

# Jesse's Project

*Reaching out to families at a  
time when they need help...*

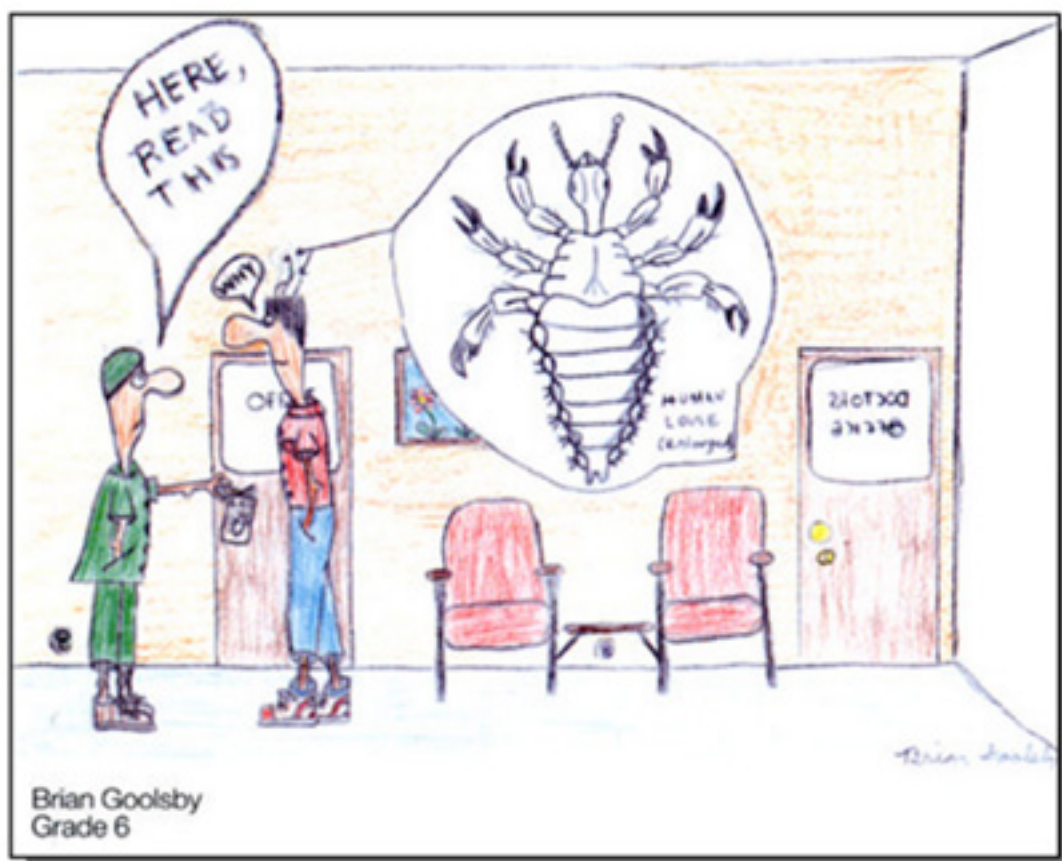


# JESSE'S PROJECT

Jesse's Project has been developed to protect the children diagnosed with serious illness from unnecessary exposure to potentially harmful chemicals contained in pesticidal head lice treatments and sprays.

Children of any age or size are vulnerable to pesticides, and none are more at risk than the growing number of children treated for illnesses such as cancer, brain tumors, epilepsy, asthma and AIDS.

Jesse's Project focuses on providing the education and tools for safe prevention and elimination of inappropriate chemical responses to head lice for this especially vulnerable and often immuno-suppressed child population.



# JESSE'S PROJECT



Dear Parents and Health Professionals:

In 1993, I lost my 11-year-old son Jesse to Leukemia. Jesse had undergone many bouts of chemotherapy since first diagnosed at age two. It was decided that Jesse would receive a bone marrow transplant from his sister. Jesse skated through the entire procedure and the doctors felt it went well.

We came home and everyone felt good about things. Jesse had stayed out of school for five months so that his immune system could get back to normal. It was mid-August 1993 and I shampooed the kids' hair for lice as I had in previous years. A week later we took Jesse in for lab work to find that he had relapsed again and this time he was completely full of leukemia. In a "normal relapse" after a bone marrow transplant experts usually find that they missed some of the original chromosomes from the leukemia patient. Jesse was one of 12 documented cases in the world where the patient had relapsed even though the tainted cells had been completely removed. I panicked that my daughter's marrow was leukemic, but the doctors told me her marrow was perfectly clean. Jesse's relapse indicated that there had been some kind of chemical or environmental trigger.

