



Joe Leslie died of a massive heart attack in January of 2012. He was 41 years old. Joe was talented in many areas but in his heart he was a musician. He was a rocker. In his memory the Rock It Forward Fund (RIFF) was established. It is a charity for underprivileged teens with the desire to learn music but lack the resources to pay for lessons and/or instruments. RIFF is partnered with Charity Smith Organization (www.charitysmith.org/endeavors/jleslie), a 501c3 not for profit memorial fund.

The following is what RIFF has accomplished so far:

Our first scholarship went to, Rien Conversi (14), in 2012 to pay for guitar lessons at The Rock School summer camp.

Funds for voice and guitar lessons were provided in 2013 for 25 teens (12-18) who are part of the Christian Activity Center www.cacesl.org in the Samuel Gompers Housing Project. CAC is located in one of the poorest areas in East St. Louis, IL. Joe's mom was raised there and understands the hopelessness of poverty. We felt this was a good way to honor Joe and at the same time give teens in this area a positive outlet for their energy and provide them with hope for a better tomorrow. The choir and guitarists performed last year at the 2013 RIFF Fundraiser. We have continued to fund these lessons through 2014 and are in the process of buying 10 drums for a drum line that is part of CAC's music program. The famous local singer, Zelfhia Robinson-Otis, is the musical director at CAC, and she is hoping to add piano lessons this fall.

Jeffrey Rumelhart (16) has been a recipient since 2013 and has continued receiving guitar and voice lessons from James Jobe as part of the RIFF music program. He is specializing in blue grass music and is becoming quite a talent. He played for us last year at the RIFF Fundraiser.

In 2014 Liam Kramer (13) started taking guitar and mandolin lessons from James Jobe as well. We hope to see him playing at our fundraiser in 2015.

The RIFF fund is proud to include Kingdom House (www.kingdomhouse.org), located in the Soulard area of south St. Louis, to our list of recipients. Dennis Allen (17) is taking guitar lessons and will be playing at the 2014 RIFF Fundraiser this October 11th 2014 at the Old Rock House 1200 South 7th in St. Louis, MO. According to John Chiecsek, our guitar teacher, he is really dedicated, so we are eager to hear him play. Nailah Imani (12) has just begun guitar lessons, and we look forward to hearing about her in the future. In addition, we are in the process of adding voice lessons to the musical offerings at Kingdom House as well.

We are very proud of what the RIFF has accomplished in just two and a half years. Thanks to a very active committee, wonderful donors and dedicated teachers, we are able to forge ahead. We would like to thank you for being a part of the RIFF team. None of this would be possible without your donations.

Please consider making a tax deductible donation to this wonderful cause at www.charitysmith.org/endeavors/jleslie.

Contact barbarasavan@sbcglobal.net or jillhogan38@gmail.com for in-kind donations. These donations make up our raffle baskets for our annual RIFF event, which are a large part of our fundraising success.

Sponsorship opportunities for our annual RIFF Event are also available starting at \$250. For more information please contact barbarasavan@sbcglobal.net or michelle.yates17@gmail.com.

Finally, we cordially invite you to attend our 3rd annual RIFF event at the Old Rock House on Saturday, October 11 from 7:00pm-10:00pm. For more information and to register for the event, visit the RIFF event website www.rockitforward2014.com

We have gotten off to a great start, but we are in need of your help to make the Rock it Forward Fund even more successful!

Thank you,