

Reflections from Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future



James F. Mikulski Memorial Group

Volume 11 Issue 1

Keeping Up with Our Scholars

The mission of Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future is to benefit school children in financial need in the Chicago area, in memory of Jim Mikulski. Our charity accomplishes this by granting scholarship funds and sponsoring in-school and after-school programs. Since 2014, 125 scholarships have been awarded and hundreds of school children have benefited by the programs sponsored by Jim's Bridge.

We take pride in visiting the schools to meet with our scholarship students. The visits are always a delight, especially as we see the students grow and learn new things. Here are some highlights of our visits this Spring.

Visitation School

On March 10th, we met with the Jim's Bridge scholarship students at Visitation School. They are in sixth, seventh and eighth grade.

We chatted about their new playground, talked about classes at school and learned that many of them are taking an after-school sign language class, and even went through the alphabet for us.

We wished all the best to the eighth-grade student who will be moving on to high school next year.



St. Gall School

We had a great conversation on March 13th when we visited our scholarship students at St. Gall School. The students range from 2nd grade to 8th grade.

We heard the 6th-8th grade is studying Latin. Additionally, the 8th grade is learning to manage stocks. We chatted about field trips, summer plans,

favorite movies and their upcoming Spring Dance. Then we got into other topics like their interest in computers, the impact of AI and plans for world travel!



Academy of St. Benedict the African

We visited with the scholarship students and the Assistant Principal at ASBA on March 20th. The students are in second, third and fifth grades.

We chatted about what the students did over Christmas vacation and their plans for upcoming birthdays. We learned about the various programs in place to get the students ready

for standard testing at the end of the year. And somehow, we always talk about food. This time it was tacos! They are looking forward to Spring to work on the school garden again.

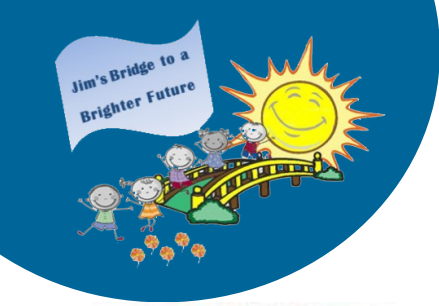


Old St. Mary's School

To date, we have not yet scheduled the visit with our three scholarship students at Old St. Mary's. However, we received an update that they are thriving and fully engaged in school.

They did share photos of our 6th grade recipient at a lip sync contest and of the first grade recipient twins with their mother.





Cheers to Our Volunteers

Volunteering at races is a fun and rewarding way to help raise funds for Jim's Bridge. The race organizers make a donation to Jim's Bridge based on the number of volunteers we recruit for the event. Here are recent races and our planned 2025 event calendar.



Hot Chocolate 15K/10K/5K Runner Info Nov. 3, 2024



Shamrock Shuffle Packet Pickup March 22, 2025



2025
Volunteer
Events for
Jim's Bridge

Event	Date
Corporate Challenge	Thu., May 8, 2025
CARA Spring Trail Chase	Sun., May 18, 2025
BTN Big 10K	Sat., July 12, 2025
Chicago Triathlon (Shift 1 & Shift 2)	Sun., August 24, 2025
CARA Ready to Run 20 Miler	Sun., September 21, 2025
Bank of America Chicago Marathon	Sun., October 12, 2025
Hot Chocolate 5K/10K/15K	Sun., November 2, 2025

Jim's Bridge in Action



Decluttering and Raising Funds for the Children

The Jim's Bridge clothing drives continue to be an effective way to raise funds to help school children. By hosting a Savers FunDrive, Jim's Bridge is compensated for all of the goods we collect and deliver to Savers Thrift Stores. It's a great way for people to clear out their closets, divert things from landfills and raise money for the charity. The Triple-Win!

Even though this is the ninth year that Jim's Bridge has hosted a FunDrive, each drive has been unique in its own way. For this drive, we were delighted that Callaghan's Moving Services provided a truck and crew to transport everything to Savers. We also welcomed a student volunteer from St. Laurence High School who joined our friends and family to load up the truck. (St. Laurence was Jim's High School).



