



ANNUAL REPORT

Portland Refugee Support Group

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Peter Newbegin
Executive Director of
Portland Refugee Support
Group

Dear Partners,

2023 was a year of incredible growth for PRSG, as we nearly doubled our organizational budget, and tripled the number of staff working to support those seeking safety in our community. It has been a time of deep reflection on the purpose of this work, and as we have had to learn a lot together as we've grown, we've also had to learn how to express why that growth has been necessary.

“

I don't wish for a world in need of our support. I want to live in a world that doesn't need PRSG because there are no more refugees, and everyone's free to live in peace wherever they desire. Until we make that world real, however, we'll be here to continue on.

There are so many incredible organizations in our community working together to create a welcoming environment. At the same time, there are ever growing numbers of people coming to us asking for sanctuary from violence and persecution. With almost 120 million forcibly displaced or stateless people in the world, many through the actions of our own government, there will never be enough money, time, or empathy to see that the care they all deserve is provided. All we can do is work together to ensure we do everything we can for everyone we have the privilege to support. PRSG has grown to meet so many more of those needs, but also to encourage the strength, hope, and prosperity of our whole community. I hope you'll see a reflection of that effort in this report.

Ultimately, I don't wish for a world in need of our support. I want to live in a world that doesn't need PRSG because there are no more refugees, and everyone's free to live in peace wherever they desire. Until we make that world real, however, we'll be here to continue on. Thank you for being part of that fight for justice, peace, and hope.

MISSION.

To re-empower refugees through social support and education. We help our clients navigate a path to a successful life in the US.

VISION.

A community where refugees feel they belong – a place where they are safe, prosperous, and able to pursue happiness.

VALUES.

Collaboration, Community, Compassion, Diversity & Inclusion, Integrity, Respect, and Trust.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nura Elmagbari ----- Board President
Jennifer Shareef ----- Vice President/
Secretary
Abdullah Elmadoun ---- Treasurer
Emmanuelle Jarmon --- Board Member
Tahia Abdelrahman ---- Board Member
Lisa Clark ----- Board Member
Soad Nur ----- Board Member

PRSG STAFF MEMBERS

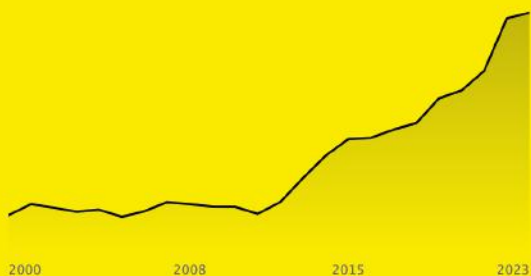
Peter Newbegin ---- Executive Director
Angela Swan ----- Deputy Director
Soheila Azadi ----- Refuge Program Director
Megan French ----- Community Education Director
Ala Alabed ----- Community Wellness Director
Rebecca Battin ----- Director of Policy & Operations
Erin Altekruise ----- Tech Equity Coordinator
Noemi Mayer ----- Community Response Advocate
Erik Furst ----- Ukrainian Program Coordinator
Ben Melles ----- Housing Coordinator
Habiba Payandanik - Community Health Worker
Ivett Altamirano ---- Community Health Worker
Halli Beauprey ----- Data & Finance Coordinator
Asmaa Zaidan ----- Volunteer Coordinator
Eddie Hardy ----- Development Coordinator
Sahar Wilson ----- Marketing & Communications Coordinator

GLOBAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT CLIMATE

110 MILLION

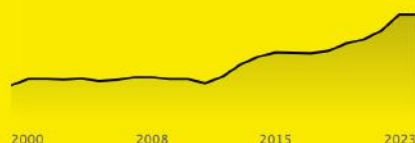
Forcibly displaced people worldwide

At mid-2023 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.



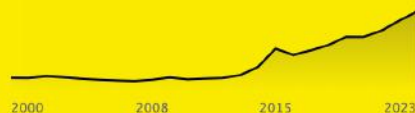
62.5 MILLION

are internally displaced people (Source: IDMC, as of end-2022)



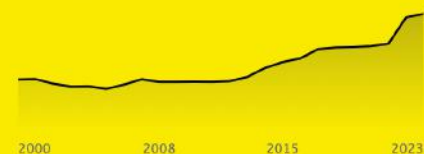
6.1 MILLION

are asylum-seekers



36.4 MILLION

are refugees



5.3 MILLION

are other people in need of international protection

Last update: 24 October 2023

In 2023, there were 36.4 million refugees and 6.1 million asylum seekers worldwide. Additionally, there are 5.3 million people in need of international protection who have not had the ability to flee their countries of origin, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics report.



