

## In This Issue

Director's Letter, 1 & 2  
Employee Spotlight, 3  
Upcoming Events, 3  
Program Highlights, 4

## THE HOT LIST

We currently need:

### Fruit Cups

Any brand



### Deodorant

Any brand



### Sporks

Any size boxes



### Fruit Snacks

Any brand



### Paper Towels

Any brand



We accept donations from 9:00-3:00  
Monday through Thursday [QR](#) order  
through our Amazon Wishlist page  
and have items shipped right to us.

## THANK YOU!

## Board of Directors

Mark Morris, *President*  
Beth Yock, *Secretary*  
Marla Gregory, *Treasurer*  
Matt Hevrin  
Barry Kramer  
Kyna Lucas  
Bobbi Marks-Cooper  
Bob Mellon  
Dee Lacny, *Executive Director*

## TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

Many times the question asked is, "What happens each day at Rock House Kids?" I would like to take this time to introduce you to our amazing staff, and give you just a snippet of what they do to ensure RHK is the best it can be for the children who attend.

The first person you will see or speak to when visiting RHK is our Office Coordinator, Kim Alexander. She genuinely makes you feel very welcomed and part of the family. When you come in for a meeting, one of Kim's first questions will be to find out if you would like a water or a coffee. Her position does not stop there. Kim has the enormous task of making sure food for the children each program night is scheduled. This is not easy. Imagine having to plan food for 200+ people a week. This includes knowing what the children like to eat, what items are nutritious, and ensuring there are enough volunteers to serve the food. Currently, Kim is actively on the phones promoting our annual upcoming fundraiser, Streets and Sweets, being held on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and seeking out sponsorships for the event.



The next person you may see is our newest staff member, Melanie Derr. She joined our team at the end of March as our Assistant Development Coordinator. Melanie has come to us with much experience in non-profit marketing and social media. She has already brought new ideas and shown her creativity in updating our brochures. Among her many duties, she will also be taking on grant writing. Through her creativity and grant writing, she is helping RHK be known in the community. This is not for the glory of RHK but when more people know about us, the more children we can reach. You will also see Melanie's handiwork at our Streets and Sweets event.

Nicole Bergren is also in the front office as our Development Coordinator. Nicole oversees all fund development, helps build partnerships in the community, and plans our annual fundraiser. She currently has the enormous task of promoting our expansion campaign, **Help for Today...Hope for Eternity**. RHK is moving forward with finishing the last section of the building so more children will be able to come to RHK. At this point, first through sixth grade nights are Monday and Wednesday while our seventh through twelfth graders designated evenings are Tuesday and Thursday. Part of the expansion completion allows there to be additional classrooms which will allow us to have ALL grades in the building each night. The total projected cost of the project is \$545,000.

## TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK *continued...*

We have over \$200,000 in house thus far and have just sent out our first set of appeal letters to let people know our hopes and dreams for the future so we can have a bigger impact on the children we currently serve and help even more children.

Every organization needs a money person. Ours is Melissa Campbell, Finance Coordinator. She ensures our spending is within budget, bills are paid on time, as well as prepare financial statements for the board. Melissa also tracks our grant spending to ensure we are spending the designated funds correctly and keeps accurate books. Her position does not stop there, as she also has the large task of working to keep our building in the best possible condition and when there is a maintenance issue, she is on it.

Next, we have two program staff. Cynthia Holman is our Storeroom Coordinator. Every item donated goes through Cynthia. When items come through the door, Cynthia jumps into action. She sorts and puts a plan together to pass the items along to the kids. She wants to get the items in and out so the kids can have their immediate needs met. This also includes working with volunteers to make sure the kid-friendly food bags are filled and ready for the children to take home in the evening. She oversees the kitchen volunteers on Monday and Wednesday evenings and monitors the cafeteria. Throughout the rest of the evening, she talks to the kids who are sent out of their classes due to behavior issues. Cynthia gets to the bottom of what is happening with the child and helps the child make positive corrections so they can return to class.

The second program staff member is Tanya Brown, our Program Coordinator. During the day, Tanya works hard making sure the lessons and supplies are ready for the volunteers in conjunction with the teaching material for chapel. Tanya is at each program night and is the first face the kids see as they walk into RHK. She greets each one by name, takes their temperature, and gives them a mask. Once Tanya is finished with her check in, she goes into the cafeteria, spends quality time with the kids and oversees the volunteers. She also teaches the lesson and life skills to the kids in chapel. The rest of the evening you never know where Tanya might be. She might pop into a class to take pictures, help with discipline, or help prepare the nightly giveaway with Cynthia.

As for myself, I am blessed to be able to work with each one of these amazing women. My position allows me to wear many hats: Speaking to groups, churches and organizations about RHK, strategic and expansion planning, and overseeing the daily operations to name a few. Brainstorming with the team to better serve the kids and community is another facet of my position. The very best part of my job is to be at each evening program to be able to love on the kids. Being with the kids each night motivates me when times get rough. I can see each child's face right now as I am writing this newsletter. They are the reason each one of us comes to work each day. They are what spurs us on. We want the very best for them physically, emotionally, and most of all spiritually.

