

Rock House Kids

Compassion Around the Corner

March 2021

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THE HOT LIST

We currently need:

Easter Candy

Individually wrapped



Deodorant

Any brand



Pop It's

Please visit our Amazon wishlist to order



Lotion

4 to 8 fl. oz. sizes



\$5 Gift Cards

Wal-mart/Fast Food



We accept donations from 9:00-3:00 Monday through Thursday OR order through our Amazon Wishlist page and have items shipped right to us.

THANK YOU!

Board of Directors

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Bobbi Marks-Cooper
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TURNING OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

We are finally in March, which means spring is around the corner and it cannot get here fast enough! As we look forward to spring activities, going for walks with the family and dogs is at the top on my list.

During this winter, especially with the COVID restrictions, I have heard from many people how they are feeling alone, discouraged, and are experiencing a loss of purpose. The children at Rock House Kids (RHK) echo those same feelings. We all need interaction with others. We want to feel needed and to know we have a purpose. Discouragement can make things seem even worse than they really are and everything is filtered through a lens of negativity. By focusing on something that adds meaning and purpose to our lives, we can turn it into something positive.

At RHK when we start having these feelings, we look to our vision; to meet the physical, emotional, and educational needs of inner-city children by instilling hope in a safe, Christ-centered environment.

Taking time to sit down and talk with one of the children or look into their eyes reminds us of our purpose. Instead of getting discouraged, we get busy. Busy trying to find a way to be able to help the children navigate through these unprecedented times.

Recently at dinner time, a junior in high school told me how school was so much better when they were able to go full time. He explained how hard it is to get his schoolwork done because learning on the computer is not like having a teacher in the classroom. On top of that, he mentions how he really misses being with his friends.

Another high school junior told me she does not go to the online meetings because it is not like real people. "The kids online are really just robots to me. That is why I love coming to Rock House Kids. I love everyone here... they are my family."

They miss the human interaction. Many of the children have expressed the same feelings. Human interaction is something provided at RHK and desperately needed by our kids.

Every month there is an Event Night for the children; a special night where there are games, prizes, guest speakers, and music. SO much fun is had by all! When the children know they are having an Event Night...there are no sad faces.



continued ►

TURNING OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Children are broken into teams or “families” and have a rotation where they go to different stations to play different games. Having a Cake Walk is one of the highlights! This is a game we have at EVERY Event Night. The kids love the loud music and the fact they all receive a sweet treat at the end of the game.

Recently one of the stations had “Annie”, a beautiful service dog. She came in with her owners, Ron and Ellen, to visit with the first through sixth graders. Annie was so sweet. She let the children pet her, take pictures with her, and love on her. However, not all of the children were as enthusiastic because they had not had the opportunity to be around dogs. Annie did a wonderful job and made even the timid children feel comfortable. At the end of the evening, Annie received a teddy bear to take home with her for a job well done.

At RHK we know we are doing a job well done when the children are safe, getting their needs met, and able to smile. We cannot do this alone. We need more than the staff to be able to reach out to each child. Caring volunteers who want to spend time with the children and make a difference in their lives is crucial.

Are you the person to help a child not feel discouraged because you listened to them? Are you the person to drive a van and pick up children so they can have a place to be with other people and not feel alone? Are you the person to commit to being a volunteer with the teens on Thursday evenings so we will be able to open up that night for them again?

Did you know RHK has started an Expansion Campaign to ensure every child who wants to come to RHK can? Once the expansion is finally completed and volunteers are in place, we will have ALL of the grades first through twelfth on Monday through Thursday. We have over 35% of our goal in house or already pledged. Are you the person to help push us closer to our goal?

We stand on this verse at RHK

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13



When our hope overflows, we have the opportunity to pour it out on the children at RHK. Would you be willing to come and spread hope with us? The children of RHK call it their home because they know...hope lives here.



Dee Lacny, Executive Director



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Kyna Lewis



Kyna started her journey with Rock House Kids when she came up with the idea to get her colleagues involved in a community project. In 2019, she organized a successful Christmas stocking stuffer drive and also brought a group of nurses in to decorate the RHK building for the holidays. Once Kyna took a tour of the facility and learned more about the inner workings of RHK, she knew she wanted to do more and joined our Board of Directors in September of 2020.

