



Dr. Jay Children's Grief Centre

A home for grieving hearts

Building Strength, Resilience and Hope



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2016-2017**

A MESSAGE FROM SARAH AND BOBBI

"It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again". Helen Steiner Rice

The Dr. Jay Children's Grief Centre occupies a unique niche across sectors, bridging child and adolescent mental health with the healthcare sector. Our small team of dedicated counsellors provide very specialized support to children and youth living with terminal illness, traumatic loss and grief. We understand the complexities of meeting the psychosocial, developmental and medical needs of children, youth and families who are navigating the unimaginably difficult journey of coping with death and dying. We recognize that creating community and connection is a vital aspect of service provision for the children, youth and families who reach out to us searching for solace from the isolation they face. We know that truly responsive and relevant support needs to be as unique as the individual grieving and the loved one being remembered.

This year alone we provided support to 626 children and youth and 387 parents/caregivers. We accomplished this feat despite many obstacles: restricted space for counselling, staffing changes, organizational transitions, and limited financial resources. With the support of a phenomenal volunteer group and a dedicated donorship, the small but mighty team of the DJCGC transcended these obstacles and grew to meet the expanding needs of the community. We are so proud to be a part of a team with such spirit, compassion and tenacity.

Our programs create circles of support that ripple out across Toronto, the GTA, Ontario and now into other provinces as well! This year celebrates the development of a new initiative called "Roots to Resiliency: Supporting Grieving Children and Families"; a creative collaboration between two of our skilled counsellors and members of the Cree Nation of Mistissini in Northern Quebec. Next steps will include additional capacity building initiatives through knowledge sharing and training opportunities in order to implement a Family Night, and Mistissini's first camp for grieving children in August of 2017.

We are looking forward to the year ahead; focused on the growth and development of more community partnerships, collaborative projects and programming that will build capacity and resilience for the Centre and the clients we serve. We will continue to strive for impact beyond the family and community level to the broader healthcare, education and social service sectors. These sectors that have a critical role to play in ensuring that children impacted by early loss are given the tools, information and compassionate support they need to thrive.

We need to reach individuals and groups in our community who understand that the impact of illness, death and grief is life-long and that effective and timely interventions are vital for children, youth and families. We are so grateful to the individuals, foundations and corporations who understand how crucial our services are in meeting the unique needs of our young clients. We would like to thank our staff, board, donors and volunteers for the essential work that each of you do to make a positive difference and bring light into the lives of grieving children, youth and families.

With Gratitude



Sarah Henderson, Executive Director



Barbara Slater, Board Chair

Dr. Jay Children's Grief Centre

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To the staff, volunteers, donors and board of the Dr. Jay Children's Grief Centre,

My name is Antonietta Gutierrez and I want to share with you my experience of grief and how this centre and Camp Erin helped me turn my life around.

When I was ten, my dad was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer. His diagnosis came as a complete shock to my family because he was active, healthy and never smoked a day in his life. He was originally given three months to live. For two years, he was moved around four different hospitals for chemotherapy and radiation treatments. A year after his diagnosis, the doctors found the cancer had spread to his brain following a blood infection. By November of 2014, he quickly deteriorated. He was moved to palliative care. At that point he was in constant pain. No medication, nothing was working. He lost his ability to walk, speak and interact with my family and I. For the first time in two years, I realized how critical his condition was. Then came the fear of not knowing what was going to happen. But I, never gave up hope.

On January 4th 2015, he passed away in the arms of my brother. Every single day of my life I wish I could've told him how much I loved him, how much I appreciated him. I wish I could've said goodbye. I never spoke to anyone about his illness. Not even to my closest friends. After he died, I was never the same. That day I lost everything. Everything I was. Everything I believed in. Everything I loved, my hope and faith replaced by a pain so deep it all felt numb.

For a very long time I was in denial. I didn't want to accept that this was my reality. So I hid. I hid until I couldn't get out of bed in the morning, I would break down in the middle of class, my grades began to slip and I isolated myself from everyone around me. I fell into heavy depression.

