

May 2011 –
September 2012

Stories from Healing Joplin



Missouri Department of Mental Health
February 2013

Stories from Healing Joplin

May, 2011 – September, 2012

Following, in no particular order, are a collection of stories and highlights from Healing Joplin staff. The stories and highlights give a flavor for the day to day work; illustrate the importance of trust and assisting with concrete needs as an avenue to assisting with emotional needs; and the complete dedication of the people who were Healing Joplin.

- A new shipment of stress balls with the Healing Joplin logo, 10,000 Healing Joplin brochures, as well as 50 new Healing Joplin yard signs, with the logo and information included, will help provide higher visibility in areas around Joplin.
- A crisis counselor, fluent in Spanish, staffed a resource table at the local WIC office for Hispanic women on the day they most often come in with their infants and children.
- All of the cooling neckties, provided free by the Department of Corrections were handed out to relief, debris removal, and construction, street, and EMT workers. This has served as a great way for crisis counselors to make contact with these individuals and offer other services and resources. The Healing Joplin staff received applause from workers at the Rangeline Road lunch tent for distributing the cooling neckties and talking to them about how they are coping. DOC is placing an order for additional cooling neckties.
- Established resource tables through partnerships with the Disaster Recovery Centers at MSSU, Red Cross, FEMA Point of Distribution Center at Forest Park Baptist Church, Family Access Medical Care, the Women Infant and Children (WIC) Center, Wal-Mart, North Park Mall, and the Boys and Girls Club. Crisis counselors visit these sites each day.
- One of the Healing Joplin teams is devoted to reaching out to children and has visited all of the remaining daycare facilities in the area that were on the Child Care Aware list providing toys, blankets, stress pillows, coloring books, bubbles and activity books to provide comfort and stress management to the children impacted by the disaster.
- The Healing Joplin Project Manager attended the Good Morning Joplin Chamber of Commerce meeting to alert business owners of the project. The Project Manager also provided interviews to the following media outlets:
 - Joplin Globe;
 - Mind & Body Magazine;
 - CNN;
 - Wall Street Journal;
 - St. Louis Beacon;
 - KSN-TV-Kansas City;
 - Joplin's KODE-TV Medical Focus segment; and
 - A morning segment will be provided every Wednesday on the local New Life Radio 105.3 (a Christian Rock station)
- The Project Manager actively participates in the weekly COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) meetings, LTRC (Long Term Recovery Committee) and the Crisis Counseling sub-

committee of the LTRC in order to stay aware of approaching deadlines (state and federal) and available community resources.

- Healing Joplin received a donation of over 100 high quality toys from a local pharmaceutical representative. Toys were distributed to daycare facilities, summer camps, and various community agencies.
- Healing Joplin staff is participating in the "I am Joplin" event public event that focuses on children returning to school.
- They have also been working closely with the United Way on a three-day event that started this Tuesday in which any child in the Joplin School district may attend to select brand new (donated) back to school clothing. Over 20 Healing Joplin workers were there as personal shoppers with the students and to chat about their emotional well-being while shopping the warehouse (which usually lasts up to an hour for each student).
- Healing Joplin staff have also been active with the YMCA summer program, the Boys and Girls Club and have visited all of the local day care facilities several times.
- Healing Joplin staff have also been going out to the Bridge which is a local youth facility and reaching teens there. Providing the stuffed animals, soft dolls, blankets, bubbles, reading and coloring books and play dough to the children helped open the door to good communication with the entire family.
- Healing Joplin staff have also been to the local churches, DRC at MSSU, WIC office, Head Start, North Park Mall, Wal-Mart and Family Access Medical Care on a regular basis (if not daily) to reach families.
- Related to people with disabilities and older adults, Healing Joplin staff have been to the senior centers and residential apartment complexes that serve these individuals. As well as making stops and dropping materials at the local social security administration office complex and the local geriatric outpatient medical center.
- Healing Joplin staff attends all local memorial services or events (concerts, meals in the city parks) that were open to the general public and including one this week (a balloon launch).
- Healing Joplin received a formal thank you letter from the Ronald McDonald House Charities on July 22 thanking them for their "generous donation of stuffed animals." Staff also visited children and families that had been physically injured with some still hospitalized at the Ronald McDonald House in Joplin in June and July.
- Healing Joplin was highlighted in a front page article of the Joplin Globe this past Friday available at:
<http://www.joplinglobe.com/local/x1073355319/Teams-deliver-psychological-first-aid-on-the-street>
- Healing Joplin staff attended the 'I Am Joplin' back to school event at MSSU. Over 10,000 students and families attended. They provided 1,000 stress pillows, 100 blankets, 100 soft dolls and over 1,000 Healing Joplin program brochures. All project staff attended and served as personal shoppers in the gym while students selected backpacks and school supplies that were donated. Free eye-exams were available, and a free music concert. As a follow up, three schools within the Joplin R-VIII School District requested Healing Joplin staff be present on the first day of school.

- Joplin Schools sent out an automated phone blast to all students on Tuesday afternoon alerting them of the Healing Joplin program and the phone number to call as storms were passing through the area. At one time, the Ozark Center phone bank had 20 lines ringing at once. Ozark Center served four families in crisis in less than 24 hours of that phone message.
- In their door to door canvassing of Joplin, crisis counselors found 3 elderly couples that had not applied for FEMA. They also found a working adult male who had private insurance but a \$5,000 deductible who had not applied. This illustrates not only the importance of having crisis counselors going door to door to provide emotional support for survivors, but also to link them to services that can help them in their personal and financial recovery.
- Healing Joplin will continue to go door to door and leave plastic bags with their flyer and FEMA flyers on doors of those not at home all this week and next. They will continue to canvass the area until the FEMA deadline of 08/26/11 comes and goes in an attempt to locate more citizens impacted who have not yet applied.
- As an example of the imaginative ways that Healing Joplin is reaching out to members of the community, Healing Joplin, was one of 19 boats competing in the cardboard boat races held in conjunction with the Shoal Creek Water Festival on Saturday, August 13. This allowed Healing Joplin to both make the community aware of the program and interact with people at the festival. Additionally, the team won the Team Spirit Award for the race.
- Healing Joplin staff found a senior couple at the Carl Junction, senior center, who had not yet applied for FEMA and left the senior center to go to the DRC that same day.
- Healing Joplin program brochures were provided to the Area Agency on Aging frozen meal delivery program staff who reported that they were going to place the flyer in with the 250 meals they deliver this week. Next week Healing Joplin will do the same for their hot meal delivery program.
- The Joplin Senior Center reopened this week and some of the senior males had invited Healing Joplin staff to watch the pool matches or games at the opening. 114 contacts were made during this event alone.
- The Joplin Schools referred four students the first week of school.
- The Salvation Army has invited the Healing Joplin staff to come to their recovery center each day to visit with disaster survivors. They served 90 people last Tuesday, many of whom were noted to be distraught by staff.
- Three local agencies have requested crisis debriefing groups over the past week.
- On Wednesday, Healing Joplin set up a table at Missouri Southern State University as part of the student welcome back activities. Healing Joplin staff reported a lot of contacts with college students. Many took educational materials for themselves, their families or friends.
- Healing Joplin staff assisted a veteran in his 50's obtain a new pair of dentures. He lost his pair in the disaster and had not eaten a solid meal until this week. He had applied for the free dentures locally but had been denied because he was a vet and had benefits. They helped him obtain the authorization locally from the VA to proceed with his replacement dentures signing off on the necessary forms. They basically helped him through the red tape after he had given up out of frustration.

