

## In This Issue

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## WISHLIST

We currently need:

### Chapstick

Any brand



### Bar Soap

Any brand



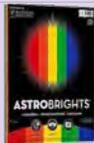
### Lotion

Any brand, 8-16oz.



### Colored Cardstock Paper

8 1/2 x 11, any color



### Instant Water Balloons

Rapid fill/self-sealing  
Any brand



We accept donations from 9:00-3:00  
Monday through Thursday [QR](#) order  
through our Amazon Wishlist page

## Board of Directors

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Dee Lacny, *Executive Director*

## PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

In July, we celebrate our freedom in the United States of America and the birth of a nation we call home. Rock House Kids is called "home" by so many, both past and present.

What that means is some of our previous kids are now young adults, and they are coming back to RHK. In the past few months, I have received many phone calls and surprise visits from past RHK kids. Some graduated out of RHK, and some moved away and simply missed "home."

One young gentleman came to visit on a Teen Night to say "Hi." He had moved out of the state and is now back in the Rockford area. He is graduating this year from high school, has been accepted into college and will be starting this fall! While he was filling me in on all the amazing activities happening in his life, my heart exploded with pride for him and his future.

There is another gentleman who always seems to find himself in places he shouldn't be, which has ended him up in jail several times. When he was a juvenile, I would treat him to lunch and we would just talk. One of the times he was in trouble as a juvenile, I showed up at the detention center to see him. The look on his face was priceless! It was a look of both excitement and embarrassment. He did not expect me to come visit him. I told him I was there for him and loved him unconditionally. However, there were also



*Ms. Dee gets a visit from a former RHK teen.*

words of heartache with the choices he had been making, followed by uplifting words encouraging him to do better. I would like to say from that point on he straightened up, but unfortunately, he hasn't. He is still in and out of jail. But, he KNOWS he is ALWAYS welcome to come to RHK to talk, in the good times and the bad. Each time he is released from jail, he calls and comes to talk with me. Each time, he receives a big hug from me, followed by a stern talking to and I treat him as I would my own child.

## PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE *continued...*

Recently, my office phone rang and on the other end was a voice I had not heard in over a year. This young lady had moved out of state. She told me she will be coming back to Rockford to visit and wanted to make sure she will be able to stop by and visit. She started reminiscing about all she had done through RHK from dance, crazy rides to McDonald's, winter camp, and the friendships she made. We are making plans to have a "family" reunion when she gets back and I can't wait to see her! These are just a few of the latest interactions I have had with kids who have moved on.

As I reflect on the calls and visits, I think back to when RHK first started with just one child in 1999. Since that time, Rock House Kids has served thousands of children, an average of 250 children per week, and the hours have expanded from the original one day to four days per week. I would like to thank each and every one of you who have given to RHK, whether it was needed items, finances, prayers, or your valuable time. Without you, we would not be able to give the kids at RHK special memories or a place they can come "home" for the past 22 years.



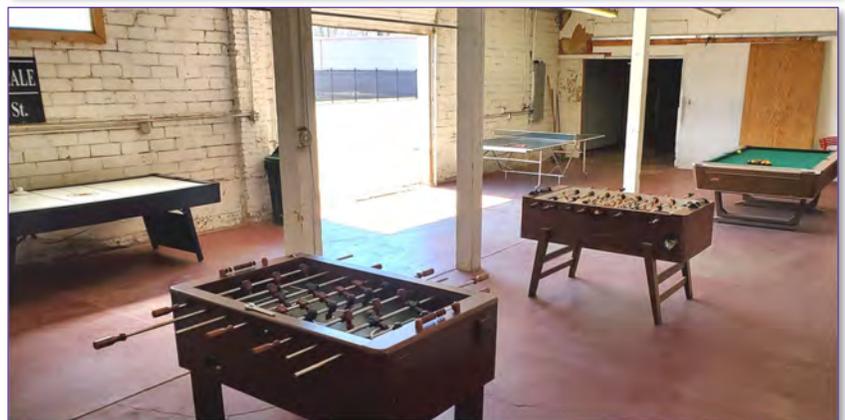
What if I told you we can have an even bigger impact on the kids we serve? Actually, double the impact! With the completion of the upcoming expansion, the opportunity to impact kids even more will double. We will be able to have ALL grades (1<sup>st</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>) Monday-Thursday, instead of separating the grades. (Monday and Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday and Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>) This means TWICE as much nurturing time with them, and would allow us to increase our capacity to serve additional kids, too.

Adding a multi-purpose recreational activity center will allow for increased and expanded physical and social activities in a safe and controlled environment. This will include a basketball court, a large venue projector, additional classrooms and a lounge-type area with a library, game room, and restrooms.

To make all of this possible, would you consider partnering with RHK in our Expansion Campaign? We appreciate your continued support and your willingness to continue the journey with us.

