Judi’s House and JAG Institute are preventing complications of unaddressed grief and trauma by providing comprehensive services to bereaved children and families, and sharing knowledge and resources with those who care for them. We promote healthy adjustment in grieving children and families through our three core strategic initiatives:

- Direct Service
- Evaluation and Research
- Training and Education

This Mid-Year Report provides updates on the progress of Judi’s House and JAG Institute for the first six months of 2015.

Direct Service: Caring for Our Community

Judi’s House is the only free-standing organization in Metro Denver devoted solely to supporting grieving children and their families. For the first half of 2015, Judi’s House has provided Comprehensive Grief Care™ to more than 800 children and caregivers — and provided more than 6,000 counseling hours, completely free of charge.

We promote connection and healing through group, individual, and family grief counseling at Judi’s House, as well as groups in schools and community organizations throughout Metro Denver. Below is a breakdown of the numbers of clients served in all of these settings for the first six months of this year:

**Clients**

- 60% Youth
- 40% Adult Caregivers

**Gender**

- 61% Male
- 39% Female

**Client Ethnicity**

- 53% Caucasian
- 21% Hispanic/Latino
- 12% African-American
- 8% Multi-racial
- 6% Did not specify

**Age of Participants (in years)**

- 3-6: 87
- 7-10: 136
- 11-13: 165
- 14-18: 97
- 19 and up: 324

**Client Age**

- 0-5: 250
- 6-10: 200
- 11-13: 150
- 14-18: 100
- 19 and up: 50

- Male: 300
- Female: 250

- 61% Male
- 39% Female
In addition to ongoing programming, we offer special events to help families cope with significant holidays or to create opportunities for remembrance. This year, more than 100 clients took part in our New Year’s Celebration and our Memorial Event at Judi’s House. Together with grieving children and their caregivers, we help cultivate resilience and develop coping skills to adjust to their loss and handle future challenges.
Evaluation and Research: 
Advancing the Field

By successfully integrating research and practice at Judi’s House, we have amassed the largest known dataset focused on the needs of bereaved children and families. This insight sets us apart — both locally and nationally — from other grief care approaches. Through the establishment of an internal Evaluation and Research Department within JAG Institute, we are poised to advance knowledge and transform the field.

In addition to successfully continuing all current data collection throughout the first half of the year, the Evaluation and Research Department has focused heavily on creating vital internal infrastructure to ensure a sustainable, productive department. This includes a coordinated effort for establishing and documenting all evaluation and research standards, processes, procedures, and data tracking systems as well as the development of comprehensive data codebooks to track each variable on every measure across all data collection time points. To facilitate data-informed decision making, we have also produced a streamlined internal reporting system that is more timely and user-friendly.

As part of our efforts to disseminate knowledge about meeting the needs of bereaved children, an invited article detailing our Pathfinders program was submitted to a peer-reviewed academic journal special issue focused on creative approaches to supporting the bereaved. Additionally, our development of the Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model has been well received at national conferences and is currently being internally validated in order to be prepared for peer-reviewed publication. This innovative statistical model is a useful tool for estimating prevalence of parent and sibling loss during childhood both nationally and in specific geographic regions. The model estimates that 1 in 20 children will experience the death of a parent or sibling before the age of 18. In the Metro Denver area alone, it is estimated that more than 30,000 children will experience the death of a parent or sibling before the age of 18. That number climbs to more than 60,000 for the state of Colorado, and more than 4,000,000 nationally.
Training and Education: Increasing Access by Building Workforce Capacity

We continue to raise public awareness about the needs of grieving children and families, while training professionals in best practices. So far this year, our clinical staff has provided more than 400 hours of in-depth training and supervision to graduate-level interns and postgraduate trainees. These young professionals dedicate a minimum of 20 hours each week to our community, our families, and our mission. Additionally, we have already provided training, education and outreach to 786 individuals in 2015 — locally and nationally — through educational and professional development workshops that target:

- Schools
- Universities
- Service agencies
- Professional associations
- Academic conferences

In June, Judi’s House/JAG Institute was well represented at the 19th Annual National Alliance for Grieving Children (NAGC) Symposium in Portland, Oregon. Our Executive Director, Dr. Brook Griese, was an invited panelist for a plenary on research that was attended by over 450 participants from around the country. She was also invited to lead a workshop on understanding and applying research, and provided interviews for national media efforts focused on raising awareness about childhood bereavement. Dr. Griese has also been serving on an NAGC Think Tank focused on messaging for an upcoming national awareness campaign. Dr. Micki Burns, our Director of Programs, led a forum on school based grief services at the symposium, and both psychologists gave a well-attended presentation on Judi’s House evaluation findings with Dr. Samantha Farro, Director of Evaluation and Research, co-authored by Dr. Louise Silvern, research partner at CU Boulder, and Dr. Ayelet Talmi, Director of Institute Development.