- Healing Joplin staff assisted an older female widow, age 85 process through her insurance. Her home had major damage with trees falling into the home. Her belongings had been placed in a POD unit on her property, the home was repaired but no one returned to help her get the furniture and personal belongings out of the POD/back into her home. Staff assisted her in calling her insurance company to get the items out as the POD Company was coming back over the weekend to pick up the unit with or without her belongings being removed.
- Healing Joplin staff assisted an adult female in her 50's obtain free diabetic test strips and diabetic shoes that had been lost in the storm. When the weather is cloudy she becomes nervous and picks at her skin which is bad for a diabetic. Now, when a storm comes she calls the Healing Joplin number to talk until the anxiety and urge to pick her skin passes.
- Healing Joplin staff was in attendance at a memorial service at MSSU last Sunday.
- Healing Joplin staff will be attending the September 11th flag ceremony in Joplin.
- Last week Healing Joplin staff entered the FEMA modular living park for the first time, went door to door and attended the block party last Friday evening with residents there. They left materials for those not at home and some residents are calling in for resources. They are visiting on a regular basis and are finding a lot of individual contacts there that are requiring longer interactions.
- Healing Joplin staff located a wheelchair for a senior citizen through the Independent Living Center.
- Healing Joplin is utilizing grids of the city (including the disaster zone area) and is covering the entire town in an organized fashion. Healing Joplin staff is working in pairs taking a grid map and canvassing door to door.
- Healing Joplin's Project Director was interviewed and in the September/October issue of Body & Mind Magazine that discusses trauma and resources available. Body & Mind is a local tri-state medical magazine.
- Healing Joplin staff attended the 09/11/01 Tenth Anniversary flag ceremony and helped children and youth make stars at MSSU to place around town.
- Healing Joplin received notice that they could host a resource table at a local October Fest festival on October 22nd free of charge from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to offer activities for children such as face painting and a coloring booth utilizing disaster coloring books.
- Healing Joplin is partnering with a group out of Wisconsin and the Carthage Crisis Center to have a free winter coat drive for children up to 17 years of age.
- Healing Joplin received an invitation to have a live television interview with KSN (Channel 16) regarding their project and mental health on 10/24/11.
- Healing Joplin flyers left at the Haven FEMA trailer park resulted in at least 100 contacts, with requests for immediate needs, of which 70 were able to be met in less than 72 hours and the other requests are in the works. These requests ranged from requests for baby formula, baby diapers, bath towels, washer & dryer, car gas vouchers, dairy groceries, meat groceries, storage bins or tubs, shoes, eye glasses, referrals for dentist, birth control, job fairs and mental health services (substance abuse & counseling) among many others.

- Healing Joplin staff conducted crisis education and debriefing with the Joplin Housing Authority employees.
- Healing Joplin staff are working with the Joplin area Department of Social Services to find dates for crisis education and debriefing with their employees.
- Healing Joplin staff assisted a disabled adult male in obtaining a wheelchair lift for his auto that had been destroyed in the disaster valued at \$7,000 free of charge and visited several nursing homes as well as the senior centers.
- Healing Joplin staff has been invited by the Salvation Army to have a presence in the waiting area of that agency.
- Healing Joplin staff attended several businesses' grand re-openings in Joplin.
- Healing Joplin staff visited Children's Haven and played games/sports with the children displaced from their homes.
- Healing Joplin staff attended a local Blue Grass Festival and had a coloring booth and resource table.
- Healing Joplin staff continues to serve as lunch buddies at the senior center and received a list of nursing facilities that have displaced Joplin seniors currently living there
- Healing Joplin staff took part in the "Great Day of Service" event in Joplin on Sunday, September 25, as an individual, a family or with a group, civic organization, or a company. Organizers of this year's event set a goal of over 2,000 volunteers participating to provide the assistance needed for the Joplin community service program. Citizens volunteered as an individual, a family or with a group, civic organization, or a company.
- Healing Joplin received a list of 30 nursing homes and residential care centers, from the Department of Health and Senior Services, where Joplin residents were displaced to and are actively contacting those facilities to offer information and support.
- Healing Joplin hosted 12 nursing students from Chamberlain College from St. Louis in a job shadowing experience so they could observe how the crisis workers engage and communicate with those experiencing trauma as well as identifying mental health needs.
- Construction began on the Healing Joplin float for the Maple Leaf parade in Carthage, Mo. (Jasper County) this Saturday.
- Healing Joplin has partnered with the Joplin School District to host a Christmas tree give-away with those families that reside in the FEMA parks set for December 3rd at which time the family will receive a three or four foot artificial tree, a box of ornaments and lights. Additionally, there will be a table for the crisis workers to help children make their own personal Christmas decoration for the tree or their front door in an effort to replace items lost in the disaster and to build or foster new holiday traditions.
- Training for existing and new crisis counseling staff added in the Regular Services Grant was held October 11 – 12 in Joplin. There were over 70 individuals in attendance at the training which was conducted by two national crisis counselor trainers. The training was well received and the makeup, enthusiasm, and commitment of the staff trained were very impressive.
- Healing Joplin hosted a float in the Maple Leaf Parade in Jasper County which was attended by several thousand area residents. The float won a "Special Recognition" award and people

clapped and cheered for the Healing Joplin staff as they walked with the float down the street. Staff handed out 1,040 Healing Joplin paper band-aids with program information and their logo.

- Healing Joplin also hosted a resource table at this event and had face painting for children.
- One day last week Healing Joplin staff stopped in a local restaurant to eat lunch when a lady approached them saying she was concerned about her room-mate who had lost her home in the disaster and had been staying with her. The staff joined the approaching woman for lunch and she stated that she had heard the radio PSA as well as recognized their blue t-shirts. They finished eating and then the three of them went back to her home. The Healing Joplin crisis workers soon determined that the room-mate was in need of additional mental health services as she was having suicidal ideation.
- Healing Joplin also received a shipment of fidget blankets and other items from Department of Correction's Restorative Justice Program and has plans to distribute them over the next 3 weeks to displaced seniors.
- Healing Joplin located an adult male who still had a \$250.per month weekly payment due on an underinsured loan for a small restaurant which was destroyed by the tornado. He was becoming very depressed and had already used what monies he had available to pay down the balance on the loan but had no income coming in currently so he was going to end up defaulting on the loan after all. After discussing this with the Healing Joplin team out in the community, he agreed to have a follow-up visit and a team member took his need to a local church in Oronogo, Missouri (Jasper County). The church agreed to assist him with the remaining \$6,000. The man was so relieved to have this financial burden lifted from him and has agreed to assist the church with their needs in return.
- Another Healing Joplin team, while out going door to door at the FEMA park in Joplin found a younger adult male that was very upset over the fact that he had started moving some of his personal belongings to his temporary home but had left them on the front porch only to return from his bedroom, about 15 minutes later, to find them missing. The team spoke to him and did their best to provide him with referrals to replace lost items and continued on their visit amongst survivors in the park. About 1 ½ hours later they came across a man who appeared to be having a yard sale and had a sign up saying, "free stuff, please take if you have use for it." When speaking to this older adult male about his giving away items he mentioned that he had found them on a neighbor's porch just sitting out for the trash. The man who had taken them made comment that the items were "perfectly good" and he was "sure somebody could use them." The team started putting two and two together, asked the man missing his items to come with them and then connected the two men. Luckily none of the items had been re-gifted on to others and they were restored to their rightful owner. The rightful owner was not angry at all and called his new neighbor "Robin Hood." The two men actually ended up having a good belly laugh, shook hands and left their experience with quite a story to tell!
- Healing Joplin staff assisted an adult male, who lost all of his clothing in the disaster, in locating additional clothing. This man wore a size 5X in shirts and had a 64 inch waist and had only been wearing two outfits the past five months. The Healing Joplin team was able to find him several more shirts and sweat pants in his size. When they returned to his home they said "the smile on his face was priceless."

