



SEPTEMBER
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!**

Contact Us:

Rock House Kids
1325 7th Street
Rockford, IL 61104

Phone: 815-962-5067

Email: Info@rockhousekids.org

Web: rockhousekids.org

Office Hours:
M-F 9 AM-3 PM

Program Hours:
M-Th 5 PM-8 PM

Scan for more
information about
Rock House Kids



Board of Directors

- Mark Morris, *President*
- Barry Kramer, *Vice President*
- Beth Yock, *Secretary*
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- Bob Mellon
- Dee Lacny, *Executive Director*

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Routine. Do you ever feel "out of sorts" and realize you have been out of your routine? Even the most free-spirited person likes to have some routine. I confess - I am a list maker. I add items to my to-do list simply so I can cross them off. It makes me feel productive.

Summer's long, warm days are wonderful (okay, some are sweltering days), but routine and consistency are missing. School is out. Kids move from place to place. Bedtime comes later and later.

It is no different at RHK. Many kids will tell you they do not like having a routine or schedule, but their actions say differently. They want to know what the day will look like when they will eat dinner, and who will be at RHK when they come.

This summer, the Rock Valley College Whiz Kids program received a grant to go into the community and do STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) projects. They chose RHK to be one of the places they wanted to bless.

Every Monday and Wednesday (unless we had a field trip), they came to RHK and do different projects with the kids. They made unique fans, LED bugs, and marble mazes, to name a few.

Even though the kids had fun using their creative juices as they worked on their projects, someone always asked if we were doing our stations. They wanted to know if we were going back to "normal." Consistency is so important to them.

Seemingly unimportant things like a building improvement or an exciting surprise, like a guest speaker, are not always seen as something positive.

For example, we updated the large chapel with a fresh coat of paint. It went from a very bright yellow to a calming blue/gray. One of the fourth graders walked into the chapel, and he got angry. He yelled at us, asking why we changed the color, and demanded we change the color back to yellow.

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CREATING ROUTINE continued...

This boy's reaction was a good reminder. When changes are coming, the kids need a heads-up. They need to know when someone will not be at RHK for a while. They need to know for how long and even why. Kids will assume the worse when someone does not show up. They think the person has left them. I have seen kids approach volunteers and staff returning from a vacation or time off and ask, "Where were you?" "Why were you gone?" "Why didn't you tell me?"

These questions might seem rude to some, but the kids were worried. They worried the person was not coming back. They worried another person had left them.

At RHK, the kids need to know this is a place where they KNOW dinner is at 5:45. They KNOW they are loved. They KNOW the staff and volunteers welcome them the moment they enter RHK. They KNOW they are safe. Giving a little assurance is easy to do.

We are looking for more people to come alongside the kids and become a part of their routine. Someone they can rely on. Is that you? If so, please call our office at 815-962-5067, Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.

Blessings,

Dee Lacny
Executive Director, Rock House Kids



Our Annual Streets & Sweets fundraiser is in just a few weeks - Thursday, September 21, 2023. Be sure to reserve your seats by the September 4 deadline.

We are hosting our first ever full sit-down dinner and LIVE auction this year. We will also have our annual silent auction, 50/50 raffle and inspiring stories of God at work at RHK. Please join us.

See the reservation form included for more information.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - DAVE & VICKIE KIEFFER

Meet the Kieffers. Vickie has been volunteering at RHK for 10 years and Dave has volunteered for 6 years. They serve on Tuesday evenings with our teens as small group leaders. Dave also leads our chapel times on a rotating basis. They both took a break for several months, then returned when they felt God was calling them back to serve at RHK. According to Vickie, "It feels great to be back!"

We asked Vickie to share her heart and tell us why volunteering at Rock House Kids is so important:

"Their prayer requests are forthright from the hearts of the RHK teens and sometimes catch me off guard with their honesty and heaviness.

Can you please pray for the following:

"My brother-he just went to jail-I don't know when he's getting out."

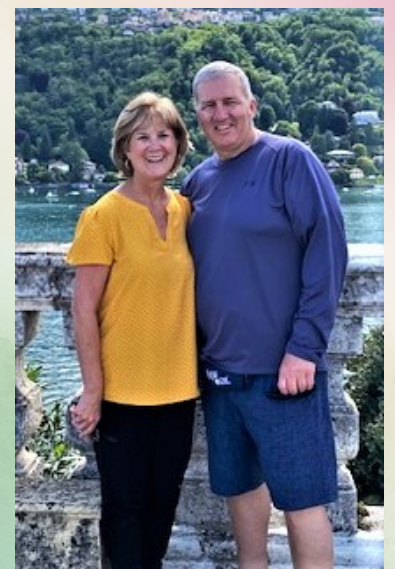
"My Granny-she has a brain tumor, and I live with her. Where will I go?"