Last, but definitely not least, Jesus Christ is our boss. He is the one who leads each decision made at RHK. Everything goes to Him through prayer. We pray continually we do not run before Him but do His will. We are each blessed to be at RHK to serve His children. It is not for our glory but His!

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen ~ Romans 11:36

We would love to meet you! Stop anytime during office hours and say "hi"! If you have not had a tour of our facility and would like to see our plans for expansion, please give us a call. We would love to share our hopes and dreams for the kids with you personally!



Dee Lacny, Executive Director



*Top photo: Cynthia assisting the children in receiving their needed essentials.*



*Bottom photo: Dee and Tanya get silly at one of the staff meetings. Work hard, play hard!*

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: Nicole Bergren



Nicole started her journey as Development Coordinator at Rock House Kids in July of 2019. She was ready for a change and a challenge but patiently waiting for the right fit. She knew the minute she walked through the doors of Rock House Kids, this is where she wanted to be! As Development Coordinator, she is responsible for fund development which means developing partnerships, organizing fundraising events and appeals, overseeing grants and getting the word out about RHK! She is also responsible for the newsletter and our website.

Nicole has a passion for education and also bringing people together to join a common cause or project. One of her favorite quotes is from Max Lucado, "No one can do everything, but everyone can do something"...and together we can change the world! She believes "everyone has their own individual attributes, it's just a matter of matching them up with their own passions." One of Nicole's favorite Bible verses is Galatians 5:13, ESV: "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the

flesh, but through love serve one another."

Nicole has a diversified background as an entrepreneur owning two businesses, a district retail manager, and as a consumer mortgage lending manager, but has spent the majority of her career working in the education field both in the classroom and as a Family and Community Engagement Liaison.

"After working in education in different roles and schools, I really do have a heart for the most vulnerable children. I want the opportunity gaps to lessen in order for the achievement gaps to widen. That's why I'm here at RHK...to help find the support from the community who are willing to help make that happen."

Nicole is a graduate of Rock Valley College and Western Governor's University. She is also the proud mother of two sons and a daughter. Salvador (21) is a junior at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire majoring in Art. Eli (18) is heading off to college in the fall to study engineering, and Reagan (3) will be starting public Montessori full-time in the fall. In her free time (haha), Nicole enjoys the arts, festivals, live music, trying new foods, DIY home projects, community activism, and of course, spending time with her family and loved ones.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MAY 20

BINGO at Mary's Market on Thursday May 20 from 5:00 - 8:00 PM. Join us for a night of food, fun, and bingo! 15% of all food/drink sales and bingo cards comes back to RHK. Prizes for winning cards and door prizes, too! Bring a friend and get an extra door prize ticket. All are welcome! RHK Executive Director, Dee Lacny, will also be speaking on behalf of Rock House Kids.

### MAY 28 & 29

The RHK 3rd Annual Rummage Sale will take place on Friday, May 28 & Saturday, May 29 at 1802 Santa Monica Drive, Rockford, IL 61108 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM both days. 100% of the proceeds will go directly to Rock House Kids. The sale is being organized and sponsored by our dedicated volunteer, Cathy Slothower. Thank you, Cathy, and to all who donated! We are done accepting items but please come shop the sale for some great deals and support RHK.

### SEPTEMBER 23 ~ SAVE THE DATE!

Streets & Sweets, our annual fundraiser, will take place on Thursday, September 23rd at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center from 6:00 - 8:30 PM. After our 2020 cancellation and 2021 reschedule, we are excited the event is finally taking place and really happening! We look forward to this event every year because we get to celebrate as a community all the amazing things happening at RHK, watch several performances from the kids, and enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres and a vast array of delectable desserts.

**Quarterly Donors:** We will now be listing our donors bi-annually in the newsletter instead of quarterly. The first donor list will come out in August.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Exciting news for our Praise Dance Team! They received a \$500 grant this month to purchase new performance outfits from the Our Journey Micro-Grant program, sponsored by Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Rockford Area Arts Council and the Rockford Art Deli. The dancers, led by our amazing volunteer choreographer and dancer, LaVannah Wilson, are working hard to prepare a new dance for our upcoming Streets & Sweets event. We look forward to their performance!



The teens wrapped up their introduction to abstract painting with local artist, Laura Gomel, owner of 317 Art Collective and SmARTy Pants art studio. They were introduced to the art history of abstract art and a more in depth meaning to color identification and meaning. Art therapy is a technique rooted in the idea that creative expression can foster healing and mental well-being. Art, either creating it or viewing others' art, is used to help people explore emotions, develop self-awareness, cope with stress, boost self-esteem, and work on social skills.

Other highlights included presentations from Rockford Career College, The Workforce Connection, Pregnancy Care Center, and Marshmallow's Hope which addressed suicide prevention. We were also blessed with some entertainment from our own volunteer, Emily Pagles, who sang to the kids and The Puppet Team put on a wonderful performance. The kids also received many needed items this month, including underwear, pillows, blankets, hygiene products, towels, flashlights and water bottles. We are looking forward to bowling in May as more field trips get under way! If you would like to help contribute to items needed or help sponsor field trips, we would love to speak with you!



## 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

If you would like to change your method of newsletter delivery to email or unsubscribe, please call our office at 815-962-5067.

**Thank you!**