

Reflections from Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future



James F. Mikulski Memorial Group

Volume 10 Issue 1

With a *Lotta* Help from Our Friends

Generally, our wintertime clothing drives with Savers Thrift stores have not been of the same size and scale as our summer drives. Well, this winter's drive put that trend to rest!

With our largest single delivery, Jim's Bridge provided 6,500 pounds of goods for Savers on February 17th. We could never have reached that level without a lot of help from many people and organizations.

Special thanks to St. Gall School which hosted a drop off date for its families and to Visitation School which collected many soft goods and books. Students from each school helped to load up our minivan with all they gathered for us.



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

This year we were fortunate to have several students and staff from Marist High School help us load and deliver everything to Savers. That made delivery day a breeze!

We are grateful to all who donated or helped. Jim's Bridge earned good size payment based on the total weight of the items donated.

If you missed out on this Savers drive, see page four for information on the next one.

An Early Springtime Visit

We had a wonderful time on March 20th when we visited the Academy of St. Benedict the African. We chatted with the Principal and Assistant Principal and then spent time with our five scholarship students.

What a great group of children! We talked about school, spring break plans, spicy food and favorite salads. They were so vibrant, fun and inquisitive. We all shared hugs before they headed back to class. Looking forward to our next visit.





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 2024 event calendar.

Jim's Bridge Named Outstanding Volunteer Group!



We were surprised and honored when Jim's Bridge was presented with the 2023 Outstanding Volunteer Group award by Chicago Event Management (CEM) at their Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on November 14, 2023.

Chicago Event Management directs major Chicago area athletic events including the Chicago Marathon and the Shamrock Shuffle.

Jim's Bridge has been proud to provide more than 700 volunteers for those events since 2014. We greatly appreciate the recognition and support from the CEM management and staff. It's always a pleasure to work with them.

Catching up on Volunteer Events

Hot Chocolate 15K/10K/5K
11-5-23



Shamrock Shuffle Packet Pickup
3-23-24



2024
Volunteer
Events for
Jim's Bridge

Event	Date
Chase Corporate Challenge	Thu., May 16, 2024
CARA Spring Trail Chase	Sun., May 19, 2024
BTN Big 10K	Sat., July 13, 2024
Chicago Triathlon	Sun., August 25, 2024
CARA Ready to Run 20 Miler	Sun., September 22, 2024
Bank of America Chicago Marathon	Sun., October 13, 2024
Allstate Hot Chocolate 5K/10K/15K	Sun., November 3, 2024

Jim's Bridge in Action

Once again, Jim's Bridge was pleased to present a Christmas gift and year end grant to the schools and organizations it supports. We are always delighted to hear how each one used it for their community.



Visitation School

Visitation used their Christmas gift to fund a "Cookies and Caroling Christmas Event". Students and parents enjoyed Christmas cookies, hot chocolate, peppermints and Christmas Carols.

Visitation utilized its grant to fund bus transportation for a field trip and "Tiger Bucks" which are awarded to students for use at the "school store".

Additionally, after school clubs including the Craft Club, the Chess Club, Girls in the Game, volleyball and Praise Dancers were helped by the grant with supplies and equipment. Jim's Bridge is happy to support these activities as they provide additional opportunities to practice social and emotional skills taught through the school day.



Academy of St. Benedict the African (ASBA)

ASBA used its Christmas gift to purchase Tonie boxes, which play songs and stories, as well as other toys for its Pre-K students. ASBA then directed the year end grant to a family that experienced an emergency situation, which allowed their child to stay in school.



St. Gall School

Similarly, St. Gall School used the year end grant and part of the Christmas gift for a family that experienced critical health issues so that their students could stay in school for the remainder of the year. The rest of the Christmas gift was used to help purchase warm hats for all of the students.

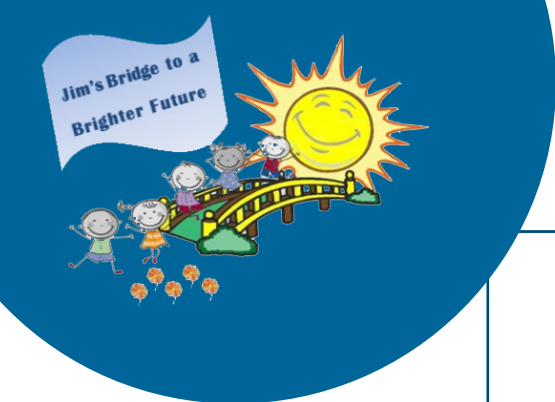


Erie Neighborhood House

Jim's Bridge provided a consolidated Christmas gift/year end grant to the Erie Neighborhood House which was used to help fund snacks and hot chocolate for the events where Santa presented gifts to more than 800 children.

Jim's Bridge also volunteered to help wrap the gifts that were distributed as part of this program.





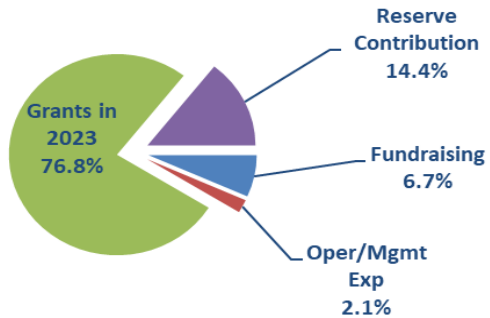
Wrapping Up Our Tenth Year

As we look back at 2023, the 10th year for Jim's Bridge, we are proud of its many accomplishments.

Since being formed in 2014, Jim's Bridge has granted close to a quarter million dollars to benefit school children in the Chicago area.

Those funds were used to award 104 scholarships, sponsor hundreds of back to school backpacks, fund field trips, acquire equipment for play areas and sponsor in school and after school programs.

Jim's Bridge 2023 Use of Funds



The year 2023 was special on its own. In March, Jim's Bridge was presented the Erie Neighborhood House 2023 Community Investment Award. We were honored with the 2023 Outstanding Volunteer Group award by Chicago Event Management in November.

We granted 23 scholarships, the most for one year. The charity realized its biggest annual revenue, largest donations for volunteering and most collected at clothing donation drives.

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, as a tribute to the life of our son, Jim.

Accomplishments Since 2014

\$242,771	Total Funds Granted to help Children
70,832	Pounds of goods collected for Savers
2,383	Volunteers provided to Run/Walk events
797	Donations Received
104	Scholarships Awarded

SAVE THE DATE!

Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future

2024 Fundraiser

Sunday Sept 8, 2024

1:00 PM — 4:00 PM

Zachary's Grill

13415 Ridgeland Ave
Palos Heights, IL 60463



Jim's Bridge Clothing Drive this Summer

Jim's Bridge will hold a clothing drive in partnership with Savers from **Saturday June 15, 2024 until Saturday August 10, 2024.**

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, 2023 marked ten 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 at www.jfmmemorial.org/donate, Zelle to john@jfmmemorial.org or mail to:

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group
405 Shadow Creek Court
Palos Heights, IL 60463

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



www.jfmmemorial.org

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