52% of these refugees, asylum seekers, and others in need of international protection originate from just three countries, each of which PRSG has a significant connection with: Syria, where many of our board members originate from; Afghanistan, for which we have a dedicated Community Health Worker; and Ukraine, a community we have fully committed to serving by hiring a Ukrainian Program Coordinator.

U.S. NATIONAL REFUGEE CLIMATE

As reported by the Migration Policy Institute, “More refugees arrived in the United States in the first eight months of fiscal year (FY) 2023 than in any year since FY 2017,” due to the annual resettlement cap being reduced to a historical low by the Trump Administration. The Biden Administration raised the cap back to 125,000 for FY 2023, but “Despite these increases, the pace of actual resettlement has lagged...Approximately 11,400 refugees were resettled in FY 2021, 25,500 in FY 2022, and 31,800 in the first eight months of FY 2023. Over the 43 years of the modern resettlement program, an average of approximately 73,300 refugees have been resettled annually.”

This data refers to the national resettlement program, which is separate from, though very closely related to, the work we do at PRSG. We attempt to bridge the gap in services for those who are excluded from the resettlement program, such as asylum seekers.

OREGON LOCAL REFUGEE CLIMATE

Gauging the number of refugees and asylum seekers at the state or city level presents challenges, but we can gain insight from a couple of sources. The Refugee Processing Center's 2023 admissions report indicates that Oregon welcomed nearly 300 refugees. Additionally, the Migration Policy Institute reports that approximately 14,000 individuals, including asylum seekers and various other immigration statuses, are currently involved in immigration legal proceedings through the Equity Corps of Oregon's universal legal representation program.

At PRSG, we acknowledge the intrinsic human need for safety and we prioritize understanding the unique needs and aspirations of individuals rather than probing into origins or reasons. By doing so, PRSG aims to establish a sustainable support system for those seeking refuge through our community response.

POLICY & ADVOCACY



In September 2023, PRSG had the privilege of participating in a coalition of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) tasked with crafting a policy proposal for presentation to the Oregon State Legislature during the upcoming short session, scheduled from February 5th to mid-March 2024. Represented by Rebecca Battin and Angela Swan, PRSG played a pivotal role in spearheading the creation of this groundbreaking policy proposal.

The policy proposal offers a range of essential services, including temporary shelter, food, healthcare, education access, and employment assistance, with a focus on long-term support. These services will be offered through existing avenues when possible and coordinated through CBOs.

Noteworthy features of the proposal include financial oversight with regular audits and behavioral supervision by an advisory body, ensuring program compliance and accountability.

Scan the QR-code to view our most recent press release and stay tuned for further updates in 2024 as our bill progresses through the legislative process!



PRSG COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Portland Refugee Support Group is dedicated to re-empowering refugees, asylum seekers, and newcomers to the community using trauma-informed care and a culturally responsive, human-centered approach.

Our organization facilitates the transition of refugees and asylum seekers newly arriving in the Pacific Northwest into successful lives in the U.S. through our core programs: Community Wellness, Community Aid, and Community Education. The effectiveness of each program is enhanced by the collaboration with volunteers and partner organizations, a synergy achieved through our emphasis on fostering community connection.