"My Mama and Auntie to stop partying all night so I can sleep and do good in school."

"I can see my Dad for my Birthday-it's all I want- but he's in prison."

"Me to be safe in Chicago this summer-I have to stay with my Dad and his girlfriend."

"My Mama's making me go to Las Vegas for the summer and live with my Uncle - I don't want to go!"



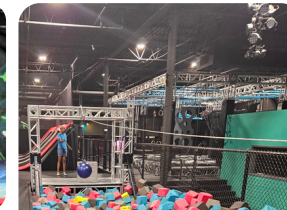
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SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

Visiting Klehm Arboretum was a favorite field trip of the summer. The kids enjoyed tracking down each of the giant bug sculptures on display. As you can imagine, the water attractions were a big hit, especially since they were there on one of the hottest summer days.



Our teens had a blast at FLOW, challenging themselves and each other on the various apparatuses there. After a while, the girls began an epic game of hide-and-seek. By the night's end, they had switched to tag, which is harder than you think in a trampoline park. The best part? As the night went on, nearly the whole group joined in. Guy, girl, 7th grade, or high school senior, it didn't matter. They had a great time - together.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED...

Rock House Kids resides in a high-crime area on Seventh Street. It provides safety, stability, and hope to teens and children living in generational poverty and chaos. It's a place to escape loneliness, intense family drama, street violence, and other daily situations. RHK teens have had to learn survival and coping skills many of us would never dream of our own children needing to learn. Many sleep on the floor (beds are a luxury), duck and dive from daytime gunshots in their neighborhood, are being pimped out by their relatives (the code of silence runs deep), and sadly, the list goes on and on. When I asked one girl why she wanted winter gloves in the summer, she explained, "You have to wear gloves to clean out the mouse traps on the kitchen counter."

Each teen has their own challenging story, but at RHK, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, they are assured of a hot meal, encouraging smiles, high-5s, time to laugh and play together, just being a teen. Most importantly, they learn about hope because of Jesus and His unconditional love for them.

Breaking the chains of generational poverty is complicated. Mentors can help by volunteering to teach discernment, wise choices, standing up to negative peer pressure, etc. Most of the RHK teens do not have positive influences outside of RHK. The window of opportunity for speaking into a teen's life is short; we can't do it on our own strength. We rely on the Holy Spirit to work in and through us, as we minister and serve His teens.

Would you consider and pray about joining the RHK Teen team on Tuesday or Thursday evenings? Can you serve a meal, assist the van driver, be a teacher assistant? Men are especially needed. Come observe, shadow, ask questions and receive training. Call and talk with Kathy Bartz, the Volunteer Coordinator. Pray about where you should serve and come observe. No experience is necessary, just a desire to serve God and share a smile with teens.

WELCOME, NEW RHK VOLUNTEERS!

Beth Edwards	Karen Crosser
Edwin Zehner	Heather Sandlin
Diamond Edwards	Michael Reynolds
MacKenzie Gottman	Joey Foote
Pete Bushey	Sue Bushey



In August, our staff took time away from the office for a "team building" day at Anderson's Japanese Gardens. RHK is blessed with a great group of people to "do ministry" with daily. The work God has given us to do is not always easy or fun, but it is worth it, and it helps to know we are in it together.

September Stop: RHK BIG EATS TOUR

Lou Malnati's Pizzeria

September 25, 2023

Our Big Eats Tour is heading someplace new this month - Lou Malnati's Pizzeria.

Mention this Rock House Kids' fundraiser when you place your order for pick-up, and 20% of your bill will be donated to benefit our kids.

If you order online (<https://loumalnatispizzeria.olo.com/>), enter the offer code "GRPRSFUND23" at checkout.

Where: Lou Malnati's Pizzeria
6240 Mulford Village Drive, Rockford, IL 61108

When: 4-10 PM

Enjoy your pizza!

MONTH AT A GLANCE

526

TOTAL ATTENDANCE/
MEALS SERVED

NEW KIDS

26

6

RETURNING KIDS
(AFTER 6+ MONTHS ABSENT)

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

78

10

VOLUNTEERS (NEW)

VOLUNTEER HOURS

808

Fall is in the air and cold weather will be here before we know it. Now is the time to start thinking about keeping our kids warm. Thank you for helping us provide the essentials they need.

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. Please include your name on the receipt so we know who to thank.

Thank you!!



SEPTEMBER

Wish List

- Blankets (light to heavy)
- Lotion
- Capri Sun
- Winter Boots -
- Girls sizes- 1-4, 7
- Boys sizes- 1-8
- Individually packaged desserts
- Paper Plates - 3 or 5 compartment



Thank you for supporting our kids!

