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DNA Doe Project



Because Every Person Deserves a Name.

Celebrating 8 years and 150+ names restored.

Annual Report 2025

Our Vision

The DNA Doe Project is a remarkable organization powered by dedicated staff and volunteers committed to ensuring that no Jane or John Does are left nameless and that every person is given back their identity. As I step into the role of Board President, I am inspired by their passion, the opportunity ahead, and the growing impact the DNA Doe Project can have in the years to come.

Looking toward 2026 and beyond, the Board of Directors is focused on ensuring that the organization remains strong, responsive, and well-positioned to advance its mission.

Our role is both strategic and sustaining. We are committed to thoughtful governance, responsible stewardship of resources, and supporting the leadership and staff who bring this work to life each day.

In partnership with our Executive Director, staff, and volunteers, we will continue strengthening the foundation that supports this work while encouraging the ideas, collaborations, and opportunities that allow the mission to grow and take on the many unsolved cases that remain.

We envision a future in which the organization continues to deepen its impact, broaden its reach, and serve as a trusted resource for those it supports.

That future will be shaped by the collective commitment of our board members, staff, volunteers, supporters, and partners. I am inspired by the energy surrounding this work and look forward to what we will accomplish together in the years ahead.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for being part of this important journey.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin Semple". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robin Semple
DNA Doe Project Board President

2025 Highlights

19

**Publicly
Announced
Identifications**

112

**Active
Volunteers**

17

**New Cases
Announced**

397

**Individual or
Corporate Donations**

8

**Years of Industry
Leadership**

19

thousand+

**Hours of Investigative
Genetic Genealogy Work**

IGG PROCESS

DDP CASE FLOW

1

FIRST CONTACT

Our team connects with a coroner, medical examiner, or law enforcement investigator.

2

SAMPLE

We help our agency partner select the best sample to send for DNA lab analysis.

3

DNA PROFILE

One or more labs extract DNA, sequence the DNA, and format the data into a profile for upload.

4

IGG RESEARCH

A DDP team is assigned to analyze match lists and build family trees to identify the Jane or John Doe.

5

CANDIDATE

The DDP team presents their research and the name of the candidate to the agency.

6

CONFIRMATION

Our agency partners conduct confirmation testing to validate the identification according to their own standards.

7

ANNOUNCEMENT

The resolution of the case is made public. Further investigation into the case may continue for homicide victims.

Our process is designed to handle the most challenging biological samples, including degraded bone, hair, and teeth. We partner with elite independent laboratories to perform Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS). This high-resolution approach is vital for samples that have suffered from environmental degradation or low DNA input. Once sequenced, our bioinformaticians transform raw data into specialized genotype files compatible with genealogical databases. Profiles are uploaded to GEDmatch Pro, FamilyTreeDNA, and DNA Justice. We ensure all uploads comply with current privacy and forensic standards.

Our dedicated team of volunteer researchers performs exhaustive analysis, building complex family trees and cross-referencing public records to identify potential candidates. When a likely candidate is identified, DDP provides the agency with a formal report. Final confirmation of identity remains the responsibility of the agency, typically finalized through CODIS or direct reference testing.

Timeline and Expectations

The journey from sample receipt to identification is highly variable. Lab processing typically takes weeks to months. While some genealogical resolutions occur rapidly, others require years of persistent work as databases grow. DDP provides regular progress updates and maintains a "never give up" philosophy; we continue to monitor cases long-term to leverage new genetic matches.

As a non-profit, our pricing model is structured to ensure accessibility while maintaining the highest standards of data security and operational excellence. DDP provides all investigative genetic genealogy research pro bono. Whether a case requires 10 hours or 10,000, our volunteers' expertise is provided at no cost to the agency. Agencies are invoiced for actual laboratory fees, database upload costs, and a Case Management Fee. Our case management fee is heavily subsidized by our generous donors. This fee covers essential infrastructure, including secure platforms, staff support, and volunteer training, ensuring that the cost to the agency remains well below the actual operational expense.

NAMING THE DEAD



Six cases. Six stories revealed.

