

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group



www.jfmmemorial.org

Annual Report 2023

James F Mikulski Memorial Group Inc.
January, 2024
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Executive Summary

2023 was a memorable year for the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group/Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future. While we were proud to complete our tenth year as a 501(c)(3) charity benefitting school children, we were also saddened by marking ten years since we lost Jim to suicide in 2013.

Looking back on those ten years, the charity has accomplished much, as a tribute to Jim. It has donated close to a quarter million dollars to benefit school children in the Chicago area, including more than 100 scholarships, sponsoring hundreds of back to school backpacks, funding field trips, providing equipment for play areas and supporting school programs. In reflecting on those accomplishments, Jim's Bridge has clearly benefitted thousands of children these past 10 years.

The year 2023 was special on its own. The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group was honored with awards from two of the organizations it supports. In March 2023, the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group was awarded the 2023 Community Investment Award from the Erie Neighborhood House. In November 2023, Jim's Bridge was presented with the Outstanding Volunteer Group award by Chicago Event Management, which directs some of the largest races in Chicago.

In 2023, Jim's Bridge provided twenty scholarships to the children in the schools it supports, the most for a single year. The charity also realized its greatest overall annual revenue, largest donations for volunteering at athletic events and most collected for clothing donation drives.

We look forward to continuing the work of the charity to benefit school children in lower income areas of Chicago in ways that promote wellness and service.

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

\$241,271	Total Funds Granted to help Children
64,234	Pounds of goods collected for Savers
2,352	Volunteers provided to Run/Walk events
793	Donations Received
102	Scholarships Awarded
74	Volunteer events supported

Best regards,

Maureen and John Mikulski

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Visitation Catholic School



St. Gall School



The Erie Neighborhood House



Academy of St. Benedict the African

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 family member and friend who passed away by suicide 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 assistance 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 2023

2023 marked several milestones for the James F. Mikulski Memorial group: the number of scholarships awarded to date, the overall funding provided to help students and the receipt of prestigious awards from two of the organizations we support.

Help Children in Need in the Chicago Area

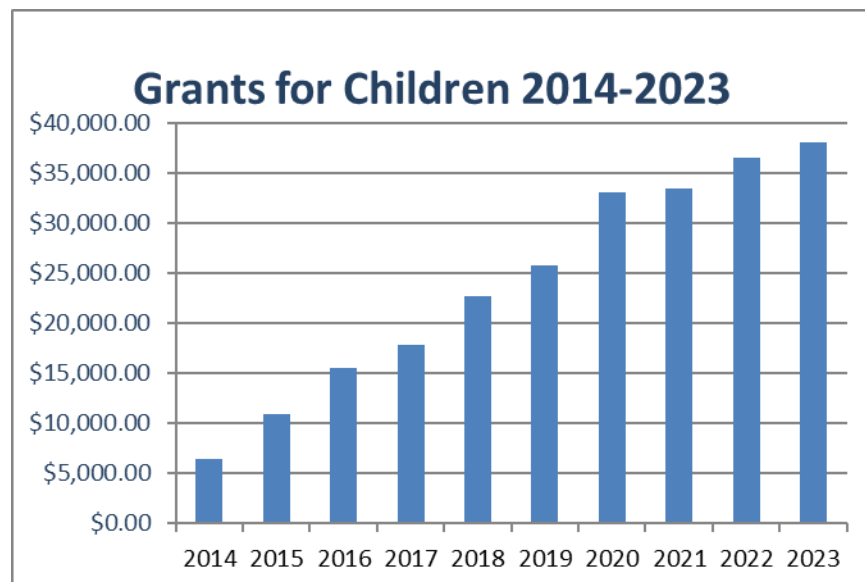
In 2023, we were able to increase our overall grant levels to the schools and the Erie Neighborhood House. We were proud that, in 2023, Jim's Bridge surpassed 100 scholarships awarded to students since 2014.

A total of twenty scholarships were awarded in 2023 across the three schools. For the Erie Neighborhood House, we continued our tradition of funding and distributing fully stocked backpacks to the Erie House children as they prepared for a new school year. This year, backpacks were also given to the children in the Little Village and West Town communities. Jim's Bridge sponsored food and gifts for the children at their Holiday with Heart celebration.

During the year, we were able to visit with our scholarship students at Visitation, St. Gall's and The Academy of St. Benedict the African (ASBA). It was wonderful to be able to spend time talking with them and getting to know them better.

