

# James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



[www.jfmmemorial.org](http://www.jfmmemorial.org)

## Annual Report 2019

James F Mikulski Memorial Group Inc.  
February, 2020  
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## Executive Summary

We are proud of the progress of the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group over the six years since the charity was formed.

In 2019, we held our most successful Annual Fundraiser, with over 110 people attending. We have established “Jim’s Bridge to a Brighter Future” as a highly regarded volunteer group for local Run/Walk events. People welcome our clothing (and more!) donation drives in partnership with \$savers as a great opportunity to de-clutter and get organized. Our revenue from donations has steadily risen while we maintain a low total expense ratio of less than 10% of revenue. Looking at operating and management expenses only, our ratio is at 2% of revenue.

We are most proud of the relationships we have established with Visitation Catholic School, St. Gall School and the Erie Neighborhood House. It is wonderful to meet with our scholarship students and to hear of the benefits that children in those organizations receive through the programs that we sponsor.

Last year, for the five year anniversary, we created a list of our accomplishments to date. Here is an updated list, reflecting six years of helping others.

### Jim’s Bridge to a Brighter Future Six Year Summary

\$101,280	Total Funds Granted to help Children
28,857	Pounds of goods collected for \$savers and diverted from landfills
1,738	Volunteers provided to Run/Walk/Tri events
410	Donations Received
188	"Likes" on Facebook
44	Run/Walk/Tri events supported
41	Scholarships Awarded

We are pleased that we have been successful in honoring the memory of our son Jim in such a positive manner.

Best regards,

Maureen and John Mikulski

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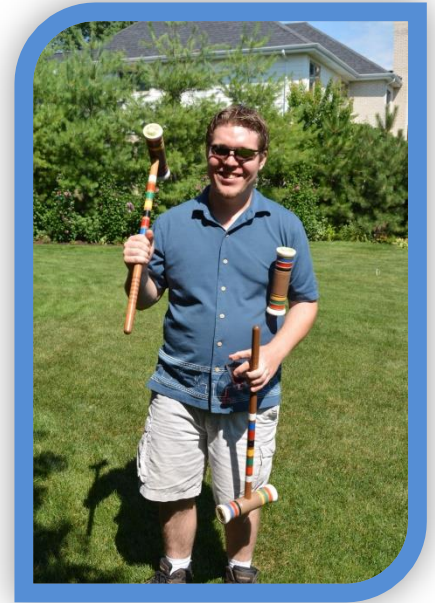


## Mission

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 husband, stepfather, son, brother, family member and friend who passed away suddenly 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 aged 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 services 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 2019 for the next five year period.

## Accomplishments for 2019

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group was successful in meeting its goals for 2019

- Help children in need in the Chicago Area
- Enhance fundraising
- Coordinate volunteer groups as a source of revenue
- Get the word out about our organization
- Keep operating expenses low through strong financial management

### Help Children in Need in the Chicago Area

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group was proud to enhance its support for the children at Visitation School, St. Gall School and the Erie Neighborhood House. For Visitation, our charity increased its scholarship funding and sponsorship of school and after school programs. For the fourth year we funded the transportation for the Visitation students and their chaperones, who were nominated to attend a week long summer camp in Wisconsin.

At St. Gall, we were delighted to increase our scholarship funding, as well as provide additional funding that was used to sponsor a field trip in May to the Holocaust Museum for the sixth and seventh grade students.

Between Visitation and St Gall School, we awarded eight scholarships for the 2019-2020 school year.

At the Erie Neighborhood House, we once again funded backpacks filled with school supplies. Volunteers from Jim's Bridge handed out the backpacks to the children at the Erie Neighborhood House Little Village "Back to School Fair".



We donated toys to the Visitation "Christmas Festival" as well as supported the Catholic Charities "Sponsor a Family" and the Erie Neighborhood House "Holiday with Heart" events. We provided funds for the meal prepared for "Breakfast with Santa" for over 300 children and their parents at the Erie Neighborhood House.

