



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

REFUGEE DREAM CENTER

*747 Broad Street
Providence, RI 02907
M-F 9:00AM - 5:00PM
(401) 300-0544
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Refugee Dream Center

Omar Bah, the Founder and Executive Director of the **Refugee Dream Center**, is a refugee from The Gambia. In 2010, he formed a group with a few other refugees called the **Refugee Advocacy Group**, which was inspired by observable poor housing conditions among refugees in RI. This group engaged with local stakeholders to hold resettlement agencies and landlords accountable, and to create awareness about this health disparity. In 2012, Omar and the other members of the cohort founded the **Center for Refugee Advocacy and Support**, which established this work as an official nonprofit organization. In 2015, the organization's members naturally parted ways as they took on other projects in the community.

Omar's passion for advocacy for refugees remained strong - he realized the need to combine advocacy with direct services in order to effect change in the refugee community. This inspired the development of the Refugee Dream Center (RDC), which he co-founded with Teddi Jallow in 2015. As Executive Director, he has supervised and managed all programs at the RDC since its inception. The development of the Refugee Dream Center was born out of a need for:

- **A continuation of services after assistance through resettlement agencies**
- **Bridges between the refugee community and the receiving American community to help refugees have a voice**
- **A collaborative approach to direct services of refugees helping refugees, rather than the top-down style of Americans helping refugees to integrate**
- **A common ground for cultural exchange among all refugee communities**



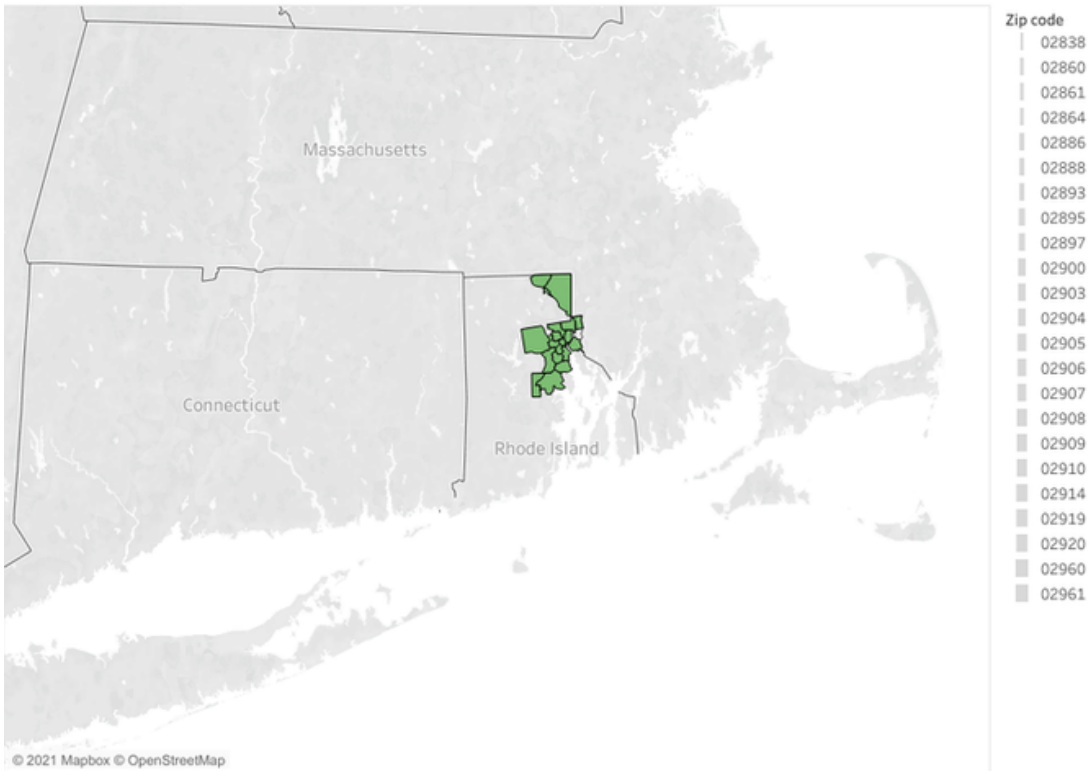


OUR MISSION

The Refugee Dream Center (RDC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) post-resettlement refugee organization based in Providence, Rhode Island. We offer support to the local community to ensure continuation of services in refugees' efforts towards self-sufficiency and integration. We achieve this through culturally attuned programming, which, over the course of 2020, was delivered using both in-person and remote methods. We tailor our direct services to the short and long-term needs of the individuals we serve.