The 2025 release of the National Geographic docuseries *Naming the Dead* marked a significant milestone for the DNA Doe Project, bringing our mission to a global audience. Across six riveting episodes, the series chronicled the relentless pursuit of identity for some of the more than 50,000 unidentified individuals across the United States.

By providing unprecedented access to active investigations, the series highlighted the collaborative efforts between our dedicated volunteer genealogists, law enforcement, and forensic experts. Each installment functioned as a high-stakes mystery, where fragmented clues and decades-old cold cases were revitalized through the power of investigative genetic genealogy. The narrative successfully balanced cutting-edge science with deeply human storytelling, focusing on the emotional weight of restoring names to those long forgotten.

From the Arizona desert to the railcars of the 1960s, *Naming the Dead* showcased how distant DNA matches and meticulous research could bridge the gap between "unnamed" and "home." The show served as a powerful testament to the importance of our work, illustrating that no timeline is too long and no victim is beyond the reach of justice. Ultimately, the series honored the families of the deceased and reinforced our organization's commitment to ensuring every person is remembered.



Watch the Trailer Here:



Reviews

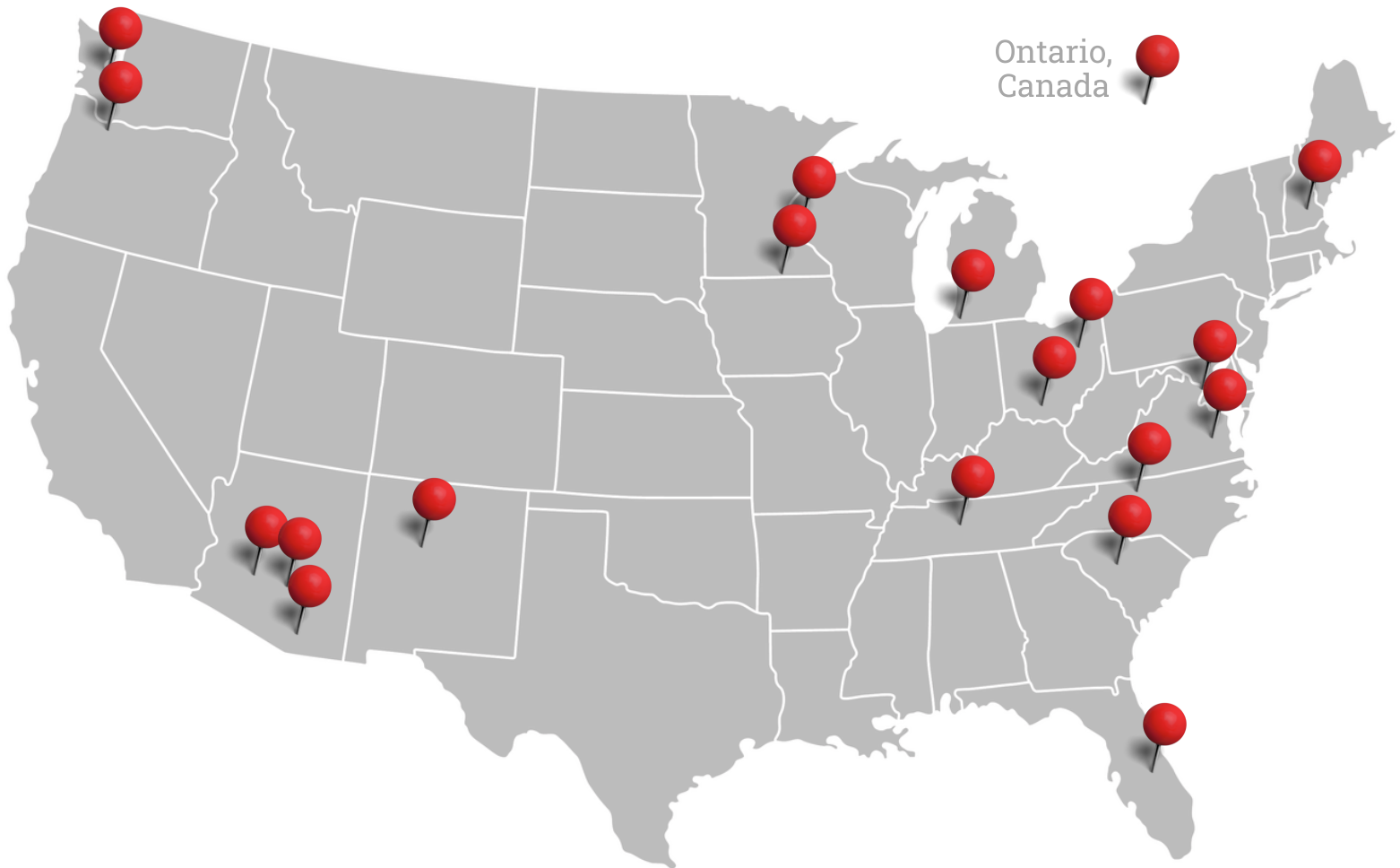
"It's a fantastic show that really was **fascinating** to see the behind-the-scenes process and research. "