### Enhance Fundraising

We held our most successful annual fundraiser to date on August 11, 2019.

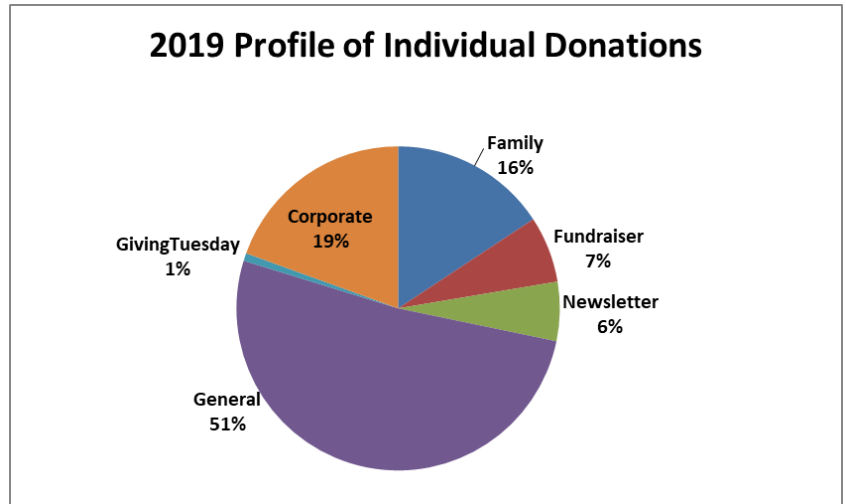
Over 110 people joined us that day to relax, listen to music, meet with friends and bid on one or more of the many silent auction and raffle items. With the help of Zachary Kubiak, owner of Zachary's Grill where the event was held, our fundraiser was promoted on the local Palos Heights TV channel, discussed at the Palos Heights City Council meetings and later featured in *The Regional News*. We were



delighted when Zachary agreed to fill a vacancy on our Board of Directors (more details later in this report).

In 2019, we maintained our partnership with Savers, hosting one large drive after the Holidays and one summertime “mini-drive”. Jim’s Bridge receives a donation from Savers based on the number of pounds of goods we collect. We amassed a total of 8117 pounds (over 4 Tons) of soft goods, hard goods and books which were delivered to Savers and resulted in a nice donations to the charity.

We are very grateful for the continuing trend in corporate and family foundation donations. A number of our supporters have solicited donations from their place of employment, nominated our charity for grants from corporate programs sponsored by their employer or included our charity in their family foundation awards.

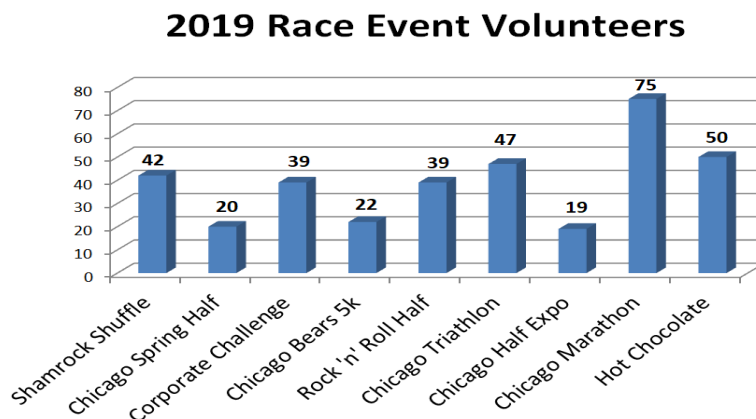


We continued our partnership with the AmazonSmile charitable organization program. We have realized regular growth in the quarterly contributions from Amazon. When people choose the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group while purchasing items through the Amazon Smile website, our charity will receive 0.05% of the purchase price at no cost to the buyer. We promote our AmazonSmile connection in each newsletter and at the fundraiser.