Kyna is passionate about the population we serve. "I am grateful to be a part of an organization who has the best intentions for the kids with the hardest challenges to face. Knowing the children have positive influences to lean on for support and are not forgotten or lost in the streets, is something I want to support. I also love seeing

the blessings that come to RHK, as this is God's work in action." Jeremiah 29:11 is one of Kyna's favorite Bible verses... "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Kyna moved from Chicago to Rockford when she was in middle school and is an RPS205 graduate. She went on to earn her Associate's Degree from Rock Valley College and then earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Northern Illinois University (NIU). She initially thought she wanted to become an educator. However, at the time of her graduation, teaching jobs were scarce so she went onto get her Bachelors of Science in Nursing from NIU as well. She is currently employed by Swedish American Health Systems as a Special Procedures Nurse in the Cardiac Cath Lab Unit.

Kyna is married to her high school sweetheart, Alan, and together they share two children, Alan Jr, 17 and Alea, 9 years old. In her free time, she enjoys reading, exercising, and of course spending time with her family. Recently, she has taken up gardening as a hobby and loves being outdoors. She also looks for special youth opportunities to get her children involved in volunteering, so they too can give back to the community.

RHK 3RD ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE

Spring cleaning is here! We are starting to collect items for our rummage sale that will take place this summer. Last year, we brought in over \$4,000 so those used items really add up. We are able to accept your GENTLY used items during our normal office hours of 9 am - 3 pm, Monday through Friday. Please call our office at 815-962-0567 if you have any questions.

YES! I want to help Rock House Kids!

I want to be an **Angel of Love!** Please send more information.

Use my donation of \$ _____ where most needed.

My donation is in honor of: in memory of:

I would like information on volunteering.

I/My group would like to provide a hot meal. Please call me.

I have included Rock House Kids in my estate planning.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please mail to:

Rock House Kids

1325 7th St.

Rockford, IL 61104

Thank you!

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

We have had a lot of exciting things happen this last month during our evening programming! The children celebrated Valentine's Day with lots of special goodies and also made valentine cards for local senior citizens. Thanks to our donors and our local Family Dollar Stores on Charles and Broadway locations, the kids received special treat bags to take home.

The teens were presented a lesson in Positive Choices from the Pregnancy Care Center. They talked about relationships, emotional attachments, abstinence, and information on sexually transmitted diseases. They also discussed high school completion, college/vocational training and full-time jobs,. They participated in a hands on activity to complete using building blocks to show the importance of each orderly step to building a strong foundation. This gave them a visual of prioritizing goals in order to reach their potential and succeed.

Representatives from the Air Force and National Guard visited RHK and provided informational sessions on the military experience. The discussed the steps and requirements involved if the kids were to choose that route in the future. We want the kids to envision bright futures for themselves. It is important for them to know they have options and what it will take to get there.

The teens also enjoyed a good ole' game of Family Feud! We encourage input on activity choices and one of our teen girls wanted to play Family Feud. Surprisingly, many of the teens didn't even know anything about it and had never heard of it. At first it was a race to ring the bell, but they didn't realize they had to answer the question. After they got the hang of it, they were able to apply some critical thinking skills and collaborate with their teammates.

The event night for the elementary kids was filled with joy, laughter and lots of surprises! They enjoyed their snack cake walk as music was played by the legendary, Stevie Wonder. The song "Superstitious" was everyone's favorite; kids, volunteers and staff were really getting into the dancing as Stevie struck a universal chord with all of them. The kids were also given a very special raffle night thanks to some generous donors. One of the kids exclaimed, "It's like Christmas all over again!" They all received a special gift and some of them even chose items to give one of their siblings instead.

Rockford Art Museum jumped on board with us this month to give interactive and hands on lesson activities to all the elementary students. They were given age appropriate lessons on art history and the opportunity to create their own art with guided instruction. This was a great addition since, the majority of the students are participating in remote learning, they don't get a chance to have art enrichment.

The giveaways this month included lots of blankets, winter wear accessories and packages of underwear for every child who needed or wanted them! As always, if a child is in need of something that is not part of our monthly giveaways like hygiene products, socks, or shoes for example, they know they can ask and we will give them what is on hand.

