



# THE Carson J Spencer FOUNDATION

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December 2007

Second Annual Report

*Sustaining a Passion for Life*

## Report August 2006-December 2007

### The Carson J Spencer Foundation—the Formative Years

#### LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Welcome to 2008! It is hard to believe we are already well into the New Year. With so much activity for the CJSF, it would be easy to forget to pause briefly and recognize what has been accomplished over the last year and how far we have come in a very short period of time. Here, and within the pages that follow, we share some of the many highlights of what has been a very exciting period for the foundation.

I am pleased to report the Carson J. Spencer Foundation is in excellent health, both financially and programmatically. In a “year of action”, we continued and expanded several programs, including awarding our fourth grant, identifying our first Rising Star Scholar, and establishing a very promising partnership with JA Rocky Mountain. We further ex-

*(Continued on page 6)*

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Received \$250,000 grant from the federal government to develop and evaluate a comprehensive suicide prevention program for colleges and universities in partnership with Regis University and the BACCHUS Network. Through this collaborative effort—over 300 suicide prevention gatekeepers trained, over 2,000 people impacted by educational programs.
- First Rising Star Scholarship awarded to Trent Lovell
- Office of Suicide Prevention makes suicide prevention for men of working age a priority and becomes first funder for Working Minds Program.
- Colorado’s First Lady Jeannie Ritter keynotes at our annual fund-raising event.
- Grants awarded to: University of California (Berkeley), Crisis Link (DC) and State of the Art.

*And the Light Shines on...*

#### CHARTING OUR COURSE



**Vision:** We envision a world where leaders and communities are dedicated to sustaining a passion for life.

**Mission:** We sustain a passion for life by:

- ◆ funding social enterprise for sustainable mental health initiatives
- ◆ delivering innovative suicide prevention programs targeting the working age population
- ◆ supporting the education of emerging entrepreneurs and leaders

#### Goals 2006-2007:

1. Programming: Conduct needs assessment and develop suicide prevention projects targeting the working aged population.
2. Grant-Making: Help mental health nonprofits develop capacity in social enterprise.
3. Emerging Leaders and Entrepreneurs: Support educational opportunities through scholarships and experiential learning.
4. Financial: Diversify funding streams with eye toward sustainability

## SHOOTING STARS: GRANT MAKING ENCOURAGES SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Carson J Spencer Foundation isn't your everyday grant-maker—like most things we do, we stand apart because we celebrate the entrepreneurial ideals of innovation and accountability. In fact, we have shifted our traditional grant-making guidelines to those of **venture philanthropy** and thereby encourage the mental health organizations that apply for our funding to think of their projects as social enterprises—programs that impact the double bottom line of a financial and social return on investment. We are not content with our dollars funding a one-time effort; we want mental health organizations to think in terms of sustainability—promoting mental health while generating revenue. For many of our applicants, this is a fairly significant paradigm shift, so we offer some technical assistance in the process. To date we have committed \$20,000 toward innovative approaches to mental health promotion:

- ◆ The Second Wind Fund—expanded their program into Adams County. Their Executive Director Jeff Lamontagne reports, “I want offer a special salute to the Carson J Spencer Foundation in acknowledging their role in the history of our program...We continue to see the timing of the Spencer grant—your ‘investing’ in our work at that moment—as key in terms of launching that new phase of our growth.”
- ◆ University of California (Berkeley) - created phone cards with suicide prevention information and distributed these to 2,500 students.
- ◆ Crisis Link (Washington, DC) - created a culturally sensitive gatekeeper training program targeting older adults in assisted living residential communities.
- ◆ State of the Art—is disseminating their documentary “Men Get Depression” in a statewide launch in May 2008.

