

# Case Study: Jessica's House Finds Confidence as a Changemaker

Using data to establish a Strategic Roadmap helps achieve goals and improve programming.

## About Jessica's House

[Jessica's House](#) provides a safe place for California's Central Valley children, teens, young adults, and their families to grieve through peer support and therapeutic expressive activities. Additionally, the center provides education and support programming for local schools and community agencies.



## The Challenge

When they applied to become a *Childhood Bereavement Changemaker (CBC)*, Jessica's House did not have an established process for program evaluation. They had rich anecdotal stories, but no data to back up those experiences.

Jessica's House knew they were a resource, but they did not know how to articulate or measure their impact. They wanted to create a strategic roadmap to guide them in examining how they could improve to better serve their community.

## A Solution

Developed by Judi's House/JAG Institute in partnership with [The New York Life Foundation](#), the CBC initiative is on the front lines of efforts in the childhood bereavement field to assess and address gaps between accessible, quality resources and families.

As a *Changemaker*, Jessica's House developed the methods and tools to ensure their program evaluation aligned with and sustained their mission and expansion goals.

Now, Jessica's House is positioned to take a broader perspective, focus on the future needs, and ensure the infrastructure necessary to realize longterm impact down the line.

# At a Glance

## Challenges

- Lack of focus on what was/was not working with respect to program goals.
- Collecting irrelevant data.
- Difficulty articulating impact through data.

## Benefits

### Appropriate Data Utilization:

- Supports organization's long-term goals.
- Provides real-time feedback that illustrates the return on investments to varied stakeholders.
- Produces evidence of community need and program impact.

## The Results

Jessica's House knew the why behind their work, but they were missing the data-driven evidence to illustrate their success. More than anything, the CBC initiative allows organizations to craft impact stories that appeal to multiple audiences.

Program Director Brad Quillen notes that, while he can't invite stakeholders into groups to hear stories of triumph in times of tragedy, he can share data that unequivocally demonstrates the positive difference the programming makes in families' lives.

Participating in the CBC initiative is helping Jessica's House better serve their community by sustaining funding, increasing access to services, and ultimately improving programming.

## Conclusion

Jessica's House is poised to capture qualitative and quantitative data that demonstrates the care and compassion they provide to families in need.

The increased evaluation capacity bolsters confidence among their stakeholders and the California Central Valley community and complements their mission and vision.

By growing the evaluation capacity and data utilization of our CBC partners, Judi's House/JAG Institute is part of a movement that will strengthen the field and improve programming for bereaved families nationwide.

*"The Changemaker initiative will forever influence the trajectory of Jessica's House, and I say that wholeheartedly. The CBC program gave Jessica's House not only the support we needed, but guidance and accountability... In one word, they gave us confidence, and that has had a huge ripple effect."*



**Stephanie Heitkemper**  
Doctoral Intern at Jessica's House