- Healing Joplin staff assisted two adult females that reside in the Hope Haven FEMA park in obtaining a winter coat. One of the ladies was so happy with her coat that “she danced around in her coat and kept saying how warm it was.”
- Healing Joplin staff assisted an adult female with \$6,000 in unpaid medical bills (Baptist Church in Oronogo, MO gave her the money to settle her debt) and located a prosthetic leg for her. She lost her leg in the disaster and had been wheelchair bound.
- Healing Joplin staff assisted a family, living in a shed, in obtaining a 42 foot fully equipped travel trailer. The owner signed the title over to them. They left the Joplin area and moved to the Wentworth area to some property and hope to build there in the future.
- Healing Joplin staff came across a family who had had many struggles in addition to dealing with the aftermath of the tornado but their needs were still many. Each week this family drove their damaged suburban to Kansas City to take their son to the hospital for medical appointments. Staff were able to help the family get the auto repaired and windows replaced free of charge at Roper Auto Center. The family was so happy to have their regular commutes be made in a warm auto in good repair.
- Healing Joplin staff were going door to door in the FEMA parks to deliver the December 3rd event holiday flyers to residents when they came upon an older adult female who reported she had not had anything to eat the past 2 days and had no food available. Staff drove to the College Heights Christian Church point of distribution and was able to obtain a 2 week emergency supply of food for this lady in need. This lady was placed into the client tracker and was not noted to have been to another other charity organization prior but would now be linked with a long term recovery case manager for additional follow-up.
- Healing Joplin staff were working the Forest Park Baptist Church point of distribution as a personal shopper when they came across a lady that was diagnosed with cancer shortly before the disaster, was then impacted by the disaster and then spent 3 months hospitalized undergoing extensive oral surgeries/cancer treatments. As a result, all of her teeth had been removed and doctors told her it might be nine months before her oral condition had improved enough for dentures but Medicare does not cover dentures. The woman mentioned that her lack of teeth and disfigured appearance kept her from going to church where she had previously been a door person who greeted and passed the plate each Sunday. Staff was able to locate a local dentist, who agreed to assist her in obtaining the dentures free of charge when she is medically ready. Staff said that when they provided her with this news she was so elated and tearful and said she was going to make it back to church the first Sunday she could greeting people for Sunday services with a big smile on her face.
- Healing Joplin staff met a single mother of 4 children who mentioned that her 11 year old daughter’s glasses were blown away in the tornado and they were in need of additional winter clothing. Staff were able to obtain a card from a local vision center for free eye exam with glasses included and provided her with the Salvation Army clothing flyer for the free give-a-away coming this Friday and Saturday. The mother commented that she was so happy Healing Joplin came to her home to direct her to so many resources she didn’t know were available.
- Healing Joplin had a print ad in the Joplin Globe on 11/17/11 on page 6B providing helpful guidelines to help reduce holiday stress.

- A Healing Joplin team put together baby gift baskets to be given to families who are expecting or recently given birth. The items were donated and included items such as pacifiers, receiving blankets, clothing, hats, booties, lotions and oils.
- All Healing Joplin teams worked the free community-wide clothing giveaway at the Salvation Army warehouse and served as a personal shopper for many families. The teams also helped prepare and sort by size prior to the event.
- The Church of Christ in Oronogo, Mo. (Jasper County) agreed to purchase a small lap-top computer and printer for a young couple who had lost theirs in the disaster. The couple will be returning to college this January and had been overwhelmed worrying about how to replace it.
- Healing Joplin had a print ad in the Joplin Globe on 11/17/11 on page 6B providing helpful guidelines to help reduce holiday stress.
- A Healing Joplin team put together some baby gift baskets to be given to families who are expecting or recently given birth. The items were donated and included items like pacifiers, receiving blankets, clothing, hats, booties, lotions and oils.
- All Healing Joplin teams worked the free community wide clothing give-away at the Salvation Army warehouse and served as a personal shopper for many families. The teams also helped prepare and sort by size before the event.
- The Church of Christ in Oronogo, MO (Jasper County) agreed to purchase a small lap-top computer and printer for a young couple being seen by Healing Joplin staff who had lost theirs in the disaster. The couple will be returning to college this January and had been overwhelmed worrying about how to replace it.
- Healing Joplin hosted an event called “Rebuilding the Holidays” for the people living in the FEMA temporary housing units. Approximately 900 people attended, of which about 500 were children.
- An article in the Joplin Globe highlighted the importance of people displaced by the storm to establish new holiday traditions. The article also brought attention to the Healing Joplin program and availability of the crisis counselors and crisis line.
- <http://www.joplinglobe.com/healthandfamily/x1938316113/Tornado-victims-may-need-help-preparing-for-first-holiday-season-after-storm>
- Our December 3rd “Rebuilding the Holidays” event at Forest Park Baptist church at which time 307 families were served. There were 981 disaster survivors served that included 506 children and 475 adults. One little girl about 3 to 4 years of age presented Santa with some chocolate candy and Santa reached into his pocket and presented her with a beautiful Polar Express bell that was engraved. It was hers to keep. Santa wore a large gold key on his belt and told all the FEMA children that this key was the “special key” he used to get into all homes that did not have chimneys. He was aware that all of these children were living in the FEMA parks and did not have a chimney. It was very sweet and moving.
- Nursing students from Chamberlain College came to Joplin on December 10th with a truck full of toys and helped Healing Joplin workers distribute them to disaster families in the FEMA parks, the community points of distribution and other facilities where youth were present. The school sent thank you e-mails and cards to the project.

- Twelve Healing Joplin staff served Thanksgiving meal at the Methodist Church to over 400 families and they have plans to serve Christmas meals again.
- Healing Joplin had a photo and caption in the Joplin Globe's "32 Minutes in May, The Joplin Tornado" on page 122 and a photo on page 125.
- Healing Joplin assisted a family with a \$3,000 car repair through a donation from Oronogo Church of Christ and Roper Honda. This family had a disabled child prior to the tornado and lost everything. The used car they could afford from their small insurance payment broke down after 3 months and they needed reliable transportation to physicians.
- Healing Joplin assisted Forest Park Baptist Church in distributing Christmas food baskets to 124 families and had extended home visits with them.
- Healing Joplin is participating with 7 different church and agency parties serving dinner, distributing toys, clothing, singing Christmas carols and assisting with food distribution.
- A *Health Joplin* team made an effort to reach some of the smaller cultural or ethnic groups within their community by visiting the local Chinese, Mexican and Thai restaurants. Most reported themselves and family members to be doing well but a few really appreciated Healing Joplin reaching out to them and even offered suggestions on how to reach other minorities or those citizens with different cultural backgrounds in our community. All accepted materials to be left at their place of business and some accepted the offer to return for restocking materials/follow-up visits.
- A *Health Joplin* team met an adult female who had been an artist prior to the tornado. She even had an art room in her home that was a total loss in which she worked but lost all materials/items in the disaster. She had been isolating without her favorite pastime/outlet when Healing Joplin stopped by her new apartment home during an outreach in Joplin. Healing Joplin visited the local Spiva Art Center and met another staff person who works at the center. They explained the situation and the staff person stated that they were accepting thirty applications for \$1,000 art scholarships. Healing Joplin assisted the woman in completing her application. She was chosen and received her \$1,000 check from Spiva. She said it was one of her "best" Christmas presents ever in the "worst year of her life". Now she is getting out to the craft store to restock her new art room that the (as as calls them) "ladies in blue helped me get back."
- A *Health Joplin* team was conducting outreach in the city of Neosho (Newton County) and came into contact with a disaster survivor who is a young adult male who was in a truck outside the Home Depot when the tornado hit. He was thrown from the truck and sustained life threatening head injuries that resulted in a coma and multiple surgeries over the course of 2 months. He had to learn how to walk again and use his left hand since his right side is not functioning well. This young male was very upbeat with the Healing Joplin workers and said that their visit made him want to preserve on with his physical therapy, occupational and speech therapy because many people do have a caring heart for all disaster survivors. The staff that visited him said they were very moved by this young man's smile and determination to overcome his severe physical injuries. They will visit with him again for follow-ups and his mother mentioned it also brightened her day to see him have visitors outside family or treatment staff that he could talk with.
- The Healing Joplin workers attended a tornado recovery meeting at the local NAMI chapter of Joplin and were able to engage with those disaster survivors that had a serious and persistent

