



MAY 2024



Compassion Around the Corner

Monthly Newsletter

In This Issue

- Director's Letter, 1 & 2
- Streets & Sweets, 2
- Meet Kayla, 3
- Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, 3
- Volunteer Spotlight, 3
- Welcome New Volunteers, 4
- Volunteer Appreciation, 4
- Big Eats Tour, 4
- Month at a Glance, 4
- Wish List, 4

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

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

The alarm buzzes, the aroma of fresh coffee wafts, and a new day unrolls. Carefully planned schedules may tick along like clockwork, or they may be punctuated by surprises. That was the case for me on a recent Wednesday. It was 5:30 pm, and our evening program for first through sixth graders was underway. Then, a voice on my walkie-talkie called my name, summoning me to the Conference Room. What in the world? During evening program hours, there's a lot going on in our building, but not in the Conference Room...

As I entered, I saw a couple I didn't recognize. Then from around the corner a young man's head popped out, and I did a double-take. It was one of the RHK kids who had moved away about five years ago. I'll refer to him as JJ, for the sake of privacy. JJ and his family had moved back to the area and wanted to see what was new at RHK. It occurred to me, since it was evening, that they likely had made a special trip to visit us.

JJ is now 20 years old. He graduated high school and is taking online college courses in criminal justice. He also has a third shift security job at one of the local businesses. I was thrilled to take him and his parents through the building, showing them the many changes made in the last few years. Even better, I introduced them to the kids, volunteers, and staff on hand. This is a double benefit: JJ and his parents were excited to see all that had changed and the new faces, and the kids and adults there saw how much RHK can mean to a family, even years later.

My heart felt full each time JJ would stop the tour to share memories he had in each area-many good memories from his RHK years. He still remembers the lessons that were taught and, because they put them into practice, he and his brother have made better choices than some others they have come across.

JJ's s mom and dad also shared what a difference RHK had made to their family. When times were hard, they knew they were not alone because they were helped. They shared how they don't know how they would have made it through if it weren't for RHK. They mattered, and it made a difference they still remember.

Continued on pg 2 >



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *continued...*

As we toured the building, they mentioned they had walked three hours just to come and say hi. Yes, you read that right. THREE HOURS! I failed to mention that JJ walks two-and-a-half hours to work, four days a week. He has a solid work ethic and dedication to doing what is right, both crucial character traits that were instilled in him, he said, by what he was taught by his parents and RHK. This example shines as a bright light.

During the past six months it has felt like we've heard more bad news than good about our older kids. There are times when we wonder if we are making a positive difference; and times when we want to curl up into a ball in the corner and throw in the towel.

When we're at that point, we're given a nugget of hope.

Everyone involved with RHK, whether through volunteering, donating funds or items, praying for us, or sharing about RHK with others, YOU ALL have played a part in the positive impact of RHK in JJ's life story, even though you may never meet him personally. Anyone involved in RHK is planting seeds in the lives of children. JJ is a perfect example: a seed that has grown into a solid shoot we get to see. There are many others we may never witness, but we can be assured that our obedience to serve will not go unanswered.

JJ is just one of the kids from RHK. There are hundreds more, and you touch each one by supporting RHK and enabling us to be the hands and feet of Jesus. We need each of you. Have you felt a nudging, a desire to challenge your comfort zone, to channel your time and actions into a purpose?

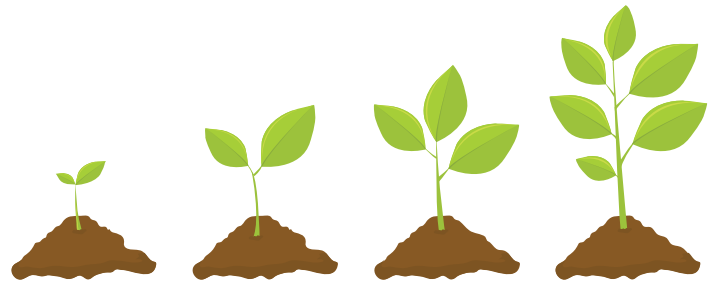
Christian pastor and author Francis Chan says, "We shouldn't fear failure. We should fear succeeding at things that don't really matter."