Sixty percent of the donations that we received continue to be in cash or check, minimizing the fees incurred for web based donations.

### Coordinate Volunteer Groups as a Source of Revenue

We supported nine race events in 2019. With the addition of a ninth race in 2019, our total number of volunteers grew accordingly.



We have been successful in negotiating higher donation levels for our volunteers, as well as bonus donations, since the race organizers recognize the quality and dependability of the volunteers from Jim’s Bridge to a Brighter Future.

Year to Year Comparison for Races	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Number of Race Events	9	8	9	7	6
Total Number of Volunteers	353	320	322	269	268
Donations Received from Races <sup>1</sup>	\$6,362.50	\$5,320.00	\$5,925.00	\$4,475.00	\$4,631.50
<sup>1</sup> 2019 Hot Chocolate donation received in January 2020					

Soliciting volunteers for races remains a great way to promote our charity and get people involved in helping others.

### Get the Word Out About our Organization

The Jim’s Bridge Facebook page, the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group website, and our semi-annual newsletter are the primary ways that we communicate about the work our charity has performed as well as announce upcoming activities.

In 2019, Jim’s Bridge received additional publicity. We were contacted by two running community publications about volunteering at races, and our annual fundraiser was featured in a local newspaper:

- The May 17, 2019 Chicago Events Management newsletter included a “Spotlight” article on the volunteer work performed by Jim’s Bridge to a Brighter Future
- The Sept 26, 2019 “Regional News” contained a front page article titled “Fundraiser Honors Memory of Palos Heights Suicide Victim”
- The Sept 27, 2019 Chicago Athlete Magazine featured Jim’s Bridge in the article “Give Back to the Running Community by Volunteering”

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group website, [www.jfmmemorial.org](http://www.jfmmemorial.org), has links to each of these articles.

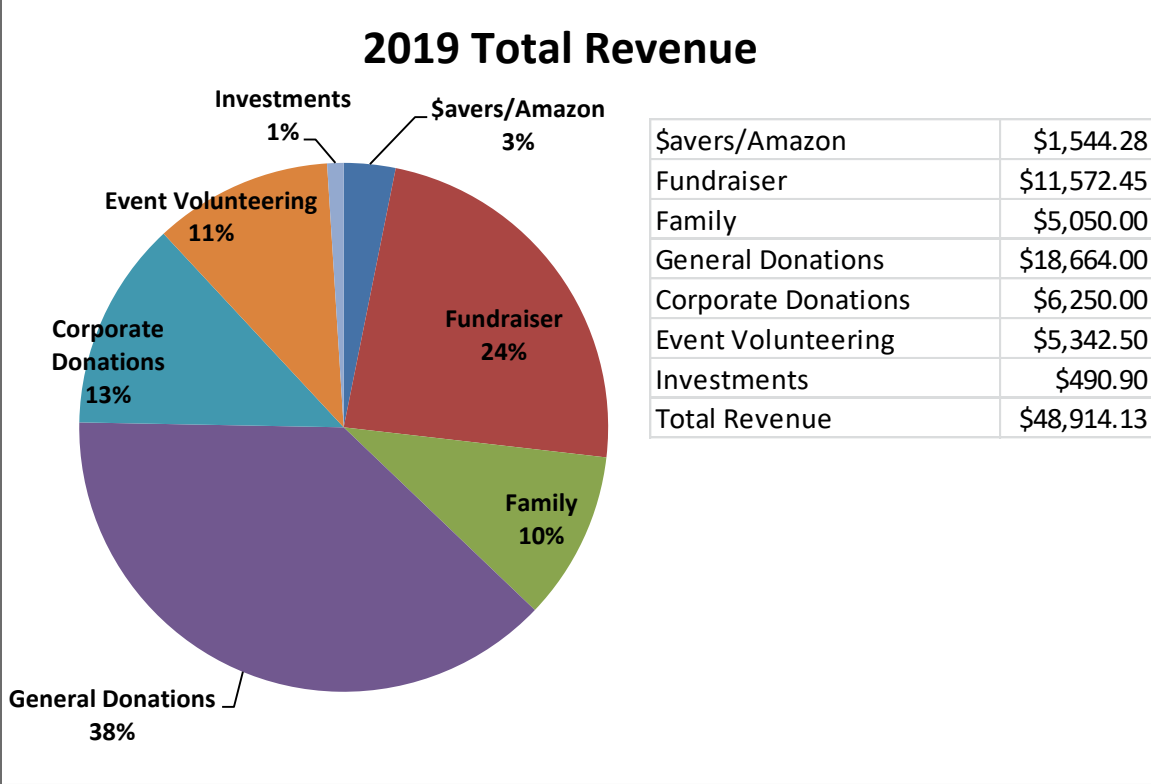
Our Facebook “Likes” continue to steadily rise with 188 “Likes”. The Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/JimsBridge/>. The organizations we sponsor, as well as family and friends, regularly Share and “Like” our posts. The Yankee Runners website, a local running group, links to the Jim’s Bridge website as a volunteer organization.



