



December
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

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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*
- Marla Gregory, *Treasurer*
- Matt Hevrin
- Bob Mellon
- Dee Lacny, *Executive Director*

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

May I be the first to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! I pray you will have a wonderful Christmas season remembering the birth of our Lord Jesus.

Traditionally, our RHK building becomes a festive winter wonderland during the holiday season. Our elves decorate the building so the kids see and feel Christmas in each room. The teens did a fantastic job picking out and decorating the tree for the large cafeteria again this year.

For the second year in a row, a local church is putting on a huge event night for ALL the kids. It's an opportunity for all the kids who attend RHK (grades 1-12) to have a fun Friday night, complete with dinner, games, crafts, and a LOT of fun.

In early October, we began collecting each child's Christmas wish list. Their eyes sparkled with excitement as they shared their hearts' desires. What fun seeing what the big hits are for this year! Many kids asked for Crocs, Squishmallows, and rubberband bracelet kits. About a dozen kids asked for a Bible. When I heard this, my eyes teared up. How priceless to me! Since Jesus is the true gift of Christmas, what more appropriate gift could there be?

Kids want *presents*, but more importantly, they want the *presence* of an adult volunteer in their lives. They want time with them. They want someone to sit and listen as they tell about the ups and downs of their day. They want to share their lives with someone.

Recently, one teen girl wanted to tell us about her school day. She explained how another student was saying some very mean things to her. This teen wanted us to know she did not fight the girl. When she first came to RHK, she was a fighter. She has been with us for about three years and has grown so much. She now knows how to walk away from a fight. She said, "It's hard, but I did the right thing." She is secure in knowing she is loved, and we have her back.

Continued on pg 2 >



THERE IS JESUS continued...

RHK received an early Christmas present this year. Construction HAS STARTED! First came concrete removal, and then the plumbers laid the piping for the new ADA bathrooms. Concrete removal also helped to level out the flooring. If you have toured RHK, you will remember us telling you to watch your step because there were many floor levels.

The inside construction should be complete by February. The outside will have to wait until Spring due to weather. But, the end is in sight! The fundraising process to cover construction costs began back in 2020. Due to the upheaval associated with COVID, we did not think we would ever see this day. There were times of discouragement, but we kept our eyes on the Lord. We know His timing is perfect.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven"
Ecclesiastes 3:1.

"But when the set time had fully come, God sent forth his son, born of woman, born under the law to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship." Galatians 4:4-5.

We're approaching Christmas, one of the most important times of the year. Everything around us reminds us of Jesus' birth. For some, the holidays are challenging, but when times seem hard, *there is Jesus*. When times are good, *there is Jesus*. He never leaves us. No matter where you are this Christmas season, may you sense the presence of Jesus.

Dee

Dee Lacny, Executive Director, Rock House Kids

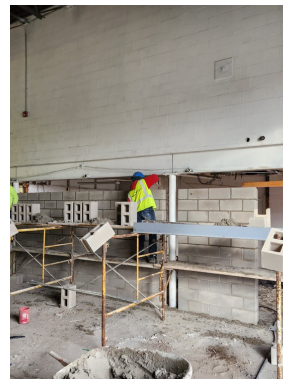


EXPANSION UPDATE - IT'S HAPPENING!

Do you hear those sounds? They're the sounds of jackhammers, trucks, and men at work. Yes! Construction has started.

A little over three years ago, RHK began raising funds to remodel the warehouse space in the south portion of our building. The goal is to expand the area available for our evening programming. After about two and a half years, we received the remaining funding needed to proceed with the project.

Work began a few weeks ago, and we are excited to see the transformation. Here is a peek at some of the progress made so far.



SMILES AT FALL EVENT NIGHT

Fall event nights are always a fun treat for our kids and this year was no exception.

Throughout our building, kids were busily decorating pumpkins to take home, frosting sugar cookies (and eating them!) and enjoying fun times with friends, volunteers, and RHK staff.

A game of "hot potato" with a gourd and a harvest-themed version of "Simon Says" generated plenty of laughter. Candy Corn Bingo was a favorite as long as they kept from eating their candy markers. (Did you know they make them in a S'Mores flavor now?) We are so thankful for the support we receive from our community that makes fun nights like these possible. You guys ROCK!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - PAT NUDERA

My name is Pat Nudera. I began volunteering as a Teen Leader last June.

I've worked with youth in trouble for over half my life, inside the Juvenile Justice system and out. It all started when my sister gave me a book called "Children in Trouble" by Howard James. I read it and have been "hooked" ever since!

Working in the system, you see and learn a great deal. One day, I saw a youth who'd been paroled twice back again for a third time. I asked him why. He said, "Ms Nudera, this is the only place where I know I have a roof over my head, clothes on my back, food on the table, and PEOPLE WHO LOVE ME!" We sent them back to the same place they came from with very little support.

I jumped at it when I saw Rock House Kids needed volunteers, and maybe I could keep one youth from entering the system! And I continue to learn something new from the kids every week.

The young man in the revolving door and the violence on the streets are why I do what I do at Rock House Kids. This and the fact the Lord says, in Matt. 18:14 - "...it is not My heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish."

Join us, won't you? We're better together.



WELCOME, NEW RHK VOLUNTEER!

Bob Rose

ROCK HOUSE KIDS + ROCKFORD ICEHOGS: A WINNING EVENT!

Rock House Kids is partnering with the Rockford IceHogs this season! We will be featured as the “Non-profit of the Game” on Friday, February 16, 2024. This amazing opportunity doubles your impact by supporting two local organizations on one amazing night. Rock House Kids will receive a portion of each ticket sold through the QR code.



The more tickets sold, the larger the portion that the Rockford IceHogs organization will donate back to us. Rock House Kids will also have a table at the game, and staff and a group of volunteers will be attending, so feel free to stop by and say, “Hi!”

Look forward to seeing you there!

BENKA'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

The Benka Family is kicking off their Annual Christmas Lighting in a big way on December 2, 2023. What a great family event! Bring the kids to see Santa, enjoy the beautiful Christmas display, and warm up by the outdoor fire pit.

Once again, attendees can contribute to blessing our Rock House Kids children.

When: Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

**Where: 8906 Flying Cloud Ct.
Cherry Valley, IL 61016**

Santa arrives around 6:00 PM.

Questions? Call Bob at 815-298-8580



MONTH AT A GLANCE

1079

TOTAL ATTENDANCE/
MEALS SERVED

NEW KIDS

2

6

RETURNING KIDS
(AFTER 6+ MONTHS ABSENT)

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

191

1

VOLUNTEERS (NEW)

VOLUNTEER HOURS

1460

We appreciate your help in providing what we need for our kids. You are a blessing!

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 during office hours to us at 1325 7th Street, Rockford, IL 61104. Please include your name on the receipt so we know who to thank.

Thank you!!



DECEMBER

Wish List



- Hand Warmers
- Bags of Candy (individually wrapped)
- Chapstick
- Lotion
- Slime
- Playdough
- Popits
- Blankets
- Flashlights & Batteries



Thank you for supporting our kids!