

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



www.jfmmemorial.org

Annual Year End Report 2024

James F Mikulski Memorial Group Inc.

January, 2025

info@jfmmemorial.org

Executive Summary

We are proud that the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group/Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future continues to grow and gain new supporters year over year. In 2024, the charity awarded twenty-three scholarships – the most in a single year and a notable increase from the three we awarded in our first year, 2014. The charity realized its largest revenue to date, with the number of individual monetary donations significantly higher than prior years. Our Saver Clothing Drives set new records for us on the amount of goods collected. And we are pleased to see new people join our seasoned volunteers at race events.

During 2024, we were delighted to welcome Old St. Mary's School as the next school sponsored by Jim's Bridge, while sustaining the grant levels for the other organizations supported by Jim's Bridge.

Our relationships with the schools and the Erie Neighborhood House remain strong and positive. Three of the schools welcomed new Principals, who were delighted to learn more about Jim's Bridge. It is an honor that Jim's Bridge is highly regarded by the organizations we sponsor, the race directors we assist and our clothing drive liaison as a quality, dependable organization with a purposeful mission to help children.

We look forward to continuing the work of the charity to benefit school children in lower income areas of Chicago in ways that promote wellness and service into 2025 and beyond.

Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future Accomplishments Since Established in 2014

\$280,303	Total Funds Granted to help Children
81,514	Pounds of goods collected for Savers
2,609	Volunteers provided to Run/Walk events
951	Donations Received
125	Scholarships Awarded
83	Volunteer events supported

Best regards,

Maureen and John Mikulski

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Visitation Catholic School



St. Gall School



The Erie Neighborhood House



Old St. Mary’s School



Academy of St. Benedict the African

Mission

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group, Inc. was formed to establish a legacy of sharing, caring and helping others in memory of James F. Mikulski, a wonderful and loving family member and friend who passed away by suicide on October 2, 2013.

This charity was created to honor Jim's life by giving back in a way that will directly benefit underserved children in the Chicago area. The organization accomplishes its mission by providing scholarships and support for academic and after school activities. This is made possible through fundraising and volunteer activities that promote wellness, service and the opportunity to support the education of school age children. The organization is entirely run by volunteers. The grants awarded by the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group are directed to grade schools and institutions that support young children in the Chicago area.

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group is funded through private donations, online contributions and donations in appreciation of organized volunteer services. Donations and volunteer assistance are accepted from anybody who would like to help make a positive difference in a child's life.



About the Organization

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group is an IRS Tax Exempt 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization, EIN 46-4519616. It was incorporated in the State of Illinois as a charitable organization on January 13, 2014. It has a five-member Board of Directors.

Approval of tax-exempt status for The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group was received from the Internal Revenue Service on July 30, 2014 with an effective date of Exemption of January 13, 2014.

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group is registered with the Office of the Attorney General of the State of Illinois, under both the Charitable Trust and the Solicitation for Charity Acts, effective November 28, 2014.

The charity has an Assumed Name of Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future which was renewed at the end of 2024 for the next five-year period.

Accomplishments for 2024

The year 2024 marked several milestones for the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group: the largest number of scholarships awarded in a single year, the highest amount of funding provided to help students and the addition of a new school!

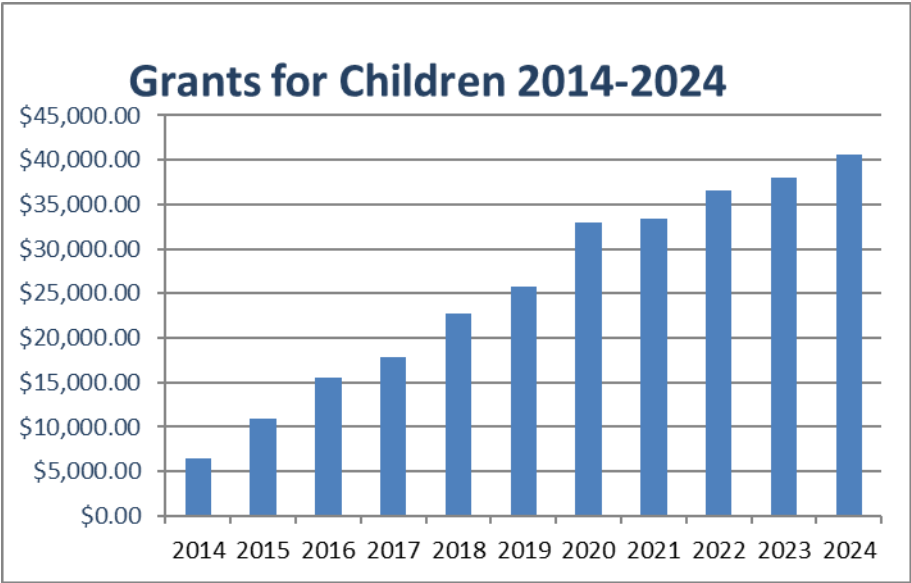
Help Children in Need in the Chicago Area