mental illness prior to the disaster. These individuals fell into a high risk category prior to the disaster and many had previous trauma in their lives. As these survivors spoke to the project workers it was clear that they were some of those in our community most impacted and they displayed a lot of anger and anxiety. The workers were able to listen to their stories and help coach them on relaxation and stress management techniques. The workers agreed to return and have some educational groups over the next few months. Some survivors were referred to anger management groups and grief support groups within the community/local mental health/community mental health providers.

- Two Healing Joplin team leaders that are mental health professionals began staffing the local long term disaster case manager office 7 hours per day (10 am to 5 pm) Monday through Friday. The team leaders are on site and immediately available for those disaster survivors who have unmet needs and require additional emotional screening and/or supports while visiting their case manager. This is a very beneficial collaborative relationship.
- On January 19 and 20 all of the Healing Joplin Crisis Counselors were trained in Skills for Psychological Recovery by Melissa Brymer and Robin Gurwitch of the National Child Trauma Services Network. This training focused on providing the crisis counselors with skills to assist disaster survivors with emotional recovery from the event without creating a dependence on the continued contact with the crisis counselor. In addition to the Healing Joplin Crisis Counselors, three crisis counselors from the Bootheel flood response program attended the training. The training was well received and there will be follow up specialized training for crisis counseling teams working specifically with children and with seniors. There will also be phone consultation with the crisis counselor team leaders on a regular basis to monitor the implementation of the skills taught in the class.
- Two Healing Joplin staff conducting door to door canvassing in the Carl Junction area came across an adult female who had pulled off beside the road with a flat tire. They turned back and asked if they could help her. As they helped her change her tire, she shared that she had been a survivor of the 2008 Carl Junction tornado and the events of May 22nd caused her some significant triggers with a reoccurrence of nightmares. Even though she was not impacted directly by the Joplin tornado, she was emotional and was willing to accept referrals from the community crisis counselors to better deal with the upcoming spring weather.
- The East Middle school changed their school bells to music rather than a loud ringing because so many students were uncomfortable with the sounds. The Healing Joplin community crisis counselors were able to voice some of the student's wishes to school administrators and feel that they had a small part in helping adjust the school environment to lessen the negative impacts that the old school bell had on students. While at the school, Healing Joplin workers were able to assist students in stocking/shelving the brand new books that had arrived for their library. The school had lost nearly 6,000 books in the disaster and many students enjoyed being able to chat with workers while unpacking the books.
- Healing Joplin staff hosted a resource table at the local Wal-Mart super center when a young adult female (with 3 children) approached their table asking for referrals for her two oldest children. She related they had lost their home on May 22nd behind Dillon's grocery store off 20th street, had moved out to a FEMA modular home and then to a replacement home in Newton County. Sadly on Saturday, January 14th the new home burned to the ground and the family lost everything again. The mother was not certain she had the energy required to start yet again. The community crisis workers were able to make the referrals for the children as well as the

mother. The Healing Joplin project had been given \$250 in Wal-Mart gift cards through donations and provided these to the mother. The mother began to cry and stated that she would, “now be able to get her children more clothing and replace some toys to bring them comfort.”

- Healing Joplin staff visited an elderly couple in the FEMA modular home park. The woman was an invalid and totally dependent on her husband for care. The man shared that he knew she understood what had happened with the disaster even though she was not verbal. One of the female Healing Joplin staff took her hand and began talking to her. While talking the worker rubbed lotion on her hands provided words of encouragement and talked about the plans for their new home in the future. The worker noticed that her mood changed and she was much calmer after spending that time with her even though the conversation was one way.
- While canvassing door to door, the Healing Joplin community crisis workers came to a woman’s door who invited them in. The woman began to share her story: that she had been an employee of St. John’s Hospital for many years, how she goes the back route to get to her physician so she does not have to drive past St. John’s Hospital now and how difficult the evening of May 22nd was for her. She had gotten a man, who was wheelchair bound and had an oxygen tank down 5 flights of stairs to safety. She had not shared her story with others over the past 7 months and had been keeping it in but when the workers showed up asking she decided that it was finally time to get it off her chest. She thanked them and asked them back for another visit in two weeks.
- Healing Joplin workers had an early contact, post disaster, with an adult male who had pulled his mother from their home the evening of the disaster only to have her pass away from her injuries later. Now seven months later Healing Joplin workers were canvassing in the FEMA modular living home park (Hope Haven) and ran into him for the 2nd time. The man reported he had lost 70 pounds, was obsessed with all things tornado and weather related. He also reported increasing anger and feeling “very sad.” He had only one outfit of clothing that fit his frame. CCP workers discovered he had been forced to pawn some of his remaining personal possessions to obtain needed household items and food so they networked with other community agencies/churches and were able to assist him in getting his items out of the pawn shop. Healing Joplin workers were able to locate clothing in his current size and he attended church for this first time post disaster this past Sunday. CCP workers were also able to connect him to a local food point of distribution (Forest Park Baptist Church) and obtain needed food to halt his weight loss. He is resistant to counseling even though CCP workers feel he is depressed but was agreeable to having them return to his home again in 2 weeks so a relationship is being established.
- Healing Joplin workers came into contact with a young adult female who is a single mother of two children, ages two and three years of age. She was living in the FEMA modular living park and had been since it opened. She reported herself to be “losing all hope of a better life and ever making it out of the park.” Workers had just attended the Skills for Psychological Recovery training and were able to help her prioritize her list so it was not so overwhelming. Healing Joplin workers were able to connect her to a local resource to obtain trolley tickets for transportation and were able to purchase her a Tracfone (cell) phone since she had no childcare, no transportation and had been unable to establish any contact to get these issues corrected. The Salvation Army agreed to sponsor her and was able to help her get into long term disaster

case management. She was also given a Healing Joplin resource list. Upon the Healing Joplin workers return the female stated, "I am unstuck and feel I can finally see that life is not hopeless.....I am rebuilding a life for my family."