"You carefully told each story, navigating carefully and with such **sensitivity**."

"I just finished episode 1, and it's so **beautifully done**, focusing on the victim, his family and the search...it's beautiful."



Our Impact: Identified Does



Click on a pin for the full story

January

Darryl Terrence Williamson

Five years after his body was found inside a house in Washington, D.C., the DNA Doe Project has identified the man previously classified as Naylor Road John Doe 2020. He was Darryl Terrence Williamson, a 59-year-old D.C. native.

March

Monique S. Boggs

Nearly 30 years after her charred body was found in an abandoned vehicle in Phoenix, Monique S. Boggs has been successfully identified. Prior to this resolution, her case was tracked as Monique Phoenix Jane Doe 1997.

Our Impact: Identified Does

March (cont.)

Historical Son of Salem and Mary Friend

Nearly three years after a jawbone was discovered along the Scioto River in Chillicothe, Ohio, the remains, initially referred to as Yoctangee Park John Doe, have been identified as a historical son of Salem and Mary Friend.

Pamela Leigh Walton

More than 36 years after her body was discovered in a wooded area west of Orlando, Florida, Pamela Leigh Walton has been identified. DNA Doe Project staff and volunteers first knew this case as Transgender Julie Doe 1988.

Anthony Gulley

Nearly 24 years after his remains were discovered in a rural area of Stark County, Ohio, Anthony Gulley has been identified. Prior to this breakthrough, investigators knew him as Stark Co. John Doe.

June

Jennifer Elaine Vawter

More than a decade after her body was discovered in Thurston County, Washington, Peter Kalama Lane Jane Doe has been identified as Jennifer Elaine Vawter.

July

Renee Isabel Nilsson

Over 40 years after her remains were found in a dumpster in Phoenix, Renee Isabel Nilsson has been identified. For decades, she was known as Del Ray Jane Doe 1984.

August

Alyce Catharina Peterson

Twenty-three years after her skull was discovered in a wooded area near Houlton, Wisconsin, 92-year-old Alyce Catharina Peterson has been identified. Long designated as St Croix County Jane Doe, Peterson's remains were inexplicably found in a plastic bag despite official records stating she had been cremated.

Our Impact: Identified Does

September

Eric "Ricky" Singer

A Cleveland man missing since 1973, Eric "Ricky" Singer, has been identified 45 years after his remains were discovered at a campsite in Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario. For decades, he was known as Algonquin Park John Doe 1980.

Rea Rasmussen

For more than two decades, the "Middle Child" of the notorious Bear Brook murders, Bear Brook Jane Doe, haunted the public. In 2026, DDP successfully identified her as Rea Rasmussen. The DDP research team constructed a massive family tree of 25,000 people, tracing back to the 1780s. This tree led to Rea's missing mother, Pepper Reed, and ultimately to Rea's 1976 birth certificate.

Jolene Lynn White

Fourteen years after her remains were discovered in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, Jolene Lynn White has been identified. She was initially referred to as Ms. Startex 2011.

