



MAY
2023



Compassion

Around the Corner

Monthly Newsletter

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Our Mission

Sharing God's love with inner-city children through Biblical principles, with physical and spiritual solutions.

Our Vision

To meet the physical, emotional, and educational needs of inner-city children by instilling hope in a safe, Christ-centered environment.

Our Motto

Help for **TODAY**,
Hope for **ETERNITY!**

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Office Hours:

M-F 9 AM-3 PM

Program Hours:

M-Th 5 PM-8 PM

Board of Directors

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

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

When you hear the word fear, what comes to mind? For some, it is being alone, storms, loud noises, darkness, and death.

The kids at RHK are no different. We have kids who fear dogs, people in costumes, being alone, death, and people leaving them.

Early in April, the teens set out for a fun evening watching the Rockford Ice Hogs hockey team. The night started like any other field trip night - chaos (As we like to say, "herding cats"). We would get one group of kids where we wanted them and the other group would go in another direction.

The local meteorologists predicted major thunderstorms with high winds on this particular night. Well, I am one of those "I'll believe it when I see it" people. The Weather Channel has fooled me too many times.

A local state representative rented an executive suite for the kids to watch the game. They felt like royalty as they entered the exclusive elevator, which took us to the suite floor. The teens had their room with hamburgers, hot dogs, mac and cheese, popcorn, cookies, and brownies.

One section of the room had two recliners and an oversized, "comfy" couch where the teens could sit and watch the game. They thought they were pretty special.

As we watched the hockey game, there was an announcement. We all had to evacuate due to severe storms and a tornado warning. It felt surreal. Thousands of people were at the game, yet it was quiet. Everyone filed to different corridors leading to the bottom of the BMO Center. We saw kindness as people were getting into a single line to go down the narrow stairwell. One of our teens stopped so an elderly couple could go in front of her down the stairs.

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DO NOT FEAR continued...

In this scary moment, people did not show fear. They had peace.

Once we reached our destination in the deepest part of BMO, the kids started playing games. There was laughter. They had no concern about what was going on in the outside world.

As I watched them, I smiled. This is precisely what we try to do at RHK for them. We want them to have a place where they can come and not care about the outside world. When the kids are at RHK, it does not matter what is happening outside our walls. They know they are safe, cared for, protected, and loved.

This is how the Lord wants us to feel in His presence. We are not to have fear, not to worry. Is it a wonder the Bible has 365 verses about not fearing? There is one for each day of the year.

We talked with the kids about God showing up, and they could see how He gave them peace and protection that night.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

Blessings,

Executive Director, Rock House Kids



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION



Our volunteers are the absolute best.

Volunteers make all we do at RHK possible. With a small staff of eight people, there is no way we could serve the nearly 250 kids we do each week without our amazing team of volunteers.



On Thursday, April 20, we honored our volunteers with a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held at Central Christian Church. Our program volunteers, van drivers, and kitchen servers were together with our newsletter ladies, Board members and other daytime volunteers. Seeing so many of our team all gathered in one place made us appreciate them all the more.

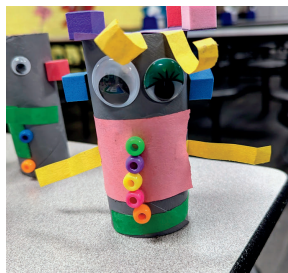
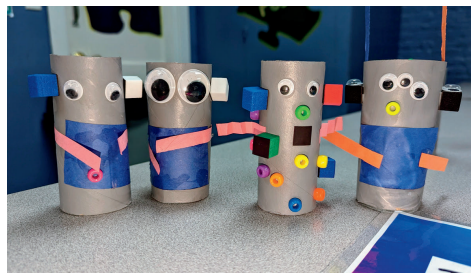


We always need more volunteers and if we could get more just like this group, what an incredible blessing it would be! Our volunteers ROCK!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Our teens enjoyed the opportunity to go to Medieval Times. They cheered hard, unfortunately, their knight didn't win this time. Fun was had by all, just the same.



