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## **"SCATTERING CJ" PREMIERES ON PUBLIC TELEVISION THIS FALL Award Winning Doc Profiles Grieving Mother's Inspired Idea to Honor Her Son's Life; Promote Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention**

**WASHINGTON DC, July 12, 2022** – 20-year-old CJ Twomey was a veteran who hoped to see the world. When he shot and killed himself in front of his parents, their world collapsed. Struggling to find meaning and purpose, his mother Hallie eventually had an inspiration. She posted a request on Facebook: would anyone out there consider receiving a small bag of her son's ashes and spreading them, anywhere in the world that was meaningful to them? Her heartfelt request struck a chord, creating a global online community of tens of thousands and inspiring more than 1,000 "scatterers" who documented the delivery of CJ's ashes to locations on every continent.

Now, *Scattering CJ*, the award-winning documentary about Hallie Twomey's healing mission from Emmy-winning filmmaker Andrea Kalin, is coming to public television in September, during National Suicide Prevention Month. The film, which has sparked essential conversations about mental health and suicide prevention, can be streamed at PBS.org beginning on August 27 or viewed on local public television stations this fall, including a national broadcast on the PBS World Channel (Friday, September 16 at 7 p.m. ET with additional broadcasts to follow; check local listings.)

"My son's suicide killed the person I was before. Yet, it's also driven me to action." – Hallie Twomey.

A Spark Media production written, produced and directed by Kalin, the *Scattering CJ* story, both uplifting and raw, examines how military recruit CJ's memory is kept alive through the kindness of strangers willing to scatter his ashes in places of meaning and beauty throughout the world.

"There is no 'good news story' when it comes to suicide," says Kalin. "But the innate goodness Hallie hit upon when she put out that call to the world on Facebook remains profoundly moving and inspiring to us. Hallie trusted our team to chronicle her family's story during a period of unimaginable loss, and we never took that trust lightly. Her story illustrates the extraordinary bonds formed among strangers through social media and is a much-needed antidote to the darker side of the Internet."

"The process of making this film has only reinforced for me a thousand times over that we are all responsible for our state of mental health as a society," says David Lobatto, the film's producer. "To assert that you will never be affected by mental illness, directly or indirectly, throughout your lifetime is like saying you will never catch a cold or cut your finger. It is through the incredible endeavors of people like Hallie Twomey and the prowess of activists like Andrea Kalin that shame can be driven out of the subject, and the tools to get help for people in need can be most widely and effectively deployed."

The public television airings of *Scattering CJ* follow a successful film festival run and an outreach campaign that has touched people from all walks of life, with special focus directed to the military community and youth—both groups at high risk for mental health issues and suicide. Activities to engage communities have included expert panel discussions, on-demand screenings, live performances, mental health first aid trainings, Capitol Hill forums and Facebook Live sessions. The American Association of Suicidology and other partners working in the areas of mental health and suicide prevention have championed this project and have been invaluable supporters.

*Scattering CJ* is sponsored by Southeast Nassau Guidance Center, The Charles E. Kubly Foundation, and Ruderman Family Foundation.

View the trailer for the film at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4zeH6Ee-Xg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4zeH6Ee-Xg).

Access press materials at [scatteringcfilm.com](http://scatteringcfilm.com).

**About Spark Media:** Founded by filmmaker Andrea Kalin, Washington D.C.-based Spark Media specializes in producing trailblazing documentaries and digital storytelling. With over 100 prestigious, industry awards, Spark Media strives to both inform and inspire audiences with stories that are compelling, entertaining and real.