

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



www.jfmmemorial.org

Annual Report 2020

James F Mikulski Memorial Group Inc.
February, 2021
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Executive Summary

We began the year 2020 delighted to welcome the Academy of St. Benedict the African (ASBA) as a new school that the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group will support through scholarships and funding school programs. We got an early start on planning our annual summertime fundraiser and the races where we would volunteer for the year were already identified. Then everything changed with the onset of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Although 2020 played out much differently than we had expected, we are proud of the way the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group/Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future was able to adapt and support the children at Visitation, St. Gall, the Erie Neighborhood House and ASBA in new ways, supplying facemasks, handsantizer and shoe coverings as well as additional scholarships. We even held our first Holiday Toy Drive, where we received so many donations that we delivered over 100 toys to each school!

We were very pleased with the response we received from our supporters to the Special Appeal that we launched in place of the annual fundraiser. As a result we were able to incorporate grants for ASBA, sustain our grant levels for Vis, St. Gall's and Erie House and have enough left to add to our reserve for future years, all while keeping our expense to revenue ratio well below 10%.

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

\$132,289	Total Funds Granted to help Children
36,285	Pounds of good collected for \$avers
1,738	Volunteers provided to Run/Walk/Tri events
481	Donations Received
213	"Likes" on Facebook
47	Run/Walk/Tri events supported
52	Scholarships Awarded

We are heartened that we were able to honor the memory of our son Jim in ways which benefit others, during such a challenging year.

Best regards,

Maureen and John Mikulski

Table of Contents

- Executive Summary*.....1
- Mission*.....3
- About the Organization*.....3
- Accomplishments for 2020*4
 - Help Children in Need in the Chicago Area4
 - Enhance Fundraising4
 - Coordinate Volunteer Groups as a Source of Revenue5
 - Get the Word Out About our Organization.....5
 - Keep Operating Costs Low – Financial Analysis.....6
- Our Board of Directors*7
- Plans for 2021*.....8
- Ways You Can Help Support Our Mission*.....9



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 2020

Jim's Bridge began the year happy to welcome The Academy of St. Benedict the African as the newest addition to the schools that it sponsors. Jim's Bridge had just completed its most successful Savers Clothing donation drive in February, 2020. At the Board of Directors meeting in early March, the Board was excited to begin planning for the annual fundraiser in August 2020, and already had the slate of volunteer events for the year.

Then in mid-March, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and lockdowns began. The restrictions eventually resulted in the cancellation of all the in-person races that were identified by Jim's Bridge for recruiting volunteers. In July, 2021, the Board of Directors agreed to cancel the annual fundraiser.

Even though the year turned out quite differently than expected due to the COVID-19 restrictions, Jim's Bridge met its goals for 2020, adjusting and creating new approaches as the year progressed.

Help Children in Need in the Chicago Area

We were pleased that we were able to sustain our grant levels for Visitation, St. Gall and the Erie Neighborhood House, while also providing grants to the Academy of St. Benedict the African. In 2020 we awarded a total of eleven scholarships across the three schools. As the COVID-19 restrictions rolled out, the funds we generally provide for school programs, after school activities and equipment, were redirected by those organizations to provide personal protective equipment for the children, including face masks, hand sanitizer, shoe coverings and even 'touch free' pencil sharpeners for St. Gall's. Director Zach Kubiak partnered with another business to provide 3,000 face masks, which were distributed to the three schools.

The normal holiday festivities that we help sponsor for the schools and the Erie House were dramatically cut back. However, Jim's Bridge found a way to help. We funded grocery cards for the Erie House families in place of the Breakfast with Santa. And for the schools, Jim's Bridge launched its first Holiday Toy Drive, based on a suggestion from Director Zach. Even though it was our first time trying a Toy Drive, it was very successful, collecting more than 300 new toys. The toys were distributed to the children at Vis, St. Gall and ASBA. They were all very grateful!



Enhance Fundraising

The cancellation of the annual fundraiser and the in-person races left a large void in our fundraising plans for the year. The Board of Directors deliberated over several options for hosting a modified, 'socially distanced' fundraiser but, in the end, the risks and precautions that would be needed resulted in the decision to cancel the 2020 fundraiser.

Instead, the Board decided to launch a Special Appeal to our donor community, which coincided with the release of the Fall 2020 Newsletter. The Special Appeal was successful, increasing overall donations by more than 10% vs 2019.

We were fortunate to have completed the Post-Holiday Savers Clothing Drive in early February 2020, well before the pandemic erupted. By August, Savers had reopened its Thrift Stores and we were able to schedule another drive for September. The two clothing drives in 2020 turned out to be the most successful Jim's Bridge ever held, almost doubling the funds that were generated in 2019 through the Savers drives.



Coordinate Volunteer Groups as a Source of Revenue

Jim's Bridge recruits volunteers to help at local races, supporting activities such as staffing aid stations, managing start corrals or providing "Runner Info". The race organizers donate to Jim's Bridge based on the number of volunteers that it recruits.

Additionally, starting in 2019, the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group was accepted as a Blue Cross Blue Shield "Blue Partner". With this designation, our charity receives \$20 per hour for every BCSBS employee who volunteers at one of our events, up to \$2,000 per year.