In June 2024, we welcomed Old St. Mary’s School in Chicago’s South Loop area as the newest school supported by Jim’s Bridge. We visited with the Principal and the Enrollment Director and were very impressed with all that the school has to offer. We granted funds to Old St. Mary’s that were used for three scholarships for students in financial need.

A total of twenty-three scholarships were awarded in 2024. Jim’s Bridge awards scholarship funds to the schools and the school administration chooses the recipients. For the Erie Neighborhood House, we continued our tradition of helping to fund and distribute fully stocked backpacks to the Erie House children as they prepared for a new school year. This year, backpacks were given to close to 700 children in the various programs at the Erie House. Jim’s Bridge sponsored food and gifts for the children at the Erie House Holiday with Heart celebration.

During the year, we were able to visit with our scholarship students at Visitation, St. Gall’s and The Academy of St. Benedict the African (ASBA). It was wonderful to be able to spend time talking with them and getting to know them better.

Since 2014, Jim’s Bridge has provided over a quarter million dollars to school children in lower income areas of Chicago.



Enhance Fundraising

The 2024 Jim's Bridge Annual Fundraiser and Get Together was fun and successful once again. Over ninety people joined us at Zachary's Grill on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Many supporters who were unable to attend the event were very generous with donations to the fundraiser. This year, an eighth grade Jim's Bridge scholarship student from St. Gall's was the featured speaker. And he "wow-ed" the audience. The Principal of Visitation, the Assistant Principal from ASBA and the Executive Director of the Erie Neighborhood House spoke about the impact that Jim's Bridge has made for the children in their organizations. We received many positive comments from the attendees.



We had our most successful clothing drive to date. In total, 10,682 pounds of goods was collected in the summer clothing drive, which was a new record. We also had a clothing drive in February with close to 6,600 pounds delivered at that time. Savers compensates the charity based on the number of pounds of goods we deliver to them.

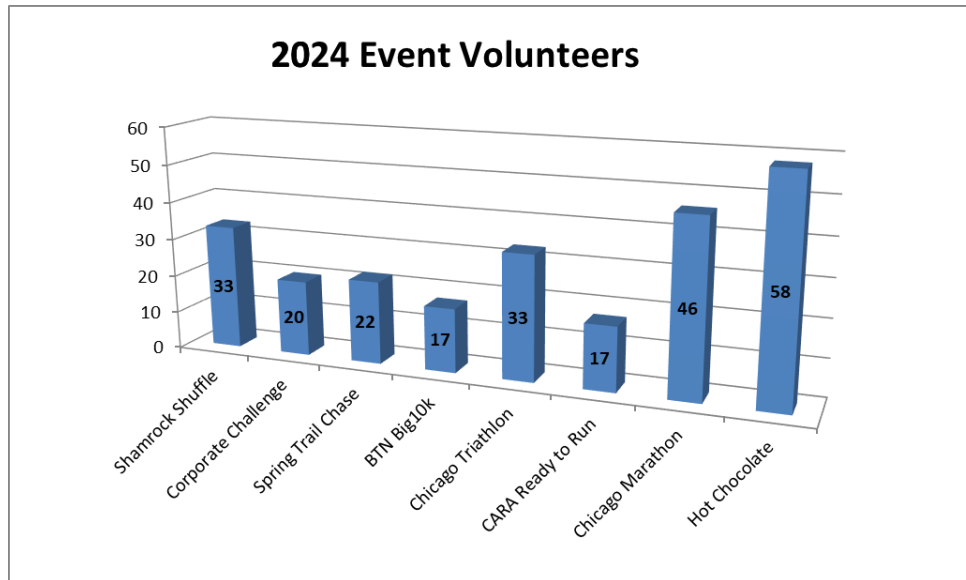
Jim's Bridge benefitted from Facebook Birthday Fundraisers, which not only provides revenue, but introduces new donors to our charity. We also see a modest amount of "In Memory" and "In Honor Of" donations.