RDC Statewide Reach 2020



WHO WE SERVE

Over the course of 2020, the RDC saw a rise in clientele, totaling to 1200+ individuals (compared to a steady 300, annually). Of this population, approximately half are refugees, hailing from over nineteen countries of origin, including: Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, The Gambia, DR Congo, Senegal, Mauritania, and Sudan. The majority of our clients come from low-income backgrounds, and include both seniors/older adults, youth, and refugees with disabilities.



CLIENT SERVICES

We offer services under the following categories:

- Case Management**
- Adult Education (ESL & Workforce Development, Financial Literacy)**
- Health Promotion**
- Youth Mentoring**
- Advocacy**

COVID-19 RELIEF



Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, our typical client services looked different this year. **Food security, financial assistance, unemployment help, and COVID-19 outreach** were thrust to the forefront, as the communities we serve are at highest risk of exposure.

To accommodate public health guidelines, we shifted the bulk of our programming to remote formats, which involved increased reliance on phone calls, computers, and internet connection in order to reach the population. We performed socially-distanced in-person check-ins as well, along with PPE, food, and supply distributions to households to ensure stay-at-home orders could be followed, and to keep families connected to emergency resources.

AN AVERAGE OF

**150
CALLS**



PER WEEK SINCE THE
START OF THE
PANDEMIC



CRAFTED
INFORMATIONAL
COVID-19 RELATED
AUDIOS IN

5

LANGUAGES
(ENGLISH, SWAHILI,
SOMALI, FRENCH,
ARABIC)