The kids love to let their creativity flow during craft time. For some, it's the highlight of the night.



Rockford Barbell came and introduced our teens to weight-lifting program. They all had a chance to try it out and see a demonstration of the basic lifts.



Our 5th and 6th graders got to go to an Ice Hogs game, too. For many, it was their first hockey game and they were pretty excited to see it.



Our grade school kids and teens enjoyed decorating cookies during their Easter Event nights. The best part? Eating them, of course! We are so thankful to EK Cakery for donating all of the cookies and decorating supplies. They were a big hit.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - WILLIE & SARAH SMITH

Meet Willie and Sarah Smith. They became volunteers with Rock House Kids a year ago and quickly won the hearts of the kids and other program leaders. Willie now serves on our Volunteer Advisory Board.

The Smiths have been married for 56 years, but they met in church when Sarah was 12 and Willie was 14, and have been together ever since. They are originally from Lima, Ohio, but moved to Rockford about 25 years ago.

Willie wasn't looking to get involved in anything new at the time but was introduced to volunteering at Rock House Kids through someone at church. As Willie said, "When God calls, He will order your steps - and the rest is history." Sarah then decided to join her husband in serving together. According to Sarah, "I volunteer to hopefully make a difference, somehow, in a young person's life here at RHK, while doing something positive with some of my spare time since retiring."

As a volunteer, there have been a few pivotal moments for Willie this past year. The first was during one of the instructional periods. "First, I must say, these periods don't always go as planned. The children have a lot of pent-up energy and they choose this time to express themselves. Their agenda is different than yours. As a structured person, I became annoyed. This was sensed by two of the children and, out of nowhere, asked if they could lead the group in prayer. 'But God...'" Another time, he said that another mentor saw that he was struggling with the lack of discipline in a group of kids. That mentor gathered a few of the other mentors and prayed with Willie not to be discouraged, but to have understanding and compassion. That meant a lot to him.

To all who may be considering volunteering, Willie said, "You are needed to help course correct our children, who may be dealing with issues, in ways that are life-changing and rewarding. Help us and join us!"

"It's a poor person that walks the faces of this earth, that can't look back and say they helped someone." - unknown



WELCOME, NEW RHK VOLUNTEERS!

Dave Giammarino
Paul Hammelev



Congratulations to Kim Alexander on her recent retirement from Rock House Kids. If you have stopped by our office during the day, you are probably familiar with her welcoming smile.

She is certainly missed in our Front Office, but we are excited to see what God has planned for her in this next chapter.

May Stop:

Backyard Grill & Bar



May 18,
2023



Don't miss our next stop on the Big Eats Tour!

Gather your friends and family for some of the best food in town! Eat in or carry out, 20% of all sales will be donated to Rock House Kids.

Where: Backyard Grill & Bar
6473 N Second St, Loves Park

When: 5-8 PM

We will see you there!

MONTH AT A GLANCE

513

TOTAL ATTENDANCE/
MEALS SERVED

NEW KIDS

8

24

RETURNING KIDS
(AFTER 6+ MONTHS ABSENT)

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

114

2

VOLUNTEERS (NEW)

VOLUNTEER HOURS

803

It's time to restock! Our kitchen needs more paper plates/trays and the office is low on white copy paper and cardstock. We also have a special request for hula hoops. The kids love them and now that the weather is getting nicer, they can play outside with them to their hearts' content.

Donations can be dropped off at our office from 9 AM to 3 PM (M-F) OR order through Amazon or Walmart and have them delivered to us at 1325 7th Street; Rockford, IL 61104. Be sure to include your name on the receipt so we know who to thank.

Thank you!!



MAY Wish List

- Paper Plates - 10" and 6" >
- Paper Bowls - 10 oz >
- 3-compartment Paper Dinner Trays >
- 5-compartment Paper Dinner Trays >
- Hula Hoops >
- Cereal Cups (Single servings) >
- Bags of Candy (bite-size) >
- Copy Paper / White Cardstock >



Thank you for supporting our kids!