Cooking beyond borders

PRSG Staff

Community Kids art

Camp Silah

Community member

Intake See no strangers

See No S

See No Stranger

Reimagine resettlement

Camp Silah

Community wedding

Housing

First aid kit volunteers

Intake

community member

OHSSU career research

Community member

Resume writing

PRSG team

Food boxes delivery

mattress

Lease signing

Scholarship awardee

essentials delivery

PRSG board

@Welcome Center

@Welcome Center

Bake sale

school enrollment

Food and essentials

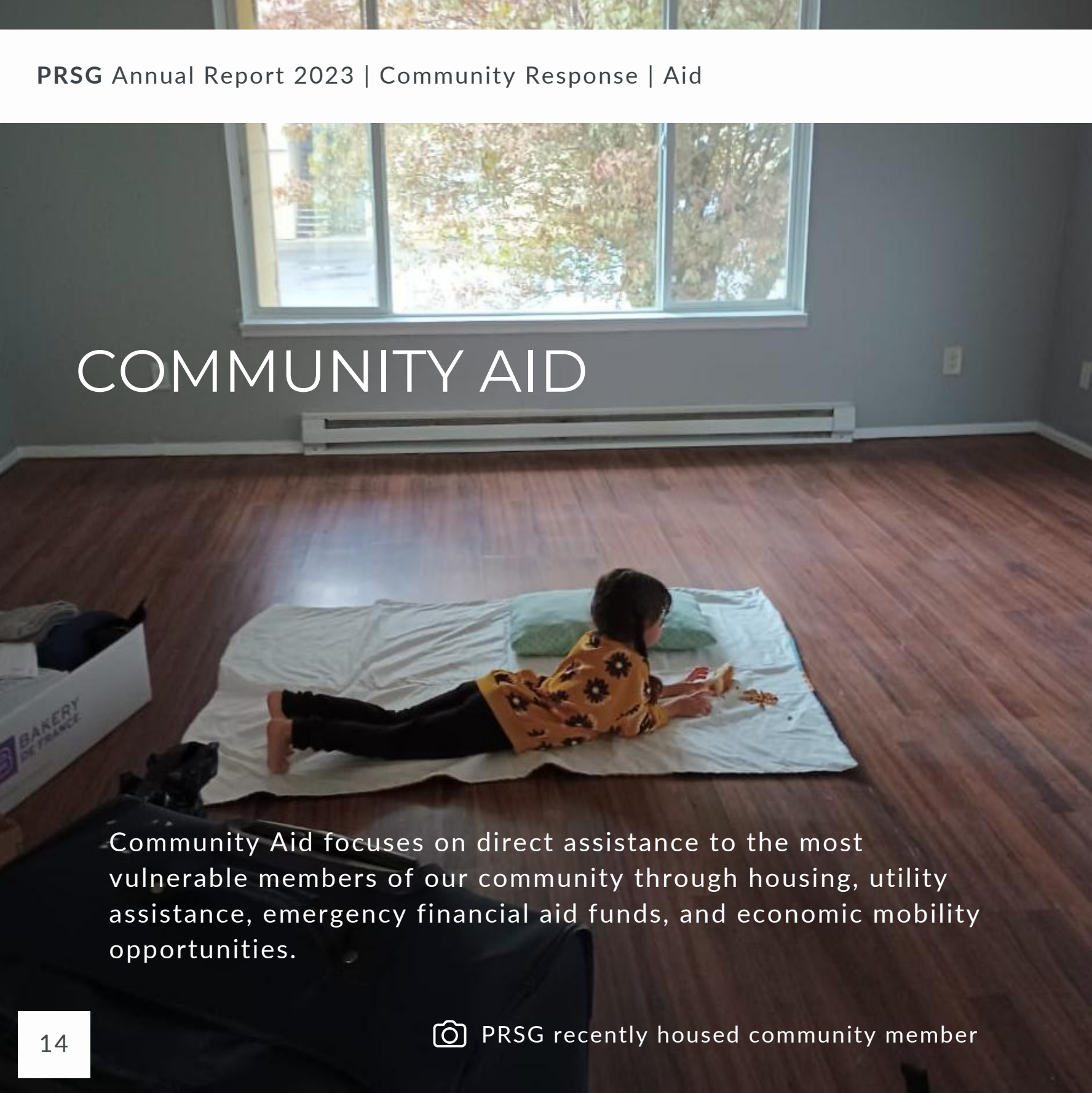
Holiday baskets

Digital Divide

State ID asst

Camp Silah

COMMUNITY AID

A young child with dark hair, wearing a yellow patterned shirt and black pants, is lying on their stomach on a white sheet spread on a wooden floor. The child is looking towards a large window in the background. The room has grey walls and a white baseboard heater. To the left, there is a white box with the text 'BAKERY DE FRANCE' and a black bag. The window shows trees with autumn foliage outside.

Community Aid focuses on direct assistance to the most vulnerable members of our community through housing, utility assistance, emergency financial aid funds, and economic mobility opportunities.



Our Community Aid team showcased impactful outcomes in 2023. We **successfully housed over 200** households, providing essential support to individuals and families in need.

Additionally, we fulfilled close to **500 emergency financial aid requests**, addressing urgent needs for both utility and rent assistance.



Furthermore, our efforts extended to assisting over **50 individuals in acquiring state identification/driver's licenses**, fostering greater independence within the community.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Perhaps the most essential service PRSG provides is connecting the newest members of our community to more established individuals—not only our own staff, but volunteers and members of other organizations.

We also collaborate closely with partner organizations to ensure optimal support for our community members. Our approach avoids duplication of services, thereby maximizing the benefits and resources available.