SERVING

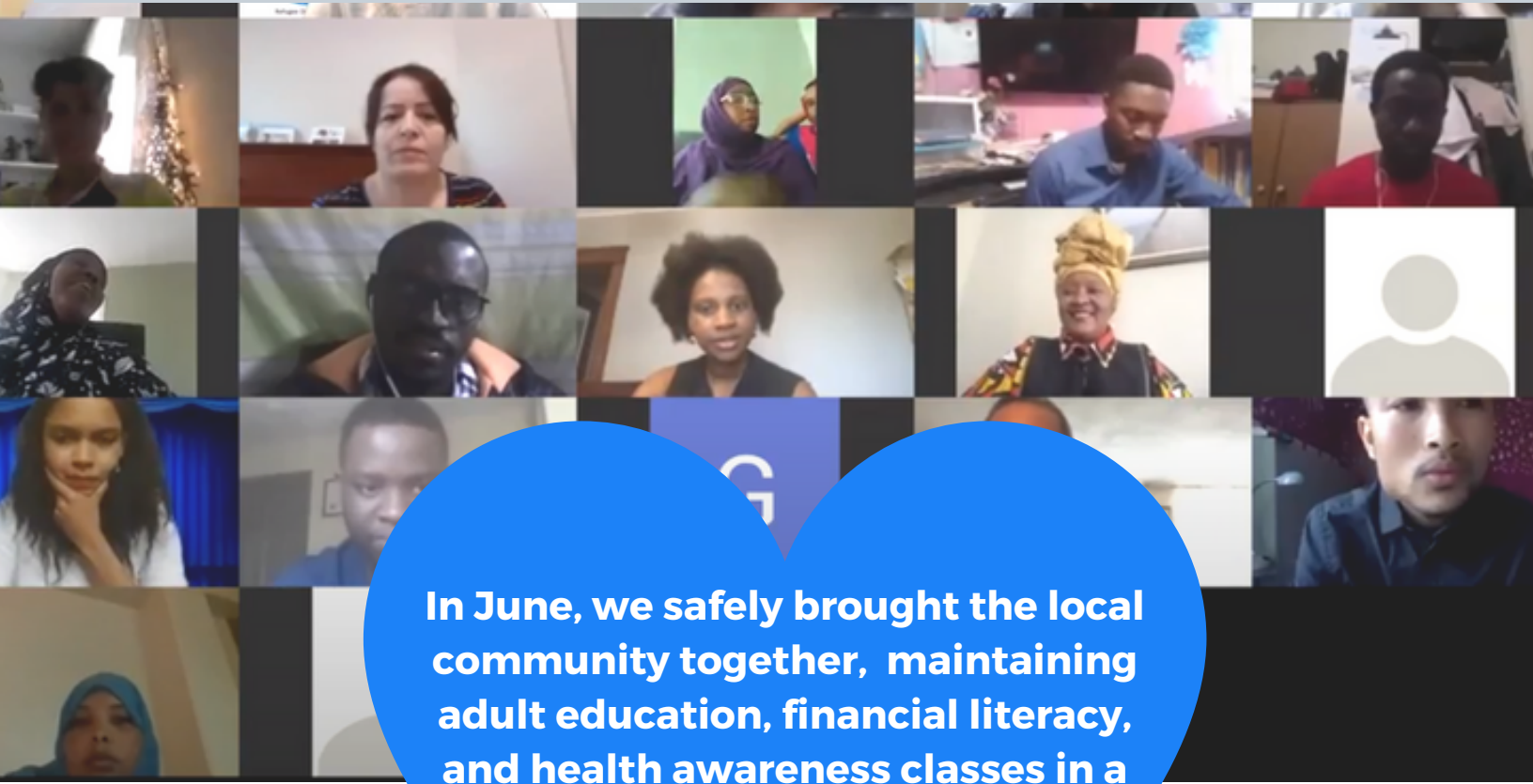
1200

(INCLUDING THE LARGER
IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY)

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

- **Continuous case management - direct service with the Rhode Island refugee community to provide support through the pandemic, such as applying for benefits, rental assistance, etc.**
- **Production and dissemination of translated resources and information on safely navigating the pandemic and accessing government resources**
- **Purchase, transportation and distribution of necessities including food, kitchen supplies and cleaning products/critical health supplies**
- **Support families with accessing and utilizing digital services**
- **Connected clients to resources for unemployment insurance or TDI when necessary**

