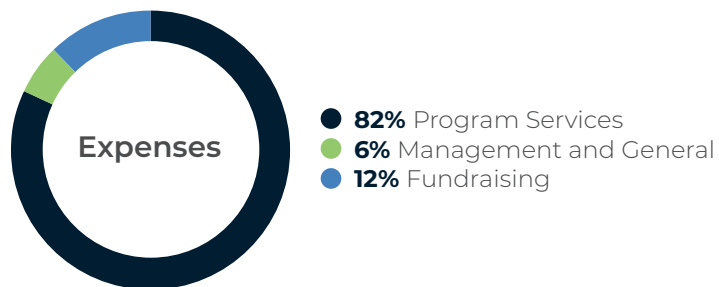
Contributions	\$1,242,594.66
· Capital Campaign	
· Heart Circle Drive	
· General Donations	
· Grants	
EMC Health Contributions	\$ 591,997.34

TOTAL **\$1,834,592.00**

Expenses

Program Services	\$ 1,511,693.82
Management and General	\$ 101,778.22
Fundraising	\$ 221,119.96

TOTAL **\$1,834,592.00**



*Fiscal Year 2022-23 (October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023)

ONE CARING TEAM



Our 12 dedicated and compassionate team members

have a variety of experiences and educational backgrounds working across Family Services, Programming, Marketing and Development, Outreach and Education. Together they are committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment at Jessica's House.





*Grief Support for Children, Teens,
Young Adults and Their Families*

1225 W Christoffersen Pkwy
Turlock, CA 95382

info@jessicashouse.org
(209) 250-5395

JESSICASHOUSE.ORG