

Riverside CARE Awards

Kathleen E. & Jaiden M. *Home-Based Family Services*



Grandparents offer love, acceptance and a strong connection to family. But after bringing up their own children, sometimes they're called upon to raise their grandkids as well. It's a wonderful gift when they step up to this responsibility with all the energy, organization, and optimism that's called for in a child's time of need.

Kathleen stepped up for her grandson, Jaiden. Their strong and loving relationship is obvious when you meet them. What you don't necessarily see on the outside, though, is the incredible resilience built into their little family. Their home burned to the ground recently, the result of arson. Kathy was able to alert others in the building to the emergency and everyone got out safely, for which she's deeply thankful. However, she and Jaiden lost all their belongings in the fire, including everything of sentimental value. And although her phone was gone too, Kathy managed to locate their In-Home Therapy safety plan to let the on-call clinician know not to come to the home that day – because it no longer existed! Incredible she was able to stay this organized and thoughtful of others during a great personal crisis.

Jaiden has been able to cope with this trauma and other challenges like adjusting to a new school. He's stayed positive and maintained his sense of humor, in large part through the positive example of his grandmother. Recently Jaiden used Play-Doh in therapy to demonstrate his understandably difficult mix of feelings. Some of the colors represented anger and confusion. But then he added a little bit of another color – blue - to symbolize “new opportunity.”

Jaiden and Kathy have moved from a hotel to a trailer on the site of their old home – not ideal, but one step closer to their goal of rebuilding on the property. Being able to play outside again has done Jaiden a lot of good. And because of the strength of their relationship, and their persistent focus on hope, we celebrate their incredible accomplishments along this journey.