Virtual World Refugee Day Celebration



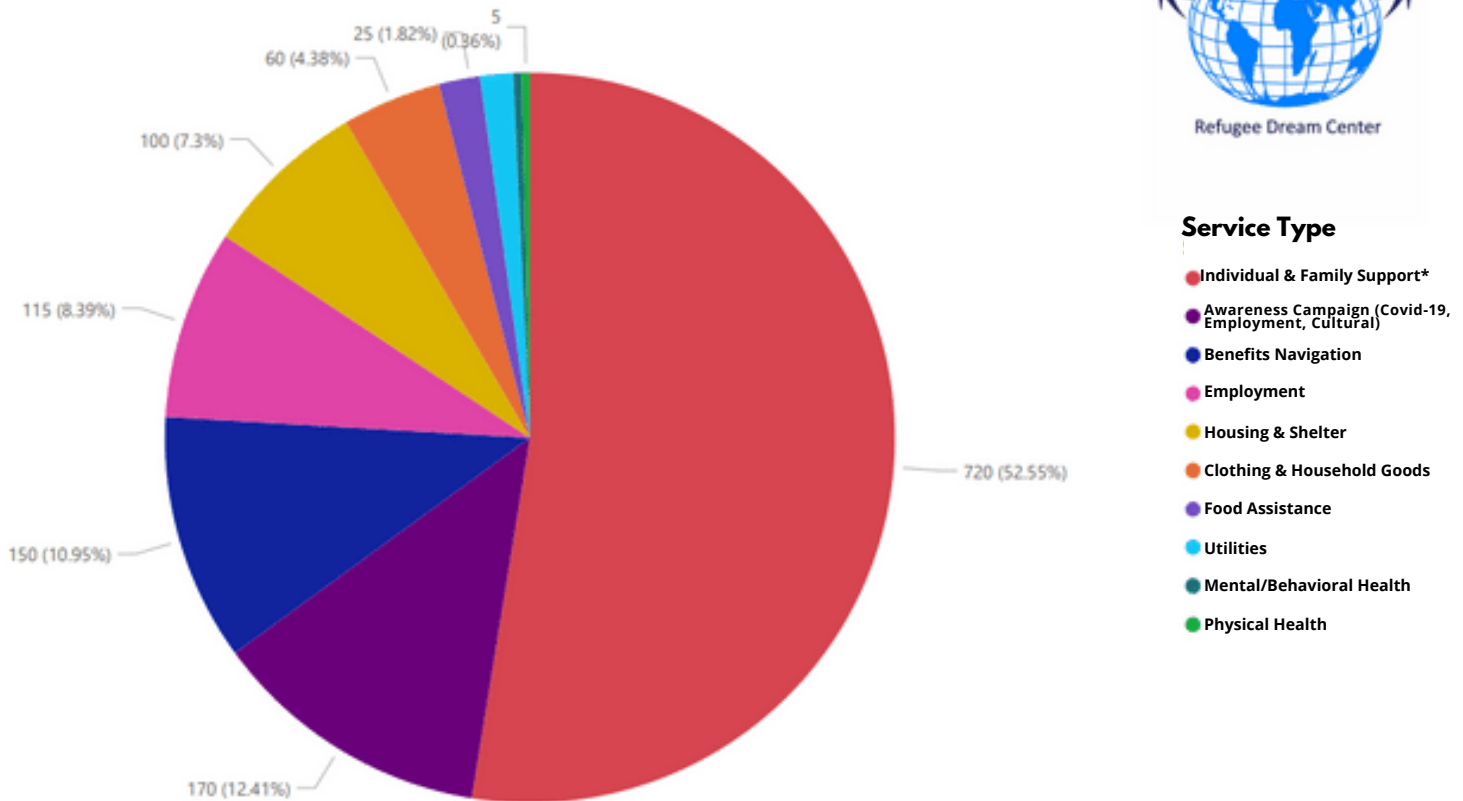
In June, we safely brought the local community together, maintaining adult education, financial literacy, and health awareness classes in a remote format.

Through this celebration, we raised \$2,750!



Case Management

Case Management Cases By Service Type



***"Individual & Family Support" includes help with food, rental payments, and PPE/hygienic supply provisions

Case Management services are crucial for refugees at the **post-resettlement level (6 months - 5 years)**, when they no longer receive services from resettlement agencies. These needs were exacerbated by the pandemic, prompting our **expanded response efforts**.

We provide direct and individualized services to our refugee clients, and this remained the case throughout 2020. The RDC staff worked together to determine how to address exacerbated needs in the areas of housing, employment, awareness campaigning (COVID, employment, cultural), health promotion (lead safety, housing, medication management, preventative health awareness), donations assistance, social service referrals, interpreting support, and assistance with applications for adjustment of legal permanent resident status, asylee status, or citizenship status.

Adult Education

The Adult Education Program consists of ESL classes, Workforce Development, Financial Literacy, and Mentoring.

ESL centers around attaining self-sufficiency and employment prospects by learning functional English language skills and basic computer skills.

Workforce Development and Financial Literacy facilitates competence-based job development. We partner with employers that have shown interest in hiring refugees.

Mentoring was created to address the need for more intensive and focused ESL assistance, cultural balancing and workforce skill development. Mentors assist with daily tasks that a client may need help with, such as practice using public transportation, grocery shopping, trips to other areas in Providence, or even visiting public locales for entertainment.

Accounting for the COVID-19 pandemic, Adult ESL classes shifted to a remote learning landscape. This came with significant challenges, as many of our clients have very limited technical proficiency as well as access. However, we were able to manage 1:1 classes for a group of 30 students, held mostly through WhatsApp calls.



