

2020 Annual Report



Jessica's House

*Grief support for children, teens,
young adults and their families*

A young girl with dark, curly hair is sitting on a light-colored couch. She is holding a large, white stuffed rabbit with orange ears and a black nose. She has a thoughtful or sad expression on her face, looking off to the side. The background is slightly blurred, showing a green plant and a wicker basket.

1

mission

To provide support in a safe place for children, teens, young adults and their families grieving a death because no one should grieve alone.

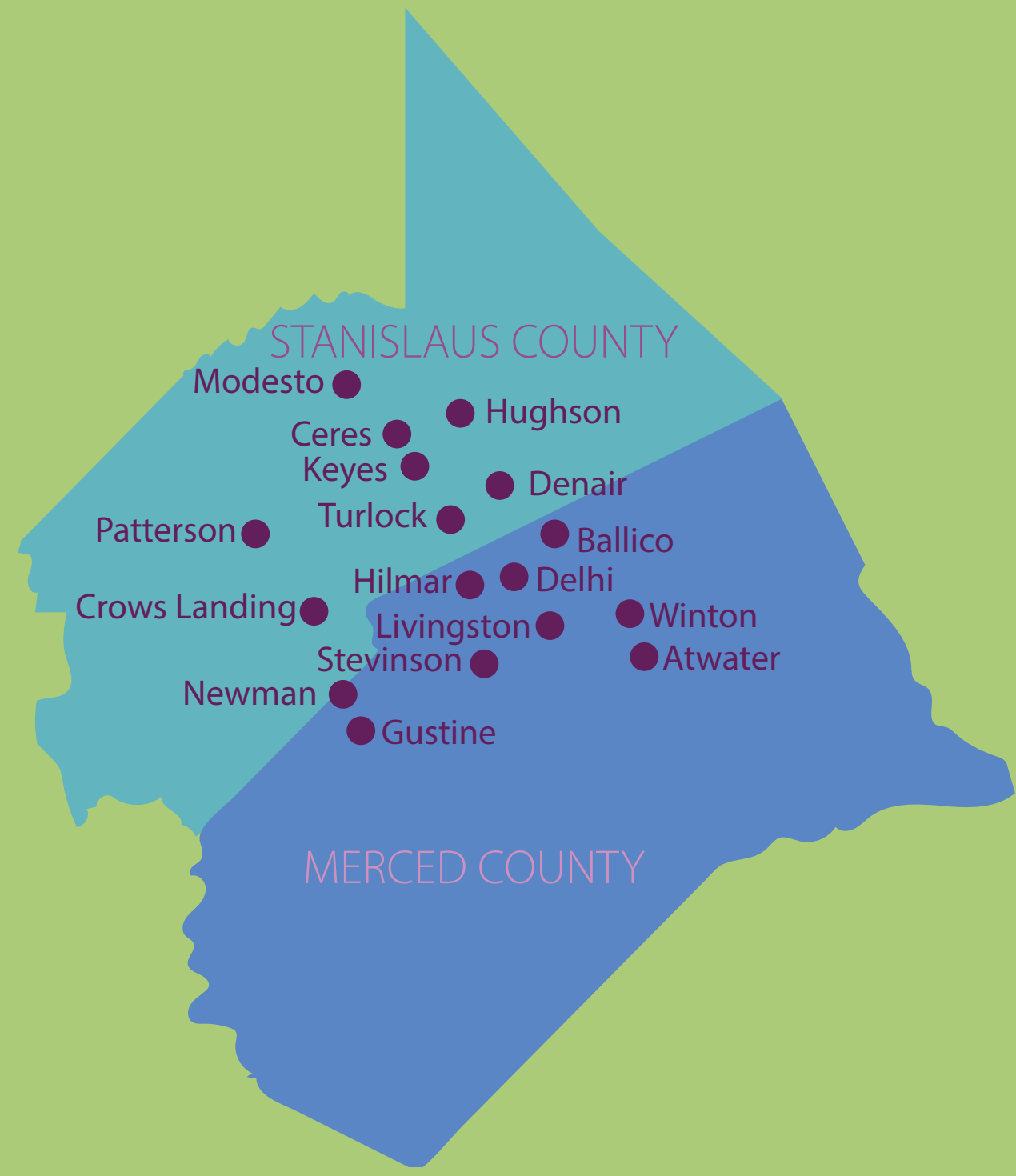


**counties in
our primary
service area**

including these great
communities:

Stanislaus: Ceres, Crows
Landing, Denair, Hughson,
Keyes, Modesto, Newman,
Patterson, and Turlock

Merced: Atwater, Ballico, Delhi, Gustine,
Hilmar, Livingston, Stevinson, and Winton



*Jessica's House provides grief support to
anyone, regardless of their residence.*



specialized peer support groups

Grieving children, teens and young adults are placed in peer support groups by age, type of loss and relationship to the person who died.