- Healing Joplin workers came into contact with an elderly man, who was having his 82nd birthday in January. CCP workers noticed the home was very cold and when they shook his hand it was ice cold. Healing Joplin workers asked about any home damage and the couple reported massive damage in the disaster and the loss of their car. Their 35 year old furnace was damaged beyond repair and they simply ran out of money to replace it. The couple was trying to use space heaters and move them from room to room. Healing Joplin workers were able to connect the couple with 4 area churches who purchased a new central furnace unit for the couple and it was installed this last Saturday. Healing Joplin workers returned and the couple was so thrilled to have their home fully functional again.
- Healing Joplin workers were canvassing local businesses on Range Line Road and went to Derailed Commodity. The assistant manager mentioned how many disaster survivors he sees each day coming in to purchase carpet and flooring. He mentioned one family in particular that he was concerned about. It is a woman raising her deaf daughter and two grandchildren. He called the woman, explained the Healing Joplin program and the Healing Joplin workers were deployed to her home at that time. The family had little to no furniture in their rental home and was eating family meals on a two by two folding card table. Healing Joplin workers were able to connect the family to a community resource for gently used furniture at no charge. The woman only had one baking pan for meals and this made it difficult to serve or bake meals. The Healing Joplin workers were also able to locate baking and kitchen wares, including plates. The Healing Joplin workers were able to locate a gently used swing set and when they returned to the home the family was sitting down to a home cooked family meal together. The woman mentioned how delightful it was to hear her grandchildren laughing and playing outside while she cooked the family meal.
- We are very proud of Healing Joplin workers who consistently connect disaster survivors to resources to meet needs. Healing Joplin program staff sometimes wonders aloud if they had not crossed paths with these disaster survivors (listed above in the highlights) exactly how many more months, if ever; would it have taken for these families to obtain these items in their life?
- Healing Joplin staff assisted a FEMA resident to access resources and they are continuing visits as she was a single woman who was pregnant when the disaster hit. She lost her home, her car and her job (the Taco Bell on Main Street was destroyed). She had complicating health problems and ended up having bed rest in her FEMA modular home. Healing Joplin staff visited her regularly and attempted to keep her spirits up as the pregnancy was touch and go for months. She gave birth this past week and Healing Joplin staff visited her in the hospital. This disaster survivor credits Healing Joplin workers for helping her see her "second chances" and "miracles do happen." She is talking about a future for herself and her newborn son and project staff has assisted her in obtaining needed clothing items and diapers for the baby. Their next step is planning for a car, return to work and another apartment.
- Healing Joplin staff came across a woman in her 60's that had been in the church near Dillon's grocery store on 20th street and lost her leg in the disaster. She is a bus driver and has begun returning to work part-time with hopes to go full-time but is having trouble with her residual limb healing enough to wear her prosthetic limb and is not strong enough to get her own wheelchair out of the car when she ventures out. Healing Joplin staff was able to connect her to the

local independent living center and an auto mobility service center. Hopefully between these two working together she will get a chair lift for her car. Staff report her to have family but they are busy with their own lives and don't help much but she (according to staff) is "truly an amazing person and it is disaster survivors like her that keep me going."

- Healing Joplin staff had attempted to locate a survivor at her home, several times unsuccessfully but was finally able to connect with her this past week. As they chatted with her, she shared that she had been sober the past 10 years but had relapsed recently. She had been severely injured in the disaster, lost both of her pets and her mother died in the disaster. After a counseling session with outreach community crisis workers, she was agreeable to seeing one of the professional counselors on the crisis team. After this session that same day she was admitted into the Ozark Center New Directions detoxification and proudly credits this unplanned stop at her house by Healing Joplin staff as a blessing in disguise as she was "headed down a slippery slope of drinking again."
- On Wednesday, February 8, all of the Healing Joplin staff participated in a mid-program training conducted by Jenny Wiley, the Missouri DMH Disaster Coordinator. The training focused on the ways the program changes as it approaches the midpoint of the project, including discussions on developing and implementing self-help groups that might continue to support individuals beyond the time of the project. Discussions also centered on the upcoming anniversary of the tornado in May and how to get involved in planning for anniversary events.
- Experience from past disasters indicates that the anniversary period is very important and a time when there is an increased risk of suicide, particularly just preceding the actual anniversary date. Events to celebrate recovery are very important during this time and at risk individuals need extra attention.
- A female team of Healing Joplin community crisis workers were going door to door when they met a younger adult female. She shared her tornado story of "riding out the tornado while holding onto the toilet while her younger brother (who suffers from Autism) lay under his mattress in the bathtub." Both survived the storm and the roof was badly damaged on the home. She was not a home owner, her brother in California owned the home and she was not considered a renter either. So, all resources had exhausted to no availability. While visiting with her and her younger brother, her brother called from California to check in on them. The Healing Joplin workers explained that if she was on the deed, the roof and home could be repaired. Within minutes the brother was putting her name on the deed and about an hour later, staff from the College Heights' point of distribution was on the phone with the young lady to make arrangements for starting a new roof job. The workers felt everything came together during their two hour visit: locating the young lady and her brother for the first time since the disaster, her brother calling to check in while they were present and the brainstorming idea to simply add her onto the deed to obtain resources and direct contact for a free roof to be completed before this spring. No more make-shift roof with plastic and leaking into the home.
- While canvassing business' in the area, a team of Healing Joplin community crisis workers came across a family at McDonald's, that had lost everything in the disaster, had been given a trailer by a family friend but had no electricity or heat. They listened as the family shared their story, offered a community resource list, informed them of the disaster case management services and utilized SPR (skills for psychological recovery) worksheets to help them prioritize their tasks since they had so many. Later that afternoon, the Healing Joplin workers stopped by the disaster case manager's office and saw the family going through the intake process with a case

worker. The family smiled and told the Healing Joplin workers that after so many months they “met the right people to get the ball rolling for them.”

- The Healing Joplin workers have been participating in tutoring and mentoring students in the local schools, as a way to offer services in a non-threatening way. One such student is an 8 year old second grade student who lost everything in the disaster (apartment, clothing, and her pet dog). She was having a hard time focusing on studies/assignments during class so the school asked that one of the Healing Joplin workers visit her once per week for lunch and help with her afternoon assignments, encourage her to stay on task.
- Healing Joplin teams are now partnering with the local area on aging (Meals on Wheels program) and going door to door with this hot meal delivery program. This program serves hot meals to the disabled and seniors in the Joplin area. Many were displaced by the disaster. This provides an opportunity for the citizens to bond with the Healing Joplin workers, obtain resources and brief supportive one on one with the crisis counselors. Many are bringing up the issue of feeling grief over “Joplin not looking the same and wondering if it will ever look like the Joplin they lived in the past 70 years.”
- Healing Joplin teams attended the “Mercy Village” grand re-opening, this past week. This senior apartment complex sits close to the former St. John’s Hospital and former Ozark Center New Directions/Crisis Intervention facilities. The workers were able to help re-unite neighbors and friends, help facilitate small groups to discuss their feelings as they “moved back home.” They assisted some residents, who had no family present, carry in their belongings. Many seniors reported they were “kind of feeling like they did before the tornado” this day.
- Healing Joplin staff attended the Human Services Campus grand opening and saw hundreds of disaster survivors that day. One special moment came when a young boy, estimated to be 8 or nine years old ran up to the Healing Joplin staff in their blue shirts and stated, “I love it when you guys come to visit us, it makes me feel good and I really loved my Christmas this year.....you guys helped us celebrate.”
- We have a new resource table at the local flea market in downtown Joplin that has been in business almost 30 years. A lot of disaster survivors are shopping there for used items and bargains. The resource table has already produced a large amount of contacts for those moving back into permanent housing in the area, some are first time contacts.
- The collaboration between the long term recovery disaster case managers and Healing Joplin continues to grow. A case manger requested one of our Healing Joplin team leaders, April, accompany her to a man’s home that was on her caseload. April was introduced and she was able to hear the man’s story (he claimed he had never shared his true feelings and experience of May 22nd with anyone), commented on how empathetic April was, how much this helped him and then April assisted him in mapping out his social connections map using SPR skills so he could stop isolating in his trailer. Last check he had gotten out of the house at least once in the past week to visit his son and his uncle. This is something he had not done since the disaster.
- Some FEMA Park residents are moving out into the community into rental homes or their own homes and this change has caused some residents distress/opened grief reactions. One family in particular had placed what personal household items they found back in May into a storage unit in boxes. When they reclaimed these possessions and started to unpack, they soon realized that most is ruined with mold and debris. The family had taken comfort that they had rescued

family photo items to discover now they are ruined beyond repair. Emotions are rapidly changing with disaster survivors and Healing Joplin community crisis counselors are ready to help them process these changes and strong resulting feelings, one step at a time.