My name is Kirsten Burt. I'm a mom who works for a translation company, and a long-time PRSG volunteer. I helped a family from Venezuela move into their new apartment as part of the #SeeNoStranger housing initiative, and then helped them find furniture. It was an easy way to help, and I felt a real connection with this young family. And a week later, they invited me to their wedding!

400 volunteers



25% growth



50 Core volunteers



Core volunteers play a crucial role in aiding families with both immediate and long-term resettlement, dedicating months, and even years, to this effort.

As part of volunteer engagement enhancements, a monthly job board was introduced, streamlining the process for volunteers to find suitable opportunities. Notable initiatives included new virtual orientations and training sessions, covering culturally sensitive, human-centered, and trauma-informed care.

We have established enduring partnerships with organizations and businesses that actively contribute to our community via both short-term and long-term initiatives.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Our Community Education program offers support services to the refugee community to increase access to each individual's unique education and career goals, with a primary focus on English language skills, digital literacy, and professional certification.



Q: How are you?
A: I am _____

Q: Are you happy?
A: Yes, I am happy.
No, I am not happy.

thirsty
hot

scared

sad
happy

good
ok
hungry

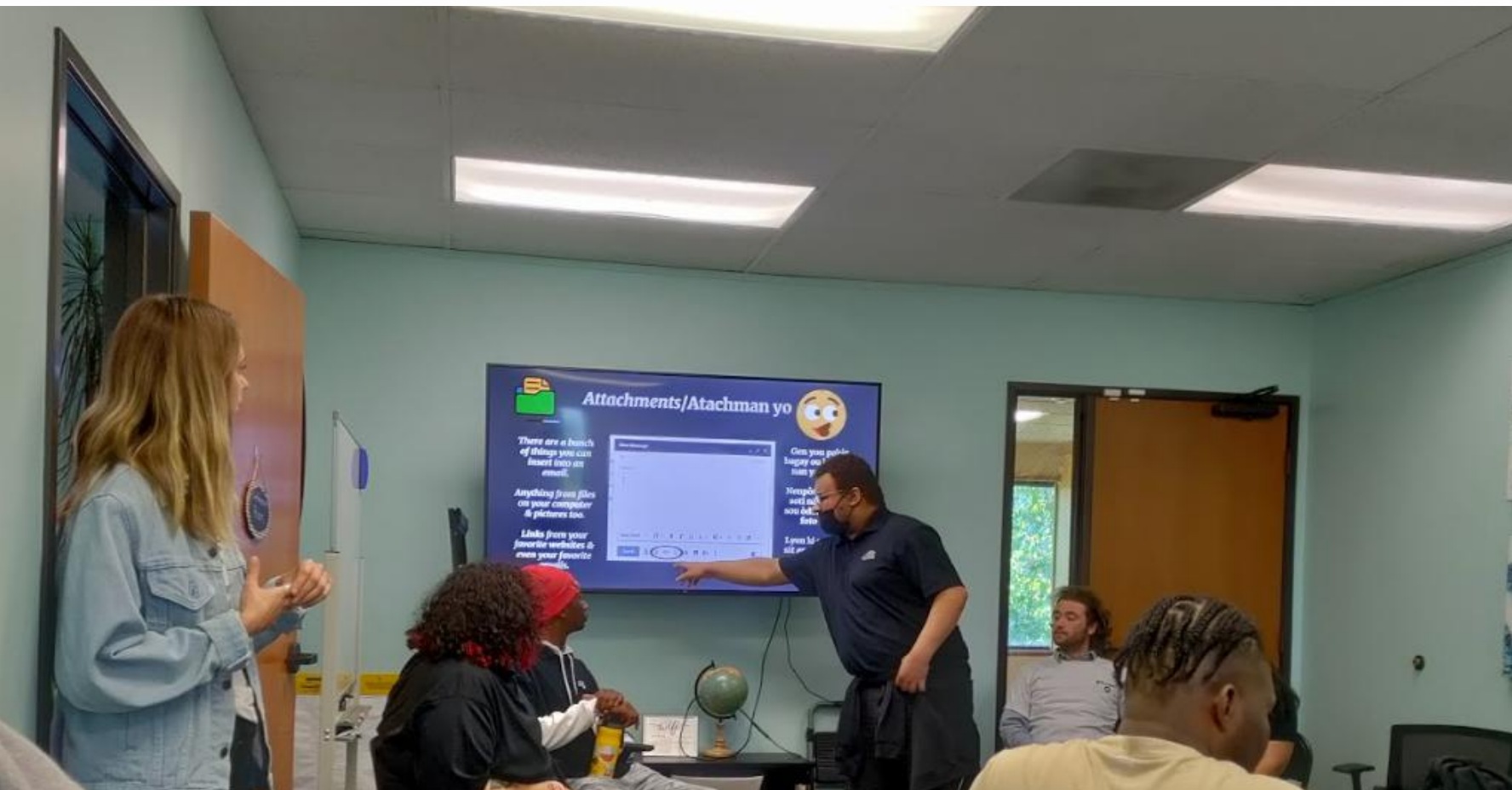
worried
tired

a pineapple
pineapples

a lemon
lemons

an apple
apples

📷 Young community members in our regularly held arts workshop at the Welcome Center in collaboration with Multnomah Arts Center Association.



