



# Reflections from Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group

Volume 7 Issue 1

## Cultivating the Giving Spirit

What do you do when it is Christmas time, you cannot get outside much, there are few holiday gatherings and visiting the schools is out because most children are learning remotely ..... why you hold a Holiday Toy Drive! And that's what Jim's Bridge did!

Thanks to our Board Director Zach Kubiak's brainstorming idea, Jim's Bridge held its first Holiday Toy Drive. All donated toys went to the schools we support – Visitation, St. Gall and the Academy of St. Benedict the African (ASBA).

Zach set up a toy drop-off at his restaurant, Zachary's Grill



and our friend Mel Diab of Running for Kicks, offered his store as another collection point. Zach even held a "Drive By Santa" event for the toy drive!

Response was outstanding with well over 300 toys collected for the children, which meant over 100 toys donated to each school.

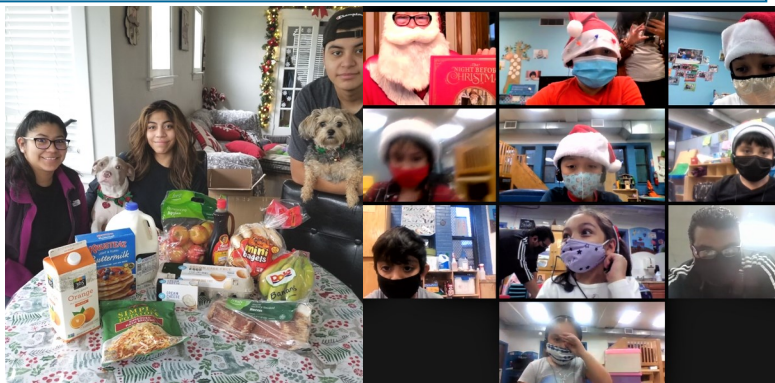
At St. Gall, the toys were handed out at their Drive Thru Christmas Parade. At Visitation, the toys were distributed during Catholic Schools week and as a prize for following COVID rules. At ASBA, they were given to the pre-K, K and extended day classrooms.

Our thanks to all who contributed to the Toy Drive. It's a keeper!

## Zooming in Good Cheer

For the past several years, Jim's Bridge contributed to the Erie House Holiday with Heart weekend by donating gifts, wrapping presents and providing funds for the Breakfast with Santa.

While the event for 2020 was a bit different because of COVID, Jim's Bridge participated by sending gifts to several children and by funding grocery cards for the families to have breakfast at home while they Zoom with Santa.





# Volunteering at Race Events

As we gained a better understanding of "Social Distancing" requirements, Jim's Bridge was able to participate in two outdoor running volunteer events at the end of 2020. We will continue to be diligent in selecting events where current COVID-19 restrictions are observed. To learn about upcoming volunteering opportunities, see our Facebook page or send an email to [info@jfmmemorial.org](mailto:info@jfmmemorial.org) to be added to our volunteer distribution list.

## CARA/Yankee Runner 26.2 Mile Run 10/11/20

Jim's Bridge set up a "Cheer Team" for one of the local 26.2 mile runs organized by the Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA) Marathon Training Program, in place of the cancelled Chicago Marathon.

Our team 'cheered on' the CARA/Yankee Runner 26.2 event in the Chicago SW suburbs.



## CARA Autumn Chase Trail Run at The Forge 11/4/20

At the CARA Autumn Chase Trail 5K Run, the Jim's Bridge volunteers managed the start corrals, ensuring that the participants maintained a 6ft distance as they moved in waves to the start line. They also served as course marshals.



## Another Successful Savers Clothing Drive

Jim's Bridge held its fifth annual Post-Holiday Clothing Drive in partnership with Savers Thrift Stores.

We were happy to deliver 142 bags with over 1,700 pounds of goods to Savers on Jan 29<sup>th</sup>. Jim's Bridge received a nice donation from Savers for all of

the items collected on their behalf.

Since 2017, Jim's Bridge has delivered a total of 36,285 pounds of goods to Savers!