- The local elementary school in Duneweg, Missouri, (Jasper County) had requested that Healing Joplin staff come to their school to read with children impacted by the disaster. The school reminded the Healing Joplin community crisis counselors that it was Dr. Seuss' birthday and the kids were ready to read some of his books. The staff were able to help them have fun as well as process their reactions regarding the disaster (23 children participated).
- When the Joplin area had their first community wide tornado disaster drills, sirens and all, the Joplin schools asked that Healing Joplin community crisis counselors come to the schools to assist any child that becomes fearful. Several students did not tolerate the test and were able to speak with Healing Joplin workers who escorted them down the hall to speak to one of the school counselors on duty.
- Healing Joplin community crisis counselors were canvassing door to door when they ran into a senior citizen watering her prized rose bush (a.k.a. Mr. Lincoln). On the night of the disaster she had clipped some roses from Mr. Lincoln and decided to drive them across town to her daughter only to be told on arrival that the weather was getting bad. She was advised to return home ASAP but Doris decided to stop at the 15th street Wal-Mart on her way home. While in the store, the tornado hit and she was badly injured. She had a pace maker, dental, ear and eye surgeries as a result of the disaster. She was still in need of hearing aids, glasses and money for additional dental care when Healing Joplin arrived. She invited them in and they were able to connect her to resources within minutes. She had attempted to locate these on her own to no avail. She referred to the staff present as "her angels" and asked them to revisit her in a few weeks to see how she was coping.
- The Healing Joplin teams helped pass out free weather radios at the local fire departments this past week. They assisted in programming them and talking with disaster survivors while they waited in line about weather preparedness. One of the fire chief's had never shared his story of his work duties the night of May 22nd and he was able to share it for the first time with no judgment from Healing Joplin workers.
- While canvassing door to door the Healing Joplin community crisis counselors came across a woman who lost her home in the disaster but continued to do her job that evening (she is a paramedic who was 6 weeks pregnant on May 22nd) and has since given birth to a baby girl. She had never really shared her story to anyone of what she did and saw that evening. She was at home due to her maternity leave and her husband is a local firefighter who was also on duty. She talked about how hard it was for them to be apart for days on end and the volume of work they experienced. She took literature from the workers and agreed to call if she would like a follow-up visit.
- While working the resource table at the local Joplin flea-market two Healing Joplin community crisis workers had an older woman stop by to talk. She talked about losing several friends in the disaster, the home where she grew up, her current neighborhood, her former place of employment and her elementary/high schools. She also shared how she worked nursing triage the night of the disaster and the days following. She shared how she saw things that evening that she had never seen in her 25 year nursing career at the hospital she worked at and how she sometimes thinks about visiting her friends but then realizes they are deceased. She asked the

staff to return next weekend so they could start looking at other avenues for socialization and making new friends.

- Healing Joplin community crisis workers have been active at the Human Services Campus and are in the process of forming groups at the facility.
- During a monthly senior mental health task force conference call with federal, state, and local agencies involved in services to seniors, Healing Joplin was requested to visit a senior woman who lost all of her belongings at a Joplin nursing facility, during the disaster. The senior did not qualify for any FEMA assistance. Apparently this senior was relocated to another skilled nursing facility near Springfield, to be close to her only nearby relative, her niece. The niece has since moved away and this woman has no social supports, had given up self-care and all adult daily living skills, was diabetic and had a fungal infection on her leg (was refusing medical care for her wounds and is wheel-chair bound). The facility felt the only option they had was to give her a 10 day notice to move. Healing Joplin dispatched the senior specialty focused team to the facility after the conference call. After much rapport building this senior was able to vent her feelings, process them and made a plan of action to get moved back to the Joplin area. The facility report improvement and she even called the Healing Joplin hotline to ask for a 2nd follow-up visit. She needed someone who understood her reactions to the disaster and to help her move forward with a plan. The workers utilized SPR, skills for psychological recovery during their extended visit and have plans to follow-up again within the next 2 weeks.
- Healing Joplin community crisis workers came upon a family of four (mother, father son and daughter) who had moved from the FEMA park into their home two weeks earlier. Since moving back into the home the parents had noticed the children were not going outside and seemed afraid to play. The family had been at home the night of the disaster and their home had taken a direct hit and was a total loss. The entire family suffered physical injuries in the disaster. The children had bikes in the past but the parents could not afford to replace them. The children told the Healing Joplin staff they missed their bikes and if they had them, they agreed to be outside and give bike riding a try. The workers were able to find used bikes free of charge and notified the parents, who promptly went to get them. When the staff checked back the children greeted them in the driveway, on their bikes with huge smiles on their faces. The mother said that the “talks” the Healing Joplin staff had with her children combined with finding the bikes, made all the difference in them being able to “just be kids and play outside again.” This was a very special moment for the family to begin to enjoy being back in their home and having the children play outside again.
- A Healing Joplin team attended a recent football game hosted at the MSSU campus. The players were the Joplin police against the Springfield police. The Healing Joplin team had a resource booth and offered face painting to the children. Staff reported that seeing their faces light up when they looked in the mirror was priceless and this gives them a chance to really talk while they are relaxed/enjoying the experience. One little girl became more solemn and withdraw when she spoke of the disaster and finally shared she had lost two friends in the disaster. The Healing Joplin staff was able to work with her one and one and by the end of the booth visit she was smiling/had plans in place to visit the Boys and Girls Club to work on the Joplin mural project.
- A Healing Joplin worker had been working with an adult woman who lost all of her belongings in the disaster. She had been living in a camper trailer and had wanted to apply for one of the

applications for a Habitat for Humanity home but shared with the worker that she did not have the \$800 fee. The woman went on to report that she felt it was a long shot she would ever be able to save that much. The worker met with her and they started working on a budget. Then the worker asked her about the storm damaged Ford truck. The woman had just left it in the yard and the worker suggested she consider contacting a local salvage yard. The woman made the call and was paid \$200 for her destroyed truck. Finally, the disaster survivor had a starting fund that was 25% of the monies required for the application. With the other budget areas the worker assisted her with; she is on the path to obtaining her application monies.

