

# We're Just Getting Started

**DNA  
Doe  
Project**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023**



Dear Friends,

As we embark upon a new year, I am filled with pride, gratitude and awe at what we have achieved as a team – lifting the burden on investigators across the country by returning well over 100 Jane and John Does to their grieving families and communities.

This past year has been remarkable. We continued to provide internship and practicum opportunities for those who want to enter the field and we love the reciprocal learning that takes place. Our management team helped to further strengthen our infrastructure so that we maintain stability in the coming years. Our newly-enhanced Data Dashboard attests to our commitment to transparency. Our newsletters and our third annual Welcome Home video capture the pride and poignancy of our achievements over the past twelve months. We also teamed up with Wall to Wall Media and National Geographic Channel to produce a documentary series about our work.



As we enter our 8th amazing year it is time for me to step away from my role of CEO at the DNA Doe Project and officially turn over the operations of our organization to our wonderful Co-Executive Directors Jennifer Randolph, Pamela Lauritzen, and Rhonda Kevorkian. They have been working in this capacity for much of the past year, and I am confident that we are in good and capable hands.

Though my tenure as CEO is ending, my passion for this cause and this organization endures. I will continue to support and champion the efforts of the DNA Doe Project in whatever capacity I can. I look forward to continuing to serve on our Board of Directors, and to remain an active volunteer within DDP participating in case work, training, and special projects.

Thank you for taking this remarkable journey with me. I embrace this change with cherished memories and a sense of optimism for the future of this organization.

With heartfelt appreciation,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Press'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Margaret Press

# Now more than ever: the need

In the United States, there are over 50,000 sets of unidentified human remains. Those that have been discovered and cataloged by government agencies face an intractable problem — a lack of investigative leads as to who these individuals are. With no evidence, lack of investigative genetic genealogy expertise, or insufficient funds to glean genetic information about the Jane or John Doe, cases typically go cold.

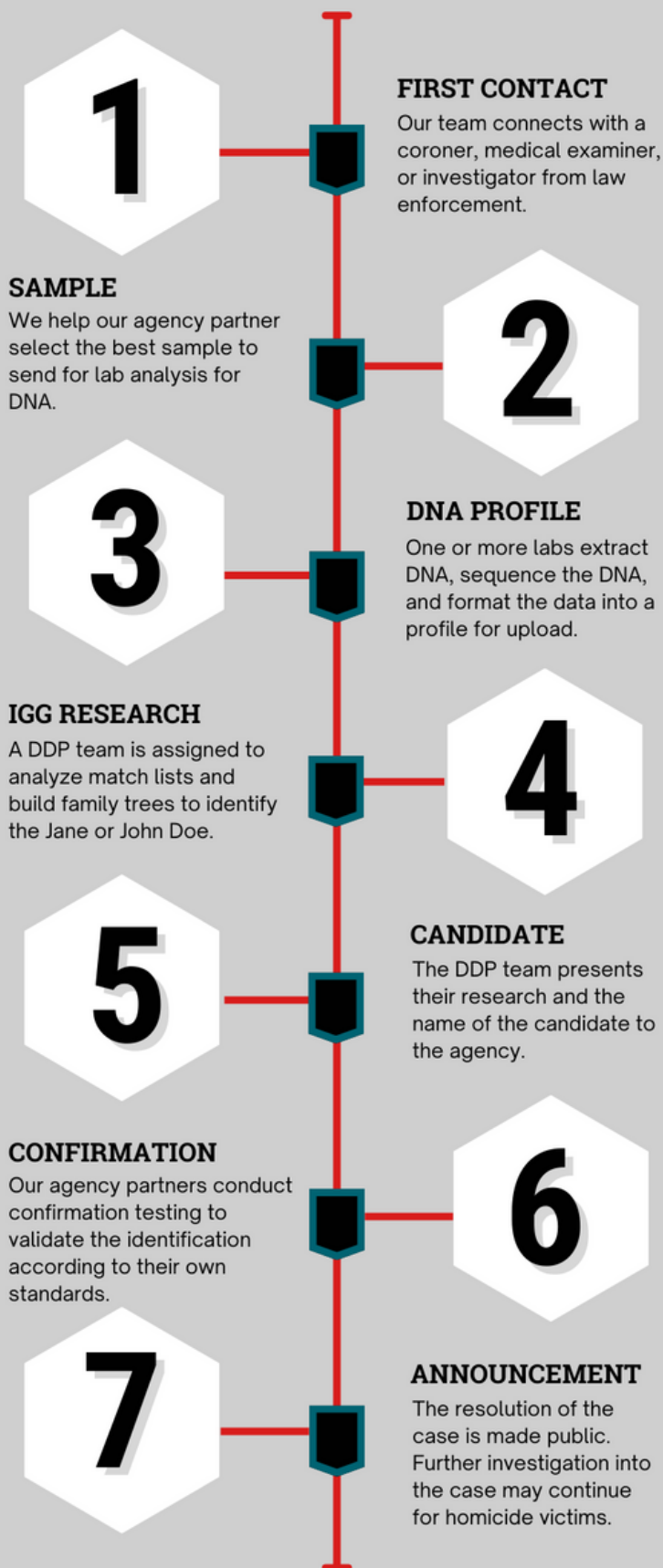
## This is where DNA Doe Project Steps In

