

Reflections from Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future



James F. Mikulski Memorial Group

Volume 11 Issue 2

Settling into the New School Year

School is back in session so it is time to visit with the school children that Jim's Bridge sponsors. As usual, the season kicks off with backpacks for the Erie Neighborhood House children and continues through the fall as we say hello for the new school year. Here is what has happened thus far. We will schedule our visit with the Academy of St. Benedict the African soon, Visitation is on Page 3.

Erie Neighborhood House

For the eighth year, Jim's Bridge has kept its tradition of sponsoring Back to School fully stocked backpacks for the children in the Erie Neighborhood House programs.



Although we were unable to attend this year, we are proud to know that Jim's Bridge helped provide 370 children with a brand-new backpack and supplies for their school year!

St. Gall School

On Sept 22nd, we visited with our scholarship students at St. Gall School. It was so nice to see the students from last year and to meet our new students.

We covered all kinds of topics in our chat including our summer vacations, favorite foods, favorite school subjects and Halloween plans.

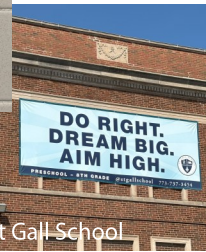
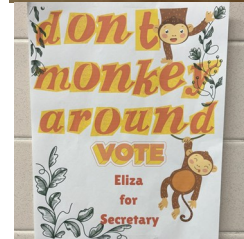
When we told them about our summer trip to France, we were impressed with all that they knew about the country, And the room we were in even had student artwork similar to Monet's *Water Lilies* that we saw in Paris!



We were thrilled to learn that two of the students were running for student council - one for Secretary and one for Treasurer.

A few weeks after our visit we checked back with the Principal to see how the student council elections went.

Guess what! Both of our scholarship students won. Nice job! Plus the student who is now the secretary was also the featured speaker at our fundraiser. (See Page 4)



Old St. Mary's School

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit on Oct 6th at Old St. Mary's School. It was wonderful to catch up with the principal and hear about how well the school is doing, including the success of their Oktoberfest event.

We were delighted to be introduced to our 7th grade scholarship student. We were very impressed as

he told us about his activities at school including his recent projects and sports that he will join this school year.

We concluded our great visit with a tour of the school with the principal. As a bonus, on the tour we were able to see our two second grade scholarship students as they worked in their classrooms.



"Settling in" article continued on Page 3



Volunteering at Race Events

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 some of the races where Jim's Bridge volunteered in 2025



Corporate Challenge 5-8-25



CARA Trail Chase 5-18-25



BTN Big 10K 7-12-25



Chicago Triathlon 8-24-25



CARA Ready, Run 9-21-25



Chicago Marathon 10-12-25

Settling into the New School Year Cont'd



Visitation Grade School

We had a great time on September 25th at Visitation Grade School meeting with our five scholarship students.

We talked with the eighth graders about their high school plans and learned about the upcoming Jr. High (5th-8th grade) field trip to the Chicago Botanic Gardens in October. Jim's Bridge is funding the transportation for that trip as well as a Pumpkin Orchard trip for the primary grades.

Then we turned the tables and asked the students if they had questions for us.

They enjoyed listening to the stories about the places we

have traveled around the world.

But surprisingly, they were most interested in what Vis was like when Director Maureen went to school there. She showed them where the Grade School and the Kindergarten once stood, and that the room we were in used to be one of her high school classrooms, back when it was the high school.

They also enjoyed looking at the photos we took of them during prior visits. It was so nice to get reacquainted and to meet our new scholarship student.



Botanic Garden Field Trip



Pumpkin Orchard Trip

Another Awesome Clothing/Book Drive

The rain stopped in plenty of time on September 13th for Jim's Bridge to deliver the 6,237 pounds of goods that were collected as part of its Summer Clothing/Book Drive.

Wow that's over three tons!!

For this event, Jim's Bridge received a FunDrive bonus for collecting more than 700 pounds of books/CDs/DVDs/VHS tapes/cassette tapes. In fact, we had 1,405 pounds. Bravo to everyone who cleared out their book/media libraries for Jim's Bridge!

All proceeds from this Savers FunDrive will be used by Jim's Bridge to directly benefit Chicago school children.

Our thanks to everyone who donated to our drive. A big THANK YOU to all who helped load/unload everything we brought to Savers. And a special shout out to **Callaghan's Moving Services** for once again providing a truck and crew to transport everything!

Our next clothing/book drive will begin on Dec 1st and end on February 7, 2026. See back page for details.

Since we began the clothing drives in 2017, Jim's Bridge has collected 97,356 pounds of goods for Savers FunDrives. In 2026, we hope to easily *crush* the 100K mark!



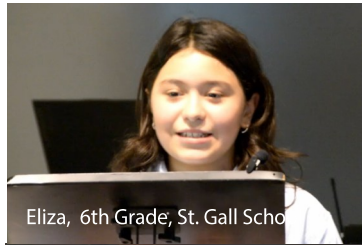


Scholarship Student "Steals the Spotlight"

We had a beautiful day for the Jim's Bridge 2025 Celebration and Fundraiser on Sunday, August 10th.

We were joined by close to 100 friends of Jim's Bridge at Zachary's Grill in Palos Heights. Three food stations, each with a different theme, were loaded with delicious offerings. Spin the Wheel was popular as usual, along with many raffles and a silent auction.

However, the highlight, once again, were the speakers from the organizations that Jim's Bridge supports. The presentations were kicked off by one of our



Eliza, 6th Grade, St. Gall School



Principal Mundt, Visitation School



Cristina DeLaRosa, Exec Director Erie Neighborhood House



Principal Jessica Taylor Academy of St. Benedict the African



Board of Directors and Friends

scholarship students, a sixth grader from St. Gall School. She was very poised, confident and articulate as she spoke. The audience responded with a thunderous round of applause as she completed her speech.

She was followed by Principal Nicole Mundt from Visitation School, Principal Jessica Taylor from the Academy of St. Benedict the African (ASBA) and Cristina DeLaRosa, Executive Director of Erie Neighborhood House. They shared the many ways that Jim's Bridge has made a difference for the children they serve.

Our thanks to everyone who joined us and all who donated. It was one of our most successful fundraisers ever.

Jim's Bridge Next Clothing Drive



Jim's Bridge is holding a clothing drive in partnership with Savers from Sunday Dec 1, 2025 until Saturday Feb 7, 2026.

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.

Jim's Bridge now Accepts Zelle

Donations to Jim's Bridge just got easier!



Send to John@jfm Memorial.org

You will be emailed a letter acknowledging your donation which can be used for tax purposes.

Our Mission

October 2, 2025 marked twelve 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.jfm Memorial.org/donate, Zelle to john@jfm Memorial.org or mail to

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

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



www.jfm Memorial.org



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