Youth Mentoring



Through Refugee Youth Dream, young adults are mentored and supported in meaningful activities geared toward reducing traumatic challenges. These activities serve to improve their **social functioning skills, prevent truancy and gang affiliation, increase college entrance potential, and propel them into community service and leadership.** The program effectively accelerates the refugee integration process through friendships with American peers and improved English language skills.

This year, we worked closely with **Brown Refugee Youth Tutoring and Enrichment (BRYTE)** to ensure youth families had access to Chromebooks to support their online studies. Furthermore, we offered a summer youth employment program for 20 local Providence students, and distributed 20k worth of academic scholarships to a select group of seven (scholarship program is ongoing).



20k Total in Scholarships

AND MORE TO COME!

Summer Youth Employment: 20 participants

INTRODUCTION TO CASE MANAGEMENT FIELD/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS



Breaking Barriers

A culturally-attuned intervention project focused on helping refugee community leaders harness their intrinsic skills, and the facilitation and capacity-building of refugees to overcome the challenges associated with their experiences of crime.



- **8 Survivor Leaders: self-motivated leaders of the refugee community (four men and four women) were chosen to represent four major refugee ethnic communities.**
- **2019 training focused on: ethics, domestic violence, identity theft, culturally attuned services, interpreting skills, and leadership development.**
- **In 2020, Survivor Leaders applied their training while assisting the case management team in COVID-19 relief efforts. They were routinely involved in supply distributions and providing translation services when needed.**

Ubah Kahiye, Survivor Leader (Somali-speaking community)

Rakia Islam

Programs Manager



"The Refugee Dream Center is considered a "home" for so many, and I understand why. At the heart of our work is a cultural and emotional sensitivity that is vital to trauma-informed service and care. I am thrilled to see the organization continue to grow, especially now as we navigate such a transformative time in all social arenas."



Denise Perez

Data and Evaluation Specialist

"As a new staff member of the RDC team, I have quickly witnessed the unmatched passion and dedication of our team. I feel extremely privileged to be a part of an organization that has worked tirelessly through this pandemic to serve and uplift Rhode Island's refugee community. Although COVID-19 has impacted all of our programs, our clients have remained engaged and our team has shown resilience. I look forward to continuing learning about the refugee experience in America and the ways in which we can continue to support and uplift this community."

From the community!

"I find that despite the challenges of teaching/learning remotely, I am inspired by my students' dedication and energy. I feel fortunate to work at a school where we have strengthened our skills at teaching our students remotely and I'm able to apply that knowledge with the ESL model RDC has provided. I truly value the relationship with Gertrude (my student) and look forward to the day we are able to meet in-person but until then we will try to have as much fun as we can through our computer screens building our connection and her language skills."

Nicole Newby Crossley, Volunteer



Pictured: Teddi Jallow assisting a family of 5. The husband of the woman pictured is sick and unable to work. She applied for unemployment benefits 3 months ago, and has not yet received assistance. RDC provided her a rental assistance check and a basket of food and supplies.



I am a mother of two that has been with the RDC for 1.5 years. I have a son and a daughter. I am a part of the ESL program and I virtually meet with my tutor once per week. The Refugee Dream Center has been very helpful with paying bills, providing my family with cleaning supplies, and food. Isabel is very helpful. With Providence being so expensive, it gets hard. I wish I'd receive more help with applying for children's clothes and diapers.

