



January 2024



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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Scan for more information about Rock House Kids



Board of Directors

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- Barry Kramer, *Vice President*
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- Bob Mellon
- Dee Lacny, *Executive Director*

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Here we are at the beginning of another year! Is it just me or does January bring an extra boost of hope for the upcoming year? I am a huge Bear's fan (don't judge me!), and at the beginning of the season I have hope. Hope that this is the year we will make it to the Super Bowl! For many years my hope has been shattered as the NFL season winds down.

What do you hope for?

At RHK we talk a lot about our vision, which is:

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

Hope is a very small word, but it is very impactful.

Last year we were devastated when we lost a child to violence; **but we didn't lose hope**. We still had hope because of Jesus. When one of our families lost their mom to cancer - **there was still hope**. When we had staff changes earlier in the year - **hope remained**. When the construction start date for our building expansion continued to be pushed back - **hope was still here**. When volunteers had to leave their positions - **hope stayed**. When staff members and volunteers are hurting from some very difficult situations - **there is still hope**.

How can I be so sure that hope never runs out? Because Jesus is the only true source of hope, and He never fails; never runs out; never turns away from us. If we truly have our faith grounded in Christ, we can have hope in ALL situations, even when we don't understand why.

The RHK kids watch the adults to see if what we teach is what we *believe*.

Where does this hope come from? Love. 1 Corinthians 13:7 says,

"Love bears all things, believes all things, HOPES all things, endures all things."

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HOPE continued...

How exciting is this news! It all boils down to love. Recently, we asked the kids why they came to RHK; their answers were the same. It came down to feeling loved and encouraged. One girl specifically said she tries to be a better person because of the people who have encouraged and believe in her at RHK. She said many people don't have that.

Another teen calls RHK her family, a place where she can just be her. She is not judged. Yet another said they would not have a hot meal if they didn't come to RHK.

Kids have found hope here.

Some of the parents have also been telling us that without RHK they don't know what they would do with their kids. They need extra support or a listening ear when they are struggling with their kids. They feel alone and hopeless. With the support of RHK, the parents can have hope.

As we look forward to 2024 we once again have many high hopes. Some will come to fruition, and others won't. What I do know, without a doubt, is that the love of Christ will be shown to the kids who walk through our doors.

We have hope that we will be able to serve even more kids when the construction is completed this spring. We have hope there will be more kids who will come and learn who they are in Christ. We have hope God will fill the volunteer positions with the perfect people to bring hope to those who need it most. We have the hope people will see the importance of the work being done at RHK and will want to partner with us financially so more kids can be served.

We have hope as we start 2024—which will be our our 25th year helping inner-city kids – the upcoming years will be even better than the earlier years have been. I know this sounds like a long time away, but, mark your calendars for our 25-Year Anniversary Celebration!

Save the date: Thursday, September 26th!

Follow RHK on our social media channels: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and of course on our website: rockhousekids.org. You are not going to want to miss the upcoming announcements.

From our RHK family to yours, may you find hope in 2024!

Blessings,

Dee Lacny, Executive Director, Rock House Kids

CUTTING DOWN THE TREE... IT'S TRADITION!

The crisp scent of evergreens...excitement and anticipation as a vanload of teens heads north to one of our favorite holiday destinations ...can you guess where we're headed?

We love our Christmas traditions here at RHK, and a favorite is cutting down a tree at Williams Tree Farm in Rockton. This year's outing took place on November 18. From choosing a tree to cutting it down and transporting it back to our home base to decorate, there's something special about hands-on holiday preparations that our teens look forward to each year; memories are made, too.

In addition, Kegel's Bike Shop holds a collection drive this time each year. On the day of our tree trimming, a group of cyclists gathers at the shop to load up the collection items. Then, they peddle their way to RHK to deliver the donations and join the teens for a pizza lunch (provided by Kegel's) before jumping on their bikes again for the return trip.



'TIS THE SEASON FOR HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Forest City Church held an incredible Christmas event night for RHK on Friday, December 8. About 100 kids and teens enjoyed a fun evening of Christmas festivities including a great dinner, crafts, crazy games & competitions, making gingerbread houses, and taking pictures with their friends in the photo booth.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - ROB WARKINS

Meet Rob Warkins. A Rockford native, he has lived here his whole life. Rob is the owner/operator of Warkins Electric and has been going strong for 26 years. He has four amazing kids who are his world! Rob grew up in Orton Keyes projects and wished he had someplace to go like RHK. When he heard RHK needed volunteers, he didn't hesitate. He says it allows him to give back to the incredible kids who walk through the door week after week. Rob loves connecting with the 5th & 6th-grade boys and watching them laugh and smile during their two and a half hours together. It keeps him coming back week after week.

The kids who attend RHK need strong male role models to mentor and encourage them. The men who volunteer with us are the best, but they are few. We need more men like Rob to step into the gap.

According to Rob, "If you are looking at volunteering, my advice would be to pray!" It takes a lot of patience and understanding to relate to the kids each week, but it's worth it.



WELCOME, NEW RHK VOLUNTEERS!

Jerri Jimenez Daysha McClain
Azhalaun Anderson Paola Velasquez
Kelly Velasquez

Volunteers are needed in all areas, including a specific need for:

Van Drivers

Mentors (Men) - 5th/6th grade boys on Wed. evenings

Mentors (Men) - Teen boys on Thursday evenings

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!

RHK AWARDED SPECIAL GRANTS

Rock House Kids gratefully received the following grants recently:

Try-Beta Club - \$715 to purchase gym equipment for our evening program.

CFNIL's Community Grants Program, with support from the Meryle A. Stockhus Fund - \$3,864 to help cover the cost of bus rental for field trips.

J.L. Clark - \$4,000 to help cover fuel costs for our vans to transport the kids.

As a non-profit organization, Rock House Kids relies on grants from generous foundations and donors like these. The amazing work they do is helping nonprofits make a greater impact all across our region.

MONTH AT A GLANCE

692

TOTAL ATTENDANCE/
MEALS SERVED

NEW KIDS

2

6

RETURNING KIDS
(AFTER 6+ MONTHS ABSENT)

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

100

5

VOLUNTEERS (NEW)

VOLUNTEER HOURS

821.5

Welcome 2024! As we look to the year ahead, we want to do more for kids who need our help and share the hope only Christ can give. With your continued support, we can see that happen. Thank you for all you do to bless our kids!

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!!



JANUARY

Wish List

Polaroid Film

Bags of Candy (Regular & Valentine's Day) >

Valentine Craft Sets (<http://tiny.cc/yuyhvz>) >

Cleaners - Stainless Steel & Pledge Multisurface

Glowsticks >

Cereal (indiv. serving size) >

Gloves - ALL sizes

Chapstick

Lotion >



Thank you for supporting our kids!