Digital Divide:

In less than a year, the Digital Divide Program has positively impacted over 350 community members' lives, addressing the expressed need for devices to achieve short-term and long-term goals. The program, born out of this necessity, has re-empowered lives by facilitating endeavors ranging from English classes at Portland Community College (PCC) to rebuilding graphic design portfolios.



Utilizing devices provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Digital Divide grant, the program distributed nearly 170 units, with priority given to community members with limited device access and those seeking to complete post-secondary programs of study. PRSG staff and volunteers worked with PCC and Portland Youth Builders (PYB) to provide approximately 25 digital literacy workshop sessions in 2023.

Tutoring:

In 2023, we facilitated close to 20 tutoring matches for community members in need of academic or English language support, all conducted by dedicated volunteer tutors. Most sessions took place one-on-one at our office or in students' homes, while others were held at our partner schools, McDaniel High School and Scott Elementary School. These collaborations have enhanced our understanding of students' needs and allowed us to extend our tutoring services to newcomer students. We are grateful for this partnership!

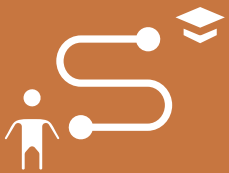


📷 Resume writing workshop for Dari speaking community members

Professional Education Services

Our Professional Education Services help adult newcomers achieve their career goals through foreign credential evaluations, one-on-one career and education meetings, support with English class enrollment, and assistance with program/exam fees for certifications and licensure.

We are proud to be a referral partner of World Education Services (WES) since February 2023, as part of The Gateway Program. We have completed 40 applications of degree evaluations for community members from Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine, and Iraq. These evaluations support job searches and licensure applications in fields like counseling and medicine.



Provided 1:1 career/
education pathway
guidance to 30 individuals
from Iraq, Ukraine, Cuba,
Somalia, and Afghanistan,
with support extending to
next year



Helped over 60
individuals enroll in
English to Speakers of
Other Languages (ESOL)
classes at Portland
Community College (PCC)



Awarded six \$1,000
scholarships to
individuals who were
recently accepted into a
post-secondary study
program

COMMUNITY WELLNESS

To increase health awareness and improve overall health and quality of life of the refugee community, our Community Wellness program conducts regular in-home visits, health workshops, and special projects such as our youth summer camp.

In 2023, PRSG sustained successful ongoing initiatives such as Camp Silah “Connection” for the community's youth and initiated a pilot youth-focused program centered on sustainability and advocacy. Additionally, the organization conducted health workshops with a specific focus on women's health. Notably, PRSG received Tier 1 of the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute's community partner grant. The objective of this grant is to gather data on cancer and tobacco cessation among refugee residents in the Portland Metro Area, and the project is set to continue through 2024.



Portland Refugee Cancer Data Project

Ala Alabed - Community Wellness Director (Portland Refugee Support Group)

Tier 1

Project Background/ Introduction

Refugees and asylum seekers often endure heightened levels of stress due to the unique challenges they face. Many of them have limited access to their health records, which can pose barriers to receiving necessary healthcare and achieving community wellness.



In an effort to better understand the health needs of this vulnerable population, we are planning to conduct a survey involving 20 families. This survey will inquire about any cancer-related health history within their immediate family members.

Project Goals

Our goal for Tier 1 grant is to gather valuable information that can help improve healthcare access and support services for our target population. The primary objective is to enhance our ability to provide and advocate for their healthcare requirements.

Portland Refugee Support Group (PRSG)

Methods / Project Design

Target Population:

This project is designed to gather cancer-related data from refugee and asylum seeker families residing in the Portland Metropolitan area.

Overview of the design of the project:

Survey 20 families through in person home visits or over the phone. Our sample population consists of 10 Arabic speaking families and 10 Dari speaking families.

Activities/efforts/initiatives:

We will document any observed patterns that may suggest a correlation between the stress experienced by refugees and asylum seekers and their risk of developing cancer.