The kids at RHK matter.

Blessings,



Dee Lacny, Executive Director, Rock House Kids



COME CELEBRATE WITH US!

SAVE THE DATE!

Streets & Sweets
Rock House Kids
Annual Fundraiser

SEPT
THURSDAY 26 AT 5 PM
2024

Benefiting the inner-city children of Rock House Kids.

Mark your calendars!!!

Rock House Kids is marking 25 years of ministry, serving Rockford's inner-city youth. We are excited and would love to celebrate this significant milestone with you.

Will you join us? Please mark your calendars and save the date for our annual Streets & Sweets Fundraiser on Thursday, September 26, 2024.

Watch for more details coming soon!

Become a Streets & Sweets Event Sponsor:

Sponsoring Streets & Sweets is a great way to come alongside RHK to continue doing what we do. It is also a perfect opportunity for local businesses and organizations to receive added exposure while helping to further a vital cause. Can you support us with a table sponsorship?

For more information, contact Kayla Lewers at 815-962-5067 Ext. 111.



MEET KAYLA RHK is excited to introduce you to our newest staff member - Kayla Lewers!

Her heart for the Lord and zeal for RHK's mission are exactly what we were looking for and we can't wait to see how God uses her in her new position.

As Outreach Coordinator, Kayla will build on current and new partnerships, finding ways to collaborate and make a more significant impact on the children we serve and the surrounding community.

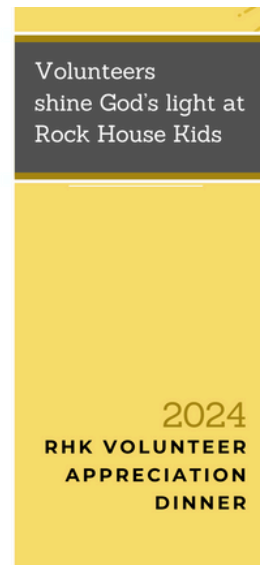
If you are interested in coming alongside RHK to make a difference, Kayla would love to talk to you - 815-962-5067.

HONORING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers do an incredible job serving our kids all year long. It was our joy to express our thanks at this year's RHK Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, held on April 18 at Central Christian Church. The theme was "My Lighthouse," (the kids' favorite praise song) and focused on how our volunteers shine the light of Jesus for the kids every time they come to RHK.

Everyone enjoyed a wonderful Italian meal, including fresh strawberries dipped in a chocolate fountain for dessert. Special thanks to Sam's Club for donating the strawberries and sending four of their staff to serve the meal.

A few of our volunteers shared a little about their volunteer experience at RHK, and, of course, we all sang "My Lighthouse" together before the night was over.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - BARB SEAWORTH

Meet Barb. Barb has lived in the Rockford area her whole life. She and her husband, Ralph, have been married for over 40 years. They have two adult sons, one of whom made her a "MeMaw!" Barb works in the human resources department at Milestone, Inc.

Barb also holds the distinction of being the volunteer with the longest tenure to date - 16 years! "I met the founder, Dola Gregory, where I worked before (at a local TV station), and once she told me about the kids, I was hooked! I began volunteering at Rock House Kids in 2008, serving with the second-grade kids, but I have worked with all the different grade levels over the years. Now, I am the volunteer puppet team leader, and I enjoy the kids and their enthusiasm for performing in front of an audience!"

When asked if she had a favorite story to share from her time at RHK, Barb said, "I met Eddie when he was about nine or ten years old at RHK. He was very polite and always wanted to help. His mom moved him to another city, but he moved back to Rockford after graduating high school. He met his fiancé here, and I was able to attend their wedding. I have continued a relationship with him, his lovely wife, and their precious baby. I am so happy to see a RHK boy grow up to become a great young man and continue to be a citizen of our community."