- COVID-19 Loss (new in 2020)
- Parent Loss
- Sibling Loss
- Spanish Language
- Hope After Homicide
- Hope After Suicide
- HeartStrings (stillbirth and pregnancy loss)
- Grandparent Loss





1888

families supported

Occupationally, they are teachers, sales reps, medical workers, ag-business owners, and more. Personally, they are solo moms, widowed dads, legal guardians and primary caregivers. Yet no matter their day job or night work, these individuals made up a group—a “club” they never planned to join—individually and collectively they are grieving together.

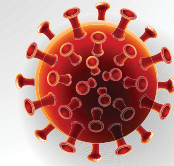
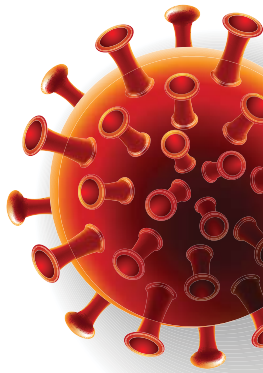
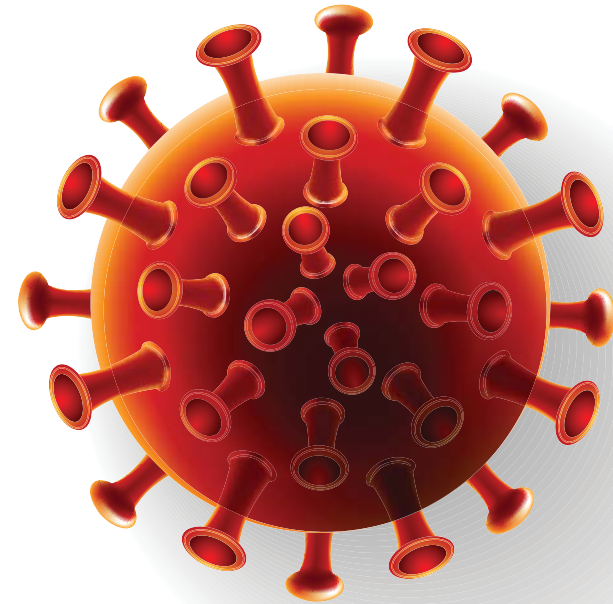
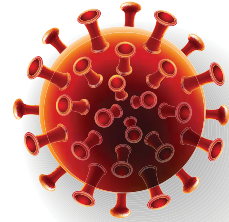
603

grieving children supported

Our team supported little brothers to big sisters through specialized peer support groups at Jessica's House. These children included 158 students who received grief support at campus-based groups, until schools were closed by the pandemic. Peer support groups provide grieving children, teens, young adults, and their families with moments of connection, expression through art and play and opportunities to share and practice coping skills. Each one has a unique story, yet all of them with one commonality—grieving the loss of someone they love.