... and then my social worker introduced me to the Dr. Jay Children's Grief Centre and the following year I attended Camp Erin. It was at camp for the very first time, I felt understood. I didn't have to hide in a blanket of shame. I was given an open space to express myself while connecting with other kids like me. It was life-changing. I left camp with positive and healthier ways to cope with my grief. I was ready to get the on-going support I needed. The road ahead was not easy, but knowing that I had a community of people supporting me, kept me going.

After Camp, I joined the youth program. I met so many other teens like me who had all experienced the loss of a loved one. It was at Youth Group that I continued to embrace my identity and confront my grief head-on. After group, I decided to come back to Camp Erin as a Leader in Training. It was so humbling to support other campers like me. I found myself so emotional because I was beyond grateful to be a part of such an incredible community of survivors. It was also interesting being on the other side because I still found myself tearing up through some of the activities. But I knew I wasn't alone. It was so special being able to see the campers cry and show their grief in such an open space. My time at Camp Erin was such an incredible privilege and I hope that more grieving children can get to be a part of it.

To the people who make these experiences possible, I cannot even express how thankful I am. Your compassion, dedication, kindness and hard work are not only changing lives, but are giving voices to so many kids like me who no longer have to grieve in silence. Your generosity and open hearts have given kids like me a space to properly grieve and learn how to embrace who they are... thank you so much for changing my life and for changing so many others. I hope that this continues to grow into an even larger community of people alike and different, but all with the same goal: to make sure that no grieving child ever has to go through it alone. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Antonietta Gutierrez

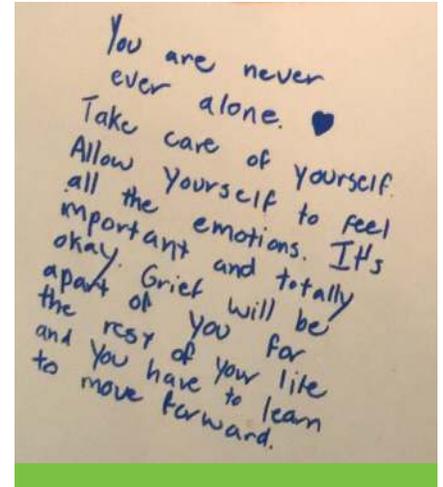


PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GRIEF COUNSELLING:

Specialized counselling provided by a multidisciplinary team of experts who help children, youth and their families cope, communicate and connect.

- The Centre received **143** new referrals for families requiring support
- **184** parents/caregivers sought counselling for the **224** children/youth in their care
- In addition to new referrals, counsellors continued to support 83 families already engaged in counselling
- There has been a significant increase in referrals for families facing complex and complicated grief that often require longer term interventions
- We now receive as many referrals from families dealing with the effects of homicide, suicide, addictions/overdose and sudden death as we do from chronic and terminal illness



CAMP ERIN TORONTO:

An annual camp experience that brings together grieving children and youth for a weekend of joy and grief activities in Muskoka, including reunion events and support for parents/caregivers.

- This year's camp saw a significant increase in campers from 97 in 2015 to 118 in 2016
- We welcomed a total of 105 campers aged 6-17 and 13 Leaders in Training
- When asked about post-camp experiences, 100% of parents & caregivers reported decreased concerns about campers
- 100% of campers reported increased feelings of closeness and support

YOUTH PROGRAM:

Connecting youth with peers through their grief, while building strength, coping strategies and communities for a lifetime.

- 18 youth completed the 12-week peer support group
- 14 youth participated in the Leader in Training program and supported other grieving children at Camp Erin 2016
- 100% of youth indicated an improvement in their coping strategies for their grief upon completion of the program
- 94% reported no longer feeling alone or isolated after group experience

"This program definitely it helps, it's a free place and doesn't judge you on how you struggled, and what you've done while you're experiencing grief"
YP Participant

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM:

An opportunity for bereaved children, youth, parents and caregivers to build support networks with other families experiencing grief in a fun, creative environment.

