



**ANNUAL REPORT | 2020**

# OUR STORY



It's been two and a half years since we first meet with teens in Golden, CO, after the death of Robbie. Two and a half years filled with unbearable pain that has been counterbalanced with a new purpose in life: enablement of our teens to end suicide. Teens in our country are experiencing an onslaught of mental health issues that have arisen from COVID-19, isolation, a 24-hour news cycle that is predominantly negative, increasing numbers of mass shootings, and skyrocketing levels of addiction and suicide. They are tired of seeing their friends die. They are losing hope.

We are a country in crisis.

2020 has been a transformational year for Robbie's Hope. We have been forced to think differently, and have embraced new technologies like Livestream and Zoom. Our footprint has exploded from the western suburbs of Denver to a national presence. We have over 2,000 teens from across the US who form the backbone of a movement to destigmatize teen mental health.

Your personal and financial support is making a meaningful difference! You will read about our success in Jefferson County later in the report. We need to replicate that success in the remaining 3,005 counties in the US. Your continued support will enable our teens to eradicate the public health epidemic we currently face.

**It is our mission that not so far in the future,  
teen suicide will be a rarity rather than a staggering statistic.**

# OUR JOURNEY

Jason & Kari Eckert started Robbie's Hope on October 14, 2018. They were sitting at the kitchen table when the realization struck that if teen suicide could happen to them and their son, Robbie, it could happen to anyone. A few days later Jason made a promise to over 500 teens who were present at Robbie's funeral: "We would dedicate our lives to supporting and enabling them to fix what was broken," because as adults we have managed to really mess things up for our youth.

## [Listen to Robbie's Eulogy and the promise that was made](#)

A week later, Kari and Jason held a listening session, open to all youth in the community, and closed to parents and adults. Over 150 teens from 11 Colorado high schools and middle schools attended. We listened, we provided support to each other, and we minted our mission to cut the rate of teen suicide in half in 10 years (by 2028). We didn't have a plan. We didn't know what we were signing up for. We only wanted to stop our youth from dying because they did not know the meaning of [HOPE](#) ([Hold On, Pain Ends](#)) or that everyone struggles and [It's OK to Not Be OK](#).

## [Listen to our story](#)



A FEW OF THE 250 "OG'S" IN COLORADO

# WHERE ARE WE HEADED?



MANNING MIDDLE SCHOOL – FEBRUARY 2020

The youth of this country, Gen Z, are nothing short of amazing. We are more invested than ever to pour all our energy into this generation. They are smart, tenacious, collaborative, passionate, and not afraid of to face adversity. They inspire us!

The past two and a half years have been a high-speed roller coaster filled with constant invention and reinvention as we flex to meet our teens' needs. For many of our teens, advocacy in their schools and communities is where they find passion. For others, that passion can be found in self-expression through the arts. We also have a lot of teens who are tired of the status quo and are laser focused on changing the legislative landscape in the states where they live. [Our guiding principle is to meet our teens in the space where they are most comfortable, and then give them the resources and support that they need to achieve their goals.](#)

Our journey started in Jefferson County, CO, where we met with local teens for over two years. COVID-19 was a blessing to us because it forced us to think differently, digitally, remotely.

# AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Our Ambassador Program was launched on October 22, 2020. It has become our focal point for enabling teens across the US.

Over 2,000 youth from all 50 states have registered and been onboarded. On our website we talk about creating a youth-lead movement, an army of teens who will change the future. This is our army, a diverse and passionate group of teens who are hyper focused on [changing the future so that their friends stop dying](#).

A lot of our energy is poured into this group. We have weekly group Zoom calls and a myriad of daily conversations via Zoom, text, chat, and IM. We will continue to grow their ranks in the years to come.

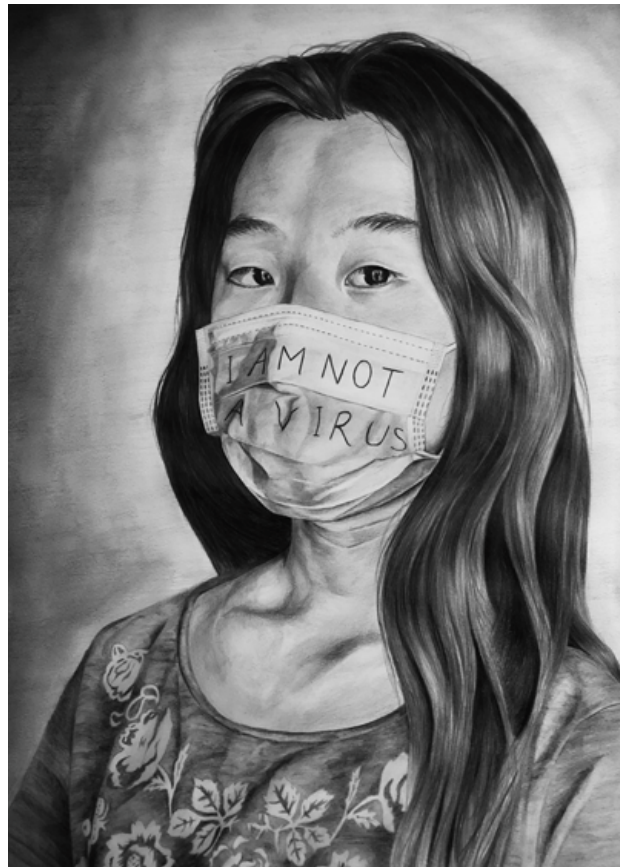
They are our future. They are the people who will inflict change on our broken society. They give us HOPE.

