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Prayers to Become Foundation of Jessica's House Permanent Home

Turlock, California – The first two prayers written on the unfinished walls of the new Jessica's House permanent home will come from two sets of parents who share unimaginable grief in common—the tragic loss of their sons.

John and Jeani Ferrari, and Bryan and Erin Nelson, will pen the first two prayers at the “**Prayers to Build On**” event on **Aug. 30**. The event will take place at the now-under-construction permanent home for Jessica's House from 10 a.m. to noon. Jessica's House provides grief support for children, teens, young adults and their families grieving the loss of a loved one.

The four parents will inscribe their prayers in the Carter Nelson Art Studio. The art studio naming was made possible by a generous donation from the John and Jeani Ferrari Family Foundation, in memory of Erin and Bryan's son, Carter.

“John and I were heartsick to learn of Carter's death,” said Jeani Ferrari. “We knew about the Jessica's House project and remembered how much it meant to our family when, through a kind gesture, a room at Emanuel Medical Center was named for Justin. Our hearts led to the decision to name a room for Carter. It was easy to choose the art room as Carter loved music and was such a creative young man.”

Justin and Carter's Story

John and Jeani's son Justin was committed to environmental issues and social justice. Justin lived a simple life, believing that one person, one action, can make a difference. Carter loved singing and songwriting and had a passion for cars. Justin and Carter shared a creative nature and had hearts to support those in need.

Justin Ferrari, a beloved son, husband, and father, was tragically killed in May 2012 at the age of 42 when a stray bullet ended his life. Carter Nelson, age 20, was tragically killed in a car accident in September 2019.

Prayers to Build On Event

After the Ferraris and Nelsons have written their prayers, community and spiritual leaders, Jessica's House staff, volunteers, and families will inscribe dozens of community-submitted prayers on the walls. The prayers will eventually be covered by paint and plaster, but Jessica's House staff will record and save them in a book to be shared with future families needing the support of Jessica's House. As of Aug. 25, 28 prayers have been received from the community.

“Our new home will be built upon the prayers of our community,” said Erin Nelson, executive director of Jessica’s House. “These prayers will be part of Jessica’s House forever.”

The “Prayers to Build On” event has been planned to adhere to social distancing guidelines and attendance will be kept at a minimum. Every 30 minutes different inscribers are scheduled to add prayers to the walls in each room of the permanent home located at the corner of Christofferson Road and Crowell Road, adjacent to the Cornerstone Covenant Church.

In addition to helping to fund Jessica’s House For Healing Hearts capital campaign with donations, community members are invited to share prayers for the children who will be served in the new home for Jessica’s House. Contact prayers@jessicashouse.org

Construction of the new Jessica’s House permanent home is projected to be completed in spring 2021. For more information, please visit: www.jessicashouse.org.

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About Jessica’s House

Jessica’s House began as a grassroots effort inspired by Erin Nelson and Turlock community members who had experienced untimely deaths in their families. When they sought grief support service for their children, they realized there were no local organizations specializing in supporting grieving children. Since the program launched in 2012, Jessica’s House has been a place of comfort, hope, and healing for grieving children, teens, young adults, and families throughout the region. Jessica’s House is a grief support ministry under the leadership of EMC Health, Inc., a Turlock-based nonprofit organization affiliated with Covenant Ministries of Benevolence. Generous community support allows Jessica’s House to provide not only grief support groups but community trainings and crisis response teams in Stanislaus and Merced counties.