- 266 children, youth, parents and caregivers attended events throughout the year
- Our annual Gingerbread event was the largest of our 9yr history with 126 participants
- Approximatley 230 hours of support were donated by volunteers and LITs to support coping and community building through the family events

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CAPACITY BUILDING, KNOWLEDGE SHARING & SOCIAL MEDIA:

Engagement in collaborative consultation, education and provision of expertise to health care professionals, children's mental health providers, adult allies, boards of education and the public.

- Canadian Virtual Hospice – the leading, reputable national source for expert knowledge and advice about all aspects of Hospice Palliative Care for individuals, families and healthcare providers, solicited an article written by the Centre's Social Worker and Expressive Arts Therapist to address the importance of conversations with children and youth
- DJCGC continued to take the lead in coordinating the Children and Youth Grief Network in Toronto, which has grown to include more than 25 members from agencies across the GTA
- Counsellors provided over 50 hours of Education, training, facilitation and supervision to 985 professionals, including physicians, nurses, social workers, youth workers, teachers, hospital staff, interdisciplinary teams and frontline staff
- Centre staff provided approximately 65 hours case consultation and phone support to teachers, school staff, and care teams
- Reached the milestone of 800 Facebook "likes"
- Posted and promoted stories, articles, videos and resource links to support around Mother's Day, Father's Day, Coping with the Holidays, Back to School and other tender times
- Connected with and cross-promoted important information about great works of community partners from the Dougy Centre, Lighthouse Program for Grieving Children, Bereaved Families of Ontario Toronto, Heart House Hospice, Gilda's Club, Wellspring Cancer Support Group, Seasons Centre for Grieving Children and others

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:

Lead and participate in clinical research on pediatric and family grief, parenting concerns, and best practices in grief support and resiliency.

- With support from Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI) at the University of Guelph, we formed collaboration with a PhD student that resulted in a qualitative and quantitative analyses of 6 years of survey data conducted from our Youth Group participants. The final report demonstrates the rich, positive benefits of this group program for our participants, and will be available online
- The Centre has been part of a collaborative study with Sickkids and the Universities of Waterloo and York since 2010, exploring the longitudinal experiences of siblings of children cared for by the PACT team at Sick Kids. The findings were recently published by the internationally renowned Journal of Death Studies
- Related to our recently completed "PaGES: Parenting through Grief Experiences Survey," several innovative knowledge translation strategies are underway, including uploading our infographics for families and clinicians onto our website
- With collaboration from SickKids and the leadership of our two UofT medical school placement students, we launched a community-based research initiative based on our "Ask the Doctor" program. 300 children's questions posed at our "Ask the Doctor" program were selected to be analyzed. We will be engaged in further thematic analysis of and recording responses to these questions and concerns in the coming year

Why does every one cry when someone Dies?

from anna-mis

to the med she

Why do people have grief

① Does the grief Pain ever go away?
② What ~~likes~~ I ~~forget~~ ^{forget} stuff about my loved one?

Why do people do suicide?

How do you get cancer

What dose Suiside mean

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

LOOKING BEYOND OUR BORDERS 2016/17:

The Centre was honoured to be invited to build community capacity, foster resiliency and offer support to grieving members of the Cree Nation of Mistissini in northern Quebec. Two DJCGC counsellors worked in partnership and collaboration with leaders in the community to develop a new project, "Roots to Resiliency: Supporting Grieving Children and Families". Feedback from the participants included:

"very resourceful...really glad they came to teach and share their knowledge. Meegwetch (thank you)"

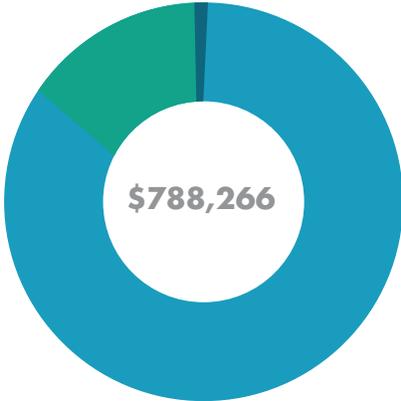
"very informative and very helpful... I have definitely gained more tools"

"this workshop is very well informative, I would suggest other people in the community take it"

The foundation has been laid for a growing relationship between Dr. Jay Children's Grief Centre and The Cree Nation of Mistissini. We look forward to taking the next steps with this community to further build capacity and offer support through implementing a Family Night and Mistissini's first camp for grieving children in August of 2017.