Your donations allow us to equip our Ambassadors with the resources they need to make an impact in their communities, including handbooks and other merchandise.

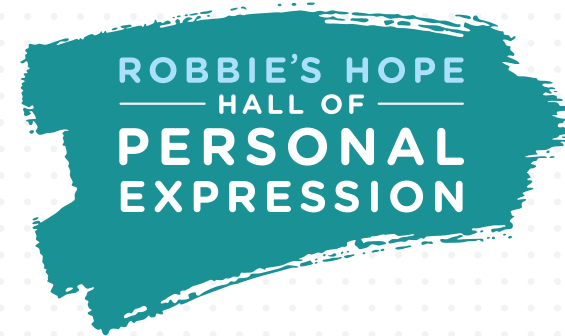


JASON & KARI WITH AMBASSADORS  
GABBY & KALLYSTA — LAS VEGAS, NV — FEBRUARY 2021

# HALL OF PERSONAL EXPRESSION



ALLISON HE — WINNER OF THE SPRING 2020 HOPE CONTEST



Joy. Sorrow. Anxiety. Elation. Depression. Robbie's Hope gives teens both venue and voice for their artistic self-expression around the many emotions our youth face today. Through music and film, poetry and dance, painting, photography, sculpture, mixed media and more, our online gallery and traveling exhibits will impact people in surprising and powerful ways—bringing an evocative voice to the emotional well-being of our youth today. Teens from across the country submit their art to a twice-yearly juried competition. Submissions are as diverse as our teens, and are focused on fine arts, digital arts, photography, music, film, poetry, and dance.

You can view the past winners on [our website](#). Their work is inspiring.

Your donations help us curate a growing collection of teen-created mental health art. We are working on the development of a national traveling exhibit.

# ROBBIE'S HOPE RECORDS

Our record label has one purpose: to support our teens' expression through music and film. Winners in the music category in our Hall of Personal Expression contests receive a free trip to Denver, with a guest, and a studio session at The Keep Recording.

Our partnership with The Keep Recording goes back to almost day one, when we recorded the songs that were sung at Robbie's funeral. Since then, we have brought a diverse group of teens into the studio, where they can record their music and benefit from training, coaching, and mentoring from music professionals. The experience is life changing for them. Listen to a few clips:

[Maleena Dominick – Pennsylvania](#)

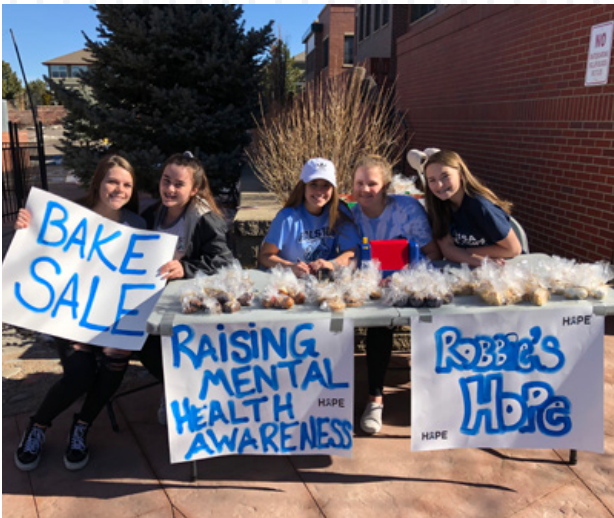
[Camden Piper – Colorado](#)

[Micah Wilson – California](#)



MALEENA DOMINICK  
THE KEEP RECORDING – JANUARY 2021

# HOPEFULL DRIVE



HOPEFULL DRIVE

Held from January 21 to the second Sunday in February each year, the HOPEfull Drive is a youth-led advocacy campaign focused on increasing awareness and education about teen mental health.

Thousands of teens, first in Colorado and now nationally, hit the streets, social media, and the airwaves in a public awareness campaign. Their impact is sizeable, with an estimated 3 million people reached via television, radio, and print, and 20,000 adult handbooks distributed. Each interaction is a chance for a teen to tell their story, often to a stranger, and engage them in a conversation about mental health.