Maryam Alwakeel, Refugee Community Member, Syria

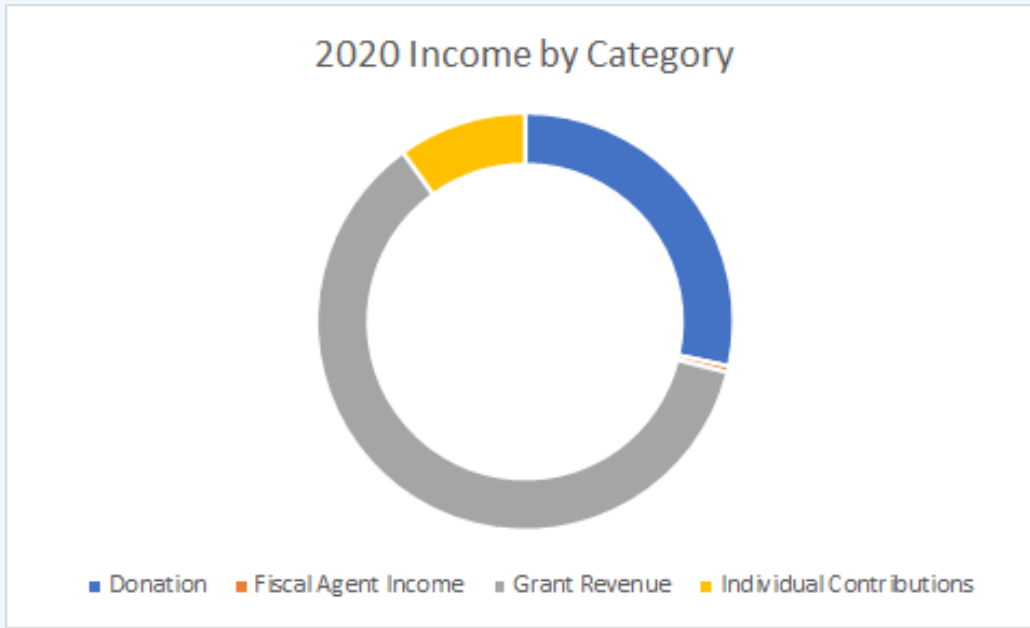
I have received essential soap, detergent, food and even assistance paying my bills. Times are hard right now. It's too hard right now. I am not working and I have 3 kids. I am very satisfied and happy with the support of the center. Isabel always responds right away. She's so nice.

I used to be a part of the ESL program but now, with the pandemic, I am no longer taking classes. I am at home with my kids, it is difficult to keep taking classes, even virtually. Maybe in the future I can start taking classes again.

Fathia Afi, Refugee Community Member, Somalia



FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Individual Contributions \$81,588.27

Donations \$233,217.02

Fiscal Agent Income \$4,000.00

Grant Revenue \$501,623.74

Total Revenue: \$820,429.03

Expenditures

2020 Expenses by Category



- Accounting & Legal Fees
- Advertising & Marketing
- Bank Charges & Fees
- Basic Human Need - Housing Assistance
- Basic Human Need - Utilities Assistance
- Car & Truck
- Computer Equipment
- Employee Benefits
- Employee Development Expenses
- Employer 401k Contribution Expense
- Employer Tax Expense
- Event Expenses
- Fiscal Agent Salaries
- Food & Housing Security
- Food and Supplies
- Health Insurance
- Immigration Filings and Legal Fees
- Insurance
- Intern Stipends
- Legal & Professional Services
- Meals & Entertainment
- Mileage and Travel
- Office Supplies & Software
- Other Business Expenses
- Payroll Agency Expenses
- Program Contractors
- Refugee Integration Assistance
- Rent & Lease
- Salaries & Wages
- Scholarships and Student Assistance
- Storage Fees
- Taxes & Licenses
- U-Haul Truck Rental

Total Expenses: \$372,753.75

Accounting & Legal Fees	1,180.00
Advertising & Marketing	98.00
Bank Charges & Fees	129.38
Basic Human Need - Housing Assistance	16,141.86
Basic Human Need - Utilities Assistance	3,844.18
Car & Truck	1,048.70
Computer Equipment	6,014.53
Employee Benefits	817.92
Employee Development Expenses	100.00
Employer 401k Contribution Expense	5,195.60
Employer Tax Expense	32,782.70
Event Expenses	1,420.00
Fiscal Agent Salaries	4,000.00
Food & Housing Security	1,662.80
Food and Supplies	68,429.43
Health Insurance	19,541.22
Immigration Filings and Legal Fees	4,457.00
Insurance	9,231.30
Intern Stipends	83,800.85
Legal & Professional Services	1,933.43
Meals & Entertainment	786.47
Mileage and Travel	19,033.10
Office Supplies & Software	8,839.40
Other Business Expenses	6,189.46
Payroll Agency Expenses	7,326.57
Program Contractors	2,760.00
Refugee Integration Assistance	6,120.24
Rent & Lease	9,768.00
Salaries & Wages	369,993.79
Scholarships and Student Assistance	12,311.23
Storage Fees	1,688.17
Taxes & Licenses	484.77
U-Haul Truck Rental	1,427.65
Utilities	67.69
Website hosting expense	395.64