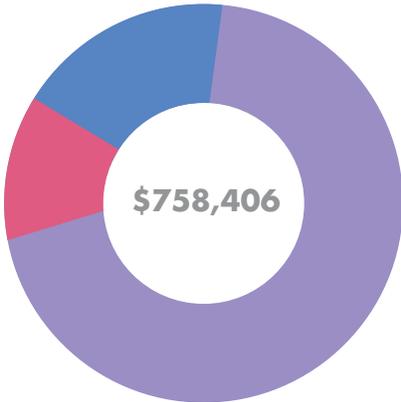


FINANCIALS



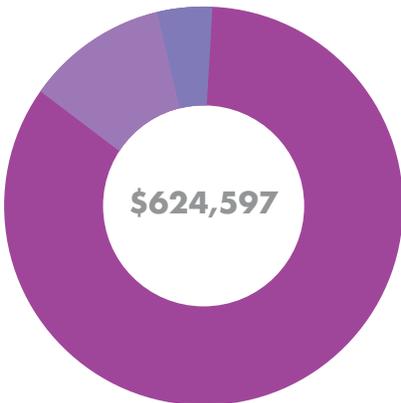
REVENUE

85%	Grants & Foundations	\$669,683
14%	Individual Donations	\$106,362
1%	Other Revenue	\$ 12,221



TOTAL EXPENDITURES

73%	Program Salaries & Benefits	\$551,902
10%	Program Support	\$ 72,695
17%	Administration & Operating	\$133,809



DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

85%	Children & Youth Programs	\$532,254
11%	Camp Erin	\$ 67,360
4%	Community Based Research	\$ 24,983

Notes:

This summary is based on the same information as the audited financial statements. Copies of the 2016-2017 audited financial statements can be obtained from the Dr. Jay Children’s Grief Centre.

THANK YOU FROM ALL THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES AT DJCGC

We are pleased to recognize the following individuals and organizations for their generous gift, donation, third party event and sponsorship of \$1,000 or more, over the past fiscal year (April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017)

\$250,000+

The Firkin Group of Pubs

\$100,000 - \$200,000

KRG Children's Charitable Foundation
The Dr. Jay Charitable Foundation

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Jayscare Foundation
Robert Kerr Foundation
Sun Life Financial Anonymous



\$10,000 - \$24,999

Kathy Morrison Memorial Golf Classic
Winner's Merchants International LP

*Norton Rose Fulbright Canada LLP

The Thornhill Club Men's
Cup and Membership

\$5,000 - \$9,999

J.P Bickell Foundation
La Cie Canada Tire Inc.
Cameron and Fran Joyce
Anonymous

Cadillac Fairview
Cameron and Fran Joyce
Moyer Foundation

CanAm Meats
Moyer Foundation
Anonymous

\$1000 - \$ 4,999

Max and Arlene Baker
Sam and Honey Grant
Jackman Foundation
John Levy
Esther Rhee
Zan and Sylvia Stern
Ron and Dorothy Wuls

BLG Foundation
Jeffrey Gropper
Jason Nyman
Richter
Dr. Tim Milligan
*Willow Printing

CIBC Children's Foundation
Danielle and Talia Goldblatt
B.A. Himel Family Foundation
LivWise Foundation
Valerie McDonald and Bruce Stratton
Shelley and Helene Shifman

*In-kind donation

We strive for accuracy in our listings. Please contact us to let us know of any errors or omissions