

## Beatrice's Story

By Jean Scarboro, Clinical Director

In the past seven months, we moved quickly from operating as an in-person clinic to providing all services via computer to now doing a bit of both.

When the coronavirus compelled us to move to telehealth, all we could do with some families was to check in with a kid by phone or to send cards every week while we sorted out issues like computer access or lack of privacy at home. With other kids, we could barely connect, because of the many changes they were suddenly facing in their own home. During this time, I heard therapists asking, "Is it enough that I am just reaching for this kid every week? Is this therapy?"

It has been different, no doubt. But I have also heard therapists say things like, "I'm not giving up. I will fight to connect with this kid."

In some ways, this is the work we have always done—searching for each child, building a trustworthy relationship with them, tirelessly following their clues, showing that we are paying close attention, until the child trusts that we want to know them from the inside out.

One child, whom I will call Beatrice, had just started therapy when we had to move to telehealth services. Her parents were going through many life changes on top of the pandemic, including divorce, and they were understandably too overwhelmed to follow through with Beatrice's weekly therapy appointments via telehealth. But Beatrice's therapist did not give up. She called, week after week. She sent cards. She celebrated as a victory even five minutes on the phone with Beatrice.

At times, though, the therapist wondered whether she should keep chasing this child. She wondered what therapeutic impact she was having with so little contact. Her intuition pushed her to keep searching, as did her knowledge that a basic human need is to know we are worthy of care. This child, Beatrice, needed to rebuild her belief in her own worth.

According to her parents, although the divorce was positive for them, it had caused Beatrice to question whether something was wrong with her. They said she felt responsible for her family falling apart. Her therapist also sensed that Beatrice felt unimportant and lost in the fray. She feared that this feeling would grow, now that Beatrice was losing her peers, teachers, and routines due to the pandemic. Although her parents love her dearly, the question of whether she was lovable, or worthy, was now a deep insecurity inside of Beatrice.

After two months of trying to make contact every week, the therapist finally had a full telehealth session with Beatrice. Beatrice seemed, at first, uninterested, although she was the one who had said that she wanted therapy to continue. She curled up in a large armchair and read a book while the therapist watched. The therapist felt that Beatrice was keeping her on the outside. She tried asking Beatrice questions about the book. Beatrice occasionally mumbled an answer.

Then, while still looking down at her book, Beatrice quietly said, "You're like family to me."



Given the small amount of time they had actually spent together in therapy sessions, her therapist was surprised.

“I am?”

Beatrice said, “Yeah. Everyone else gives up on me. But not you.”

After another moment of silence, Beatrice began talking. She talked about seemingly small things, like her old dog and a new neighbor kid. The therapist knew it was an invitation into Beatrice’s experience and that it was no small gesture, coming from this child.

Beatrice became quiet again. She hid her computer under a pillow so that her therapist could not see her. Then Beatrice told her therapist that she had a secret. She said she used to hide under the dining room table to watch her parents argue.

Beatrice said quietly, “I did that when we all lived together. I hated it. I’ll show you where I hid, next time. I’ll take you under there with me.”

Next time.

Beatrice was silent again, for nearly five minutes. Then she took the pillow off the computer. Again, she did not look at her therapist.

Her therapist said, “I am still here, Beatrice. I am not going anywhere.”

“That’s what I know,” said Beatrice. “I know that.”

There is something so stark during these times of remote connection. It is so clear that being searched for and found by another person matters, deeply. When someone does not give up on us, when someone continues to look for us despite many challenges, when someone sits silently with us and genuinely values what we offer, we know we are worthy.

Our Jumping Mouse therapists are skilled at tracking kids and building trust. They search with love and determination for each child, hoping that the child will eventually let them into their inner experience. And in that sacred and shared experience, healing happens.

**Jumping Mouse  
Children’s Center**

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*Jumping Mouse is inspired by a Native American legend of a small creature who dreams of a new way. He journeys into the world beyond the familiar, with compassion and awareness. He grows, discovers his strengths, and transforms into Eagle. Like the myth, our children’s center is about offering the tools that will assist each child in meeting the challenges of daily life.*

## Expanding Our Therapy Toys

Children use the toys on our shelves to tell their story, so it is important for them to see those that can reflect both their experience and their inner worlds. Providing representation for our kids' unique selves and stories matters. Since our therapy rooms were not in use this past summer, we took the opportunity to go through each therapy room to see what needed to be added.

This is one of the steps we have taken as we assess diversity, equity, and inclusion at Jumping Mouse, a priority in our 2020-2022 strategic plan. Our therapy rooms are at the center of our work, and we recently purchased more than 100 new toys to ensure that we have more figurines and dolls representing different identities. For example, we have added more figurines from the *Black Panther* and *Moana* movies to our superheroes and superheroines; additional Black, Asian, and multiracial dolls; and figurines from different cultures around the world.

Some of these figurines have already begun to be used in therapy. One therapist reported that a child instantly noticed one of them and exclaimed, "Hey! This looks like me!" This is part of the work at Jumping Mouse — to be a safe place where a child's whole self is seen, known, and honored.



Disney princess Tiana joins the toy shelf

"I like that my child has a safe space to express his feelings and feel like all attention is on him."

~Jumping Mouse parent

## Virtual Turkey Trot 5K and Special Family Scavenger Hunt

Join us for our VIRTUAL Turkey Trot during the week of Thanksgiving (November 21–29). This family-friendly event invites our community to run or walk to benefit Jumping Mouse kids. This year, all 5K participants get to pick their own route, what time they do the race, and whether they want to create a team to help us fundraise during this particularly tough year. We also have created a family scavenger hunt through Fort Worden State Park to encourage family participation and fun!

During the week of Thanksgiving, our event page and social media will be highlighting participants who share a photo or video of where they participated. Prizes will be awarded for most interesting or unique route, best costume, and most funds raised!



**To find out more or register for the 2020 Turkey Trot 5K and Family Scavenger Hunt, go to:**

[www.jumpingmouse.org](http://www.jumpingmouse.org)



## Fill Up Our Heart

Our year-end campaign has begun! We are just \$50,000 away from reaching our goal of \$170,000 in contributions from donors like you.

**Will you give today and help fill up the heart?**

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Jumping Mouse Children's Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Donations are accepted directly to Jumping Mouse.

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