You can bring help for today and hope for eternity to the children of Rockford and strengthen our community as a whole!

Dee Lacny, Pastor and Executive Director



*Top: Ms. Dee with a one of our current kids. As you know, they grow up quickly!*

*Center: Imagine a full size multi-purpose recreational facility that can be used ALL-YEAR round!*

*Bottom: Future home to additional classrooms, game room and library!*

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: René Escalante



Rene' became a volunteer at RHK in October of 2019. Every Tuesday morning we know we can count on Rene' to help in our storeroom wherever needed, and he also makes himself available for tutoring.

Rene' accepted Christ at the age of 14. A year later, his passion to serve in the ministry blossomed, and he was compelled to drive 11 children to VBS in his 1961 Cadillac. That all seemed well and good, until he missed a yield sign and was pulled over by a policeman. He warned the children to be very quiet, so as to not draw attention to the car, for he knew he would also be in trouble for transporting too many children. The officer showed him grace, only issuing a warning, yet Rene' knew that God had made provision for him.

Rene's pastoral career has taken quite a journey over the years. He took his first church only six days after his wedding, but realized very shortly he needed more education and experience. So he enrolled in Seminary in Kansas City. While in Missouri, he worked for the Spanish Department of International Headquarters for the Church of the Nazarene. As a writer and editor, he developed Sunday school curriculum and wrote Christian articles for a weekly magazine.

He continued his schooling in New Brunswick, New Jersey where he earned his Master's in Divinity. He completed his clinical pastoral education in Buffalo, NY and two years' residency back in Kansas City. His second church was in China Town, NY (the Lower East Side) only a short distance from the Twin Towers. While pastoring that church, he joined the Army reserves, as he desired to give back to our country, even though he was not yet a citizen of the United States.

In 1988 Rene' became a certified chaplain and took a position with Rockford Memorial Hospital in Rockford, IL where he worked for ten years. During that time, he earned his second Master's in Business Administration. Rene's most challenging job was with DCFS and only lasted ten months. "It was just too hectic of a pace, and a very disheartening experience". He recalled a very disturbing incident where he had to remove three children from their negligent grandmother's home on Christmas Eve.

The final stint in his lengthy career took him to St. Anthony's Hospital, where Rene' retired after 22 years as a staff chaplain. Upon retirement, Rene' knew he wanted to work with children, and that's how he ended up at Rock House Kids as a volunteer. He also teaches Spanish, Bible class, and handwriting with Forest City Christian Co-op.

Together, Rene' and his bride of 48 years have raised four children, have five grandchildren and the newest addition to the family is their 18-month old great granddaughter, Giovanna. They are very excited to be seeing her in July for only the second time.

## EXPANSION CAMPAIGN - We are halfway there!

100%  
75%  
50%  
25%  
0%

We are currently at 54% of our goal!



We have raised \$292,000 of our \$545,000 goal! Thank you to all of the individuals, businesses, churches and organizations who have donated or pledged to get us to our halfway mark!

We encourage you to come take a tour of our facility and spread the word about our expansion campaign to your friends, family, church, workplace or organizations. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly for more information, to share your fundraising ideas or contacts, or to set up a tour!

We still have a long way to go! Watch for more information coming soon!

# JUNE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



What an exciting month at RHK! The elementary kids took a field trip to Skateland, generously sponsored by Shepherd of the Valley Evangelical Church and Westminster Church. Program Coordinator, Tanya Brown, said she has not laughed so hard in a very long time as she watched everyone fall down in laughter, including the volunteers. With each fall, they helped each other get back up and encouraged one another to keep going and try again. Much like life...we fall, we get back up, try again, and sometimes we need a hand.

To beat the heat, this month's Elementary Event Night consisted of fun water games such as water balloon toss, water relays, and the old classic "hot potato" reinvented.

The teens got to work on creating their own artistic tile for the expansion with the help of the Pottery Lounge. After their recent abstract painting classes, you could see the improvement in confidence and artistic expression. These tiles are going to look great in the new area when completed!

Chris Lewis, VP of Workforce Development at Rock Valley College, spoke to the teens about future options and brought the RVC Tech Bus right to RHK. This is a mobile classroom concept offering credit courses, non-credit courses, youth programming, and job skills training. The RVC Tech Bus removes the brick and mortar boundaries we face and makes education attainable for all.

The Teen Event Night was indoor for the teens and was jam packed with mini games and floor volleyball. Coming up next month, the teens are looking forward to a field trip to Medieval Times!

In other news, new teams will be starting for Puppets and Bells for those who are interested and the Praise Dance Team is gearing up for their first live performance at RHK. This will be great practice for their much anticipated performance at our annual fundraiser, Streets & Sweets.

Also, during the month of June, summer toys, flip-flops and many hygiene products were distributed along with another bike raffle.



## 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!*