Jim's Bridge continued its new tradition of presenting each school with a special Christmas gift of \$500. Since we had a successful year, each school was also awarded a special year end grant. ASBA purchased toys/activities for their Pre-K students from its Christmas gift and provided a scholarship to a child in a family with an emergency need. We look forward to hearing from Visitation and St. Gall School on how they used their Christmas gift and year end grant.

Since 2014, Jim's Bridge has provided close to a quarter million dollars to school children in lower income areas of Chicago.



Enhance Fundraising

The 2023 Jim’s Bridge Annual Fundraiser and Get Together was successful once again. One hundred people joined us at Zachary’s Grill on a beautiful summer Sunday afternoon. Many supporters who were unable to attend the event were very generous with donations for the fundraiser. For the second year, we invited the Principal or past Principal of the schools, as well as the Executive Director of the Erie Neighborhood House to say a few words about the impact that Jim’s Bridge has made for the children in their organizations. We received many positive comments from the attendees.



We had our most successful clothing drive to date. Over 8,100 pound of goods in total was collected in the summer clothing drive, which was a new record. We also had a clothing drive in February with close to 4,000 pounds delivered at that time. Savers compensates the charity based on the number of pounds of goods we deliver to them.

Jim’s Bridge benefitted from Facebook Birthday Fundraisers, which not only provides revenue, but introduces new donors to our charity.

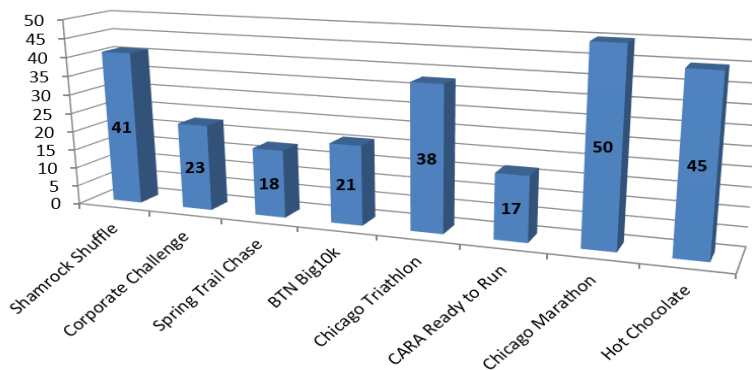
Coordinate Volunteer Groups as a Source of Revenue

In 2023, Jim’s Bridge supported eight racing events. Our Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) “Blue Partner” status provides Jim’s Bridge with \$20 per hour per BCBS employee who volunteers with us, up to \$2000 per year. In 2023 we reached the maximum level with BCBS volunteers. This award arrives the following year, so the donations below reflect the 2022 Blue Partner donation. The Corporate Challenge was very generous with its donation and the Chicago Event Management has changed its volunteer donation program, which benefitted Jim’s Bridge.

Year over Year comparison for Races

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Number of Events	8	8	7	3	9	8	9	7	6	5
Number of Volunteers	253	182	163	34	353	320	322	269	268	206
Donations Received	\$8,080.00	\$5,330.00	\$3,835.00	\$1,520.00	\$6,362.50	\$5,320.00	\$5,925.00	\$4,475.00	\$4,631.50	\$3,217.50

2023 Event Volunteers



Get the Word Out About our Organization

The Jim’s Bridge Facebook page, the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group website, email, Instagram and our semi-annual newsletter remain the primary ways that we communicate about the work our charity has performed as well as announce upcoming activities. Additionally, we keep the ‘At a Glance’ Tri-Fold summary up to date and use it as a nice way to introduce people to our charity.

Our Facebook “Likes” continue to steadily rise with 281 followers. The Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/JimsBridge/>.

The charity has become well known through activities such as volunteering at races, Facebook Birthday Fundraisers and the Savers Clothing Donation Drives. This helps to attract new contributors for Jim’s Bridge.

We are happy that Jim’s Bridge has great support from local businesses including Zachary’s Grill and Running for Kicks, as well as the “Yankee Runners” running group. Many Yankee Runners join us as volunteers, contribute generously to our clothing drives and enjoy our annual fundraiser.