## SHAPING A GALAXY: CHANGING CULTURE THROUGH MASS MEDIA

### Our Earned Media:

- ◆ September 2006—9 News interview and participation in 9 News Helpline
- ◆ June 2007—Rocky Mountain News “Tragedy Didn’t Dim Bright Star”
- ◆ July 2007—High Timber Times “A Victory for Hope” (front page)
- ◆ July 2007—Denver Post article by Diane Carman
- ◆ July 2007—KOA interview



people prevent suicide

## A PERFECT CONSTELLATION:

THE GARRETT LEE SMITH SUICIDE PREVENTION GRANT  
A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP AMONG CJSF,  
REGIS UNIVERSITY AND THE BACCHUS NETWORK

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students. Tragically, one of those students was Garrett Lee Smith—the son of Senator Gordon Smith (R-Oregon). Senator Smith has transformed his grief into action through a strongly supported bipartisan effort to funnel federal dollars to our states and campuses. In October 2006, the Carson J Spencer Foundation was honored to receive a \$250,000 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in partnership with Regis University and the BACCHUS Network. Our grant is one of 54 campus-based grants in the nation to attempt to develop and evaluate a comprehensive suicide prevention initiative targeting campus communities. Our specific grant has three goals:

1. Align networking infrastructure—at Regis, in Colorado and nationally. In other words, we are helping coordinate resources so that suicide prevention efforts are seamless and that there is minimal duplication of efforts.
2. Increase the number of trained suicide prevention gatekeepers. Using the QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) method, we are training campus stakeholders and evaluating the impact of this training.
3. Change culture to promote mental health and encourage help-seeking. Through innovative and targeted social marketing campaigns, like our highly successful YouTube video (impacting almost 10,000 in its first four months), we hope to cultivate positive attitudes related to mental health.



Suicide Affects Everyone (YouTube video)

## SHINING LIGHTS OF HOPE:

### FUND-RAISING EVENTS 2007

#### May 2007—New Canaan, CT

Cinco de Mayo Auction and Dinner



#### July 2007—Denver, CO

Shining Lights of Hope Benefit Auction Evening  
(Wynkoop Brewery)

Keynote: Colorado's First Lady Jeannie Ritter

Advocacy Awards to Representative Debbie Stafford and Senator Moe Keller

Rising Star Scholar: Trenton Lovell

Entertainment: Troy Gray



Golf Tournament (The Ranch Country Club)



#### September 2007—Atlanta, GA

*And the light shines on...*

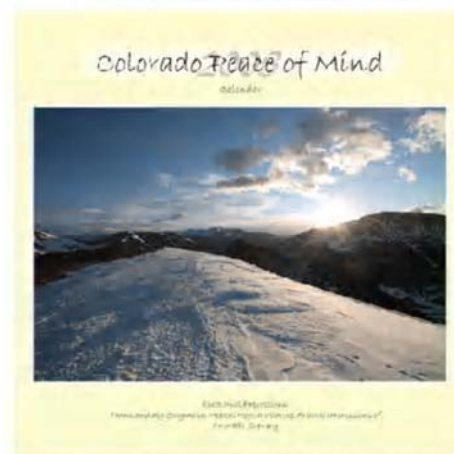
### SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION:

#### IMPACTING A DOUBLE BOTTOM LINE

The old quote says “Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime.” Well, social entrepreneurs are not satisfied until they have revolutionized the whole fishing industry! Social entrepreneurs look at problems as opportunities and tackle them in innovative ways—all with an eye toward impacting the double bottom line (financial impact AND social awareness). The Carson J Spencer Foundation is leading the mental health field into the vibrant world of social entrepreneurship:

- ◆ Fostering strategic partnerships
- ◆ Taking calculated risks and venturing into new territory
- ◆ Developing earned income strategies that sustain our awareness raising goals
- ◆ Finding and filling new niches

This year in addition to our basket enterprise ([www.ILoveColorado.org](http://www.ILoveColorado.org)), we expanded our “Peace of Mind Calendar.” With the support of beloved local artists and through the collaboration of a number of grassroots mental health advocacy programs, we created a beautiful and meaningful statement of the intersection of mental health and the arts. Oh—and it’s a useful product that will remind people of the issue and the foundation all year long.



## VOLUNTEERS MAKE US GREAT

Nonprofits thrive because of the support of passionate volunteers who dedicate their time and talents. The Carson J Spencer Foundation is no exception—we are 100% volunteer supported. Without our volunteers, we would not be able to function. College students, stay-at-home parents, working men and women, retirees, faith communities—we depend on a diverse group of fully engaged volunteers at every step. In addition to the scores of volunteers who helped with building our website, soliciting auction items, schlepping event supplies, assisting with public relations, and dozens of other thankless jobs, we have been blessed by two outstanding contributors who supported us over the long haul.