It was only then that I thought about the many times I had treated Jesse for head lice during his illness and for the first time considered what chemicals I might have exposed him to. I thought of the treatments as medicated shampoos and the idea that they were actually pesticides just had not occurred to me. I learned that the chemicals found in the treatments could potentially be hurtful to a healthy child, let alone someone who had leukemia, chemotherapy and a transplant.

Just the idea that these exposures may have contributed to his death in any way is agonizing. I want to do whatever I can to help educate parents so that they can make the safest choices possible.

Please help by letting others know about Jesse's Project and the message it conveys to protect these especially vulnerable children and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresia".

Teresia Cross



# JESSE'S PROJECT

## CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK:

Over time the nature of childhood illness has evolved from epidemics like scarlet fever, small pox and measles to chronic and disabling conditions like cancer, asthma, neurological impairment and hormone disorders.

### Asthma

- It is estimated that 26.3 million people in the U.S. have been diagnosed with asthma and more than a third of them (at least 8.6 million) are children under 18 years of age.
- Asthma is the leading serious chronic illness among children.
- The estimated annual cost of treating asthma in those under 18 years of age is \$3.2 billion.
- Asthma accounts for 10 million lost school days annually.

Data provided by the American Lung Association

### Cancer

- In the U.S., cancer kills more children under the age of 15 (about 1,700 per year) than any other disease, including AIDS.
- It is estimated that 8,000 (200,000 worldwide) new cases of childhood cancer will be diagnosed each year.
- Acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) accounts for the highest percentage at 26%
- Brain tumors are the most deadly of all the childhood cancers.

Data provided by the National Children's Cancer Society, American Association for Cancer Research, and the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation of the United States

### Epilepsy

- Epilepsy and seizures affect 2.3 million Americans of all ages, at an estimated annual direct and indirect cost of \$12.5 billion.
- 300,000 are children 14 years and younger, in the prime of life and at a crucial stage in their educational and social development.
- Approximately 181,000 new cases of seizures and epilepsy occur each year.
- Epilepsy remains a major, unsolved health problem affecting the lives of millions of Americans and their families

Data provided by the Epilepsy Foundation

## WIDESPREAD CHEMICAL EXPOSURE THREATENS OUR MOST VULNERABLE POPULATION

12 million children under the age of 18 suffer from learning disabilities as reported by the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA). Behavioral disorders such as hyperactivity and Attention Deficit Disorder - other possible signs of low-level chemical exposure - now affect one out of six U.S. children.

## JESSE'S PROJECT

“Many people with cancer have questions about what may have caused their disease. People often worry about environmental exposure to chemicals, pesticides, or other pollutants.

Many of these concerns are justified.”

- *Gina Solomon, MD, MPH*

*Senior Scientist, Natural Resources Defense Council*



“Because it’s not about lice,  
it’s about kids”™

The NPA is proud to sponsor Jesse’s Project, which emphasizes prevention over chemical treatment and provides the tools to safely and effectively protect children with serious illness.

Working together we can reach out to parents at a time when they need encouragement and assistance in helping their child not only regain good health but protect it in every possible way.

“We can’t remove every potentially harmful chemical exposure from a child’s life, making it imperative that we remove those that we can.”

- *Deborah Z. Altschuler*  
*NPA President*

# JESSE'S PROJECT

## National Pediculosis Association

*Serving the public since 1983*

The National Pediculosis Association, Inc. (NPA) is the only non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to protecting children from the misuse and abuse of potentially harmful lice and scabies pesticidal treatments. Here are some of the ways in which the NPA accomplishes its' mission:

- Award-winning website provides critical information to thousands of parents and medical professionals each day with over a million hits per month. 50% of these visitors are parents looking for help.



- National Reporting Registry for adverse reactions, treatment failures and outbreak reports
- Sponsorship of September's Head Lice Prevention Campaign
- Telephone and e-mail support

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- Educational mailings and public service announcements
- Sponsorship of independent research
- International Coalition
- L.E.A.R.N. - Lindane Education and Research Network
- The LiceMeister® Head Lice and Nit Removal Kit with educational video was developed for Jesse's Project to help families manage head lice safely, without panic and without exposure to potentially harmful chemicals.



*In September 2001, the NPA and the Sanitation District of Los Angeles County received the NPPR's national and most prestigious pollution prevention award for their cooperative efforts on the Lindane Usage Reduction Project resulting in the total ban of Lindane as a pharmaceutical product in the state of California.*

**WARNING: Personal and environmental head lice products contain a variety of chemicals that can be hazardous to a child.**

Prescription and over-the-counter products may contain gamma benzene hexachloride, acetone, propane, butane, malathion, ether, terpineol alcohol, xylene, piperonyl butoxide, permethrin, phenothrin, as well as other undisclosed petroleum distillates, enzymes, and live cultures. These and other potentially harmful ingredients may be included in products and not necessarily noted on the packaging.