Time frame of the project:

Starting the survey process in October 2023 with the goal to have all data collected by end of January 2024.



Evaluation Plan (In Progress)

Through data analysis, our goal is to categorize individuals within this demographic into three risk groups:

1. **"Cancer Patient or Survivor"**: Individuals who have been diagnosed with and treated for cancer.
2. **"High Risk"**: Individuals with factors that put them at an elevated risk of developing cancer, such as a family history of cancer or lifestyle choices that increase susceptibility.
3. **"Low Risk"**: Individuals who have a lower likelihood of developing cancer based on factors like genetics, lifestyle, and other health indicators.



References & Acknowledgements

Funding for this project was provided in part by the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Community Partnership Program, a grant program that supports communities across Oregon in addressing local cancer-related needs.

www.pdxrsg.org

info@pdxrsg.org

📷 PRSG at OHSU Community Partnership Program Grantee Conference 2023, presenting the Portland Refugee Cancer Data project during Tier 1 of the grant, with plans to progress to Tier 2 in the coming year.

Women's Health Workshops:

PRSG collaborated with Washington County Department of Health and Human Services to establish women's health workshops. Three distinct workshops were developed:

women's mental and general health

breast and cervical cancers

sexual and reproductive health

Workshops were conducted for a group of six Arabic-speaking women and a group of twelve Afghan women.



**BREAST
SELF-EXAMINATION**



📷 Provisions such as transportation, babysitting, lunch, personal hygiene baskets were provided to workshop participants.

Refugee Sustainability Leadership:

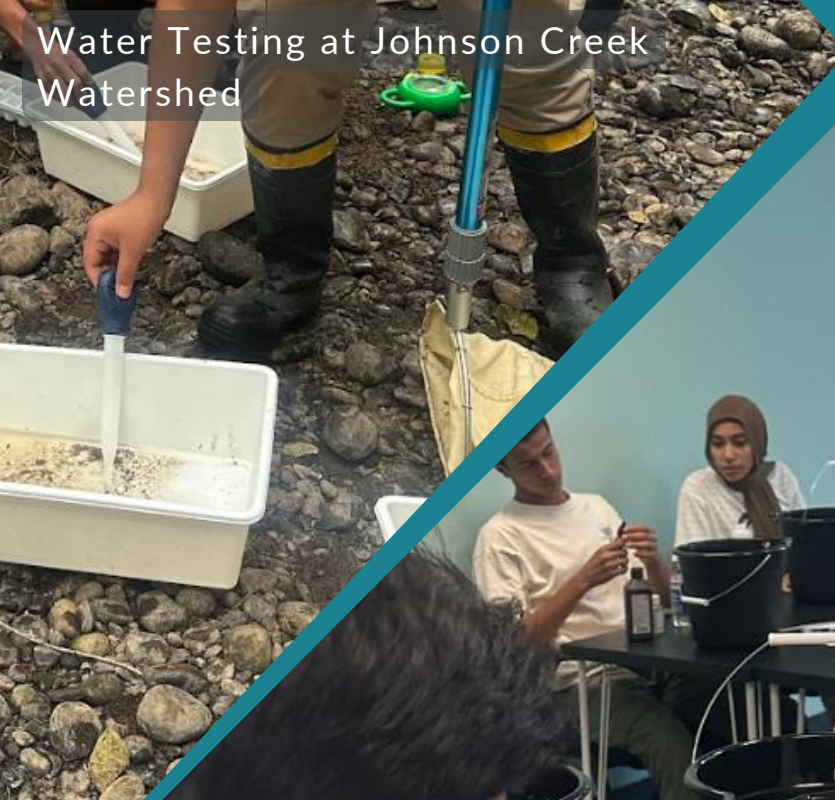
The Refugee Sustainability Leadership project aimed to educate sixteen refugee youth on specific environmental topics like watersheds, native plants, recycling, and eco-friendly cleaning alternatives. Environmental educators facilitated workshops, and practical applications followed, such as hikes and water quality testing in the Tryon Creek and Johnson Creek watersheds, as well as visits to the Leach Botanical Garden and the Metro Waste Station for hands-on learning about recycling. The final session centered on creating green cleaners in collaboration with Home Gardens Group.

The project's goal involved participants developing and presenting their outreach plan to educate their communities on recycling and the use of safer detergents.

