2018 annual report

A child's friend through and beyond a parent's cancer®
DEAR KESEM FRIENDS

In December 2010, I joined Kesem with one goal – to spread the Kesem “magic” as far and wide as I could. Thanks to your support, what has happened since then exceeded all of our ambitious objectives. In that time, we have:

- Expanded from 23 to 116 college chapters across the country
- Grown from serving 1,214 to 8,984 children annually
- Recruited, trained and empowered over 5,000 college student leaders annually
- Scaled our fundraising capacity by over 12x to support our growth
- Utilized over 80% of every dollar spent directly on programming
- Earned the highest (4 star) rating on Charity Navigator

None of this would have been possible without your support. On behalf of our Board, staff, college student leaders, and the families we serve, I thank you.

As Kesem enters its 19th year of service, we are extremely well positioned for our next phase of growth and evolution. With our Vision 2020 campaign, we will continue to make progress on expanding Kesem’s growth in service reach, strengthening our year-round support with our Through and Beyond programs, and further investing in the tools, resources and leadership development programs for our college student volunteers.

Kesem will also continue to aspire to be an organization that is reflective of the communities we serve. To that end, we have made a significant commitment to broadening our diversity and representation, and have completed a strategic assessment to identify how Kesem can reduce barriers to access, and provide more equitable and inclusive experiences for all participants. I am confident that this work will have wide-ranging impact on this organization, and the communities we work with.

As I shared in September, this will be my last time writing this letter, as I will be stepping down as CEO next year. I have learned so much during my time with this organization, and if I had to sum it up in one thought, it’s this. While we don’t get to decide what happens to us in life, we do get to decide HOW we respond.

Amidst the backdrop of a parent’s cancer, Kesem provides a positive way to respond. For me, the magic of Kesem is watching that response. Seeing a child choose to respond with trust, joy, hope and love. Seeing a college student leader choose to respond with empathy, positivity, humility and unwavering commitment. Seeing our alumni and volunteers choose to respond by continually sharing their time and talents. And seeing our supporters choose to respond with generosity, making an enormous difference in the lives of children impacted by a parent’s cancer.

My journey with Kesem started eight years ago, and it has been one of the most fulfilling and inspiring chapters of my life. I have been honored to have a first-row seat to witness the incredible and selfless impact our college student leaders are making on this world; how Kesem profoundly changes the lives of everyone who touches this organization; and what is possible when thousands of supporters unite behind a single mission of providing empathy, connection, acceptance and JOY to children impacted by a parent’s cancer.

I know that Kesem’s impact is just beginning. With your continued support, I believe we can and will be a resource for all five million children impacted by a parent’s cancer.

Thank you for being such important companions on this journey.

Emily M. Brakebill  
Chair, Board of Directors

In 2018, our community came together to raise over $12 million for children impacted by a parent’s cancer and funded FREE year-round programming and support services for nearly 9,000 children.

In 2010, Camp Kesem had just 23 chapters, serving just over 1,000 children annually. Today, Kesem is a thriving, sustainable and nationally recognized organization with 116 chapters across the United States. Over 5,000 student leaders served nearly 9,000 children this past summer. Under Jane’s skilled guidance, Kesem has grown at an annual rate of over 20% and the organization is in the strongest position we have ever seen. With solid financial footing anchored in a sustainable business model, a very talented staff in place, strong leadership from an active Board of Directors and a proven model that has been refined over the last 18 years, we feel incredibly well-positioned for the future.

Emily M. Brakebill  
Chair, Board of Directors

Jane Saccaro  
CEO, Kesem

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Emily M. Brakebill  
Chair, Board of Directors

Jane Saccaro  
CEO, Kesem
Our Challenge

There are over 5 million children impacted by a parent’s cancer nationwide.

How Kesem Helps*

Kesem is the largest national organization dedicated to supporting children through and beyond a parent’s cancer, at no cost to families.

Our innovative and fun-filled programs provide children with peers who understand their unique needs, and create long-lasting impact. Parents report that Kesem helped their children:

- STRENGTHEN communication skills
- INCREASE comfort with expressing their feelings
- CREATE connections with other children who have a parent with cancer
- BUILD confidence in their ability to handle challenges that come their way

99% of parents feel their child benefitted from attending Kesem

98% of parents would recommend Kesem to other families impacted by cancer

96% of parents intend to send their child back to Kesem each year

86% agree their child seems more confident in their ability to address their cancer experience after Kesem

how does a parent’s cancer impact a child?

- INCREASED anxiety
- EMOTIONAL isolation
- LOSS OF social interest
- FEELINGS OF hopelessness
- LOW academic performance
- TAKING ON adult roles

Through and Beyond Support provides free programs and services that offer children impacted by a parent’s cancer a continuum of touchpoints throughout the year.

CAMP KESEM
Our flagship program provides a free week-long overnight summer camp experience for children ages 6 to 18 who have been impacted by a parent or guardian’s cancer.

KESEM WARM WELCOME
A care package program that immediately includes all families into our greater community in a personal, supportive manner.

KESEM FRIENDS + FAMILY DAY
Regular gatherings for existing and interested Kesem families, alumni, supporters, and college student leaders for a day of community building.