Pictured from left to right: Dr. Brook Griese, Executive Director; Dr. Micki Burns, Director of Programs; and Dr. Samantha Farro, Director of Evaluation and Research at the NAGC Symposium.
Expanding Our Reach

We are making key investments in 2015 that will fundamentally improve our ability to promote resilience and improve lifelong health and well being for grieving children and families.

A New Building for JAG Institute

JAG Institute, also named in memory of Judith Ann Griese, is a center of excellence and learning that will complement the work of Judi’s House by allowing us to reach even more grieving children and families. Judi’s House will continue to provide direct services at 1741 Gaylord Street and throughout the community. However, our growing team and expanding research and training initiatives require additional space. We were extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to purchase the building across the street at 1740 Gaylord Street to house JAG Institute, and moved in at the beginning of this year.

Technology Development

Judi’s House and JAG Institute have identified technology strategies that will enable us to:

- **Improve** quality of care by continuously delivering data-informed feedback for practice refinement
- **Develop** and share assessment and evaluation tools with other professionals
- **Expand**, strengthen, and diversify our research knowledge base
- **Build** capacity to disseminate information to professionals working with grieving children and families

Investing in technology will ultimately allow us to increase access to effective Comprehensive Grief Care™ through sharing web-based tools and resources with a collaborative network of trained professionals. It will also provide grieving families with online, self-directed, interactive, and individualized grief support tools and resources.

Toolkit Development

JAG Institute is developing, piloting, and implementing products and materials for dissemination of the Comprehensive Grief Care™ Toolkit to **advance the bereavement field**. These products and materials include:

- The *Pathfinders* Curriculum and Materials
- The *Coping Companion*
- The *Adjustment to Trauma, Loss, and Adversity Scale* (ATLAS)
- The *Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model* (CBEM)

The Toolkit will be used in training and dissemination efforts to develop workforce capacity and increase access to high quality grief-focused, trauma-informed care.
Events and Presentations

On May 5, 2015, Judi’s House held its Inaugural Speakers Series Luncheon, “Strength in the Face of Adversity,” featuring NFL legends Archie Manning and Bob Griese. Not only did this event increase awareness of childhood bereavement and grief, it raised more than $1 million, due to the extremely generous support of our community.

We are especially grateful to the 700 guests who attended and the amazing sponsors who helped us pioneer this event, including our Title Sponsor, Land Title Guarantee Company, and our Legend Sponsors, Beverage Distributors Co LLC, Greenberg Traurig LLP, and US Bank.

A very special thank you goes out to our event chairs, Sheila and Hassan Salem and Mimi and Ed Roberson, and our Healing Hand Award recipients and honorees, Sharon Magness Blake and Ernie Blake.

This event was overwhelmingly successful in large part due to the matches that we were able to leverage, including a generous gift from The Salah Foundation. The funds raised at this event will significantly expand our capacity to promote healthy adjustment in grieving children and families in our community and beyond.

On February 27, Judi’s House and JAG Institute again co-hosted the second annual Elevating the Conversation Conference at the University of Denver. This year’s critical skills training in suicide risk assessment, management, and support featured knowledge gained from lived experience, including panelists who shared perspectives from both personal and professional experiences with suicide. Drs. Micki Burns and Brook Griese were also invited to present on our approach to supporting families grieving suicides at the 2015 Bridging the Divide Symposium Suicide Prevention and Awareness Summit on May 14. Given that nearly a quarter of the families we serve at Judi’s House are grieving a suicide death, and knowing there are very few services available for children affected by suicide in our community, this collaborative work with local and national suicide prevention partners is well aligned with our mission.

Moving Forward

We have been able to create a successful track record by being thoughtful in our approach toward growth, all while incorporating the core values of compassion, accountability, and respect as our guiding principles. It is only by adhering to these values that we are able to achieve our mission of helping children and families grieving a death find connection and healing.

We are excited for the remainder of 2015 and the milestones and successes it will bring. We thank you again for your unrelenting support, and we are proud to have you as partners as we work to realize our vision that no child should be alone in grief.

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