



JOURNEY'S END  
REFUGEE SERVICES

# where home begins again



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



# board welcomes family

“ I FOUND MYSELF REFLECTING on how challenging a health care system can be without a language barrier; add that, and it is even more overwhelming. After this humbling experience, I became more aware of the barriers and challenges faced by our clients as they interact with systems that are not built for non-native speakers.”

- Arlene Kaukus, Board Chair



Board members, left to right: Beatrice Singh-Arnone, Tonya Davis, Rachael Homewood, Drew Doherty, Arlene Kaukus, Ashica Ambu, and Kimberly Kadziolka

## A Letter from Journey's End Board Secretary Rachael Homewood

It's rare for the Board of Directors of a nonprofit to work directly with the people who benefit from its mission, but this year, Journey's End Refugee Services' Board had the chance to be an important part of resettlement for a family we serve. We participated in the new Community Sponsorship Program, and it's been an unforgettable opportunity to live the mission and welcome refugees.

The experience started with us being open to help a refugee family from anywhere in the world. We raised funds to help with rent and collected household items such as furniture, bedding, dishes and much more. Then, we learned we would be helping an Iraqi family of five -two adults and their three children between the ages of three and twelve. We added toys to the truckload of items. It was incredible to see our Board work together to clean and set up an entire four-bedroom apartment. In a few hours, it was transformed into a warm and welcoming home.

We helped to welcome the family to their new home by providing needed transportation and a warm meal with some favorites from their culture. Over the next 90 days, we learned the ups and downs of starting over in a new country on an entirely new level. Fellow Board Member Ashica Ambu and I met weekly with the family to see what was needed most from transportation to doctor appointments, to navigating school and bus schedules for the children, to opening a bank account. I remember when it was time to pick a debit card design for that first bank account in the U.S., there was no other choice for this family than the American flag.

The hope and promise of the United States come with a lot of questions. We answered as many as we could, especially how to prepare for Buffalo's famous winters. We also paid attention to the small details that make a big difference. For example, we helped the 12-year-old girl in the family get a special shirt. Students wear them on certain days to show school spirit. It was wonderful to know how happy the shirt made her and how it could help her to fit in better.

Ultimately, that's our hope for everyone in the family. We want them to belong and feel welcome. We leave the Community Sponsorship with a greater understanding of the challenges and expectations of new arrivals to our community. We are even more committed to help support our newest neighbors through the services and resources available at Journey's End.



## Mohammad Ishaq Sarwari

I came to America as a Humanitarian Parolee from Afghanistan in August 2021, where I lived in a military camp in Virginia. I contacted many resettlement agencies to take my case, but Journey's End was the first to respond!

I now work at Journey's End as a Program Assistant in the Education Department, which I started on February 7, 2022. I am also working with Journey's End attorneys to obtain Special Immigrant Visa status, as I worked with U.S. military back in Afghanistan. That way I can have a path to citizenship soon.

There are many things I appreciate about working at Journey's End. I love working in a diverse environment with people from all over the world and all walks of life. The staff here really put their clients first.



## Yar Mahmood

In the middle of winter in January 2019, I moved to the United States with my family from Kurdistan, Iraq, and we were resettled by Journey's End. The staff made sure everything was ready for us when we arrived.

I started attending education classes at Journey's End about a month after I arrived. I am grateful to my teacher for all his assistance with my studies. I was able to obtain my high school equivalency and enrolled in Erie Community College in less than two years.

In March 2022, I found out Journey's End was hiring for an IT Operations Manager, just as I was about to graduate with my Associate's Degree in Applied Science in Information Technology and Programming. I was so excited the day I was hired. As the IT Operations Manager, I am in charge of setting up all the technology for cultural orientation for new arrivals, as well as assisting staff with any technical issues.



## Nadia Umwete

I came from the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2013 with my family. We were resettled by Journey's End. Right now, I am working in the Interpreting and Translation Department, and focus mainly on coordinating document translations.

One thing I really like about working at Journey's End is how supportive we are of the refugee community. I leave my office every day with a smile on my face



because I was able to put a smile on a client's face while helping them.

The staff here is so friendly, too. They all make me feel like it is home away from home. Finally, I just love the diversity at Journey's End. We have people working here from all over the world and serve people from all over the world. I have learned to appreciate so much about other people's cultures, and that is a gift.

