



Reflections from Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future

Volume 1, Issue 1

Winter 2015

Celebrating Christmas by Helping Others

Visitation School Christmas Festival

We were delighted to assist Visitation Catholic School in their annual Christmas Festival this year with donations and through volunteering

On the day of the Christmas Festival, we joined the volunteer group that helped Visitation's students shop for holiday gifts for family and friends.



This was followed by a delicious home cooked buffet lunch prepared by the school parents for the volunteers and school staff. All of the proceeds from the Christmas Festival are directly used for the benefit of the school.

Sponsor-A-Family

Christmas time can be difficult when you are unable to afford warm clothes or a small toy for the little ones.

We were proud to sponsor a family of seven children, of grade school age and younger, through the Catholic Charities Sponsor-A-Family Program. Each child in the family was given a warm winter coat, hat, and gloves, as well as a toy.

Thank You to Our Donors and Volunteers

When we started down the path of establishing our charity in memory of Jim, we knew we could not accomplish our goals without the help of others as volunteers and donors.

We are absolutely overjoyed at the response we have received this year from people such as you who have helped us.

We are so grateful to those of you who have provided financial donations to the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group. These donations have become the cornerstone of the charity and enable us to make a difference in a child's life. With your help we received more than \$9,000 in contributions in 2014.

Thank You So Much to ALL who Donated!!

We had over 200 volunteers for five Chicago running events that Jim's Bridge supported this year:

Event	Volunteers
Chase Corporate Challenge, May 2014	46
Rock N Roll Half Marathon, July 2014	13
Rock The Night 5k, August 2014	28
The Chicago Marathon, October 2014	86
Hot Chocolate 5k/15k, November 2014	31

The organizers for these events made a donation to the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group based upon the number of volunteers who helped at their event. These donations totaled over \$3,000.

Thank You to Our Volunteers!!!

Volunteer Race Recap



Rock the Night 5K



JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge



Stormy skies held off as our 28 volunteers managed the start corrals for this 5k race by Soldier Field on August 21, 2014. After the start, our volunteers enjoyed hot dogs, burgers and roasted corn on the cob, served on a take home frisbee.

The Bank of America Chicago Marathon

Eighty-six volunteers from Jim's Bridge provided runner information in Grant Park on the crisp fall morning of October 12, 2014. Over 40,000 runners participated in the marathon. Volunteers received a Chicago marathon volunteer jacket and cap.

On May 24, 2014 Jim's Bridge provided 46 volunteers at the JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge 3.5 mile run. On a beautiful evening in Grant Park, our volunteers managed the Start Corrals, provided post-start cleanup and assisted at a water stop. Over 25,000 people participated in the race. The volunteers received a T-Shirt and pre-race pizza.



Rock N Roll Half Marathon



The Hot Chocolate 5K/15K

On the warm morning of July 21, 2014, our volunteers handed out "cold sponges to hot runners". They were stationed after the 11 mile marker on the 13.1 mile course. The volunteers received volunteer shirts, a drawstring bag and a souvenir towel.

It was a brisk morning in Grant Park on Nov 9, 2014, as 31 volunteers from Jim's Bridge provided runner information to nearly 40,000 participants in the Hot Chocolate 5K/15K. Our volunteers were rewarded with delicious Hot Chocolate fondue, hot chocolate drinks and an awesome hoodie for their services.

The Schools We Support



Visitation School

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group awards scholarships to students at Visitation Catholic School. Award recipients are recommended by the school's administration, based on financial need and good academic standing. "Vis" serves the Englewood and Back of the Yards areas on the South Side of Chicago. Visitation welcomes all children regardless of race, creed, color or national origin.

Our charity also provides financial support for programs and activities at the school which enrich the education and well-being of the students.

In Spring 2014, we were delighted to underwrite the expenses for the annual Visitation "Hoops" Tournament.



This intramural basketball tournament runs from January through March and is open to all students in Grades 2 – 8



Directors Maureen and John Mikulski were thrilled to hand out the awards at the completion of the Hoops tournament

Our charity provided transportation funding for trips to each of Chicago's zoos. The charity funded Urban Gateways programs which brought Art music and Dance workshops to the school.

We covered the expenses for the Academic Awards Ceremony at the end of the 2013-2014, where three Visitation students were presented scholarships for the upcoming 2014-2015 academic year from Jim's Bridge.



St. Gall School

Thanks to our very generous donors and the work of our volunteers, the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group has extended its scholarship program to include St. Gall Catholic School on the Southwest Side of Chicago, which primarily serves a Hispanic community.

As with Visitation, scholarship recipients are recommended by the school's administration based on financial need and good academic standing.

In November, 2014, Executive Directors Maureen and John Mikulski were proud to present scholarships to four children at St. Gall.



We were deeply touched by the gratitude expressed by the students, parents and administration.



Establishing Our Charity



Our Name and Logo

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group is the name under which we incorporated in the State of Illinois as a Charitable Organization. We chose this name to clearly reflect our commitment to establishing a legacy of caring and service in Jim's memory. For those of you who knew Jim, he was always happy to help and would go the extra mile to make sure things were done very well.

There are many ways to establish a legacy of caring and service. Our focus is on serving future generations by supporting grade school children from low-income families within the Chicago area. We also encourage others to help further this mission through volunteer work or financial support.

To create an easily recognizable name, and as a symbol to the goals of our charity, we have adopted the name "Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future" and created this logo, which is now used on our business materials and correspondence.

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



www.jfmmemorial.org

Both the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group and Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future are legally approved names for our charity. "Jim's Bridge" is used when we do our volunteer work since it is easy to remember.

IRS Tax Exempt Status

We are happy to announce that the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group received approval from the IRS as a Tax Exempt 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization, retroactive to its incorporation date of January 13, 2014. This means that your donation is fully tax deductible to

the extent allowed by law. Beginning with our incorporation in 2014, a tax exempt acknowledgement letter has been sent to each donor within two weeks of the donation. If you have not received your donation acknowledgement letter, or need another copy, please send an email to info@jfmmemorial.org, or contact Maureen Mikulski at 708-267-9343.

Our Website

Many of our donors and volunteers have visited our website. This is where we post the latest information on volunteer activities and the charitable use of your donations for beneficiary schools and programs. The website has a direct link to our donation service, GoFundMe.

Check it out at WWW.JFMMEMORIAL.ORG.

We welcome your thoughts, comments, and any new ideas on what we could be sharing online. Please send them to us at info@jfmmemorial.org.

Managing the Charity Expenses

The goal of the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group is to keep its expenses as low as possible so that donations can be used to fulfill the mission of supporting grade school children with financial need within the Chicago area.

No salary or financial compensation is provided to those managing and directing the charity: all of that work is completely voluntary. Our operating/expense ratio this year was less than 7%. More details on our financial status will be in our upcoming Annual Report which will be posted on our website.

Let us know how you like our newsletter!

We hope you enjoyed our first newsletter. We plan to issue it semi-annually. We are very interested in your comments on its content as well as ideas for future articles.

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