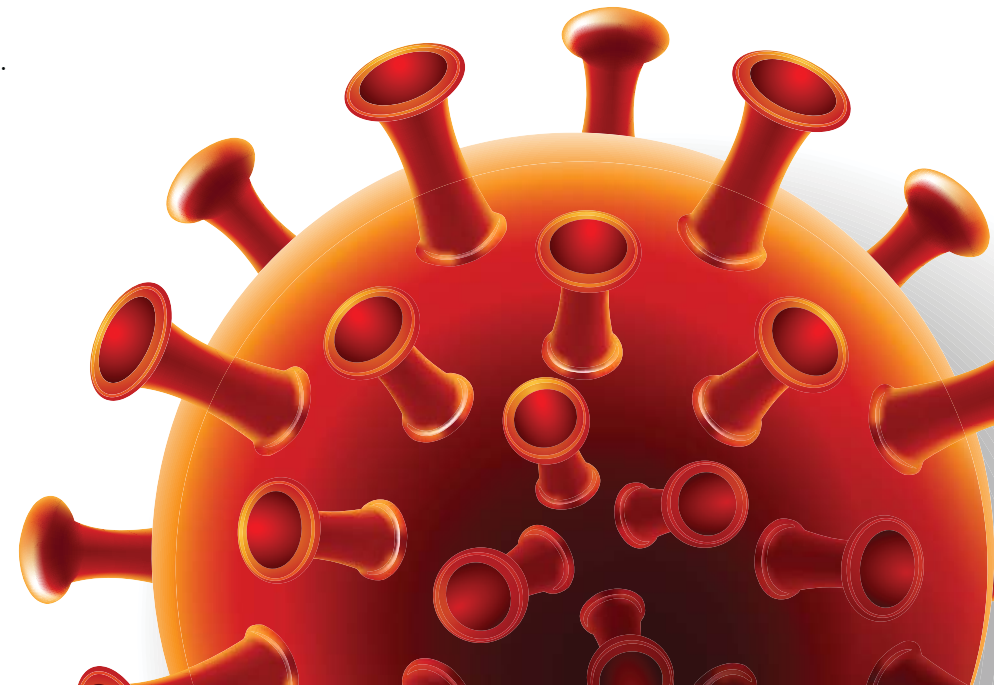
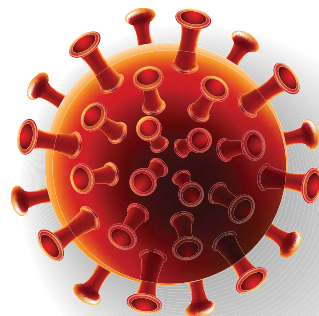
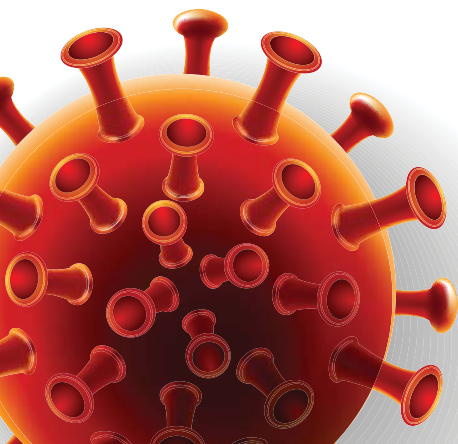
COVID-19



1

global pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, on March 12, Jessica's House suspended in-person peer support groups under the recommendations of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Our team is trained at responding to critical incidents, so we quickly pivoted to providing virtual grief support, because grieving does not cease even during a pandemic.



Today I Feel...



© 2004-2012 Gretchen Miller, MA, ATR-BC, CTC
Registered Board Certified Art Therapist and Certified Trauma Consultant
gretchen-miller.com / gretchenmiller@cox.net

336

peer support groups facilitated

Our compassionate and highly trained team of staff and volunteers facilitated dozens of in-person support groups before the pandemic and then hundreds of virtual support groups the balance of the year. Together, they supported:

242 participants in the Parent Loss Support Group

51 participants in the Sibling Loss Support Group

32 participants in the Spanish Language Support Group

22 participants in the Hope After Homicide Support Group

33 participants in the Hope After Suicide Support Group

14 parent participants in the HeartStrings Support Group

51 participants in the Grandparent Loss Support Group

Members of **176** grieving families were supported through groups at Jessica's House. The groups provided grieving children, teens, young adults and their families with moments of connection, expression through art and play, and opportunities to share and practice coping skills.

300

virtual group support sessions

What once was commonly known as a word to describe 'quickly moving travel,' the word "Zoom" took on new meaning in 2020. We utilized Zoom video chat software to meet virtually with our grieving families. We virtually facilitated 171 children's peer support groups and 129 adult groups this year.



1

COVID-19 related peer support group launched

The loss of life from COVID-19 impacted the world. It also impacted families close to home, with over 800 virus-related deaths in Stanislaus and Merced counties. In response to the immense loss from the coronavirus, on October 1 we announced an all-new peer support group that was developed especially for youth and their caregivers who have lost a family member to COVID-19.






10,786

home page visits


Our website is a valuable resource to the community and the families we serve. More than 10,700 visitors landed on our home page at www.jessicashouse.org. The pages they visited included the all-new "COVID-19 Resources for Caregivers and Children." On the COVID-19 resource page, you will find videos, expressive art activities and more. Many of these resources are available in Spanish, too.