# our staff!

IT'S BEEN A YEAR OF GROWTH AT Journey's End, which is now more than 90 employees strong, many of them refugees themselves. They bring critical language skills (our staff speak over 20 languages), great empathy, and a strong work ethic relied on by clients, colleagues, and our community.

They are one of our greatest assets!



## Myintcho Lay

I came to the U.S. from Thailand, but I was born in Burma. When I was two years old, my village was burnt by the dictator's military troops. My family and other villagers were hiding on the Thai and Burmese border for seven years, and finally got a chance to relocate to a refugee camp in Thailand in 1992. I didn't attend school until I was nine years old and started in a Pre-K class. Other students laughed and my siblings didn't encourage me. I ignored them and continued my education until I finished college.

I came to America as a refugee on July 21, 2009, and was resettled by Journey's End Refugee Services. Today, I am the Program Manager of our Refugee School Impact Program. The thing most meaningful to me about working here is helping refugee kids and their parents - the way Journey's End helped me 13 years ago. I want to continue giving back.

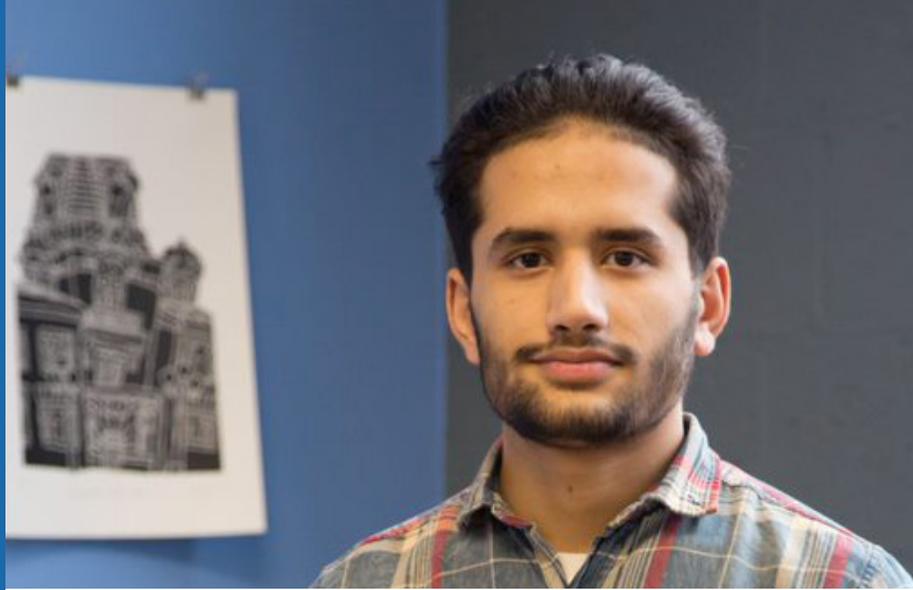




# musawer's story

IN 2022, JOURNEY'S END REFUGEE Services continued to help evacuees from Afghanistan. The impact of services is clear -from resettlement to education, mentoring, and legal assistance. Musawer shares how in his own words.

**“** *I would like to start from the beginning. It's August 16, 2021, around 8:00pm in Kabul, Afghanistan. My family and I were watching television, and suddenly we see that the presidential palace and the government have been taken over by the Taliban, and hear that President Karzai has fled the country. We were watching images of unfamiliar faces, a new flag being hoisted, and we immediately got the sinking sense that we no longer belong here in our own country. The old government had definitely collapsed, and a new regime was in power. Up until now, nobody had legitimized this new regime. Two days later, the evacuation of U.S. and Allied forces began.”*



I WAS AN OUTSPOKEN ACTIVIST FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SCHOOL and in my community, so we were advised to leave the country immediately. The airport was in total chaos. We finally were able to tell U.S. personnel that we had the correct documents that gave us permission to be evacuated. We were very lucky. By midnight, we were approved for evacuation.

## **Musawer, his sister, and her family spent days in the airport and a couple weeks at air bases before being flown to the United States.**

On October 7, I was notified I would be going to Buffalo, New York. At first I was shocked because I thought I would be going with my sister and her family, wherever that would be. We had all made the trip together! We were a family and did not want to be separated, but we had no choice.

I was assigned to be resettled by Journey's End. I arrived very late at night, but my case manager picked me up from the airport, set me up in a hotel room, and provided me with a hot meal and groceries while housing was being prepared for me, which took about two weeks. On October 20, I moved into my own efficiency apartment!