The courage it takes to have those conversations is significant and best portrayed through a series of news stories:

[2019 – A Beginning](#)

[2020 – Impact Is Growing](#)

[2021 – A National Presence](#)

# ADULT HANDBOOKS

In 2019 our teens wrote a [handbook](#), for adults, on how to have difficult conversations about mental health and suicide. This resource has impacted thousands of families across the US. We ship individual copies, and in bulk, free of charge.

Your donations have allowed us to print and distribute over 100,000 adult handbooks, with an additional 30,000 electronic downloads from our website.

In 2020 we published a [second handbook](#) focused on navigating a conversation with teens about technology and device use. Both are available in English and Spanish. Watch a couple of news segments about each handbook.

[Adult Handbook](#)

[Technology Handbook](#)



TECHNOLOGY HANDBOOK

# LEGISLATIVE REFORM



## COLORADO STATE CAPITAL



In 2019 we partnered with Children's Hospital Colorado to introduce legislation that created a set of wraparound mental health services for youth in Colorado, and implemented mental health wellness checks at primary care physician offices. That bill was signed into law and became the nucleus for our legislative agenda.

Our teens are passionate about destigmatizing mental health, and one of the easiest, most impactful ways to do that is to allow mental health, along with physical health, to be a reason for an excused absence in school. Prior to our bill becoming law in 2020, if a child was having an anxiety attack or depressive episode, a parent in Colorado would have to call their school and lie, making up a story about a physical ailment. That has all changed in Colorado, and our Ambassadors are driving similar legislation forward in 15 states.

[Listen to Kari Talk About Legislative Reform](#)

# OUTREACH

When you have thousands of teens asking for resources to help them destigmatize mental health, you need to be creative and flexible.

Kari spends hundreds of hours a year in person, and on Zoom calls, with teen groups and parent groups, educating them about teen mental health. A typical day will start with an 8 a.m. call to the East Coast and continue through the evening, ending on the West Coast.

Technology has allowed us to meet people in their homes, in their schools, and in their places of business.



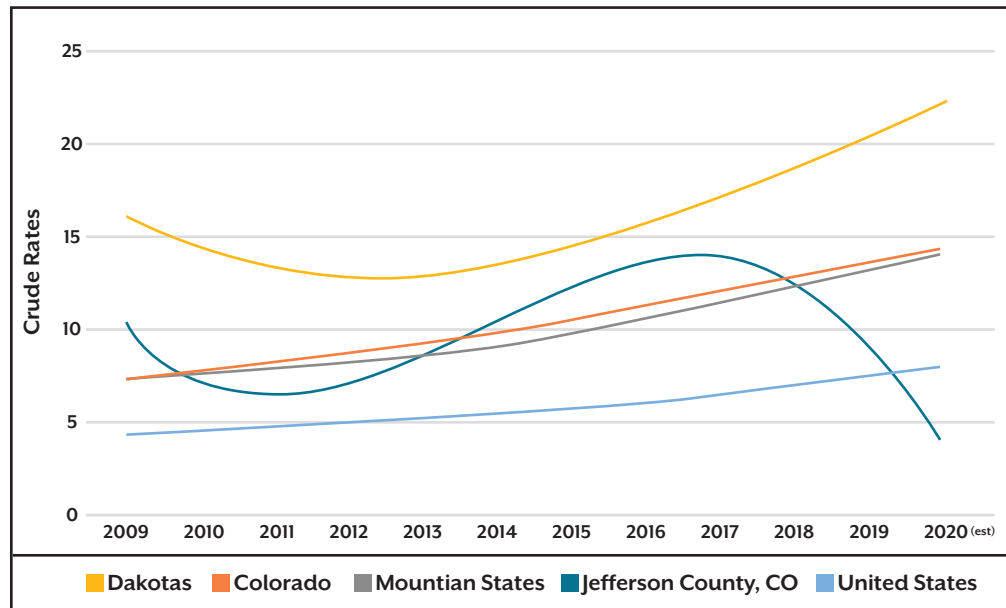
KARI & OLIVIA MILLER — DECEMBER 2020

# OUR PROGRESS

What we are doing is working! While teen suicide rates continue to soar across the country, we have seen the rate cut in half in our backyard of Jefferson County, Colorado. A 50% reduction in two years! We need to replicate our success in the other 3,005 counties in the United States.