**Keep Operating Costs Low – Financial Analysis**

*Revenue*

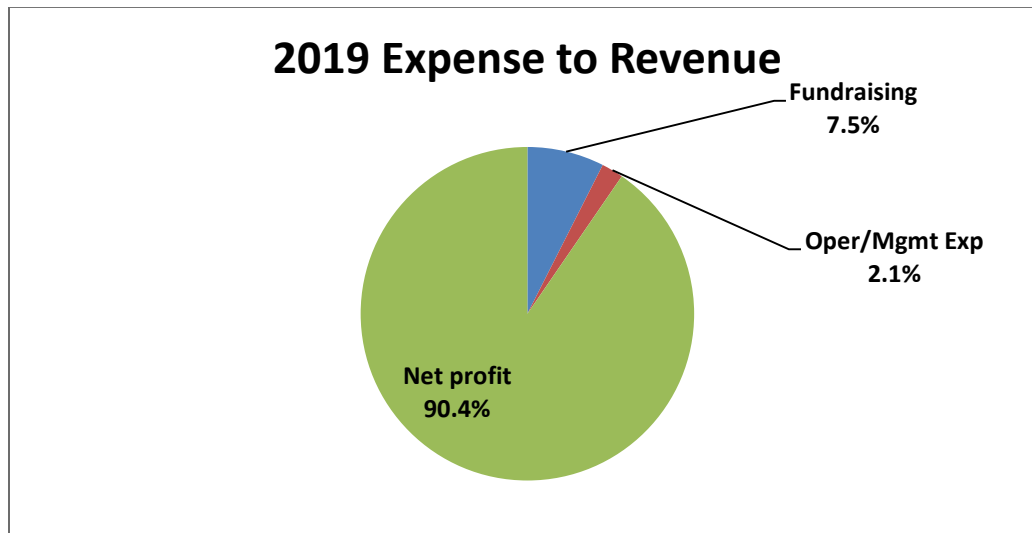
In 2019, we realized a significant increase in revenue thanks to the successful fundraiser and generous donations. We continue to have a good diversification of our revenue sources.