Our next drive will take place in the late summer of 2021.



# The Schools We Sponsor



## Visitation School

In addition to the five scholarships for Visitation this school year, Jim's Bridge provided funding for school programs and equipment, including a special year end grant. (see photos of four of our scholarship students).

This year these funds were used to acquire a variety of technology equipment, flexible seating for pre-K through 4th grade, hand sanitizing stations, and COVID Friendly toys/games for the school's aftercare program.



## St. Gall School

Although we were not able to visit the schools this year, we were delighted to squeeze in one Zoom session with our scholarship recipients at St. Gall's, along with their Principal.

We talked about how different school was with some

students at home and some in school, but still in the same class. It was good to see them and know that they were doing well.

At the end of 2020, we also gave St. Gall's a special end of year award, which they turned into scholarships for two additional students.



## Academy of St. Benedict the African

As with Visitation, St. Gall's and Erie House, Jim's Bridge was able to provide a year end gift to the Academy of St. Benedict the African (ASBA).

ASBA chose to award a scholarship to an additional

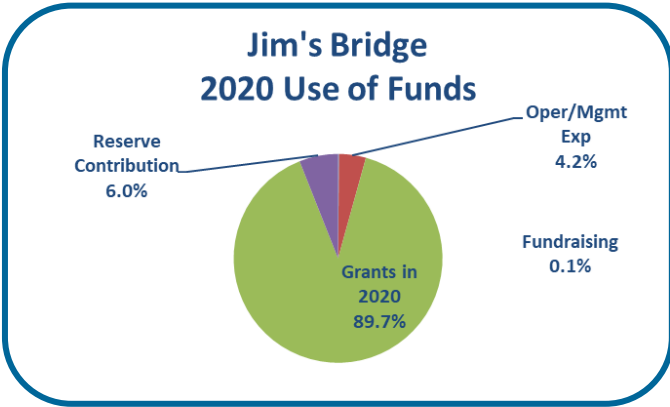
ASBA student. His family was very grateful for our help.

We are delighted that we now provide scholarship assistance for two students at ASBA





# Wrapping up 2020



There is no doubt that COVID-19 restrictions made 2020 a challenging year for Jim's Bridge. However, we are grateful that we were able to sustain our support for Visitation, St. Gall and the Erie Neighborhood House while also welcoming ASBA.

In place of our annual fundraiser, which was canceled due to COVID concerns, we launched a special appeal to our community. The response was wonderful and kept us whole for 2020.

It makes us proud to see the creative ways that the schools and Erie House adapted to operating remotely while keeping the children engaged. We are pleased at the way Jim's

Bridge was also able to adapt and find new ways to help such as donating PPE and introducing a Toy Drive.

As we get further into 2021, it will be challenging as well.

We are hopeful to revive our annual fundraiser later in the year, and will soon begin planning for it. We are heartened that our volunteer recruiting opportunities are returning and that the clothing drives continue to be successful.

Thank you to all of those who support our charity through donations, volunteering, promoting our events and assisting with our fundraising. We look forward to your continued support, which directly benefits children in the Chicago area, in memory of Jim.

Stay healthy!

### Keep in Touch with Jim's Bridge

To get the latest news from Jim's Bridge on volunteer opportunities, clothing drives, the annual fundraiser and other activities, join our email distribution list.

Just send your name and email address to [info@jfm Memorial.org](mailto:info@jfm Memorial.org)

Look for regular updates on Facebook at the Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future page.

### Attention Amazon Shoppers!

Amazon donates 0.5% of purchases made through Amazon Smile for the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group at no cost to you!

Go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)

Select James F. Mikulski Memorial Group Inc

Then Go Shopping!!!



## Our Mission

October 2, 2020 marked seven 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](http://www.jfm Memorial.org) or to

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

## James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



[www.jfm Memorial.org](http://www.jfm Memorial.org)



Follow us on Instagram  
 @jimsbridge

Like us on Facebook  
<http://www.facebook.com/JimsBridge/>