Once again, we send our thanks to St. Gall School which held a drop off date for its families. When we came to pick up from St. Gall's, we were thrilled to see many of our scholarship students there to load up our minivan with all that was gathered for us.

Also, a big thank you for the donations from the Park Monroe Condo Association, coordinated by Barb Kimble a frequent volunteer for Jim's Bridge. And, of course, the many donations from the Yankee Runners and Running for Kicks.

We are grateful to all who donated or volunteered to help. Savers provided a nice compensation to Jim's Bridge for all that we collected for them. Next drive will be in the summertime, see details on the back page.

Erie Neighborhood House

While Christmas may seem like a long way back, we want to express our appreciation for the Erie Neighborhood House Holiday with Heart event, which Jim's Bridge supported.

We had a wonderful time on Dec. 14, 2024 volunteering at the gift wrapping event. That was in preparation for the following days when over 600

gifts were delivered to the children in the many programs offered by this social services organization.

Since 2015, Jim's Bridge has been proud to donate gifts and help sponsor events around the distribution to the children for the Holiday with Heart Program.





Our Thanks to You for a Successful Year

Accomplishments Since 2014

\$282,803	Total Funds Granted to help Children
87,233	Pounds of goods collected for Savers
2,647	Volunteers provided to Run/Walk events
956	Donations Received
125	Scholarships Awarded

Looking back at 2024, we are proud of everything that the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group accomplished.

We welcomed Old St. Mary's School as the next school that Jim's Bridge supports and funded three scholarships at that school. In total, 23 scholarships were awarded across the four schools that we support.

We continued our traditions of sponsoring Back to School Backpacks and the Holiday with Heart Program at the Erie Neighborhood House.

In all, the Charity granted out its

largest amount in one year for helping children.

We had another successful fundraiser, with one of our scholarship students as a featured speaker.

We are grateful that Jim's Bridge realized its largest annual revenue to date, which was driven by over

150 individual donations. Thank you. Please keep us in mind when donating to help others.

Jim's Bridge is proud that people can help raise funds through their service by volunteering at one of the athletic events we support or by contributing to our

clothing drives. We had our greatest volunteer turnout since COVID and the most collected in one year with our summer and winter drives

Combined, it all adds up to make a difference in enhancing the ways that Jim's Bridge can, in turn, make a difference in the life of a child.

Thank you again to our donors, our volunteers and everyone who supports Jim's Bridge.



Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future



2025 Fundraiser

Sunday, Aug 10, 2025

1:00 PM — 4:00 PM

Zachary's Grill

13415 Ridgeland Ave
Palos Heights, IL 60463

Featuring
Games, Raffles
& Silent Auction

Jim's Bridge Summer Clothing Drive

Jim's Bridge will hold a clothing drive in partnership with Savers **from Saturday, June 21, 2025 until Saturday, Sept. 6, 2025.**

That gives you plenty of time to clean out your closets and get your donations to us. More to come on Facebook and in email. Text or call 708-267-9343 to arrange a drop off or a clothing pickup.

Our Mission - You Can Help

October 2, 2024 marked 11 years since we lost our dear son, brother, husband, step-dad and friend to suicide, and we will probably never understand why. Not a day goes by without remembering Jim, still loving him and wishing he was with us.

We knew from that day in 2013 that we wanted to do something positive as a tribute to him. We set up the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group, a tax exempt 501(c)(3) charity EIN 46-4519616, to honor his life by benefiting children while emphasizing wellness and helping others. We are proud that our charity, with your help, has been able to accomplish this. Without our generous donors and wonderful volunteers it would not be possible. We continue to keep operating expenses well below 10% of revenue.

Please consider a donation: www.jfmmemorial.org/donate, Zelle to john@jfmmemorial.org or mail to:

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Palos Heights, IL 60463

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



www.jfmmemorial.org

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