- Another Healing Joplin worker was able to refer a disaster unemployed male survivor to a local businessman and gave the man some tips on how to show his past work in the best light as well as tips to interview. The man showed persistence and so much enthusiasm for the position he was hired, according to the employer.
- A Healing Joplin team assisted an older adult male who is in the process of rebuilding his home. They assisted him in having some volunteers rebuild his bathroom because he had run out of insurance monies. The bathroom was recently completed and this would not have happened had the disaster survivor not had the referral from his Healing Joplin workers.
- Healing Joplin team 5 had been working with a family still living in the FEMA modular home park and the family talked about needing to raise their credit score to be able to be considered for a home loan. A team member spoke with another group providing financial classes to families and a class was born. The family attended the financial aid classes held free of charge at the Human Services campus and were proud to report that they learned easy concrete steps to build their credit score and thanked Karen for the referral.
- Another Healing Joplin team had been working with a family of 5 that are still living in the FEMA modular home park. The family has 3 small children. The team referred the father to a resource and he is now employed full time. He lost his birth certificate in the tornado and had been unable to reach a lot of resources the family needed to do not having the document so Stacy sat down with him and they figured out a plan to obtain the needed document. The family is very excited to have income coming in for the first time since the May 22nd disaster.
- Healing Joplin Team Three had 30 people participate in a “Map Your Neighborhood” training. Most participants were eager to have their neighborhood participate and provided good feedback about the program. Most expressed satisfaction with the program and felt it was easy and practical.
- Approximately 200 people attended the four sessions of Map Your Neighborhood. We are waiting for an exact tally because the trainer retained the sign in sheets. It was covered by media and generated good interest.
- Healing Joplin Team Five made contact with the managers of Macy’s Department store because a large number of their employees were impacted by the disaster and offered disaster preparedness training such as Ready in 3 and Map Your Neighborhood. The managers were interested and are going to have Healing Joplin attend an upcoming staff meeting to explain what types of trainings and/or groups are available.
- The manager from the Old Navy store at the Northpark Mall, Joplin, Mo. called the Healing Joplin hotline and asked for the project to host a table at their store on September 15th. The event was a disaster preparedness event and other EMS and city emergency staff were present. Healing Joplin provided a table with the Ready in 3 disaster materials and promoted our Map

Your Neighborhood trainings. The manager commented she had seen our media on the television about the event and had seen a flyer in a public place.

- Healing Joplin Team One, a children's specialty team, visited Miracles Daycare Center and Wee Care Center previously and worked with children. At Miracles Daycare Center Team 1 met with a group of 12, 4 and 5 year old children about their feelings and with visuals they would describe and act out happy, sad and afraid. They were then asked them with visuals to describe different weather conditions such as sunny, windy and stormy and then to describe with actions how the different conditions made them feel. They were then taught breathing techniques with a song....."123 breathe with me, let's see how calm we can be." The kids would go from a standing, moving position to a quiet and controlled seated position. Team 1 made a return visit to Miracles Daycare Center and found that weeks later the kids are still singing the song and as soon as they saw Healing Joplin they burst into the song. On a more positive note the director of the facility indicated the kids will automatically begin singing when it is windy or especially stormy and they all calm themselves. The staff also reported that they use the song when things become a little chaotic and again, the kids respond by calming down. A couple of the kids told Team 1 that they taught the song to the parents and they use it at home. Team 1 said "it was so awesome to see the seeds that we planted grow" and the kids now know how to cope when feeling stressed.
- Healing Joplin Team Two was hosting a resource table at the Family Access Medical Care and one of the physicians made a referral of a young adult female to the Healing Joplin community crisis workers present. The disaster survivor shared that her brother died in the tornado and that she had recently started having recurrent distressing nightmares. The workers were able to connect her with resources, such as a support group as well as professional mental health services.
- Healing Joplin Team Three, connected an adult female with Samaritans Purse and she is receiving a home. This woman had been employed on the same job for 25 years, had just made her last house payment in the beginning of May 2011 and then lost everything in the May 22nd, 2011 disaster. She refused to be considered for a home for the past 15 months because she felt that the families in Joplin with children were more deserving of a home before she was. This disaster survivor who believed that others deserved help before her created a strong community like Joplin. Samaritans Purse said they had never seen a more deserving candidate for the free housing program. She will once again be a home owner in a home that is paid for.
- Healing Joplin Team 3 hosted a Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) program at the First Baptist Church in Carl Junction, Mo. (Jasper County) and afterwards a family stepped forward. This family was the first family who was willing to host a MYN 9 step all hazards disaster preparedness program. 11 neighbors attended the session and Carl Junction was impacted by the 2007 tornado as well as a neighboring community north of Joplin. The neighbors actively participated and expressed relief after the program knowing they had a plan in place for the entire neighborhood. Healing Joplin helped them put a support and disaster response plan in place.
- Healing Joplin team 5 attended the 42nd Cycle Connection celebration upon request of the facility because they lost an employee in the disaster and a few other employees lost their homes/cars. The business wanted to support their staff as well as have a resource table for

those in attendance. They passed out resources and engaged in one on one counseling with employees/participants.

- Healing Joplin team 5 also had a resource booth on Saturday at the Summer on the Square festival in Newton County where they passed out Ready in 3 disaster materials to adults and disaster coloring books with crayons to children. They had high foot traffic and high participation with families in attendance.
- Healing Joplin team four has been hosting an “Emotional Scars and Physical Trauma” support and educational group at the Joplin Public Library, for those citizens who suffered significant injury in the disaster. During this group Dan and James have been utilizing different worksheets from the Skills for Psychological Recovery manual and participants are reporting that they feel positive and uplifted upon leaving the group. They also reported they have tasks to focus on the upcoming week. The group was to end on August 28th but the 8 regular participants have commented that they are going to continue the group on their own and build on what they have learned. Several appear capable of leading this critical support group forward after Healing Joplin is no longer present.
- Healing Joplin Team Four has been hosting a support group at the local Messenger Towers, an independent senior and disabled adult apartment living facility, since July and have had regular attendance. Last week the group invited their family members impacted by the disaster and there were 39 people present. These individuals cannot get out as much as other disaster survivors and they seem to appreciate the group being hosted in their facility. Many of the seniors appear to be resilient on the surface but many begin to express psychological wounds when presented with skills for psychological recovery prompting tasks/worksheets. It appears their willingness to express their feelings often comes out during exercises with the group but not so much during one on ones with the individual Healing Joplin community crisis workers. This group has been a wonderful outlet for their emotions.
- Healing Joplin Team Four met with a family last week. The wife explained that their home had minor damage in the disaster but her husband is in the Army so he had to help with search and rescue. The husband had explained to his wife that the things he saw in Joplin were worse than the things he saw while he was in active duty. She went on to report that they both thought they were dealing with the disaster okay but then they started fighting a lot. She mentioned they did not have any money to seek out counseling. Team Four provided them with our Healing Joplin program brochure and explained that our SERG grant covers counseling for those that are underinsured or uninsured. She asked if they were “kidding” and when told it was really a possibility she said she would “definitely call for an appointment.” The relief in her face was “pretty awesome” according to the Healing Joplin worker.
- Healing Joplin Team Five taught safety and emergency preparedness classes to K – 2nd graders at the local Boys and Girls Club. They created an acronym – BEARS – which stands for breathing during emergencies and relax for safety. The kids made safety bracelets with different color beads (representing each letter of BEAR) that helps them remember their acronym. The first day only a few of the children knew their address and family phone numbers so they helped them write these “important information to know during any emergency.” They also used disaster coloring books as they talked about action steps. These activities happened over the course of four, thirty minute sessions last week. The Joplin school mascot is also a bear so the kids could remember it easily.