### Drew Anneberg—AmeriCorps VISTA

After graduating from Regis University in May 2007, Drew Anneberg signed on to be our first AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer. Through his leadership we were able to develop and disseminate 1,250 “Colorado Peace of Mind” calendars. Drew is truly a servant leader in our organization—steadfast, compassionate, and creative. We are so lucky to have his service.



### Bobbi Reed— Volunteer of the Year

With a background in marketing and event planning with AT&T and the Olympic Games, Bobbi has worked on large scale initiatives. She brought her talents, organization, and optimism to CJSF and tirelessly turned our visions into dazzling outcomes. Thank you, Bobbi!

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS: TOGETHER WE ARE BETTER

We proudly partner with many organizations:

- Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado
- Colorado’s Office of Suicide Prevention
- The Second Wind Fund
- The QPR Institute
- National Alliance of the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
- Active Minds on Campus
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Mental Health America of Colorado
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center



## THANK YOU TO OUR MAJOR SUPPORTERS



- Presenting sponsor for 2007 Denver Golf Tournament
- Offered paid college student workstudy assistance to CJSF
- Established 20 hour per week undergraduate internship with CJSF
- Created Americorps Vista volunteer position
- Partner of Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Grant
- Co-sponsored numerous educational programs and social marketing campaigns
- Created two minute PSA “Suicide Affects Everyone” attracting over 12,000 visits on YouTube
- Developed 27 minute training DVD “Working Minds: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace”
- Filmed video clips for websites
- Recorded events



- Scholarship commitment -- \$5K/ year for five years.
- Sponsorships: Shining Light of Hope Sponsor in Denver and Atlanta event
- Scholarship endowment



## RISING STAR SCHOLARSHIP



**Move over Lee Majors, Denver has its own Bionic man.** Trent Lovell, 18, a Green Mountain High graduate and creator of B.I.O.N.I.C., (Believe it or Not, I Care) was the first recipient of the Carson J Spencer Foundation's Rising Star Scholarship. "With this support, I look forward to going above and beyond," said Lovell.

The Carson J Spencer Foundation and the Junior Achievement Rocky Mountain Organization have partnered to honor emerging entrepreneurs: budding young business men and

women who show promise in making the world a better place. Lovell's scholarship of \$4,000 per year for the next four years will go toward his tuition at the University of Colorado, where he will enter as a freshman this Fall. Lovell was recognized at the Shining Lights of Hope Benefit Auction Evening, July 28th, 2007.

Chosen from a group of over 60 qualified applicants, Lovell impressed the review committee with his social entrepreneurship founding "B.I.O.N.I.C." (Believe It Or Not I Care). The year before Trenton entered his freshman year at Green Mountain High School (Lakewood) several student suicides devastated the community. Lovell and others brainstormed how to "save kids from falling through the cracks," and developed B.I.O.N.I.C. The club now involves over 200 students from Green Mountain High School alone and has also expanded to nine other schools in Colorado

including one elementary school. B.I.O.N.I.C.'s mission is to create a caring community so when students face crisis, they know someone cares about them. For instance, B.I.O.N.I.C. offers outreach services to children who are missing school due to sickness by providing homework, tutoring, and well wishes.

"The support helps boosts ailing students' spirits to help keep them functioning at their class level," Lovell says. "B.I.O.N.I.C. also supports those who have lost a loved one in their family. We also welcome new students by holding New Student Lunches. We also reach out to high schools around the nation after tragic events have occurred. After only three years this program is gaining recognition by numerous high school counselors across the nation with the dream of saving kids from falling through the cracks."

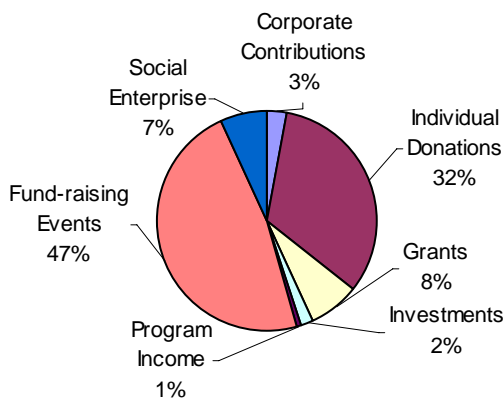
Lovell also has an outstanding academic record, was the captain of both the varsity basketball and track teams, and was a class senator in his high school's student government for three years.

