

# Reflections from Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future



James F. Mikulski Memorial Group

Volume 8 Issue 1

## Jim's Bridge Holiday Toy Drive

# "For it is in Giving that We Receive" (St. Francis of Assisi)

In many ways, that quote exemplified the 2021 Jim's Bridge Holiday Toy Drive. Many people generously contributed to the drive and many gave their time to ensure that each toy was placed in the hands of a child or became part of a school program.

The 2021 Holiday toy drive went from Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve. Zachary's Grill and Running for Kicks kindly served as convenient drop off locations. Some people chose to make monetary donations which were used to purchase more toys. Over 300 toys were collected!

The toys were delivered to the schools in January. With holiday vacations, a resurgence of COVID and unscheduled school snow days, distribution to the children was more challenging than expected. However, each school rose to the occasion in their own creative way.

At ASBA, the toys were given to many children. They also added some of the toys to their extended day program so more children could enjoy them.

At St. Gall's, we were so proud of our scholarship students who had the pleasure of distributing the toys to surprised and thrilled Pre-K – 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. They first introduced our charity to the children and then presented each child with a bag that contained a toy. The children screamed, jumped, clapped and loved their toys.



When we delivered the toys to Visitation, we were greeted at the door by our scholarship students! They swooped in to gather up the toys to bring into the school. Later, they helped determine the best way to distribute them to the students. The plan was a great success, handing out the toys as a surprise Valentine's Day treat. Sure beats candy!



# Volunteering at Race Events

As in-person race events return, Jim's Bridge has been able to recruit volunteers for several events. Not only is it rewarding to volunteer, but it is also a fundraising activity 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.



Hot Chocolate 15K/5K - Nov 7, 2021



CARA Autumn Trail Chase 8K - Nov 13, 2021



Shamrock Shuffle Packet Pickup - Mar 19, 2022

# Jim's Bridge in Action

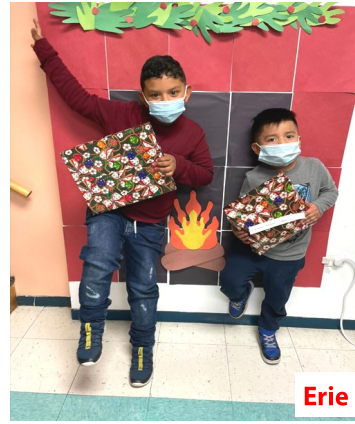


## Holiday Giving

Once again, the Erie House Holiday with Heart Breakfast with Santa was cancelled due to COVID concerns. However, Jim's Bridge still helped to spread holiday cheer by funding grocery cards for the families of the children who would have attended the breakfast.

We were also happy to provide Christmas gifts for several Erie House children to be presented by Santa

Additionally, Jim's Bridge sponsored a family of seven with gifts of clothing, bedding and toys for all, as part of the Catholic Charities Sponsor a Family holiday program.



Erie House



## Special Year End Grants for Schools

Jim's Bridge was proud to provide special year-end grants to Visitation, St. Gall's and ASBA.

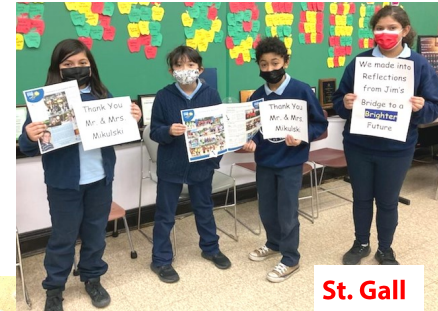
Visitation used its grant to provide supplies for new after school programs, including Print Making, Girls Who Code, Praise Dance, and Science on the Go. Plus we funded buses for a rock climbing field trip!

St. Gall School awarded a new scholarship to a third grade student who has now joined our "Mikulski Scholars".

The Academy of St. Benedict the African (ASBA) awarded a new scholarship to a student whose mother is a proud graduate of ASBA.