Isidro Marcelo Guzmán Quinde

Twenty-one years after his remains were discovered in Tucson, Arizona, Isidro Marcelo Guzmán Quinde, born in 1963, has been identified. The Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner confirmed his identity, replacing his status as Missouri Street John Doe.

October

Bryant Edward Deane

Thirty-three years after his remains were discovered in North Portland, Oregon, the man initially known as St. Johns Bridge John Doe has been identified as Bryant Edward Deane. He was a Massachusetts native who had been missing since the 1970s.

Lisa Marie Vernon

Three years after her remains were discovered in Los Lunas, New Mexico, 56-year-old Lisa Marie Vernon has been identified. DNA Doe Project staff and volunteers knew her first as Los Lunas Jane Doe 2022.

Our Impact: Identified Does

November

Dorothy Glanton

Thirty-seven years after her remains were discovered in New Buffalo, Michigan, Dorothy Glanton has been identified. She had been missing from Chicago, Illinois, and was previously known to investigators as New Buffalo Jane Doe 1988.

Mary Alice Maloney

Eighteen years after her body was discovered in a wooded area of La Vergne, Tennessee, 40-year-old Mary Alice Maloney has been identified. This identification replaced the temporary moniker of La Vergne Jane Doe 2007.

December

Nick S. Lopsis

Nearly five decades after his remains were discovered on the banks of the James River in Charles City County, Virginia, 27-year-old Nick S. Lopsis has been identified. This case was tracked under the name John Charles City Doe 1979.

Luis Gilberto Robledo

Ten years after his remains were discovered along the side of Interstate 90 in Freeborn County, Minnesota, Luis Gilberto Robledo has been given his name back. Prior to this identification, his case was designated as Freeborn Co John Doe 2015.

Socorro Medina

Six years after her remains were discovered in Rural Hall, North Carolina, Socorro Medina has been identified. DNA Doe Project staff and volunteers first knew this case as Rural Hall Jane Doe 2019.

In Summary:

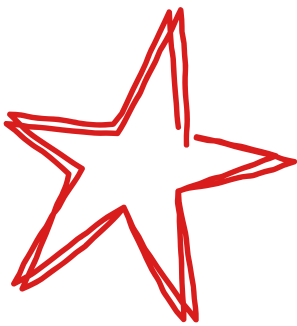
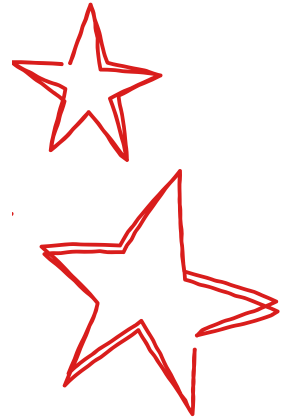


Volunteer Spotlight

At the DNA Doe Project, our mission is fueled by the passion and expertise of a dedicated volunteer community. This year, we asked our volunteers to nominate peers who embody the spirit of our work. The response was overwhelming, and we are proud to feature **Lisa Ivany** and **Robin Espensen** as our Spotlight Volunteers of the Year.

Lisa Ivany

Lisa joined the DNA Doe Project in 2022 as part of our inaugural apprenticeship program. Drawing from her own experience as an adoptee, she finds deep parallels between the search for biological family and the quest to identify our Does. This personal connection drives her relentless pursuit of the truth, especially in challenging Latin American cases.



"Lisa is what I will call a 'quiet powerhouse.' Her skill in Hispanic research is excellent but she does not stop there... She will dig into every record, indexed or not, and find every nuanced piece of evidence to build back one more generation."