Apoyo de duelo para niños, adolescentes, adultos jóvenes y sus familias | [Español](#)



About Grief Support Make a Difference Contact Us [Donate](#)


Grief Support for Children, Teens, Young Adults and their Families



A Time to Build
For grieving children whose hearts have been broken, there will always be a place of hope, caring and connection.
for
healing hearts
A Capital Campaign for Jessica's House

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 Resources for Caregivers and Children
[Click here to learn more.](#)



About Jessica's House
Jessica's House provides support in a safe place for grieving children, teens, young adults, and their families. Learn more about the work of Jessica's House from families we have served.

[Our Mission](#)

Please call (209) 250-5395 or email info@jessicashouse.org for more information.



Jessica's House

Grief support for children, teens,
young adults and their families

Activity



My Safe Place

Materials:

- Pillowcase
- Sharpie or marker

Directions:

- Think of an animal that lives in the wild. What does your animal need to feel safe?
- What kinds of habitats help animals to feel safe?
- What helps you feel safe?
- Lie on your back and place a stuffed animal on your belly. Rock your animal to sleep by breathing deeply in and out as you watch your animal go up and down.
- As you breathe in, the animal rocks up; as you breathe out, the animal rocks back down.
- Now draw a picture of your safe place.
- When was the last time you felt safe and calm?
 - What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel? What did you smell? Who was there? What was the weather like?
 - If you can't think of a time when you felt safe, draw a place you would most likely feel safe.
- With a sharpie or marker, draw your safe place on the pillowcase.
 - This person, place or thing is what helps you feel safe and calm. Now write your strengths and good memories or hopes on your pillowcase.
- What place helps you feel safe? What helps you feel better?
- Remember to think about or go to your safe place to feel better. Just like an animal, this is your safe "habitat" that can help you find calm.

Questions for Facilitator and Parent/Guardian:

- Tell about the last time you felt safe.
- What made that feel safe for you?
- What else helps you feel safe?

188

expressive art activity kits

Expressive arts help those with grief and trauma find healing. During the nine-month period that we provided virtual grief support, we delivered expressive art activity kits to 188 families who combined, have 266 children participating in our groups. The kits included a variety of supplies for 18 different expressive art activities, including pipe cleaners, feathers, Crayola Model Magic, Play-Doh, googly eyes and even pillowcases.

31,000

“Grandma Nan” story time views

In March, when the California Governor issued a pandemic-related stay-at-home order, our in-person groups were immediately paused. We swiftly connected online with our families and the community. Hosted by Peer Support Group Facilitator Nancy Daley, known fondly as “Grandma Nan,” we presented 21 Facebook Live story hours. Her stories were specially selected to reach those grieving the loss of a loved one. The stories were also for those grieving the sudden change and/or isolation resulting from staying at home during the pandemic.

[Watch an episode here](#)





**cost to
participate in
peer support
groups**

Zip. Nada. Not one penny. All of Jessica's House support services, including peer support groups, are provided at no charge to grieving families thanks to generous community support.



\$1,500 per child program expense

The cost of grief support services to children, like Lucas, is \$1,500 per child. Lucas was eight when his dad died. He found connection in a Jessica's House group especially for kids his age and so did his brother Tyler. Their mom, Jessica, did not have to worry about how to pay for grief support for herself and her two sons, as our services are always free of charge.



301

children supported during critical incidents

Our Critical Incident Response Team consists of highly trained personnel who worked alongside law enforcement and emergency responders at 12 critical incidents affecting children. Examples of critical incidents include the death of a teacher or the death of a student.

INCIDENT

RESPONSE!

718

outreach contacts

In person before the pandemic, and by phone, email and online, our team readily shared our mission and services with the community, referral sources and grieving families.

We're Here for You
When You Feel Alone

Welcome to
Jessica's House

Someone has died.
Everything has changed.
But there are people who care and
want to support you.
There is a place for you to grieve
in your own time, in your own way.



7,081 Social Media Followers

We also provide grief support, inspiration and resources on Facebook and Instagram. In 2020, we shared 250 grief tips with our followers, some whom may never walk through our doors. Our community loves to connect with us socially and we love them, too. Our Facebook Live "Prayers to Build On" event had more than 10,000 views and our Facebook Live "Capital Campaign Milestone" announcement had more than 4,000 views.