ASBA



St. Gall



Vis

## Year End Savers Clothing Drive

With a year end COVID resurgence and severe winter weather, our Feb 5, 2022 Savers Clothing Drive was off to a slow start. As a result, we predicted fewer donations than prior years, hoping for 100 - 150 bags, at best.

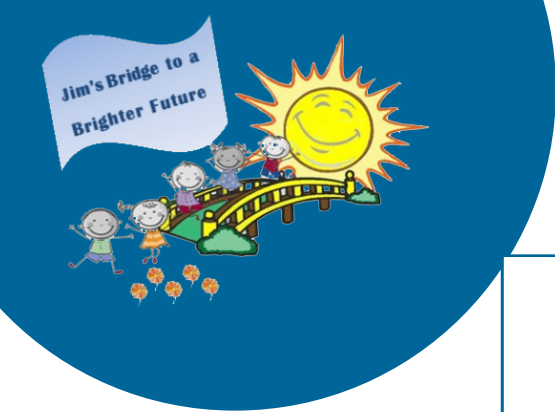
Then, in the last two weeks of the drive, our wonderful supporters began reaching out for pickups and drop-offs, including all the donations

received at the Yankee Runner Winter Breakfast.

On Feb 5th, we were delighted when our volunteers helped us deliver 296 bags and boxes to Savers, weighing in at 3,434 pounds.

We were once again overwhelmed by everyone's generosity. Savers provided a nice donation to Jim's Bridge for all we collected.

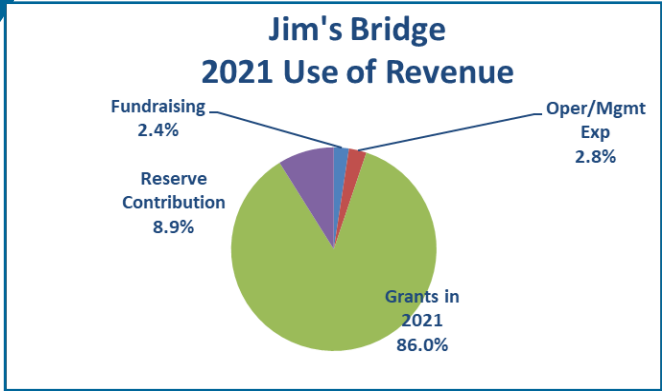




# Positive Trends in 2021

We are grateful for all the success that Jim's Bridge enjoyed in 2021:

- ◆ We maintained our support levels for Visitation, St. Gall's, ASBA and Erie House.
- ◆ We visited with our scholarship students, in person, once again.
- ◆ Our Savers clothing drives continue to have strong results.
- ◆ We volunteered at more races as in-person events return.
- ◆ Our fundraiser, on a beautiful day in September, was a big hit!



Bolstered by the great results of the Jim's Bridge 2021 Fundraiser, our revenues were up over the prior year. Thanks to Zachary's donation of the food for the fundraiser, the charity's expenses remained very low. That keeps our overall expense to revenue ratio at 5%.

Our sincere thanks to all who have donated, volunteered or supported Jim's Bridge in any way.

We are looking forward to even better things in 2022.

### Accomplishments Since 2014

\$168,211	Total Funds Granted to help Children
44,888	Pounds of goods collected for Savers
1,975	Volunteers provided to Run/Walk events
580	Donations Received
66	Scholarships Awarded

## The 2022 Fundraiser is Coming!

Although we have not yet set the date, we do know that our Annual Fundraiser and Get Together will take place on a Sunday afternoon in either September or October. You can expect the same great food, drink, music, games and prizes at Zachary's Grill in Palos Heights. Who knows...maybe even a few surprises!

**Look for more details in the coming months!**

## 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, 2021 marked eight 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.jfmmemorial.org](http://www.jfmmemorial.org) or to

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

## James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



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



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