KESEM CONNECTIONS
Provides Kesem families with regular updates including important deadlines and events.

KESEM ONLINE RESOURCES
Provides online access to resources—including publications, books, organizations and resources.

KESEM BY YOUR SIDE
Provides customized support for children through the many challenges associated with a parent or guardian’s cancer journey.

KESEM SPECIAL DELIVERIES
Provides all children with personalized greetings.

*Cancer is not just the one who’s been diagnosed, it’s the whole family."

Parent, Camp Kesem at the University of Georgia

*As reported by parent surveys (2015-2018)
Our Model

The true power of Kesem comes from empowering passionate college student volunteers to become leaders in their own local communities. We are proud to continually invest in training, support and leadership development opportunities for our student leaders, as they prepare to provide life-changing experiences for our families nationwide.

“Kesem is life-changing. An incredible experience. From the first moment I joined the Kesem family, I was amazed by how dedicated and spirited my fellow students were for such an amazing cause.”

Kesem’s College Student Leaders

- Recruit and train other student leaders
- Raise all funds to support their local chapter
- Cultivate relationships with families in need
- Plan and execute highly impactful programs
- Deliver year-round support services

Our student leaders report that their Kesem experience significantly impacted their: LEADERSHIP SKILLS, ABILITY and WILINGNESS to TAKE INITIATIVE and WORK on a TEAM, PROBLEM SOLVING, ACCOUNTABILITY.

100% of Kesem volunteers undergo EXTENSIVE TRAINING on how to create an environment where children will feel safe, loved, and respected.

94% of Kesem college student leaders are interested in continuing to do PHILANTHROPIC WORK after college.

89% of Kesem college student leaders felt BETTER PREPARED for life after college because of their Kesem experience.

80% of Kesem college student leaders have been impacted by cancer themselves – making them empathetic and relatable ROLE MODELS.

5,000+ COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS volunteer at OVER 100 CHAPTERS AT TOP COLLEGES nationwide

University of Alabama
University of Arizona
Arizona State University
University of Arkansas
Atlanta University Center
Augustana College
Ball State University
Berkeley
Boston University
Bradley University
Brown University
BYU
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
California State University, Northridge
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Central PA
Chapman University
Chestnut Hill
University of Chicago
University of Cincinnati
The Claremont Colleges
Clemson University
College of Charleston
Florida Atlantic University
Florida Gulf Coast University
Florida International University
Florida State University
University of Florida
Fordham University
Georgetown University
George Mason University
George Washington University
Georgia Institute of Technology
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Our Impact

We are GROWING each year to MAKE A DIFFERENCE in the lives of more CHILDREN impacted by a parent’s cancer.

Kesem has changed the lives of thousands of children impacted by a parent’s cancer, and we have trained and empowered thousands of empathetic and caring leaders of tomorrow — but we must do more. In support of our mission, Kesem has made a significant investment to expand the reach and breadth of our services in support of this unique community by 2020.

Vision 2020

Increase our SERVICE REACH by 70% to serve 12,000 children annually

Provide LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT opportunities for 6,000 college student leaders annually

Expand to 125 college chapters in 45 states

Engage our 10,000+ ALUMNI in continuing to make a difference

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS with universities, hospitals, and cancer support organizations

Provide greater YEAR-ROUND touchpoints and support to the children we serve

CONTINUALLY INVEST in improving leadership development programs for student leaders

Expand focus on DIVERSITY EQUITY and INCLUSION initiatives

Kesem is known as THE service provider for all children impacted by a parent's cancer
Kesem Partners

Our strategic partnerships with leading organizations have allowed us to expand our services and support more children impacted by a parent’s cancer.
We gratefully acknowledge the following supporters for their generous contributions to Keseem between November 1, 2017, and October 31, 2018.

**Impact Leaders ($100,000+)**
- John & Lisa Stiffler
- John Romano
- Karen & Bill Kisselburg
- Caretha & Ken Coleman
- Karen & Trevor Campion
- John & Shan Nemeth

**Our Donors**
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**Leadership Circle ($25,000+)**
- The George Washington University
- The Kraushaar Charitable Foundation
- The Nelson Foundation Family
- The Robert W. & Susan T. Brown Foundation
- The Bernice Gates Hopper Family
- Jay Stilwell
- Carlyn & Chris Solomon
- Stephen & Nancy Paul
- Ami & Bhabesh Patel
- MSU Interfraternity Council
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- Austin Community Foundation
- Aiming for a Cure Foundation
- Tripwire Interactive
- The Sharks Foundation
- The Century's Men Society
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- The Change the World Foundation
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- John & Lisa Stiffler
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- Caretha & Ken Coleman
- Karen & Trevor Campion
- John & Shan Nemeth

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Kesem’s mission of supporting children through and beyond a parent’s cancer, and our vision of ensuring that every child impacted by a parent’s cancer is never alone, can only be realized through an ongoing, steadfast commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in every part of our organization.

Registration for Camp Kesem Summer 2019 will open on January 15, 2019.

“Kesem magic is something that never goes away. Once you have it, all you can do is spread it.”

College Student Leader, Camp Kesem at University of Kansas