"Trent really is a shining light of hope," said Sally Spencer-Thomas, Executive Director of the Carson J Spencer Foundation. "Like any successful entrepreneur, he took a nugget of a great idea and scaled it up to make a big impact. His profit margin is measured by how many lives he has touched."



## And the light shines on...

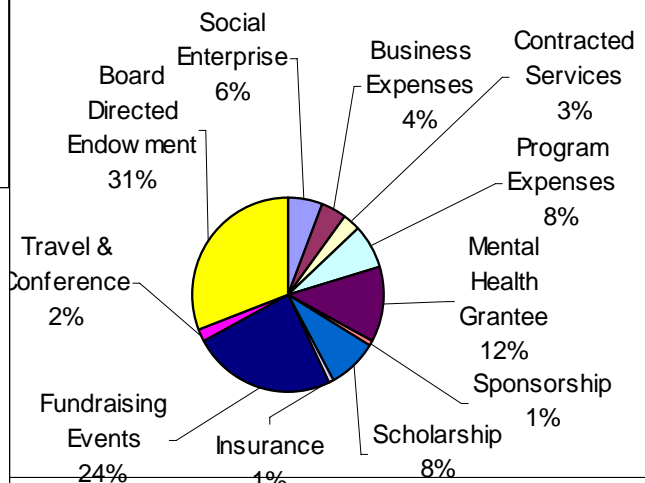
### FINANCIAL REPORT—TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY



**2007 Income = \$98,393**

#### 2007 Expense

**\$62,287 + \$30,374 (Endowment) = \$98,393**



(Letter from President continued from page 1)

panded our reach through events and additional partnerships in Colorado and elsewhere, which helped us reach a wider audience, as well as provided additional financing for new initiatives. Lastly, we adopted new Vision and Mission statements, and bolstered our Board and group of advisors to help us diversify our skill set.

In 2008, we will continue to strengthen and expand on our existing events and programs, including a major foundation initiative, Working Minds. This innovative program brings sorely needed attention to the issue of workplace mental health and education, in particular among men. We expect to devote substantial Board and volunteer time and support toward developing this important program. Please see below for additional details as well as the recognition Working Minds has already received from the mental health community.

I would also like to recognize the super-human efforts of our Executive Director, Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas, in accomplishing so much this past year. Though we have a dedicated Board and tireless volunteers, Sally's relentless enthusiasm guides us in virtually all our activities. Sally, we are indebted to you for all you have done and everything you continue to do.

Lastly, to all our supporters, donors, and volunteers, thank you for your generous time and support, which have helped make a real, positive impact in the lives of many individuals and communities.

Wright Dickinson

## DID YOU KNOW?

### **Suicide among working aged people is a growing problem.**

- NY TIMES (2.19.08) A five-year analysis of the nation's death rates released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the suicide rate among 45- to 54-year-olds increased 20 percent from 1999 to 2004, a larger increase than any other age group during the same period (youth and elderly rates are decreasing).
- Surgeon General's National Strategy for Suicide Prevention reports that employers are critical stakeholders

### **Working aged men most vulnerable**

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for men aged 25-34 years.
- Men of working age (21-65) bear the largest public health burden due to suicide—more than for HIV, homicide, diabetes or stroke.
- Middle-aged men die by suicide at twice the baseline rate of other Americans; most of these men are working for agencies and businesses in the U.S.

### **Occupations impacted most notably**

- Physicians: access to and familiarity with lethal means
- Temporary workers
- Occupations performed in isolation: farmers, miners, writers, artists, etc.

- Veterans and active duty military: high spike in suicide completion rate
- Nontraditional roles: men as nurses, women as cops

### **Economic impact**

- Suicide attempts in the US annually = \$3.8 billion in medical costs, \$13 billion in lost earnings.
- For each suicide prevented, savings = \$1,182,559 in medical costs (\$3,875 per) and lost productivity (\$1,178,684 per).
- One in 14 employees will suffer from depression at some point. This = over 200 million lost workdays, and \$44 billion annually in absenteeism, lost productivity and direct treatment costs.
- Organizations that demonstrate care for their workplace community by developing wellness programs improve employee morale and retention while keeping costs down.