In 2023, the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group was presented with awards by two of the organizations it supports. In March 2023, the Erie Neighborhood House presented its 2023 Community Investment Award to the James F. Mikulski Memorial Group at its Annual Awards Dinner. In November 2023, the Chicago Event Management Group honored Jim’s Bridge to a Brighter Future with the “Outstanding Volunteer Group” award at its Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Both of these awards not only recognized the impact that Jim’s Bridge has made, but also promotes and more broadly communicates the benefits that our charity provides.



Erie Neighborhood House
2023 Community Investment Award
March 2, 2023



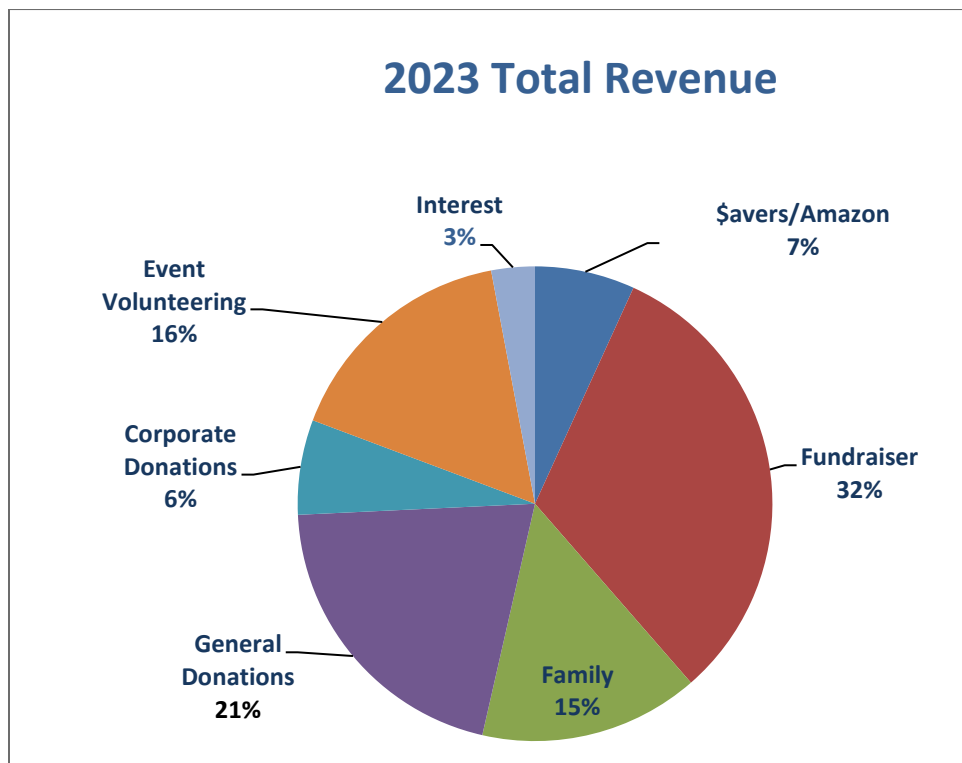
Chicago Event Management
2023 Outstanding Volunteer Group Award
November 14, 2023

Keep Operating Costs Low – Financial Analysis

Revenue and Expenses

Our overall annual revenue was the highest to date for the charity. Many factors contributed to this: an increase in overall donations, the best year to date for volunteering at races, the best year to date for the Savers drive, a good year for money market interest and a successful fundraiser. It is reassuring to have multiple contributing sources. We were happy to see that over 15% of the donations were from new donors, with over 80% repeat donors.

As reported in 2022, Amazon Smile no longer donates to charities based on purchases from individuals. However, Amazon did provide a final donation to Jim’s Bridge in 2023 based on 2022 purchases.