As the largest nonprofit organization in the field, we can take the cases that could otherwise be ignored. The tough ones, the underfunded, the almost forgotten, the longshots. Because we are funded by donors who believe in our mission and powered by over 100 volunteer Investigative Genetic Genealogists, we can keep going until the job is done.

We believe that now, more than ever, it's crucial to set the standard for investigative genetic genealogy (IGG) and solidify its critical role in restoring the identities of John and Jane Does. It is even more crucial to make sure these resources are deployed for communities that are generally underrepresented.

# We're just getting started.

## IGG PROCESS DDP case flow



[dnadooproject.org](http://dnadooproject.org)

# Case Spotlight:

## Ada Beth Kaplan with Missy Koski and Adina Newman

In 2011, a mutilated body was found in a vineyard in Arvin, California in Kern County. Identification was difficult, the head and thumbs were chopped off and her blood was drained. The case went cold for almost a decade.

Then, in 2020, the Kern County coroner's office teamed up with DNA Doe Project and Team Leader Missy Koski was on the case. Missy and her team of Investigative Genetic Genealogists worked on this case for more than three years and faced numerous obstacles. Most notably, Ada Beth Kaplan was of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry which made this an extremely challenging case. With this ancestry distant relatives are often related, there are many common last names, and family trees don't go back that far.

With help from JewishGen and Jewish genealogy specialist Adina Newman, Missy and her team were able to identify **Ada Beth Kaplan**, 64 of Canyon Country, California and give her back her name.



Adina Newman



Missy Koski

"I'm amazed at DDP volunteers, nobody gives up," stated Missy. Being from this area of California, I traveled through the area where the body was found many times. This case haunts the area."

Adina adds her reasons for volunteering with DDP, "Giving exposure to what is possible with this technology for good, and the dignity of it all. They were a person and they deserve to be remembered."

This is just one of the hundreds of cases DDP works diligently on to resolve. Each case has its unique circumstances and community connection. DNA Doe Project takes on the most challenging cases and works to resolve them, no matter how long it takes.