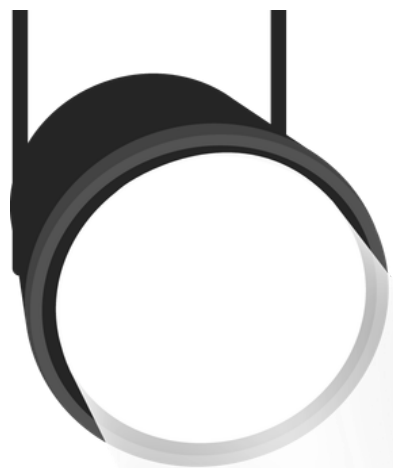
For Lisa, the work is about more than just a name; it is about the ripple effect of restoration. She recalls a particularly moving case involving a Jane Doe whose child had been placed in foster care:

"With her name restored, her child's own story would also be drastically altered—they would now know that they had not been abandoned or forgotten."

Her peers describe her as a leader who inspires through kindness and a "Sherlock Holmes-like" ability to find the unfindable. As one teammate noted, "Lisa really lives out DDP's mission to return the missing back to their families, no matter how difficult or how long it may take."

Robin Espensen

Robin's journey with DDP began in December 2017 with a serendipitous seat at a hotel restaurant next to co-founder Dr. Margaret Press. That lunch conversation about a pioneering, unproven idea sparked a commitment that has lasted nearly a decade.



"Robin gives tirelessly to DDP. She's like the proverbial church mouse who does a ton of work behind the scenes but never seeks acknowledgment... She is a treasure and truly deserves acknowledgment for all of her selfless giving."

Whether she is coordinating airport carpools, organizing retreats, or arriving days early to set up Camp Doe, Robin's presence ensures that our volunteers feel supported and seen. Her peers frequently cite her positivity and "tireless" nature as the glue that holds events together.

Robin's most memorable moment dates back to the very beginning of the field:

"The Buckskin Girl case will always hold a special place in my heart. At 2:00 AM in April of 2018, with just four volunteers still awake and working, we found her name—Marcia King—and the tears of joy were unforgettable."

As one of the first major successes in investigative genetic genealogy to make national news, that moment remains the North Star for Robin's work. Her teammates put it simply: "Robin is one of those people that you love to see show up at an event... she always has a smile on her face."

**Individual actions,
collective transformation.**

Financial Snapshot

Our work is powered by a deeply committed community of everyday heroes. The heartbeat of the DNA Doe Project's funding comes from spontaneous, grassroots donations, with the majority of gifts coming in at under \$500. From Facebook fundraisers and employee matching programs to direct contributions via our website's "Doe-Nate" case buttons, our supporters consistently step up.

Whether funding our general operations or rallying behind a specific Jane or John Doe, every dollar represents a shared promise to bring these individuals home.

Revenue and Support

Program Revenue	\$42,970
Individual and Corporate Donations	\$239,262
Merchandise Sales	\$289
Total:	\$282,521

Gifts of Time and Talent

DDP's volunteers are essential to our mission. They contribute thousands of hours of specialized research, case management, education, and other expertise each year. Much of this is work that would otherwise carry a significant cost.

Financial support provides the laboratory testing, database access, technology, training, and organizational infrastructure that make that volunteer-powered work possible.

Expenses

Program	\$180,122
Management and General	\$86,865
Fundraising	\$15,166
Total:	\$282,153