I am so thankful for everything that Journey's End has done for

me since I have been here. Back home I was in the 12th grade, and was not able to graduate high school. So I enrolled in class at Journey's End so I could obtain my high school equivalency degree.

## **He received his GED in November 2022.**

It was one of my big goals, and Journey's End helped me achieve it. I am now taking pre-college courses and will attend Erie Community College in 2023 to study computer science.

To make extra money, I worked as a part-time interpreter for the Journey's End Interpreting and Translation Department. I was very busy because of the high number of Afghan evacuees Journey's End was serving, and I was the most requested interpreter! It was challenging, but it was so rewarding helping my fellow compatriots out who did not possess the knowledge of English that I am grateful to have. There is no doubt knowing English well

helped me a lot, too, when I came to the States.

I then became involved in Refugee and Asylee Mentoring Program, where I was matched with an awesome volunteer mentor. Mr. Ben is a chemical engineer who helped me secure a steady job at his firm after I received my GED. I work on a manufacturing team that assembles pacemakers. The work is challenging, but you have a purpose, because what you make saves lives!

Finally, I have been working with Immigration Legal Services at Journey's End to get my asylum claim approved. I had my first interview with USCIS officials, and it went well, in spite of being involved in a pretty bad car accident on the way down to the interview in New York City.

I was told I could reschedule, but I had come this far so I wasn't going to give up my chance to advance my case. Now we are just waiting to hear the official outcome.

**I really do feel that Journey's End provided me with pretty much everything I needed as a young man to successfully start my new life in Buffalo, and to navigate a new culture. It's so important for refugees to have friends, hear kind words, and get a helping hand while being resettled. I love Buffalo, chicken wings, the Buffalo Bills – it really is the City of Good Neighbors.**

Journey's End has also helped many who journeyed with me from Afghanistan. But it was up to me to use those resources and tools to my full potential. If you want something badly enough, you need to work hard to get it, and I take every challenge as an opportunity to learn and become a better person. That's my key to success!



# see you at the movies!

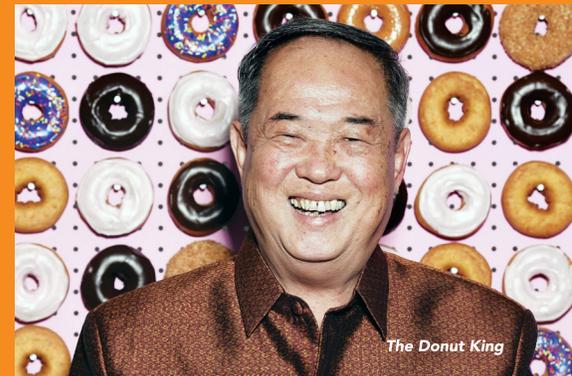
THE 4TH SEASON OF OUR WNY REFUGEE FILM FESTIVAL IN 2022 HAS BEEN a great success. We are proud to present films that enlighten, entertain, and keep our audiences from around the country engaged with the stories and voices of refugees.

Six fantastic films focused on the refugee resettlement experience in the U.S., followed by our signature talkbacks with directors, film subjects, and immigrant activists. Over 1,000 people attended our films from all over the U.S., Canada, and beyond. Our film festival is virtual and free! Donations from audience members and generous sponsors helped us raise over \$40,000 in 2022 to support the quality services and programs that Journey's End is known for.

We are very excited about our 5th anniversary season, with six films from Ukraine to Tunisia to the most diverse square mile in the U.S., the City of Clarkston, Georgia.

Get your 5th season Ambassador Pass for all six films through our film festival website.

[www.wnyrff.org](http://www.wnyrff.org)



## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR 2022 SPONSORS!

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- LAWLEY
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- NCACOMP, INC.
- OXFORD PENNANT
- WNY COUNCIL ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
- YELP ELITE SQUAD OF WNY (MEDIA SPONSOR)





*K*

**Karen M. Andolina Scott**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Journey's End Refugee Services



*Arlene F. Kaukus*

**Arlene Kaukus**  
Board Chair  
Journey's End Refugee Services

## WHAT DOES IT TRULY TAKE TO MAKE HOME BEGIN AGAIN?

It takes dedicated staff that continue to serve with the values that underscore our decisions and actions; a community willing and able to welcome refugees, either at a moment's notice or a year-long wait; clients who trust us to guide, inform, assist, and work alongside them as they navigate life in WNY and beyond; partners who recognize the value of shared resources and the strength in collective advocacy; and leaders who value individuals who are born outside of the United States and make their way to our community either by choice or driven by fear and persecution.