Recycling at Metro Waste Station



Water Testing at Johnson Creek Watershed



Native Plants Knowledge at Tryon Creek Watershed



Green Cleaners with Home Gardens Group





Camp *Silah* “Connection:” A Trauma-Informed Immersive Experience

Camp *Silah* offers a four-day, three-night trauma-informed overnight camping experience designed to unite 9-18 year-old immigrant and refugee children with non-immigrant and non-refugee counterparts. In the summer of 2023, 45 refugee children actively participated, contributing to the overarching mission of fostering meaningful connections and shared experiences.

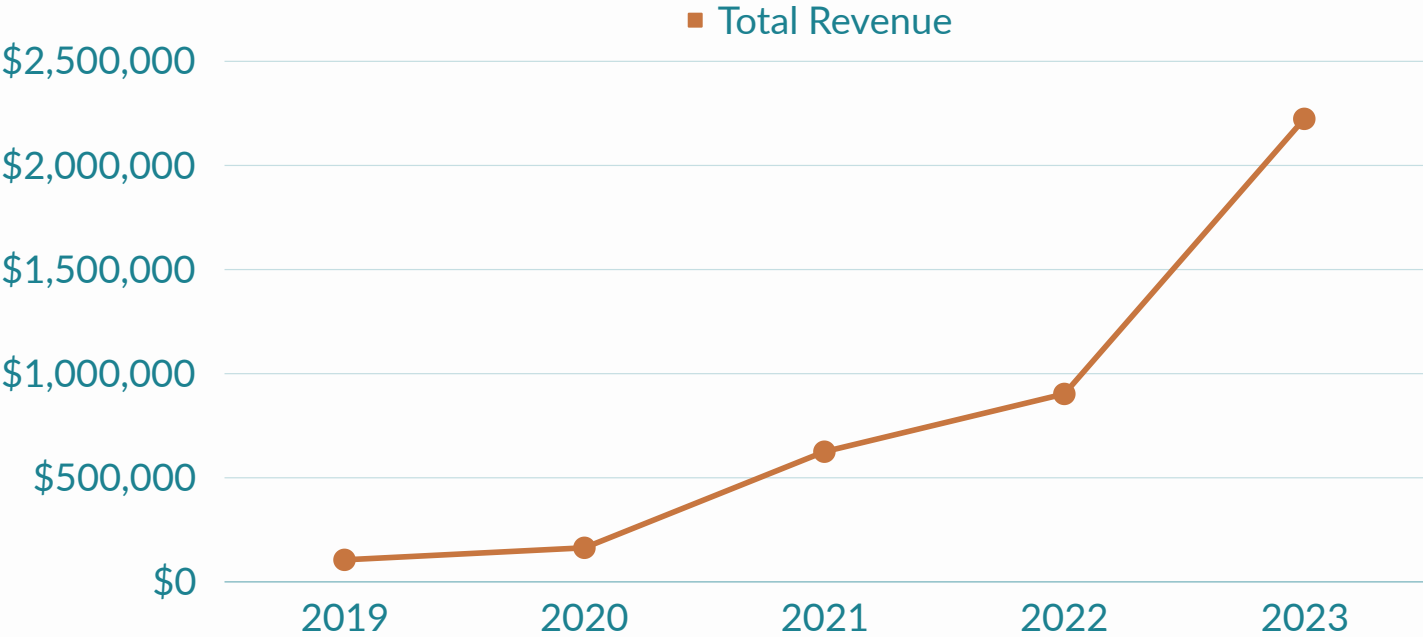


📷 The *Silah* experience features a diverse array of activities, including engaging workshops, interactive discussions, canoeing, archery, swimming, sports, and culinary delights.