Facebook



Instagram



T



3,324 volunteer hours donated

We ❤️ our volunteers! After completing a mandatory 21-hour volunteer training program, our 137 dedicated and compassionate volunteers gave of their hearts and time during this unprecedented year. Volunteers co-facilitated in-person groups before the pandemic, then continued to support our families virtually the balance of the year. We saluted them virtually, with a rad 80s themed “party,” during Volunteer Appreciation Month.



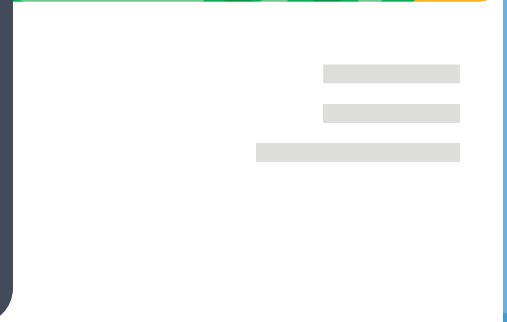
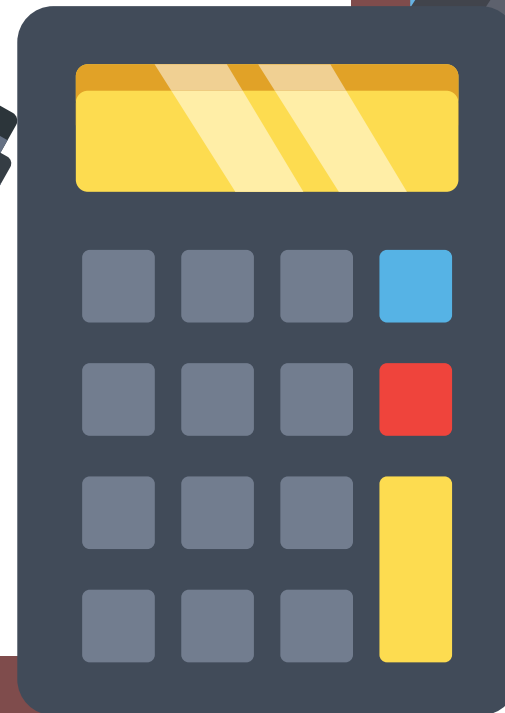
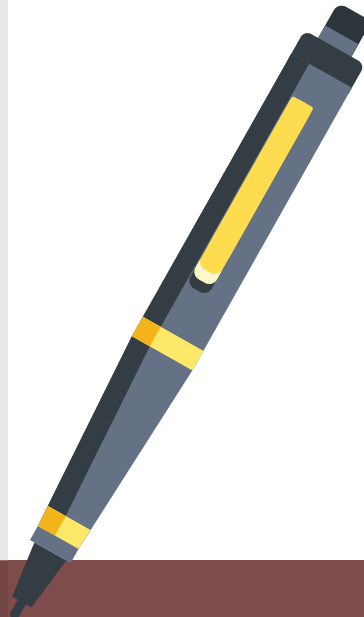
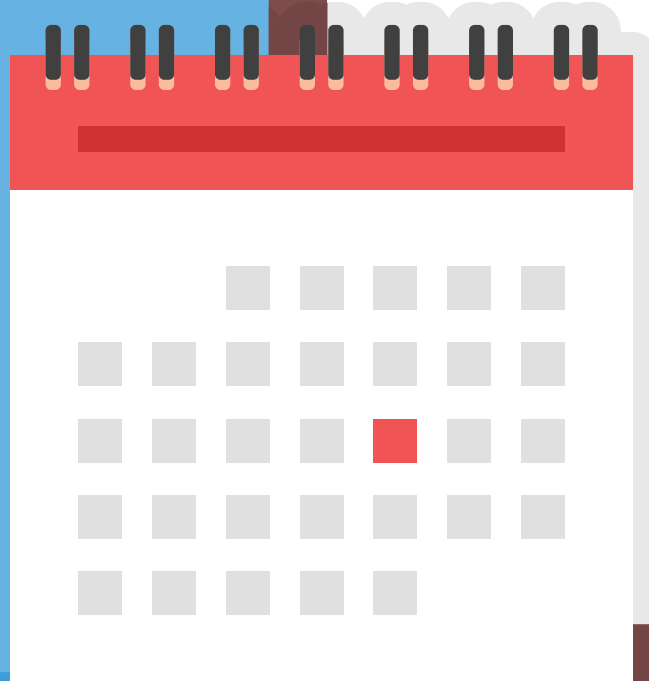
full-time staff

It was business as usual for our paid staff, until mid-March. And then they pivoted. Our grief experts were unflappable when the pandemic hit. Collectively, creatively, and quickly they developed and then delivered virtual services and resources during the pandemic. Our team includes the expert guidance of our CEO, our Board of Directors, the generous support of our donors, and the regular assistance and support of our committed and compassionate volunteers.

