



Joseph  
Keane  
Fund

YaleNewHavenHealth  
Bridgeport Hospital Foundation

For those who experience  
stillborn and newborn loss

The Joseph Keane Fund is a restricted asset of the Yale New Haven Health Bridgeport Hospital Foundation, pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



# What we do

The Joseph Keane Fund provides financial support for the Bridgeport Hospital Perinatal Bereavement Program. This program provides emotional and financial support and services to families and hospital staff members who experience the unexpected and life-changing loss of a baby.

## By the Numbers

300+

grieving families supported

\$200k

funds raised since 2012.

200+

donors to the Joseph Keane Fund

1

Scientific Journal Publication featuring the program<sup>1</sup>

93%

Keane Perinatal Bereavement lecture attendees said they learned something that they will incorporate into their practice

1

National AWHONN Conference, with 3k attendees, in which the program was shared and selected as an Innovative Program.<sup>2</sup>

200

Keane Perinatal Bereavement Lecture attendees consisted of doctors, nurses, residents, social workers, and chaplains from many hospitals across the state, as well as professors from The Yale School of Medicine.

<sup>1</sup> The mission of JOGNN is to advance the health and health care of women, childbearing, and newborns across all settings through publication of peer-reviewed nursing and interdisciplinary scholarship. [https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175\(19\)30109-1/fulltext#relatedArticles](https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175(19)30109-1/fulltext#relatedArticles)

<sup>2</sup> The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) Conference in Atlanta. <https://www.jognn.org/action/showPdf?pii=S0884-2175%2819%2930109-1>

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## OUR TEAM

Jessica Keane

Tim Keane

The Bridgeport Hospital Perinatal Bereavement Nursing Committee

Dr. Michael Berman  
Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York, NY

Karen Charleston  
Bridgeport Hospital Foundation

Susan Chudwick, CFRE  
Director of Development, Bridgeport Hospital Foundation

Sharon Gosha  
Bridgeport Hospital Foundation

Stephen Jakab, CFRE  
President, Bridgeport Hospital Foundation

Elisabeth Schneider  
LMFT, Newborn Follow-up Program Coordinator

Leslie Shannehan  
Perinatal Bereavement Volunteer

Melissa Silver  
Manager, Events & Donor Engagement

Jean Tornatore, MD, OB/Gyn  
Bridgeport Hospital

# Letter from Jess & Tim



## Dear Friends,

Since 2012, The Joseph Keane Fund has supported over 300 families at Bridgeport Hospital as they grieved the unexpected loss of their babies. As we moved through the years, we have developed an interdisciplinary approach providing wrap-around services for both patients, families and the clinicians who are with them during this life-changing event. On behalf of those who the Fund has served, we thank you for your ongoing generosity and support.

We started this initiative with a simple outreach to Bridgeport Hospital looking to support other families in memory of our son, Joseph. During coffee in the lobby of the hospital with a clinician, we learned there was a need for material resources such as memory boxes, a camera, printer and books. The hospital staff

also expressed interest in feedback from parents like ourselves. Over time, we met more regularly with nurses and clinicians who wanted to improve their practice during these traumatic experiences with patients. In many ways, this conversation over coffee has truly snowballed into a bigger initiative. We've collaborated with an amazing team and today, the program takes a comprehensive approach, focusing on: material resources, financial assistance, education, the streamlining of policies & procedures, and efforts to reduce mental health risks. Never did we think our initial outreach would lead to life coming full circle when we were asked to speak at Yale New Haven Hospital to a room full of clinicians interested in improving their practice.

Today, with support from the Joseph Keane Fund, the Bridgeport Hospital Perinatal Bereavement Program is moving ahead with expanding its reach by continuing to grow in ways that provide comprehensive resources and opportunities to both families and hospital staff. The program has recently been expanded to include the Spiritual Care and Emergency Departments. Your support has made all of this possible. We are truly humbled and honored to be where we are on this path. Thank you for being with us on this journey.

With Love,  
Jess and Tim Keane

# Why it matters

Empty arms grieve the space where an infant should be; aching hearts struggle to understand when a pregnancy unexpectedly results in the loss of a baby. Devastated and confused, parents wonder how they can ever recover. The child they loved and cared for, and the life they dreamt and planned for, are lost.

The Joseph Keane Fund is the financial resource for the Bridgeport Hospital Perinatal Bereavement Program. The program helps families cope after a miscarriage, stillbirth or the loss of an infant. Named in memory of baby Joseph, who was delivered stillborn to his loving parents Jessica and Tim, the fund provides emotional and financial support to families who experience perinatal loss at Bridgeport Hospital. Since 2012, Joseph's legacy has helped more than 300 grieving families on their journeys toward healing.