Net Assets

Cash	\$232,927
Liabilities	\$22,079
Total:	\$210,848

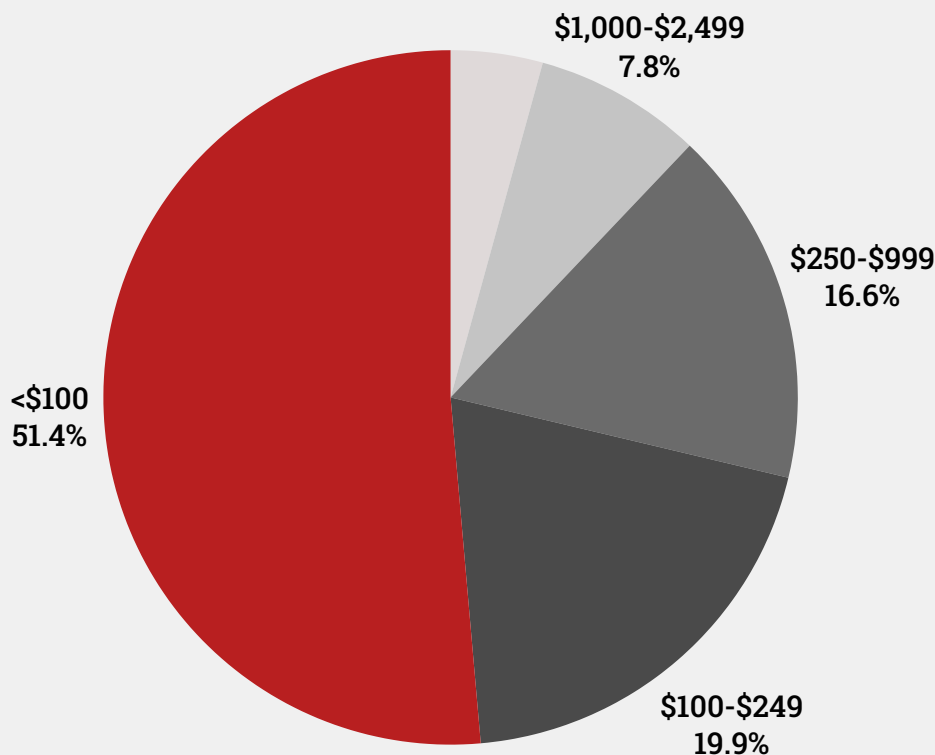
DNA Doe Project Supporters

Every Gift Helps Make this Work Possible

DNA Doe Project is supported by a community of donors who believe every person deserves their name back. Some supporters make a gift after learning about a particular case, seeing DDP in the media, or hearing from our team at an event. Others have supported our mission for years.

Gifts of every size help provide the resources needed to take on challenging cases, while our volunteer researchers, Board members, and staff contribute thousands of hours of skilled investigative genetic genealogy work. To everyone who has chosen to support DNA Doe Project, **thank you for being part of this community.**

Donations by Giving Level



Ways Our Community Gives

Support for DDP comes in many forms. Donors give through one-time and monthly gifts, workplace giving and matching programs, and gifts made in honor or memory of others.

Interested in doing more? Supporters can also make larger gifts, recommend grants through a donor-advised fund, or include DNA Doe Project in their estate plans.

If you'd like to talk about the way you give or how you can make the greatest impact, contact development@dnadoeproject.org.

A Letter from Margaret Press

DDP Co-Founder

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by the incredible momentum that defines the DNA Doe Project. What began as a pioneering mission to bring investigative genetic genealogy to the unidentified has evolved into a movement that is reshaping the landscape of cold case work. We have always been an organization in motion, and 2025 has been a testament to our ability to grow, adapt, and lead with purpose.



This year, we reached a significant cultural milestone through our collaboration with National Geographic on the series Naming the Dead. This project allowed us to share details with the world about the work our teams perform daily. By sharing these stories with a global audience, we honor the lives of those we seek to identify. We also broaden the public's understanding of the profound impact of investigative genetic genealogy—particularly on families.

Our impact is best measured by the families we serve and the investigators we support. Over the past twelve months, our dedicated teams have worked relentlessly, and we have impressive stats to show for it.

We successfully launched 17 new cases, spanning jurisdictions across the country. Our researchers provided 25 investigative leads to our partner agencies, moving cold cases closer to the resolution they deserve.

We announced 19 identifications, returning names and dignity to those who had been lost to their communities for far too long.

In 2025, we embraced a period of internal growth, welcoming new leaders into key roles across the organization, whose fresh perspectives have energized our leadership team. While we evolve, our goal remains the same: strengthening our infrastructure to ensure the DNA Doe Project remains a stable, professional, and permanent fixture in the world of investigative genetic genealogy.

As we look toward the future, I am filled with gratitude for our volunteers, our donors, and the agencies who trust us with their most difficult cases. We are no longer a young organization. We are a proven force for justice. Thank you for walking this journey with us and for believing in the power of a name.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Dr. Margaret Press, AIGG
Founder, DNA Doe Project

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Press". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'M' and 'P'.