We also know that it takes a high-functioning agency to meet client needs. This year, we focused on internal improvements and capacity-building planning and implementation to continue improved agency functioning. We built capacity through total number of staff (which grew by 40%), invested in data and technology improvements that will allow for a better client experience and storytelling through data, and implemented a restructure to help better support the two sides of our work: emergency-response and community-building. These improvements helped us serve 2,689 clients this year, an increase of more than 30 percent over last year.

It isn't just sheer numbers that tell our story, though. It is the clients who articulated trust in JERS staff who spoke their home language and understood their native culture, resulting in clients who are informed, engaged parents in Buffalo Public Schools system and can address their child's special needs. It is the client who won their asylum case, gained steady employment, and was able to move out of a homeless shelter. It is the client who developed self-advocacy skills and secured affordable childcare, and is now less isolated and managing being a single working parent while raising two children.

This past year, we have witnessed all the above (and more) and know that WNY is a stronger community for it.



# thank you

JOURNEY'S END THANKS ITS generous donors and funders.

\*Donor data from 10/1/2021 - 9/30/2022

### DONORS \$1,000+

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- ANONYMOUS
- MARGARET ALRUTZ
- AML RIGHTSOURCE, LLC
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- JOAN MONDUL



# financial statement



## Statement of Financial Position

	2021	2020
Cash	\$ 1,435,199	\$ 1,378,009
Accounts Receivable	\$ 1,729,930	\$ 1,102,073
Other Current Assets	\$ 59,513	\$ 70,171
Long-term Investments	\$ 515,072	\$ 440,588
Fixed Assets	\$ 150,958	\$ 167,900
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,890,672</b>	<b>\$ 3,158,741</b>
Accounts Payable	\$ 175,660	\$ 189,112
Deferred Revenue	\$ 37,500	\$ 4,164
Total Debt	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 213,160</b>	<b>\$ 193,276</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,677,512</b>	<b>\$ 2,965,465</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,890,672</b>	<b>\$ 3,158,741</b>

## Statement of Activities

	2021	2020
<b>Revenue</b>		
Grants	\$ 4,238,729	\$ 3,396,502
Contract Fees	\$ 313,415	\$ 386,800
Donations	\$ 1,072,906	\$ 825,538
Other	\$ 28,377	\$ 48,610
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,653,427</b>	<b>\$ 4,657,450</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Program Services	\$ 4,314,112	\$ 3,797,257
General & Management	\$ 476,261	\$ 498,599
Development & Fundraising	\$ 151,007	\$ 142,844
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,941,380</b>	<b>\$ 4,438,700</b>
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	<b>\$ 712,047</b>	<b>\$ 218,750</b>

## OUR 2021 REVENUE

**75%**  
GRANTS

**19%**  
DONATIONS

**6%**  
CONTRACT FEES

**0%**  
OTHER

## OUR 2021 EXPENSES

**2%**  
DIRECT ASSISTANCE

**3%**  
GRANT SUBCONTRACTS

**24%**  
GENERAL OPERATING

**71%**  
COMPENSATION

TRACEY MONDUL  
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VANGUARD CHARITABLE  
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THE HOT SPOT

RICHARD WRIGHT

### DONORS \$5,000+

ANONYMOUS  
BUFFALO UNITED FOR AFGHAN EVACUEES  
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF  
LATTER-DAY SAINTS  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
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LAWLEY  
SEFA STATE EMPLOYEES FEDERATED APPEAL  
SOUTHERN GLAZER'S WINE AND SPIRITS

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BUREAU OF POPULATION, REFUGEES AND  
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NYS OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY  
ASSISTANCE, BUREAU OF REFUGEE SERVICES  
NYS UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM, OFFICE OF  
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SISTERS OF MERCY MANY FACES OF  
MERCY GIVING CIRCLE  
SUNY ERIE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES, OFFICE OF REFUGEE  
RESETTLEMENT  
WALMART FOUNDATION  
WESTERN NEW YORK FOUNDATION

# our family keeps growing!

SIX NEW HAPPY FACES JOINED THE  
Journey's End family in 2022!