Donor support to the Joseph Keane Fund provides:

- Memory boxes that offer a collection of special items for the family to hold on to, including the baby's handprints and footprints and photographs
- Reading materials to help parents, siblings and extended family members cope with their grief (offered in English and Spanish)
- Financial support for families who cannot afford a funeral for their child
- Specialized training and protocols for perinatal bereavement for Bridgeport Hospital physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains and support staff
- Education and awareness about perinatal loss for medical and clinical support staff throughout Yale New Haven Health System and across the country, via lectures and nursing conference presentations

About one pregnancy in 100 at 20 weeks of pregnancy and later is affected by stillbirth, and each year about 24,000 babies are stillborn in the United States.

29% of women who experience a stillbirth will suffer from PTSD

Grieving mothers are three times more likely to attempt suicide

Bereaved mothers have four times greater odds of depressive symptomatology and seven times the increased odds of post-traumatic stress disorder than non-bereaved mothers

1 <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/stillbirth/data.html>

2 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4955602/>

3 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26258870/>

# The Four Areas of the Fund's Focus:



**"We can't take anyone's pain away, but we can help families receive compassionate care and closure after their loss. We've made a huge impact."**

- Jessica Keane

## Provide Resources

Memory Box Program

Financial assistance for burials

Magnet program (door magnets to identify patient rooms where a loss has occurred)

Books for coping with loss in Spanish & English

Literature created for families promoting how they can get help

## Created Policies and Procedures

Inspired by doctor Atul Gawande's book, Checklist Manifesto, three checklists were created to help:

- 1) medical staff,
- 2) social workers, and
- 3) chaplains as they navigate this traumatic event

Input was received from parents, social workers, therapists, doctors, chaplains, and nurses

## Influences Mental Health Symptoms

Aims to lower the impact of mental health issues (PTSD, PMAD, depression) to a lesser degree

Perinatal loss facts:

- 29% of women who experience a stillbirth will suffer from PTSD
- Suicide rates triple in grieving mothers

## Raises Awareness for Stillborn & Newborn loss

A series of lectures have been held speaking to 200+ clinicians from hospitals across Connecticut

The program was shared at the national AWHONN (obstetrics and nurses) conference in Atlanta

Website technology has been improved as our Fund page is a leader in Bridgeport Hospital Foundation visitors

# Education and Community Outreach

The Bridgeport Hospital Perinatal Bereavement Program lectures sponsored by the Joseph Keane Fund, were held at Bridgeport Hospital and at Yale New Haven Hospital. The lectures have been attended by over 200 doctors, nurses, residents, social workers, and chaplains from many hospitals across the state, as well as professors from Yale School of Medicine.

Jessica and Tim Keane kicked off the morning with a twenty-minute presentation providing a parent's perspective on perinatal loss, the importance of compassion, and tools and ideas which can be incorporated into the attendees' practices.

The events featured a keynote presentation from Michael Berman, MD, of New York's Mt. Sinai Medical Center, as well as presentations from Elisabeth Schneider, LMFT, Newborn ICU Developmental Follow up Program, Coordinator, Dr. Eliza Myers, Medical Director at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital at Bridgeport NICU, and Leslie Shannehan, Volunteer Coordinator, Bridgeport Hospital Perinatal Bereavement Program.



# Select Financials

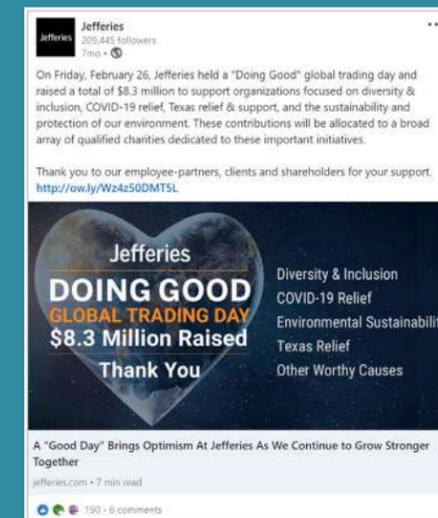
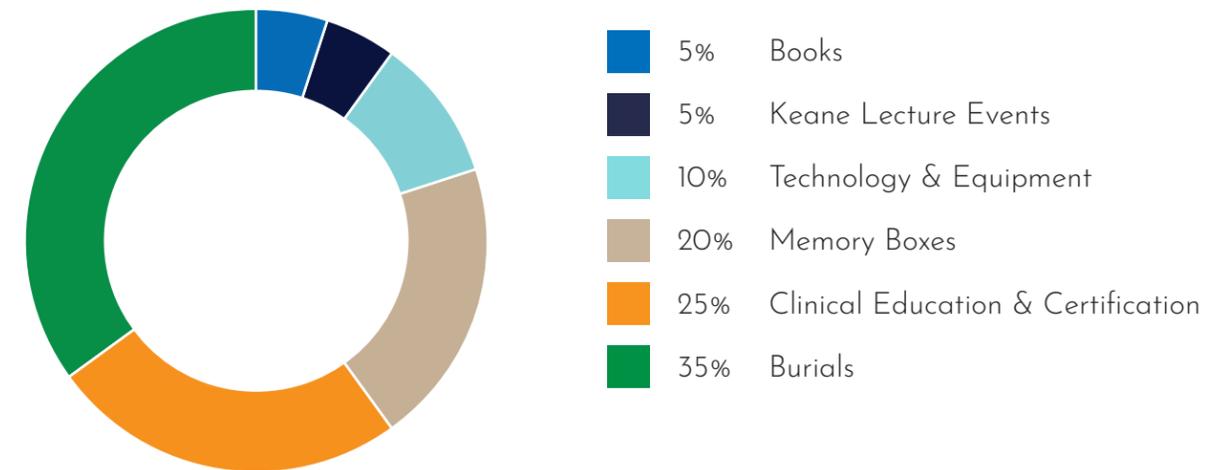
The lecture covered the physiological effects of perinatal loss on parents, focusing on emotional care and support during and after their loss. In addition to a clinical presentation, three families shared their personal stories about losing an infant.