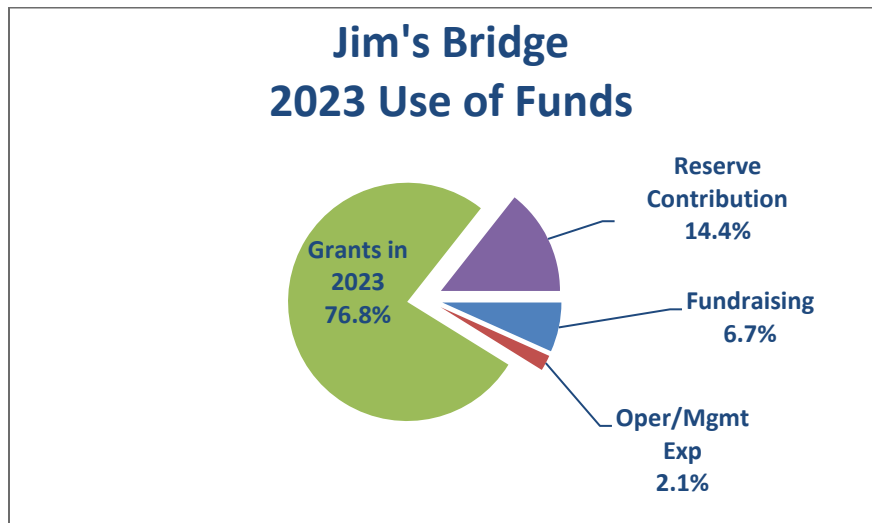
Our expenses were higher than 2022, mostly driven by fundraising expenses. Our expense to revenue ratio is 8.8%, including our fundraising cost, still below the 10% mark. Looking only at operations and management expense, it is 2.1%.

Our reserve stands at \$77.056, which is more than enough to cover an equal number of grants in 2024 as we awarded in 2023.

Year over Year Financial Status Prior Six Years

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Revenues	\$49,518.71	\$45,590.56	\$38,862.09	\$36,805.51	\$48,914.13	\$37,178.60
Total Expenses	\$4,375.19	\$2,482.89	\$1,980.86	\$1,583.98	\$4,685.80	\$3,352.50
Grants for Children	\$38,020.00	\$36,540.41	\$33,423.43	\$33,008.98	\$25,827.83	\$22,696.73
Total Expense to Revenue	8.8%	5.4%	5.1%	4.3%	9.6%	9.0%
Opex to Revenue	2.1%	3.1%	2.8%	4.2%	2.1%	2.0%
Opex	\$1,053.21	\$1,401.36	\$1,077.69	\$1,529.52	\$1,035.98	\$758.46
Reserve Contribution	\$7,123.52	\$6,567.26	\$3,457.80	\$2,212.55	\$18,400.50	\$11,129.37

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, is retired with more than 40 years of experience in Information Technology, Project Management 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 retired 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 a very popular restaurant in Palos Heights. This restaurant, Zachary's Grill, is the location of our Annual Fundraiser and Get Together.

Plans for 2024

Supporting the Children

The James F. Mikulski Memorial Group will sustain, and hopefully increase, its level of support for the children at Visitation, St. Gall, the Academy of St. Benedict the African and the Erie Neighborhood House in 2023. We will visit the schools and meet with our scholarship recipients at times throughout the school year. When possible, we will attend programs and activities at the schools and at the Erie Neighborhood House. We will continue to seek other organizations that Jim's Bridge can help.

Fundraising

We plan to hold an Annual Fundraiser in 2024 as another fun afternoon of meeting with friends, making new friends, enjoying delicious food and having a chance to win great prizes. The Board of Directors will meet in January to discuss possible dates.

We will continue to hold semi-annual Savers clothing drives. As in 2023, we will be reliant on individual and corporate donations. We will actively look for additional ways to raise funds for the charity. The Savers Clothing Drives and volunteering at races have been good ways of attracting new supporters of Jim's Bridge.

Coordinating volunteers as a source of revenue

Volunteering at races as a source of revenue continues to be a steady source of revenue and a great way to introduce people to our charity. We will look for opportunities to expand the number of events supported.

We stay in contact with the race organizers that we have worked with in prior years, including Lifetime Fitness, Ventures Endurance (formerly RAM Racing), CARA and Chicago Events Management. Based on our relationships with those groups, we are able to receive high levels of per volunteer donations from them.

And, of course, the "Outstanding Volunteer Group" Award from Chicago Event Management validates that our volunteers are well regarded and their service appreciated.

Getting the word out about our organization

We will continue to publish our semi-annual newsletter and promote the charity through email, Facebook and Instagram. The annual fundraiser, volunteering and the Savers clothing drives 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 below 10%.

Ways You Can Help Support Our Mission

Please consider helping our cause with a donation in one of these ways

- The James F Mikulski Memorial Group website
<http://www.jfmmemorial.org/donatePP.html>
- On our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JimsBridge/>
- Through Zelle to John@jfmmemorial.org
- By mailing a check to

James F. Mikulski Memorial Group
405 Shadow Creek Court
Palos Heights, IL 60463
EIN 46-4519616

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