### **Workplaces as venues for suicide prevention:**

- Disseminate public health messages
- Referral mechanisms in place
- Workplaces are communities
- Co-workers often have more face time than family or friends
- Already to preventing "workplace violence" - many strategies overlap
- Many workplace violence perpetrators also suicidal, increasing risk of homicidal tendencies.



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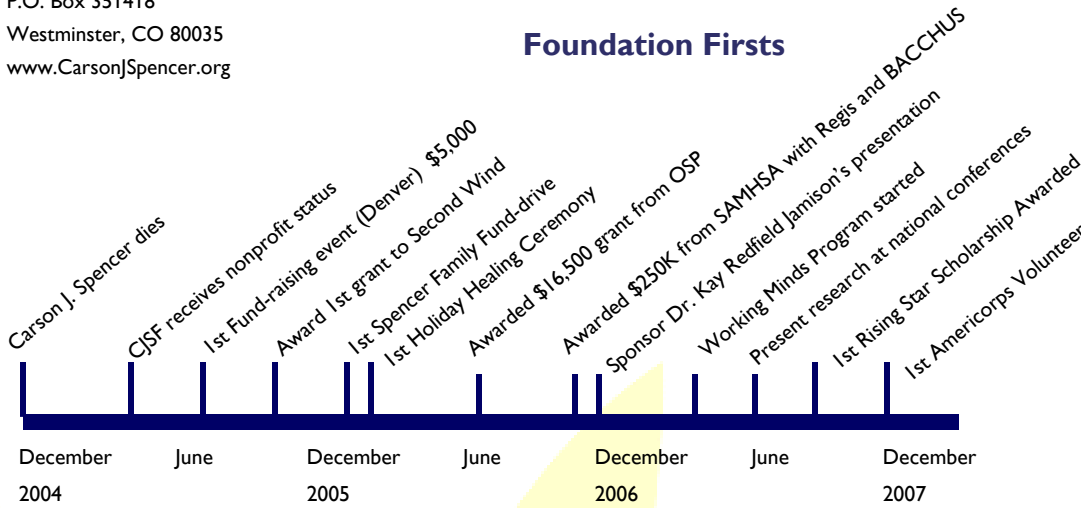
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Donation Questions: Donations@CarsonJSpencer.org



Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison (author, *Unquiet Mind* and *Night Falls Fast*) and Executive Director, Sally Spencer-Thomas

## Foundation Firsts



## And the light shines on...

### WORKING MINDS: SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

One in five American workers will suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder (primarily depression and substance abuse) and HR Directors report mental illness as the number one disability impacting workplaces today. In addition, 66% of people who die by suicide are men of working age, and yet the Carson J Spencer Foundation is the only organization to exclusively address suicide prevention in the workplace. We intend to change these statistics and help save lives by giving workplaces tools they can use to promote mental health and prevent suicide: The Working Minds Program.

In June of 2006, Colorado's Office of Suicide Prevention awarded CJSF a three-year grant to build the foundation for Working Minds. Our first step was to conduct a thorough needs assessment. During the first several months of the grant we conducted focus groups, surveys, stakeholder interviews, and a comprehensive literature review and resource scan. Results indicated that suicide and mental health issues have a profound impact on the workplace, and yet people are unsure where to turn or what to do if they need help for themselves or their employees.

In year two of the grant we started to develop the Working Minds website ([www.WorkingMinds.org](http://www.WorkingMinds.org)) and a training DVD—both of which will be launched in 2008. We didn't wait for the completion of these products before we started sharing our lessons learned. Already we are gaining a reputation of being experts in this area through national presentations at:



- ◆ National Association of Student Personnel Administrators National Conference (Orlando, FL)
- ◆ American Association of Suicidology (New Orleans, LA)
- ◆ International Association of Suicide Prevention (Killarney, Ireland)

**In our brain-based economy, we are becoming increasingly dependent on a mentally healthy workforce.**