By sharing their experiences, suggestions were given for healthcare professionals to support mothers and fathers in the first moments after a loss and beyond. Jessica, Tim, and the other presenters urged attendees to return to their respective hospitals and educate their staffs about this issue, which is sometimes overlooked in clinical training and rarely spoken about.

**We are proud to say that in the surveys completed by the Lecture's attendees, an overwhelming 93% said they learned something that they will incorporate into their practice.**

The Joseph Keane Fund is the financial resource for the Bridgeport Hospital Perinatal Bereavement Program. Our generous donor community has generated \$200,000 since 2012. This could not have been possible without the powerful dedication and committed support of our donors.

In keeping with the careful fiscal stewardship that has allowed us to grow the Joseph Keane Fund mission, we continue to control costs and push toward the greatest efficiencies possible in all areas. We look to build on this momentum and deliver our mission and awareness to more hospitals through future programs such as a video education series.



**We were humbled to have been selected by the financial firm, Jefferies, as a charity "Doing Good" in efforts to make a difference. They generously donated \$65,000 to the Joseph Keane Fund!**

# Testimonials



A family lost their daughter at full term. The mother was deeply distraught and the father was very angry. With the incredible depth of support available through the Joseph Keane Fund, we were able to create space for them to mourn and process this loss over the course of two and a half days during which the Cuddle Cot was used. The nurses went completely above and beyond taking pictures, talking to the family and making space for them to grieve.

We had a multi-disciplinary approach (much of which has been shared at the Keane Lecture Events). During this approach the chaplains assist with a naming ceremony, social workers share the Keane Fund resources, and a specialist is brought in for emotional support to both the family and staff. Months after leaving the hospital, the family called to say what an extraordinary gift the staff and Fund had given them. The family recognized that their experience, devastating as it was, had been deeply impacted by the resources and support of the staff at the hospital. They were immensely grateful.



We recently had a mom who experienced a loss at 28 weeks. It was her second loss, as her first was in her native country in South America. She was totally distraught about the idea of cremating her child and wanted as much time as possible with him. She and her husband were able to spend time together with the child and then, thanks to the Fund's assistance, they were able to have a proper burial.

What is so poignant about this is that her first experience was so radically different as that hospital had no resources to assist her. Her gratitude for the time and resources to honor her child was immeasurable. It was amazing to see what a huge impact the Joseph Keane Fund had on her experience in grieving her loss.



The most significant impact the Joseph Keane Fund has had on families is in the consistency of care and depth of resources offered to families going through loss. These families have been particularly impacted during the pandemic, when the resources are more limited as well as access to support. Being able to provide pamphlets, pictures, memory boxes, a bedside religious ceremony (should they choose), clothing, books and blankets have an invaluable effect on these families. These things create memories for our families that will last a lifetime.



It is important to note that the photos the nurses are taking for families during these times are heavily informed by the class that Leslie and Kelley brought to the staff and that the Keane Fund sponsored. This class taught the nurses how to create the most beautiful and honorable pictures possible under difficult circumstances. It is also very important to note that each of the specific resources - the informative books, the comforting blankets, the prayer squares, and the memory boxes - were all made possible through the ideas and resources derived from the Keane Fund. Each one has been recognized at various times as a critical function of a family's grieving experience.



We were recently contacted by a family that had a loss last March. They were calling to express their gratitude for the resources given to them through the staff. They are expecting again and have chosen to return Bridgeport Hospital because that cannot imagine a better and more supportive staff and place for delivery. To see the circle of life continue, and the gift of the Keane Fund help carry these families, not only through the worst of times but also into future joy, is such an honor!





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**To learn more about the Fund and how you can help  
make a difference, please visit us online. Thank you.**

<https://foundation.bridgeporthospital.org/joseph-keane-fund/>  
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