[Watch a Story Highlighting Our Success](#)

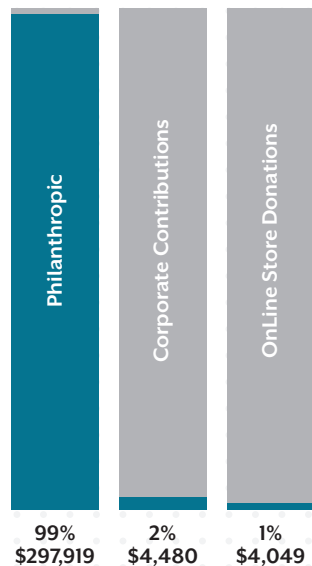
**Suicide Trends Among Teens 10-19 Years Old**



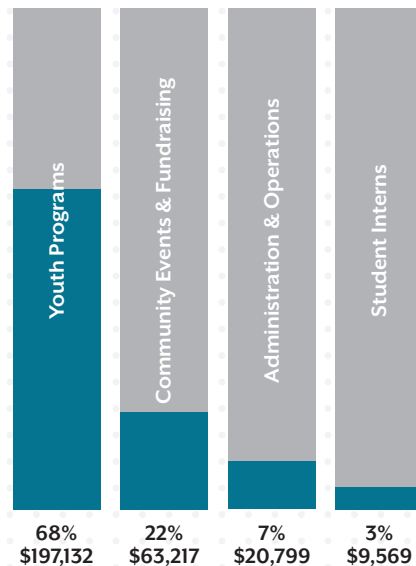
# OUR FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

We maintain a rigorous approach to the management of our finances. For the past two years our donations have continued to grow through individual support and corporate gifts in kind. Ninety percent of our spending is directly tied to the support of the programs and activities of our teens.

## Revenue: \$306,448



## Expenses: \$290,717



Neither Kari nor Jason takes a salary. The only paid employees of the Foundation are four high school student interns who work five hours per week.

We have a [Board of Directors](#) made up of business professionals who help guide our strategy.

Our [Founding Partners](#) are a group of companies that work tirelessly beside us and share our mission, and passion, to cut the rate of teen suicide in half by 2028.

Through large gifts by Jason & Kari and an anonymous donor, the Foundation now has an endowment that we hope to grow over time as we strive for a level of financial security.

We are [Platinum certified by GuideStar](#), and you can view our [Annual Report](#) and IRS filings on our website.

# AN EVENING OF HOPE



JEOPARDY — 2020 EVENING OF HOPE, A LIVESTREAM EVENT

Our annual Gala is our other large fundraising event.

In 2020, due to COVID-19 we moved to a livestream format, which allowed us to reach our supporters in a safe way while incorporating an auction and entertainment.

We had hoped for 500 viewers: we ended up with over 10,000 livestreams. IP mapping showed viewers from every corner of the country.

We hope to have a hybrid approach moving forward, with a live, paid audience and a free livestream segment.

[Watch our 2020 Gala](#) – it is 90 minutes of fast-paced entertainment and education.

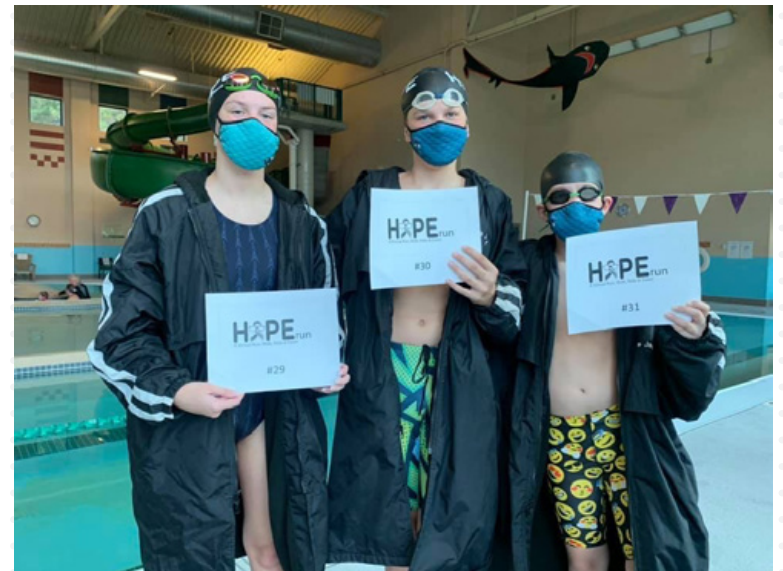
Save the date for our 2021 Gala: August 27

# HOPErun

One of our annual fundraisers is our HOPErun, originally designed as an in-person 5K in 2019 with an attendance of 300 runners.

As with most events during the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to pivot and move to a virtual format in 2020. We had low expectations that were wildly exceeded as participants from across the US signed up to support Robbie's Hope. Because of the virtual format, we were able include options for a swim and a bike ride.

We will be moving to a hybrid format in the future to allow for local live participation in a 5K and virtual run/swim/bike participation.



2020 VIRTUAL HOPErun – CHICAGO, IL

## DONATE

For more information about Robbie's Hope,  
please contact us at [info@robbies-hope.com](mailto:info@robbies-hope.com) | 720-633-0817



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Robbie's Hope

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