# 2023: A Year of Impact

**120+**  
VOLUNTEERS

**50**  
CASES IN RESEARCH

**6**  
YEARS OF  
INDUSTRY  
LEADERSHIP

**14k+**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS

**1512**  
DONATIONS

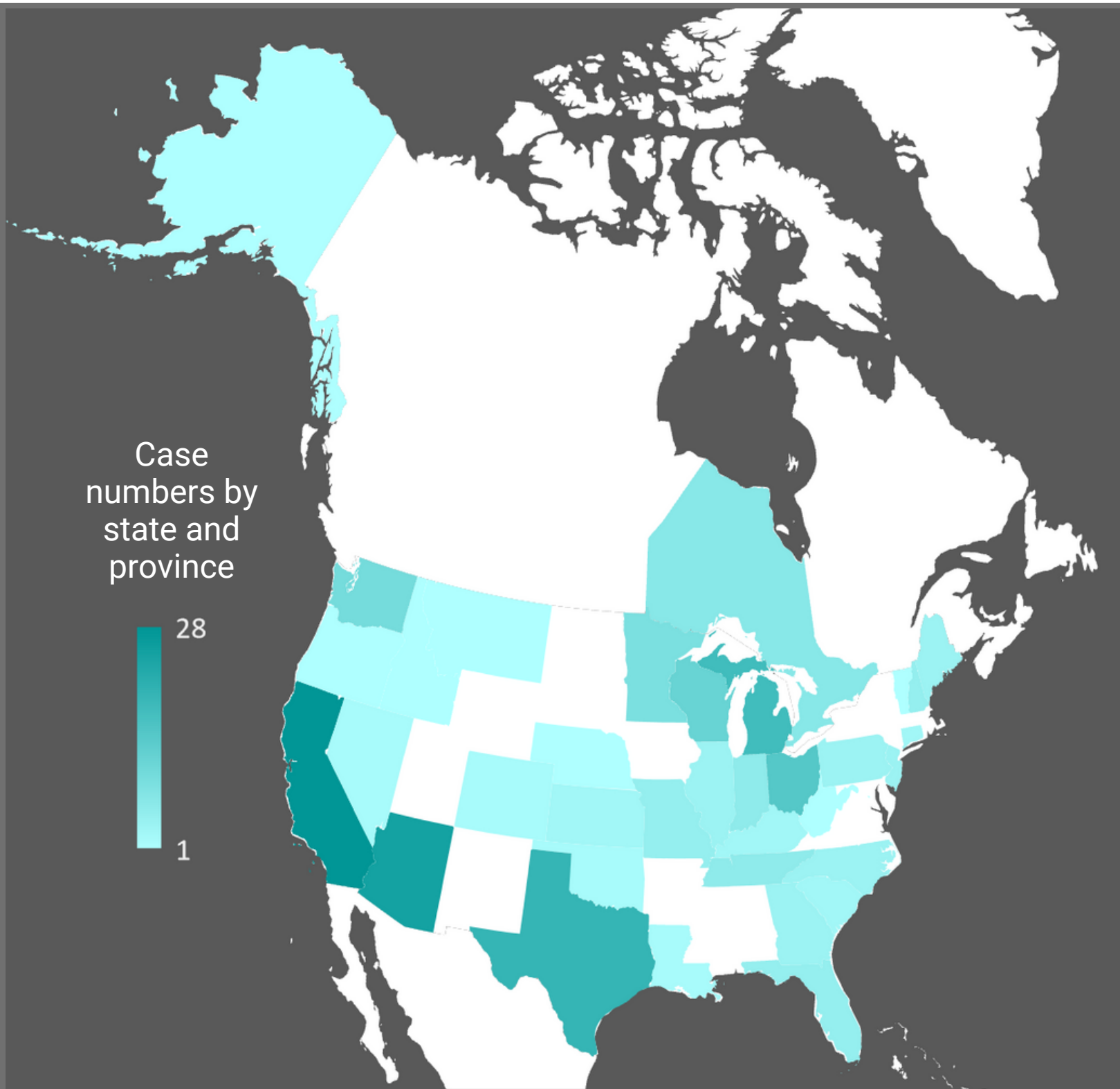
**29**  
CASES IN THE  
LAB PIPELINE

**750k+**  
SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

**478**  
CARING DONORS

**150+**  
MEDIA STORIES

# Local Impact on a National Scale



DNA Doe Project is a **trailblazer** in the development and deployment of investigative genetic genealogy (IGG). We resolve cases of unidentified human remains for every community.