Coordinate Volunteer Groups as a Source of Revenue

In 2024, Jim's Bridge supported eight racing events. Our Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) "Blue Partner" status provides Jim's Bridge with \$20 per hour per BCBS employee volunteer, up to \$2000 per year. In 2024 we reached the maximum level with BCBS volunteers. This award arrives the following year, so the donations below reflect the 2023 Blue Partner donation. Once again, the Corporate Challenge was very generous with its donation. Also, the changes Chicago Event Management (CEM) has made to its volunteer donation program has nicely benefitted Jim's Bridge. CEM directs the Shamrock Shuffle, the BTN 10K and the Chicago Marathon,

Year over Year comparison for Races (Past Six Years)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Number of Events	8	8	8	7	3	9
Number of Volunteers	246	253	182	163	34	353
Donations Received	\$8,455.00	\$8,080.00	\$5,330.00	\$3,835.00	\$1,520.00	\$6,362.50



Get the Word Out About our Organization

The Jim's Bridge Facebook page, the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group website, email, Instagram and our semi-annual newsletter remain the primary ways that we communicate about the work our charity has performed as well as announce upcoming activities. Additionally, we keep the 'At a Glance' Tri-Fold summary up to date and use it as a nice way to introduce people to our charity.

Our Facebook "Likes" continue to steadily rise with 308 followers. The Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/JimsBridge/>.

The charity has become well known through activities such as volunteering at races, Facebook Birthday Fundraisers and the Savers Clothing Donation Drives. This helps to attract new contributors for Jim's Bridge.

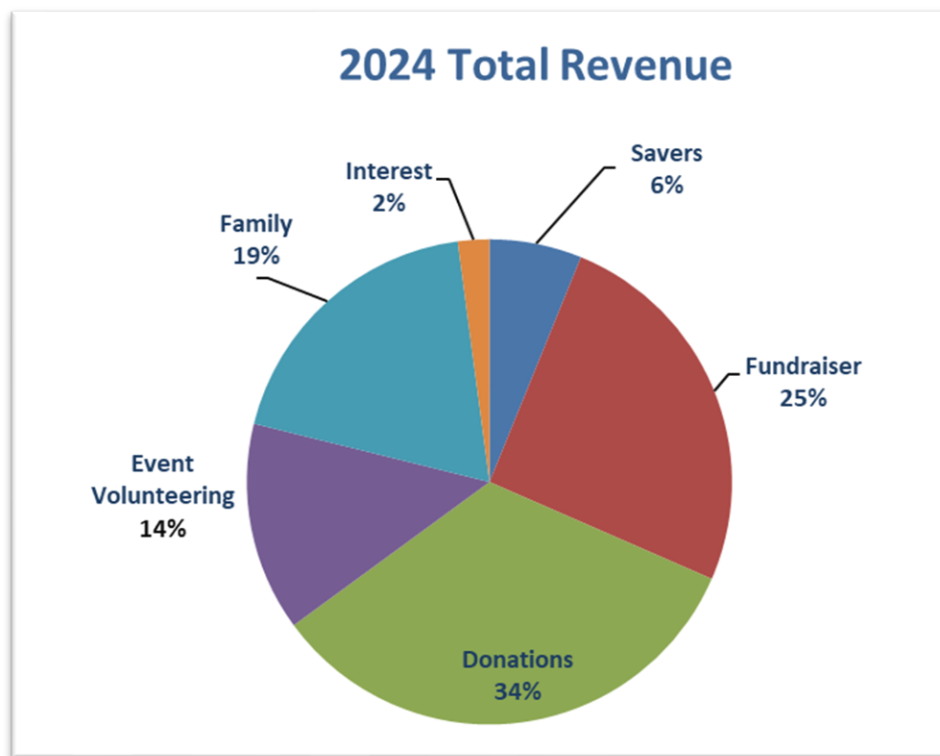
We are happy that Jim's Bridge has great support from local businesses including Zachary's Grill and Running for Kicks, as well as the "Yankee Runners" running group. Many Yankee Runners join us as volunteers, contribute generously to our clothing drives and enjoy our annual fundraiser.