\$712,427.71

Total Operating Budget

Annual Fund Contributions	\$201,489.16
Events	\$5,000.00
EMC Health Contribution	\$505,938.55



206,489.16
dollars donated

Our generous donors sponsored a child, funded grief support and school-based groups, and covered program costs such as art for activities, toys, kitchen, and office supplies for groups and more. Our heartfelt thanks for the financial support from individuals, businesses and organizations. We were also the beneficiary of much-needed in-kind contributions such as art supplies, toys, snacks, hand sanitizer, gift cards and more.



KAYLA BERNARDI
BEE POSITIVE FOUNDATION

DATE: March 8, 2020

PAY TO THE
ORDER OF

Jessica's House

\$5,000.00

Five Thousand Dollars----- DOLLARS

MEMO

Bee Positive



SUPPORT AND REVENUE SOURCES:

Contributions	\$201,489.16
Events	\$5,000.00
EMC Health Contributions	\$505,938.55
Total	\$712,427.71

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$592,669.22
Management and General	\$44,894.42
Fundraising	\$74,864.07
Total	\$712,427.71

For calendar year January 1 - December 31, 2020

permanent home for healing hearts

This year we broke ground on our permanent home at the property made possible by generous terms from Cornerstone Covenant Church.

While the pandemic surged, our construction team socially-distanced to safely transform an empty lot on Christoffersen Parkway to our future 15,639 square foot permanent home.

Our dedicated building team has poured 2,800,000 pounds of concrete (the weight of about 235 elephants). They've cut, stacked, and erected 20,318 lineal feet of board lumber, using 47,000 gun nails. They've sawed 1,028 sheets of plywood and much, much more.

Millions of materials. One home for healing hearts. Coming summer 2021.





70

Prayers to Build On

Written prayers from donors, the community, spiritual leaders, and Jessica's House staff, volunteers and families were inscribed on the walls of our soon-to-be permanent home. The prayers are now covered by paint and plaster and will be part of Jessica's House forever.



for healing hearts

A Capital Campaign for Jessica's House

\$6,000,000

Capital Campaign goal

The For Healing Hearts Capital Campaign will build a permanent Jessica's House, with a 15,600 square-foot floor plan, designed to retain a home-like feel while providing the therapeutic spaces needed to deliver quality grief support to children, teens, young adults, and their caregivers. Thanks to the generous and compassionate major donors throughout the region, and a generous \$3 million match from EMC Health, Inc., we are excited to announce our progress as of March 2021:

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE AS OF March 31, 2021

Total Committed Pledges:	\$3,319,883.38
Total Pledge Payments:	\$1,943,283.38
EMC Health Match:	\$3,000,000.00
Sponsor a Building Block Campaign:	\$100,506.00
Total Campaign/Constructions Expenses:	\$5,584,839.17



2

extraordinary all-volunteer committees

Our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated members of the For Healing Hearts Capital Campaign Committee. This dedicated team of community leaders donated hours and hours of fundraising time to propel our vision for a permanent home for Jessica's House.

And a colossal thank you to our remarkable Building Committee whose expertise in all facets of construction have directed the future of our permanent home.





Immeasurable

We all grieved in 2020. We grieved when the global pandemic made its way to the United States. When it found California. And when it infiltrated our hometowns. The coronavirus impacted our families, friends and coworkers. It changed everyday life and how we worked. At the same time, hundreds of Jessica's House families were already grieving the unimaginable—the painful loss of a loved one. Life seemed so dark at times.

But out of the darkness came hope. Hope in the future. Hope in healing. Hope that our new building was being prepared to welcome our families. And through the darkness, we found the light of remarkable generosity all around us.

I am grateful to each of you who has supported the mission of Jessica's House in 2020. It was a year that made world history and will forever be marked in our hearts and minds. Yet, you looked past the unprecedented and never lost sight of what was right in front of us—grieving children and their families who should never walk alone. Your generosity and support, in every form, is truly immeasurable.

With heartfelt thanks,

Erin Nelson

Executive Director

Jessica's House