OUR SUPPORTERS

Julie-Anne Eastman
Claudia Gregoire
Carole Marshall
David Wasser
Meagan Miranda
Christen Sherman
Sam Evans
Catherine Frum
Amato DeLuca
Bethany Baker
Mary Clark
Myrth York
Elizabeth McLaughlin
Janet Higbie
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Anisa Raouf
Natasha Bansal
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Lindsay Aromin
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Joelle Kanter
Lynne Crowell
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Mills Sparkman
Elizabeth Tobin Tyler
Deb Dormody
Sasha Aronson
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Hellen DeOliveira
Ailise Powers
Isabel Johnson
Doug Thomas
Monica-Ann Mendoza
Julia Walker
Marijoan Bull
Four Corners Community Chapel
David Wells
Judith Kaye
Anthony Chang
Lily Fawcett
Suzanne Sahloul
Allie Elkhadem
Hilary Binder-Aviles
Erica Dewsbury
Wendy Klein
Roberta Hazen Aaronson
Pamela Thomas
Carol Murchie
Gora Field
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Linda Finn
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Joanne H Schwarz
Andrew Bell & Sheryl Kopel
Fran Pacheco-Fogarty/ Davisville
Middle School
Julius L. Tancinco
Pamela H Hanke & Patrick R
Hanke
Matthew Goldstein

PUBLIC & PRIVATE FUNDERS

RI Department of Public Safety (Victims of Crime Act)
Department of Labor & Training
Rhode Island Foundation
Providence Healthy Communities Office
Providence Office of Economic Opportunity
Islamic Relief USA
RI Department of Health
Department of Administration
United Way
Haymarket People's Fund
Lifespan
Eastern Bank
Neighborhood Health Plan
The Providence Project
The Partnership Foundation
100+ Women Who Care
Bank Newport
Tufts Health Plan
Sterling Bank
RESIST
The Nature Conservancy
Nellie Mae Foundation
Environmental Protection Agency
The Champlin Foundation

OUR PARTNERS

Dorcas International Institute of RI
Childhood Lead Action Project
Office of Workforce Development & Economic Opportunity
New Bridges for Haitian Success
Southside Community Land Trust
Rhode Island Coalition against Domestic Violence
Amos House
Swearer Center at Brown University
Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University
RISD Moses Brown School
The Sage School
Genesis Center
RI Hospital
RI Commission on Prejudice & Bias
Lifespan Health System
Women and Infants Hospital
Randstad Holding
Beautiful Day
Edesia Inc.
Jewish Alliance RI
Renaissance Church
Unitarian Universalist Church
Islamic Center of RI
Cranston Christian Fellowship
Catholic Diocese of Providence
Camp RYSE (Refugee Youth Solidarity through Education)
Refugee Youth Power Summit
Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council
Central Providence Health Equity Zone
Woonsocket Health Equity Zone
02907 Health Equity Zone
Community Action Team
Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma
Seekonk Huddle Group
Women's Action Initiative Immigration Committee
of the South County Huddle Group
Allstate Foundation
Tufts University

OUR SUPPORTERS

Paullette L. Chamberas
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Cecilia Bellows
Joyce Bernau
David Karoff

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Maurine Tobin
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Jillian Ramey
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Katherine Gosnell
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Emily Goldstein
Megan Doscher
Eannine Casselman
Diane Minasian
Jeannine Casselman
Megan Fox
Sean Carlson
Brett Smiley
Robert F Swanson
June A Newman & A Leonard Newman
Mike Coburn and Carol Lewis
Beatrice Thrams/ 7 yrs old girl
Dorinda L Keene & Mark A Keene
The Bottaro Law Firm LLC
Sarah Hall
Roberta Hazen Aaronson
Gale Yallop
Keith Hoffmann
Cecily Ziegler
Maxwell Lewis
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