## Expense

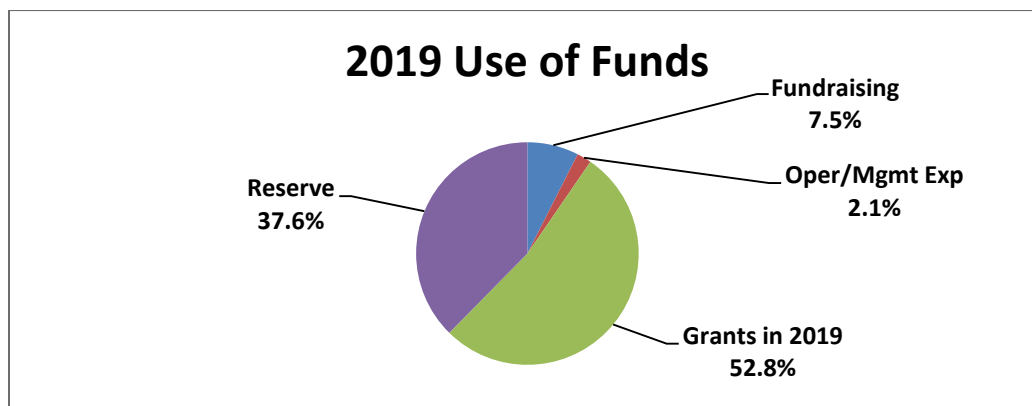
Overall expense increased in 2019 due to supporting a greater number of attendees at the annual fundraiser. Operating and management expenses remain at 2% of revenue; total expense is less than 10% of revenue.



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

Yearly Comparison	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Revenues	\$48,914.13	\$37,178.60	\$32,472.13	\$23,542.96	\$16,152.43	\$17,850.00
Total Expenses	\$4,685.80	\$3,352.50	\$3,580.34	\$3,931.22	\$1,364.23	\$2,420.00
Grants for Children	\$25,827.83	\$22,696.73	\$17,820.40	\$15,501.61	\$10,936.23	\$8,497.08
Total Expense to Revenue	9.6%	9.0%	11.0%	16.7%	8.4%	13.6%
Opex/Mgmt to Revenue	2.1%	2.0%	2.4%	4.5%	6.6%	5.8%
Opex/Mgmt Expense only	\$1,035.98	\$758.46	\$783.16	1,047.95	1064.23	\$1,027.00
Reserve	\$18,400.50	\$11,129.37	\$11,071.39	\$4,110.13	\$3,851.97	\$6,932.92

As a result of our successful Annual Fundraiser, increased donations and lower operating/management expense, we were able to award more funds to the organizations we sponsor, continuing the trend of granting more each year.



## 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**, has more than 35 years of experience in Information Technology and Business in the Chicago Area, with an advanced degree in Computer Science and Certification in Project Management.



**Kathleen Diaz, Vice President**, has more than 15 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 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 two restaurants Palos Heights. His restaurant, Zachary's Grill, is the popular location of our Annual Fundraiser. We welcome Zachary as the newest member of our Board of Directors!

## Plans for 2020

### *Supporting the Children*

In addition to sustaining the work and good relationships that we have established at Visitation, St. Gall and the Erie Neighborhood House, we hope to deepen our support for them and include another school or organization that supports children in underserved Chicagoland areas.

### *Fundraising*

We are happy with the success of this year's fundraiser and plan to host the event in 2020. We will continue using Facebook, Savers and Amazon Smile as sources of fundraising. We will regularly seek new fundraising sources and promote opportunities for corporate gift matching or sharing.

### *Coordinating volunteers as a source of revenue*

We will continue to provide volunteers for race events, especially with the race organizers who know us and appreciate the efforts of our volunteers. We will focus on races that provide healthy, fun and rewarding experiences for our volunteers as well as a donation to Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future. We will recruit new volunteers and extend our gratitude to all of them, especially those who volunteer with us at nearly every possible opportunity. Each year, we provide gift cards to Panera Bread or Starbucks to those who volunteer with us at the most races. We also have an 'open raffle' of Panera Bread or Starbucks gift cards to our other volunteers.

### *Getting the word out about our organization*

We will continue to publish our semi-annual newsletter and promote the charity through Facebook. The Fundraiser and Donation Drives also expand 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 our 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.

## Ways You Can Help Support Our Mission

Please consider helping our cause with a donation on our website at the James F Mikulski Memorial Group website <http://www.jfmmemorial.org/donatePP.html>, on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JimsBridge/> or by mail at

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

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](mailto:info@jfmmemorial.org)



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