Keep Operating Costs Low – Financial Analysis

Revenue and Expenses

Our overall annual revenue was the highest to date for the charity. Many factors contributed to this: a substantial increase in overall donations, the highest amount donated to Jim's Bridge for volunteering at races, the best year to date for the Savers drive, a good year for money market interest and a successful fundraiser. It is reassuring to have multiple contributing sources. We were happy to see that almost 23% of the donations were from new donors, with a little over 75% from repeat donors.

In 2024, a special fundraiser was set up for Director Maureen Mikulski as she prepared to complete the Chicago Marathon. Over \$4,000 in donations was raised for this special event.



Our expenses were higher than 2023, driven by a few factors. With PayPal no longer directly processing credit cards, we incurred expense for new credit card readers as we moved to “Square” for handling credit card transactions, mainly at the fundraiser. Fundraising expense in general were higher and we paid our every five-year registration fee for “Jim’s Bridge to a Brighter Future” as the charity’s assumed name in the State of Illinois. Our expense to revenue ratio is 9.2%, including our fundraising cost, still below the 10% mark. Looking only at operations and management expense, it is 2.4%.

Thanks to a large amount of year end donations, our reserve was able to increase by \$14,452, which is amazing since in early November it seemed like we would barely break even for the year. The charity reserve stands at \$91,883.72

Year over Year Financial Status Prior Six Years

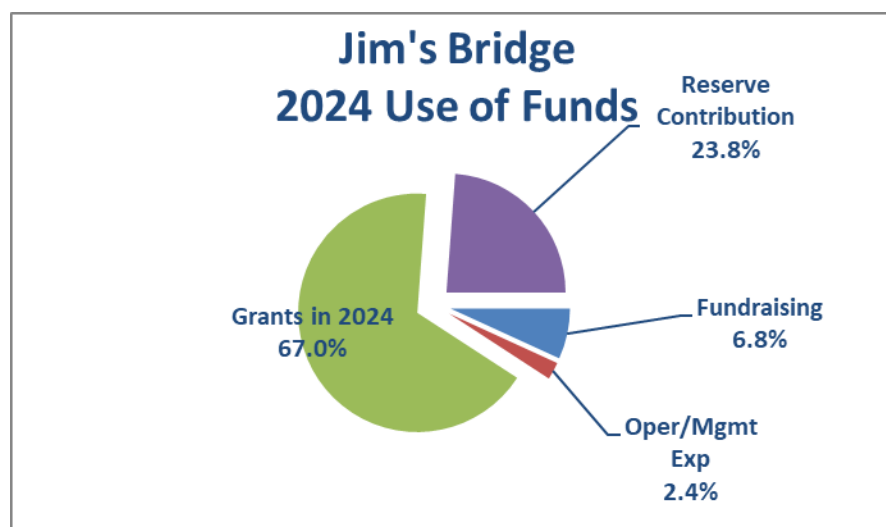
Year over Year

Comparison

(Last 6 years)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Revenues	\$60,669.36	\$49,518.71	\$45,590.56	\$38,862.09	\$36,805.51	\$48,914.13
Total Expenses	\$5,569.08	\$4,375.19	\$2,482.89	\$1,980.86	\$1,583.98	\$4,685.80
Grants for Children	\$40,648.53	\$38,020.00	\$36,540.41	\$33,423.43	\$33,008.98	\$25,827.83
Total Expense to Revenue	9.2%	8.8%	5.4%	5.1%	4.3%	9.6%
Opex to Revenue	2.4%	2.1%	3.1%	2.8%	4.2%	2.1%
Opex	\$1,428.53	\$1,053.21	\$1,401.36	\$1,077.69	\$1,529.52	\$1,035.98
Reserve Contribution	\$14,451.75	\$7,123.52	\$6,567.26	\$3,457.80	\$2,212.55	\$18,400.50

As always, our charity manages all of its own fundraising. No outside or professional fundraising organizations are used.