- Healing Joplin Team Four helped with Camp Noah since they are one of the children’s specialty teams. During the camp a young man told the staff he was “enjoying the camp because people listen to him and help him feel better.” Another young man, who also attended a Camp Noah explained to staff that he had been “using food to cope.” By the end of the camp he proudly stated, “that he now knows what really matters and he does not have to let the tornado make him feel sad anymore.”
- Healing Joplin and the Boys and Girls Club had the mural unveiling at 6:30 pm on August 2nd, 2012. KSN – Channel 16 came to the event and had recorded a segment earlier in the day that was shown on the news three times that day. The Community Partnership of the Ozarks put up a block party with food and a bounce house at the event. It was well attended. A plaque was given to the families of the three children who lost their lives on May 22nd (all three had been members of the Boys and Girls Club).
- Healing Joplin attended the “Raise the Roof” for Misti’s Mission on Saturday. The event included crafts with the children and youth present. KOAM – Channel 7 covered the event and got some footage of Healing Joplin helping a young girl make a safety bracelet at our Healing Joplin resource table. At the event there was a family that a Healing Joplin team had assisted early on after the disaster and they were there at the event, paying it forward to help others. Almost a year later they thanked the team for helping them.
- Healing Joplin partnered with the City of Joplin, AmeriCorps, and the Long Term Recovery Disaster case managers to help disaster survivors complete the city survey. This survey identifies lingering unmet needs and connects them to the Long Term Recovery Committee and case managers for resolution. Six Healing Joplin staff were given the identified address and family, made contact with them at the home and assisted with completing the survey. Many of these families have just returned to their home that had been lost in the disaster and had either not had contact with Healing Joplin or they now have additional needs upon relocation back into the home of origin.
- Healing Joplin staff presented a Map Your Neighborhood presentation to the Joplin Area Ministerial Alliance. The response was positive and several congregations have scheduled additional trainings.
- Healing Joplin staff was able to connect a younger adult female who is raising a child alone with a long term disaster case manager and about a week later she called to report she now had a housing plan in place with a possible location that might open in less than 2 weeks. She was thrilled at the prospect of having a more permanent location to reside.
- Healing Joplin received a request to participate in a community wide “Safety Day” and hosted a resource table near Old Navy at Northpark Mall. Over 300 families and children visited the table and received disaster preparedness materials such as “Bee Ready” and various preparedness coloring books. They also promoted the Map Your Neighborhood program.
- Healing Joplin staff was able to connect an adult male who resides in a FEMA modular home with a Catholic Charities long term case manager and he proudly announced last week he is now “driving a truck.” The man had a job and had been riding his bike to work in all kinds of weather over the past year. He mentioned that he had “almost begun to lose hope but now with the truck he can go to full-time hours at work which will open other apartment doors for him.” He also began attending a support group for disaster survivors and is now able to provide support to his peers when they are feeling down.

- The Healing Joplin project manager presented training on compassion fatigue, burnout and self-care to first responders and various community agencies during a mass event training in order to be better prepared if another disaster were to strike the area.

Because of the large number of people located in a compact area of the FEMA temporary housing units, a Human Services Campus was established. This consisted of temporary units that were available for use by local agencies providing human services to those individuals. Following are some stories and ideas for future consideration if future events.

- **Story 1** - Three *Healing Joplin* staff working at the HSC since it opened in March 2012. They hosted free emergency preparedness classes, support groups, attended block parties and various events while always encouraging disaster survivors to take part, gleaned all the information offered by the HSC. One example was hosting a HATS (Healing after Trauma Skills) support group once a week for children. *Healing Joplin's* active presence at the HSC allowed staff to interact with walk-in disaster survivors who we may not otherwise encounter. These staff reported having seen excellent progress with families who have committed and accessed the service the services offered at the HSC.
- A 5 year old boy was in the house with his father and grandfather when the sirens blew on May 22nd, 2011. They ran to the car, shoving him in the front seat beneath them both. The tornado tore the wall and roof off the house as well as finally taking the garage walls and roof surrounding them. The back seat of the car was impaled with a board. Joshua told a *Healing Joplin* staff person that he "saw Jesus and he told me that I would be okay."
- Two of the *Healing Joplin* staff had gone through the HATS program with the 5 year old the past summer and over time saw his attention span improve dramatically; his scary dreams go away and his overall demeanor become relaxed and calm. His grandmother and mother were faithful in bringing him every Thursday to take advantage of the children's support group. *Healing Joplin* staff was able to answer their questions and build a relationship of trust with them. The 5 year old was also able to attend Camp Noah which was a key component of his being ready to start school in the fall and become a good student. This young man's recovery and emotional healing came so far because of his services at the HSC.
- **Story 2** – One *Healing Joplin* team noted that they did not have just one specific story to share but rather many cases of disaster survivors coming in for a cold bottle of water, find answers to their questions, to receive a smile and support from *Healing Joplin* staff.
- **Story 3** – Another *Healing Joplin* team reported that they were in contact with an adult male who came into the HSC for one of the legal-aid seminars. The man reported to the team leader that he was in the midst of an insurance dispute regarding one of the five houses he owned that was lost or damaged in the disaster. The team leader noticed that he was showing classic signs of distress when they first meet (very irritable, angry, signs of depression, etc.). The team continued to have contact with this man every two to three weeks over the course of three months and was there offering suggestions as well as referrals along the way. The man followed his recovery plan that he developed with the team and on last contact was much calmer and happy with his progress in rebuilding.
- **Story 4** – *Healing Joplin* staff met a man while making door to door contacts. While out in the community, the resident was very frustrated that others in his neighborhood seemed to be making greater progress on their homes than he was. He felt unable to get his home repaired. The man was told about the storm support groups the HSC had on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The man attended and he was able to get connected with other resources that led to all of his needed home repairs being completed. This individual also showed healing emotionally after attending the support groups.

- **Story 5** – *Healing Joplin* staff attended the Easter event at the HSC and noticed that when the children were busy with a fun activity, it gave the parents residing in the FEMA modular homes a chance to visit with *Healing Joplin* staff present. This day a family expressed concerns about their child having ongoing anxiety relating to any storm and eventually moving from the FEMA Park. *Healing Joplin* was able to provide education and utilized SPR (skills for psychological recovery) with the entire family. The HSC gave the family the opportunity to receive referrals and resources they would not otherwise have.
- **Story 6** – *Healing Joplin* staff began working with a family within weeks of moving into one the FEMA modular home parks near the airport. After the HSC opened a mother came into the *Healing Joplin* office there and expressed concern over her anticipated move from the parks back into a home within the community because her son was physically challenged.
- The new home was not accessible and lacked necessary items so *Healing Joplin* staff asked the mother if she had contacted the Independent Living Center. She had not so he connected her with their resources and after performing an assist at the new home, provided the accessibility items required for access in, out and within the new home. This is a great example of the benefits associated with disaster survivors have a centralized place to walk into and discuss lingering needs preventing them from returning to pre-disaster levels of functioning.

Add some final thoughts from some of the Healing Joplin staff as the program came to an end:

- “Being a part of Healing Joplin was an honor”
- “Being given this opportunity to make a difference was wonderful”
- “We changed people’s lives, we really did”
- “We meet all kinds of wonderful and strong people”
- “We received countless “thank you’s” this past year from those we helped even though we never asked for them or needed them”
- “Without our program, Joplin would not be where it is today”
- “Healing Joplin will be in our hearts forever”
- “Healing Joplin made history and we will be remembered when they talk about 5/22/11”
- “It took all of us coming together to make Healing Joplin work”
- “I learned so much about myself and how to help people these past 15 months”
- “I was honored to be the last Healing Joplin community crisis worker off the field, out the door and to be able to shut the light off in the conference room was a honor”
- “Hey, it is not every day that you make it into National Geographic and the Joplin tornado book”
- “I am never wearing that color of blue again, I was sick of seeing that color of blue”

Handwritten signatures in blue ink, including names such as: Matthew Walsh, James Link, Susan Myer, Sandy Battle, Don James, Jackie Mulin, Susan Patterson, Christina Vice, Mark Miller, Julie Alumbaugh, Susan Marion, Dawn Miseler, Julie Miseler, Emily Miseler, Jack Watkins, Karen Grimmer, Becky Preece, Jack Billings, Jay Hale, Susan Bushara, Tom Hinton, Lana Edwards, JEFF BOXTER, Stephanie Seldon, David Scott, David Pate, David Pate, Vicki Burt, Michael Snyder, Julie Burt, and others.

The People of Healing Joplin