

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Rachel Perkins, bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, July 9, 2025.

\*\*\*

The therapists at Jumping Mouse Children's Center seek to transform lives one session at a time, through what they call expressive mental health therapy – play time that supports the young person's healing. The play therapy Jumping Mouse offers children age 3 to 12 is widely recognized as effective treatment for children with adverse childhood experiences or ACEs. Jumping Mouse accepts and evaluates requests for its services from teachers and parents, regardless of whether the child has been diagnosed with ACEs. ACEs pose significant risks to a child's emotional and physical development. They can be in the form of things that happen to a child such as abuse, neglect, bullying, or serious accidents or injuries. ACEs may also occur from things that happen around a child, such as household dysfunction, loss, instability, or community and environmental factors.

A cornerstone of the Jumping Mouse model is that the parents and therapist meet regularly. Together, the therapist and parents determine when to graduate the child out of the therapy. The average length of time that clients work or play with the therapists is about a year and a half, with sessions typically once a week. Jumping Mouse's seven therapists currently see 66 children, about one-third of those who need such therapy in the county. It has closed its waiting list at 34 children, but it still receives calls almost daily from parents needing help. Jefferson Healthcare estimates that 14% of children aged 3 to 12 in Jefferson County have suffered ACEs. 80% of clients have very low incomes and are unable to afford the tuition. They receive Jumping Mouse's services at no charge.

Jumping Mouse's \$1 million annual budget has been supported in roughly equal measure by private insurance, Medicaid, foundation grants, and donations. These revenue sources fluctuate. The organization now faces both a substantial drop in grant funding as well as uncertainties regarding Washington state's ability to support Medicaid – even at previously inadequate levels. The organization is embarking on a campaign to raise the funds to hire necessary staff and therapists to meet the ongoing need. There's also a desire to restart an internship program that was discontinued due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several therapists are also seeking to develop a regular radio show on general mental health topics.

The name Jumping Mouse comes from a legend about a young mouse who dreams of a new way of life. Compassionate and courageous, he journeys to unfamiliar places, facing scary challenges. Along the way, a magic frog gives him a gift of strong hind legs and the new name, "Jumping Mouse." Throughout his journey, he befriends other creatures who help him, as he discovers his strengths and his spirit. In the end, he is transformed into a magnificent soaring eagle.

This myth, according to Jumping Mouse's website, is a metaphor for the journey undertaken by a child at the center. Though they may face frightening experiences and emotions, through therapy, youngsters learn to trust their own inner strength and resilience. As they heal, they realize their ability to meet the challenges of daily life and relate positively to the world around them. To learn more about Jumping Mouse and to participate in one of the center's tours, visit <https://www.jumpingmouse.org/> or phone the Port Townsend office at 360-379-5109.

Reporting on this article by Scott France

\*\*\*

If you've got questions for the three candidates running for the open seat on the Port Townsend City Council, the League of Women Voters of Jefferson County wants you to submit them by noon next Monday, July 14 so that they can be asked during the candidate forum on Wednesday, July 16. Concise, unbiased questions directly

related to the job, its policies, and the leadership skills required will be given priority, and similar questions will be combined. Send your questions for candidates Fred Obee, Mikki Porter, and Dylan Quarles to [lwvjeffcowa@gmail.com](mailto:lwvjeffcowa@gmail.com). Links to the forum will be posted on the League's website at <https://lwvwa.org/Jefferson> on July 1.

\*\*\*

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Tuesday through Thursday, partnering on Wednesdays to bring you stories from [jeffcobeacon.com](http://jeffcobeacon.com). This is Rachel Perkins. Thanks for listening.