Our Board of Directors

We are fortunate to have a Board of Directors comprised of family and friends skilled in business and wellness professions. There is frequent communication among the Board of Directors throughout the year, with two formal meetings per year.



Maureen Mikulski, President, is retired with more than 40 years of experience in Information Technology, Project Management and Business in the Chicago Area, with an advanced degree in Computer Science and Certification in Project Management.



Kathleen Diaz, Vice President, has almost 20 years of combined experience working for non-profit organizations and in the wellness field, with an advanced degree in Psychology.



John Mikulski, Treasurer, is retired after having acquired more than 35 years of experience in Information Technology and Business in the Chicago area, with an advanced degree in Computer Science.



Kathleen Grady, Secretary, is a retired Registered Nurse with an advanced degree in Nursing and more than 30 years of experience as a volunteer or volunteer coordinator.



Zachary Kubiak, Sergeant at Arms, is an entrepreneur with a very popular restaurant in Palos Heights. This restaurant, Zachary's Grill, is the location of our Annual Fundraiser and Get Together.

Plans for 2025

Supporting the Children

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group will sustain, and hopefully increase, its level of support for the children at Visitation, St. Gall, the Academy of St. Benedict the African, Old St. Mary's School and the Erie Neighborhood House in 2025. We will visit the schools and meet with our scholarship recipients at times throughout the school year. When possible, we will attend programs and activities at the schools and at the Erie Neighborhood House. We will continue to seek other organizations that Jim's Bridge can help.

Fundraising

We plan to hold an Annual Fundraiser in 2025 as another fun afternoon of meeting with old friends, making new friends, enjoying delicious food and having a chance to win great prizes. The Board of Directors will meet in January to discuss possible dates.

We will continue to hold semi-annual Saver's clothing drives. As in 2024, we will be reliant on individual and corporate donations. We will actively look for additional ways to raise funds for the charity. The Savers Clothing Drives and volunteering at races have been good ways of attracting new supporters of Jim's Bridge.

Coordinating volunteers as a source of revenue

Volunteering at races as a source of revenue continues to be a steady source of revenue and a great way to introduce people to our charity. We will look for opportunities to expand the number of events supported.

We stay in contact with the race organizers that we have worked with in prior years, including Lifetime Fitness, Enmotive (formerly RAM Racing), CARA and Chicago Event Management. Based on our relationships with those groups, we are able to receive high levels of per volunteer donations from them.

Getting the word out about our organization

We will continue to publish our semi-annual newsletter and promote the charity through email, Facebook and Instagram. The annual fundraiser, volunteering and the Savers clothing drives have expanded our reach to those who may not have known about the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group/Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future. We will actively seek other opportunities to promote our work and grow the organization.

Keeping our Operating Expenses low through strong financial management

Efficient management of expenses and monitoring our revenue stream will always be a priority. We will actively identify ways to keep our expenses as low as possible, ensuring our donors know their dollars will be spent to benefit the children that we support. We are pleased that we have maintained expense/revenue ratio below 10%.

Ways You Can Help Support Our Mission

Please consider helping our cause with a donation in one of these ways

- The James F Mikulski Memorial Group website
<http://www.jfmmemorial.org/donatePP.html>
- On our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JimsBridge/>
- Through Zelle to John@jfmmemorial.org
- By mailing a check to

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group
405 Shadow Creek Court
Palos Heights, IL 60463
EIN 46-4519616

If you would like to volunteer with us or if you would like to be included on our distribution list, please send an email to info@jfmmemorial.org



From the Erie House Peace Mural
1347 W. Erie, Chicago, IL
Sponsored by James F. Mikulski Memorial Group
Dedicated August 2015