



Reflections from Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group

Volume 9 Issue 2

Marking Ten Years of Service and Giving

The end of 2023 completes the tenth year for the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group/Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future.

When we started in January of 2014, our goal was to make a positive difference in the lives of children, as a tribute to the life of our son, Jim, who we lost to suicide in October 2013. At that time, we were still reeling from the loss of Jim and had no idea how our new charity would turn out.

We have come a long way from 3 scholarships awarded in 2014 to a total of 101 granted by the end of this year, plus funding of countless school programs and supplies.

Accomplishments Since 2014

\$231,751	Total Funds Granted to help Children
64,234	Pounds of goods collected for Savers
2,306	Volunteers provided to Run/Walk events
101	Scholarships Awarded
73	Volunteer events supported

We are proud of what we have accomplished - helping hundreds of children and engaging supporters through volunteer work, clothing drives and financial donations.

Our thanks to everyone who has supported us along this journey.

Please join us as we continue into the future by making a donation, volunteering with Jim's Bridge or contributing to our clothing drives.



1st Scholarships
2014

Our Back to School Backpack Tradition

What a fun time we had on August 17th distributing fully stocked backpacks to the children at the Erie Neighborhood House Summer Block Party.

The children were excited to pick

out their favorite backpack to use for the upcoming school year.

Jim's Bridge helped fund the backpacks, and supplies. It's our annual tradition, which we thoroughly enjoy!



Tipping the Clothing Drive Scales Again!

Wow! We collected 8,356 pounds of goods in our summer clothing drive. That's more than FOUR TONS! That is the most ever for us.

Since we receive a donation from Savers Thrift Stores based on the weight of what we deliver, it resulted in a nice benefit for Jim's

Bridge and the children we help. Our thanks to everyone who contributed to the summer 2023 clothing drive. Special thanks to those who helped us deliver everything to Savers.

Miss this clothing drive? No worries, the next one is already in progress! (see Page 4)





Volunteering at Race Events

Volunteering at races is a fun and rewarding way to help raise funds 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. Here are some of the races where Jim's Bridge volunteered in 2023



Corp Challenge 5-18-23



CARA Trail Chase 5-20-23



BTN Big 10K 7-15-23



Chicago Triathlon 8-27-23



Chicago Marathon 10-8-23

Jim's Bridge in Action



St. Gall School

We had a nice visit at St. Gall School on Sept 28th.

We reconnected with our returning scholarship students and met a new "Mikulski Scholar".

Ms. Angi, from the St. Gall School administrative staff, joined us for our visit. She has become a frequent volunteer with Jim's Bridge at races. The

students enjoyed learning about her volunteer experiences with Jim's Bridge. We were grateful for her sharing.

We also talked about the clubs the students were planning to join and Halloween plans. The principal stopped by to greet us as well. We look forward to seeing them again later in the school year



Visitation School

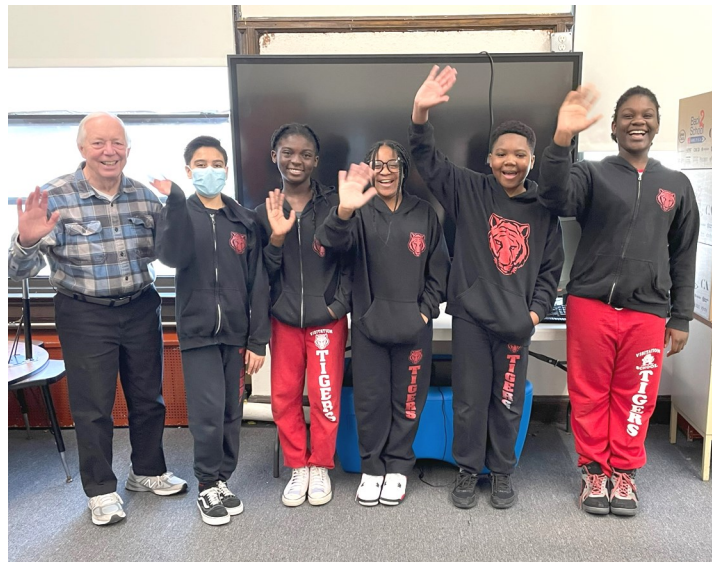
What a lot of fun chatting with our five scholarship students at Visitation Grade School on October 17th.

We had some great conversations during their lunchtime. Of course, we covered favorite classes (Social Studies and Art were most popular). They were very excited to tell us about their upcoming field trip to a Chicago Wolves game. Last year's trip was a blast and they planned to make it better this

year. They even created signs to hold up to try to get on the Fan Camera (hope it worked).

We talked about Halloween plans, best birthday parties and the possible pitfalls of playing with Play Dough! The time flew by!

In addition, Jim's Bridge provided funding to Vis after school clubs and programs, including the chess club, dance club and basketball.



Academy of St. Benedict the African

We were proud to join the Prayer Walk at the Academy of St. Benedict the African School on October 19th.

The students, teachers, staff and friends walked around the neighborhood block surrounding the school praying for peace and an end to violence.

The ASBA Prayer Walk began in 2015, after a particularly

violent summer and has become a tradition since then.

It was wonderful to see the support of local CPD, as well as the participation of recent graduates, now in high school.

And we always welcome the chance to connect with our scholarship students.



Jim's Bridge to a
Brighter Future



A Nice Day to Celebrate Jim's Bridge

We had a great turnout on July 30th for the Jim's Bridge 2023 Fundraiser at Zachary's Grill.

It was a beautiful summer afternoon where everyone could enjoy the delicious food, fun games, great prizes and music from the DJ. Spin the Wheel, Split the Pot, the Money Tree, raffles and silent auction were all very popular once again.

At the event, representatives from Visitation, ASBA, and the Erie House spoke about the ways that Jim's Bridge has made a positive impact for the children and families they serve.



Their talks underscored how supporting Jim's Bridge can make a difference.

Sr Jean and Sr. Diane, from Vis, talked about the start of Jim's Bridge and how it has expanded to provide opportunities for so many children. Principal Farrand from ASBA appreciated how the scholarships given by Jim's Bridge allow students to stay in the school, which serves as a safe haven for many of them. And Cristina DeLaRosa from Erie House spoke about the support that Jim's Bridge supplies for "Back to School" and at the Holidays.

Our thanks to all who joined us or donated. All proceeds will be used to directly assist school children in lower income areas of Chicago.

Jim's Bridge Clothing Drive



Jim's Bridge is holding a clothing drive in partnership with Savers from Saturday Nov 4, 2023 until Saturday Feb 10, 2024.

That gives you plenty of time to clean out your closets and get your donations to us. More to come on Facebook and in email. Text or call 708-267-9343 to arrange a drop off or a clothing pickup.

Jim's Bridge now Accepts Zelle

Donations to Jim's Bridge just got easier!



Send to John@jfmmemorial.org

You will be emailed a letter acknowledging your donation which can be used for tax purposes.



Our Mission

October 2, 2023 marked ten 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/donate, Zelle to john@jfmmemorial.org or mail to

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James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



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