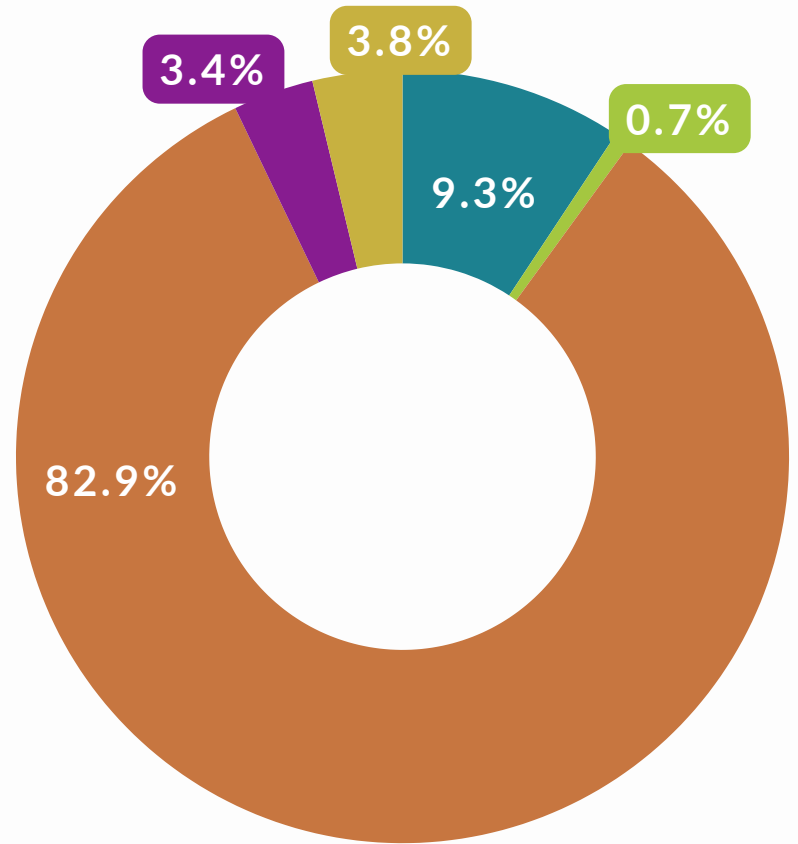
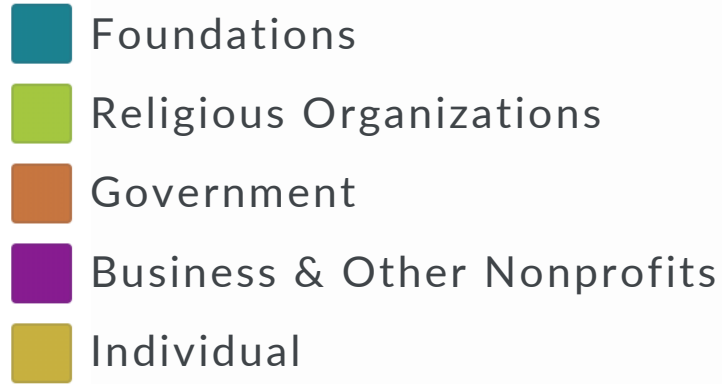
FINANCIALS

Total Revenue:

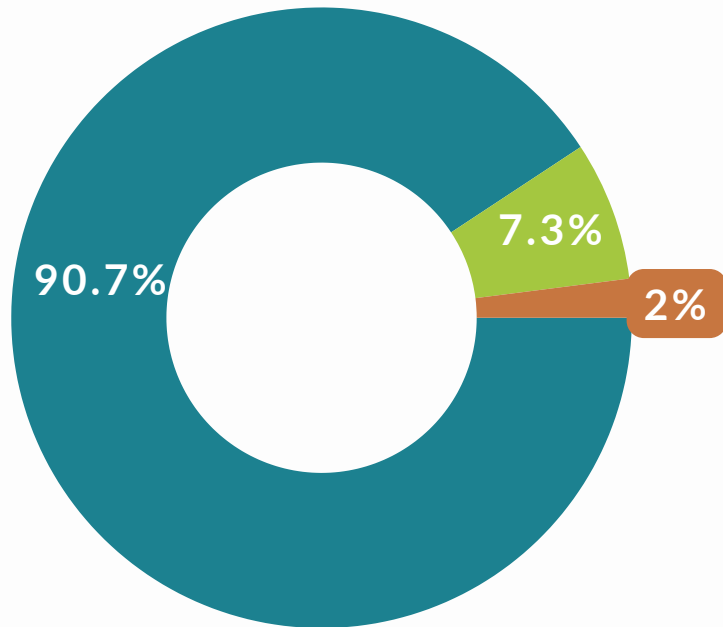
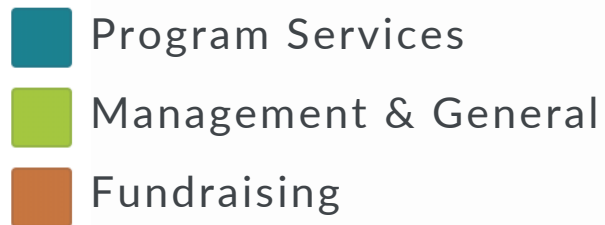
- 2019: \$105,824
- 2020: \$163,648
- 2021: \$625,190
- 2022: \$902,737
- 2023: \$2,223,850



Income by source:



Expense by source:



THANK YOU PRSG INVESTORS



CommuniCare



Hughes Family
Foundation Inc.



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY





Portland Refugee Support Group

HAND IN HAND CREATING COMMUNITY.

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