Barb gave this advice to anyone thinking about becoming a volunteer: "It's a big step to set aside a few hours a week to invest in kids that need to know Jesus. Perhaps serve a meal, help in a classroom, or even go on an outing, but seeing the smiles on kids' faces is so worth it. They look forward to seeing you every week and know you care about them. You are making a lasting difference in a child's life - more than you'll ever know."



**WELCOME,
NEW RHK VOLUNTEERS!**

*Don Campbell Melissa Campbell
Piper Campbell Shane Gillenwater
Toni Gassman Mikayla Yunk*

Volunteers are needed in all areas, including specific needs for:

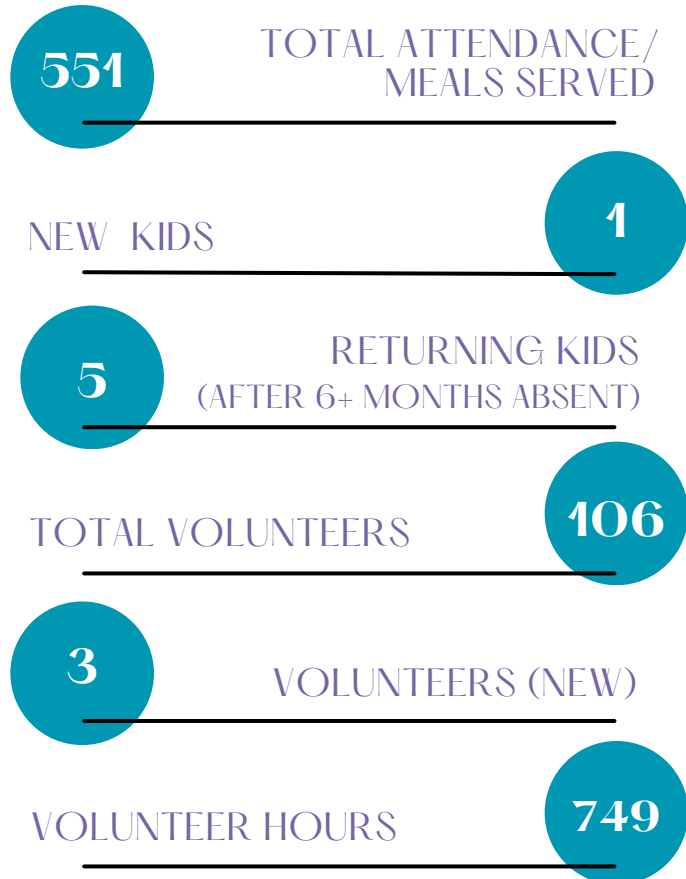
- Van Drivers - All Program nights (Mon, Tue, Weds, & Thu)
- Mentors (men) - 5th/6th grade boys (Mondays)
- Kitchen Helpers



CELEBRATING OUR
VOLUNTEERS
WE THANK YOU ALL!



MONTH AT A GLANCE



It's May and we are excited to take our kids outside to enjoy all kinds of fun activities in the warmer weather. Thank you for your help in making this possible.

Donations can be dropped off at our office from 9 AM to 3 PM (M-F) OR order through Amazon or Walmart and have items 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!!

May Stop:

RHK BIG EATS TOUR

Backyard Grill & Bar

May 30, 2024

25 YEARS 1999-2024 RHK ROCK HOUSE KIDS

Great Company! Great Food! A Great Cause!
We are heading to the Backyard Grill & Bar in Loves Park 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, Loves Park
When: Thursday, May 30, 2024, 5-8 PM.
Why: Because you love our kids!

25 YEARS 1999-2024 RHK ROCK HOUSE KIDS

MAY
Wish List

- Disposable Ice Packs
- Beach Towels
- Deodorant
- Flip flops (all sizes)
- Snow Cone Cups
- Pads and tampons of all sizes
- Hula Hoops
- Footballs - Nerf or Regular
- Field Markers/Cones - any color

Thank you for supporting our kids!