Even though all of our planned in-person races were cancelled, Jim's Bridge leveraged its Blue Partner relationship to generate volunteer funds by designating the delivery of our September Savers Drive as a volunteer event for BCBS. We also organized a "Cheer Team" for the CARA/Yankee Runner 26.2 Group Run on October 11, 2020 as a Blue Partner event. Then, the Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA) approached Jim's Bridge about providing volunteers for a new "socially distanced" 5k on November 4, 2020. We were able to recruit 15 volunteers for the event, for which CARA donated \$500.

So, while our revenues for recruiting volunteers were significantly down in 2020, we were satisfied that we were able to generate some amount of funding from volunteer events. And we initiated a new relationship with CARA as a future source of volunteer opportunities.

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.

Our Facebook "Likes" continue to steadily rise with 213 "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.

The charity has achieved greater recognition through activities like the Holiday Toy Drive and the Savers Donation Drive, with new people contributing at each event. We are happy that we have great support from local businesses like Zachary's Grill and Running for Kicks.

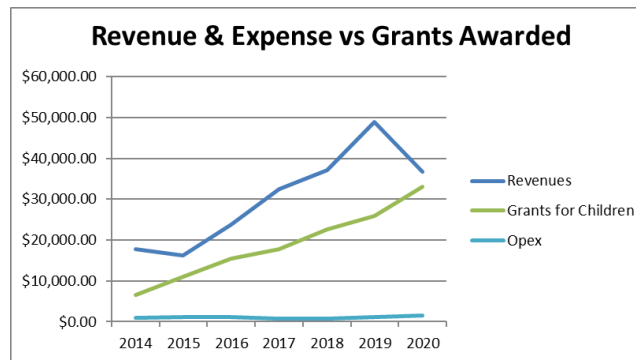
Keep Operating Costs Low – Financial Analysis

Revenue and Expenses

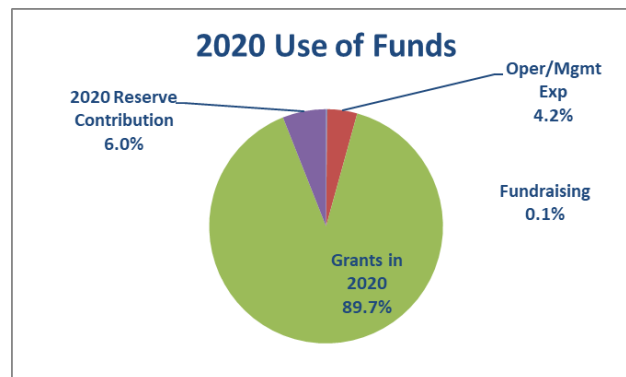
With the cancellation of the fundraiser and in-person races, the overall revenues were down for 2020, as compared to the last two years. The special appeal, in particular, helped to mitigate the loss of those revenues. Expenses were down as well, especially since we did not have the expense side of the fundraiser. As a result, we realized sufficient net income to cover all of the grants to the schools and Erie House and provide a small contribution to future reserves.

Our reserve stands at \$59,878.46, which is more than enough to cover an equal number of grants in 2021 as we awarded in 2020.

Year over Year Comparison	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Revenues	\$36,805.51	\$48,914.13	\$37,178.60	\$32,472.13	\$23,712.68	\$16,152.43	\$17,850.78
Total Expenses	\$1,583.98	\$4,685.80	\$3,352.50	\$3,580.34	\$3,931.22	\$1,364.23	\$2,420.87
Grants for Children	\$33,008.98	\$25,827.83	\$22,696.73	\$17,820.40	\$15,501.61	\$10,936.23	\$6,497.08
Total Expense to Revenue	4.3%	9.6%	9.0%	11.0%	16.6%	8.4%	13.6%
Opex to Revenue	4.2%	2.1%	2.0%	2.4%	4.4%	6.6%	5.8%
Opex	\$1,529.52	\$1,035.98	\$758.46	\$783.16	1,047.95	1064.23	\$1,027.00
Reserve Contribution	\$2,212.55	\$18,400.50	\$11,129.37	\$11,071.39	\$4,279.85	\$3,851.97	\$8,932.83



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, 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.

Plans for 2021

Supporting the Children

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group will sustain its level of support for the children at Visitation, St. Gall, the Academy of St. Benedict the African and the Erie Neighborhood House in 2021. With the return of in-house learning, we hope to be able to meet with the schools and our scholarship recipients this year. The Holiday Toy Drive was a big success in 2020 and we will work to repeat that for the 2021 Holidays.

Fundraising

We are already planning to bring back our annual fundraiser in August of 2021. We will do our best to recreate our fun afternoon of meeting with friends, making new friends, enjoying delicious food and having a chance to win great prizes. We expect that volunteering at races will come back slowly so it could be a while before we can meet the level of donations we received in prior years. We will continue to hold Savers clothing drives and look for other opportunities to raise funds. As in 2020, we will be reliant on individual and corporate donations.

Coordinating volunteers as a source of revenue

We are pleased that we already have a slate of CARA races for 2021, where we will receive a donation for recruiting 10 or more volunteers. We will stay in contact with the race organizers we have worked with in prior years, such as RAM Racing and Chicago Events Management, so that we can be ready to recruit volunteers for their races, as they safely return to in-person events.

Getting the word out about our organization

We will continue to publish our semi-annual newsletter and promote the charity through Facebook. The annual fundraiser, Savers clothing drives and the Holiday Toy Drive 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 well below 10%.

Ways You Can Help Support Our Mission

Please consider helping our cause with a donation 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 to

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



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