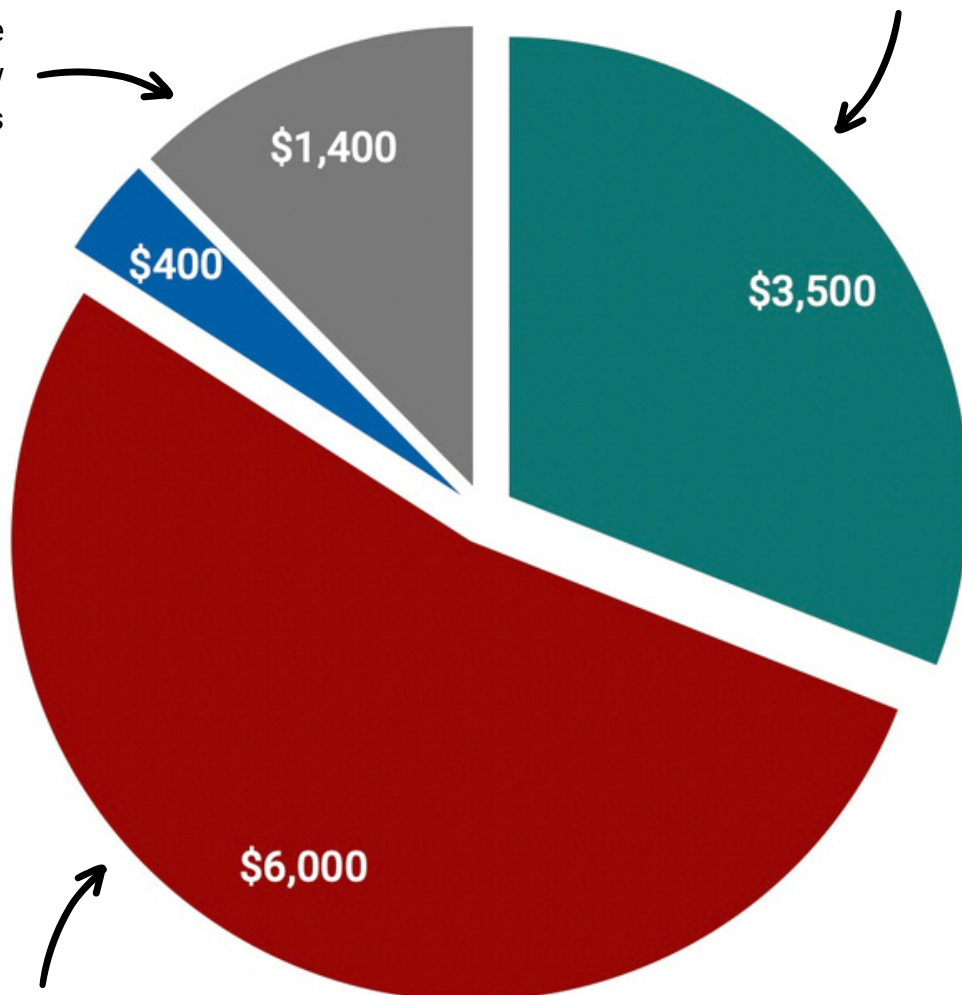
# What IGG costs:

**\$11,100**

DNA Databases charge upload fees for law enforcement DNA profiles

Professional case management includes communications, record-keeping, supervision of researching team volunteers, and data security

- Case Management
- Lab Fees
- Bioinformatics
- Database Uploads



Lab fees include DNA extraction, library preparation, quality control, and sequencing of a sample from unidentified human remains

**\$0**

Investigative Genetic Genealogy is always provided pro-bono

# What agencies pay:

**\$3,493**

On average, DDP's medical examiner and law enforcement partners pay far less than our actual costs because we underwrite every case with donated funds.



## Jennifer Randolph

Executive Director of  
Case Management  
and Operations



## Rhonda Kevorkian

Executive Director of  
Human Resources  
and Education



## Pam Lauritzen

Executive Director of Media and  
Communications

Dear Friends,

Our mission to identify Jane and John Doe remains using investigative genetic genealogy has never been more relevant than it is today, and DNA Doe Project is poised to take on the challenges of 2024 and beyond.

As of January 1, Co-Founder Margaret Press retired as CEO and the Board of Directors appointed three senior leaders as Executive Directors of the organization, creating a shared leadership model focused on growing the organization and putting DNA Doe Project on solid financial footing.

This year, we are focused on the following strategic initiatives:

- Expanding our Board of Directors and creating an Advisory Board of experts
- Establishing financial sustainability through careful budgeting and an increased focus on developing funding sources
- Developing a team approach within all departments, providing opportunities for specialist volunteers with professional staff support
- Continuing to provide leadership in the emerging field of Investigative Genetic Genealogy through collaboration and education
- Establishing a formal code of ethics that encompasses all aspects of our work

In its first six years, DDP has grown into the largest non-profit provider of investigative genetic genealogy in the field, allowing us to propagate the use of IGG to resolve more cases and keep costs low for law enforcement and medical examiners who are the custodians of Jane and John Does, while providing opportunities for skilled volunteers to gain valuable experience through casework and professional development.

There is so much more work to do, and we are just getting started.

*Jennifer S. Randolph*

*Rhonda Kevorkian*

*Pam Lauritzen*