

Impact Report

20 Years of Open Hearts and Open Doors



Our mission is to *partner* with the local church to *build* a welcoming community for Toledo area internationals, to *share* the hope and love of Jesus Christ, and to *empower* internationals with the skills to become successful.

Letter from our Director

Dear friend of Water for Ishmael,

Hanging in my dining room is a painting of an open door.

I was walking through an open market in Kuwait, and there was that painting—propped up on the ground and unframed. I just couldn't walk past. It looked like the door to something wonderful, perhaps a secret garden. Looking at it, you feel peace and beauty calling to you from the other side.



As I think of our dear international friends, I wonder how many significant doors they have walked through in their lives: the door of their first school as a child; doors to homes where they are a member of the family. Then an airplane door that took them to a whole new world and life; the door to a friend's house here who made them feel like family. The door that led to their first job in America, or the door of our beloved **Water for Ishmael**.

So much of the work we do, in teamwork with our donors, community partners, volunteers, and churches is about finding doors and helping people walk through them.

*Together with you, in our twentieth year of serving the community, we have watched so many immigrants, refugees, parolees, and UT student families pass through doors to hope, self-sufficiency, healing, and nearness to God. **It wouldn't have happened without you!***

Thank you for being there for Water for Ishmael and more importantly for the hundreds who have passed through beautiful doors because of you.

We are profoundly blessed that we get to do this!

In Christ,

Jamelle Metzger
Executive Director



Our deep gratitude to our faithful board members!

- Betsy White - Chair
- Wes Blood - Secretary
- Oghenetejiri Doro - Treasurer
- Paul Munn
- Michael Metzger
- Tim Alley
- Moses Rodriguez

Your guidance, wisdom, prayers, commitment, and love ensure that anyone who walks through our doors will have exceptional services and will hear of the name of Jesus.

Our Worldwide Impact

**We served 342 clients
from 41 countries!**



89%
of adults
improved
their English
test scores

16
languages
represented

\$264,254
given in
scholarships

66
children in
immigrant
families served



201
volunteers

5,896
volunteer
hours

Our Programs

American School for Children (ASC)

Affirming environment for dual-language learners ages 6 weeks–5 years, including ESL & Kindergarten readiness

American School Evening (ASE)

Employment focused English for men and women

American School for Kids (ASK)

Help with homework & language enrichment for school aged children of English learners

American School for Women (ASW)

Six levels of English **for women** taught **by women**. Fostering relationships and connection with the community

Church Engagement

Empowering and training church members to engage with internationals in fruitful relationships

Conversation Partners (CP)

International students building cross-cultural understanding and friendships while practicing spoken English

Toledo International Hospitality Program (TIHP)

Connecting Internationals with Americans for the purpose of friendship, hospitality and learning about American culture

WFI Welcome Corps (WC) Workforce Development (WFD)

Empowering everyday Americans to come together and directly sponsor refugees from around the world

Training immigrants with limited English for the workforce and connecting them to the community

We get to serve entire families of all ages from around the world!

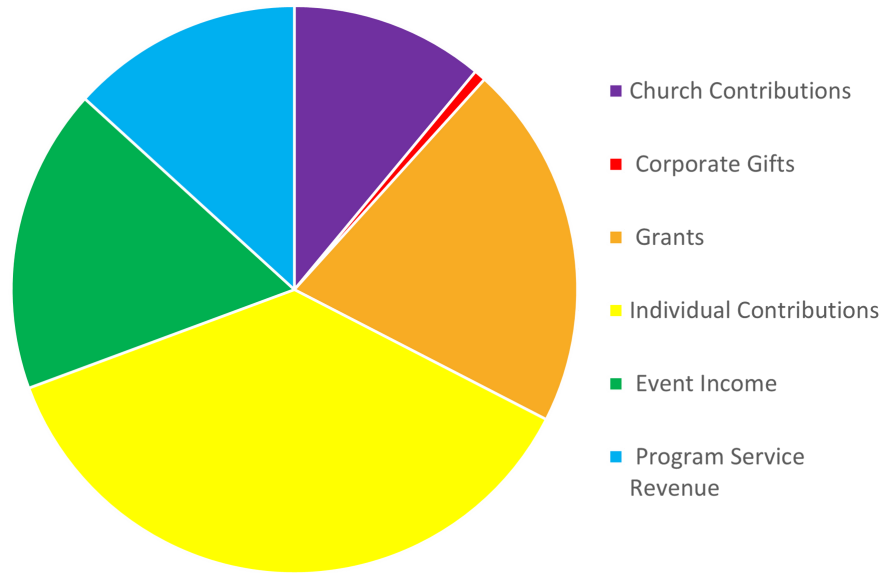


It's about people.

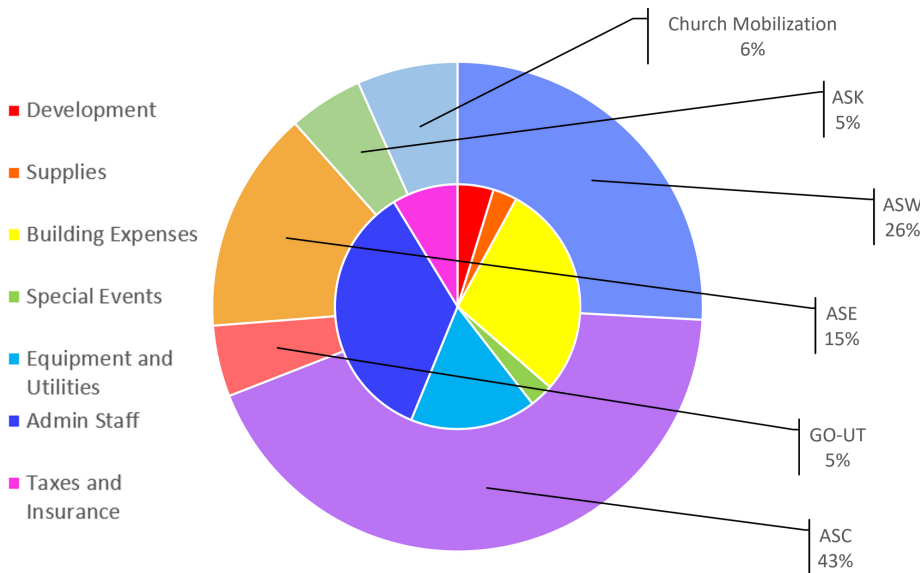
"Who donates to our school to provide scholarships?" asked Hannah, our ASW Director.

"People who love us!" replied our Sudanese student.

Where the money comes from:



Where the money goes:



The inner-circle expenses (17% of the total budget) support the outer circle programs.

*Special Thanks
to our Grant Funders*

- Greater Toledo Community Foundation
- ProLiteracy Mobile Learning Fund
- Dollar General Adult Literacy Grant
- Toledo Rotary Club Foundation
- Youth in Philanthropy Encouraging Education (YIPEE)
- Zonta Club of Toledo



Home: Jannah's Story

"I KNOW that you love me,"

Jannah declared as she looked at the Water for Ishmael staff celebrating her daughter's birthday. There was no doubt in her mind.

Jannah and her family arrived in America traumatized and uncertain of the future. Building a new life after fleeing your former life is a long and distressing process. Sadly, Jannah's family did not get the help they should have received in their initial days in America—creating more trauma, increased fear, and a growing sense of hopelessness.



But, one day Jannah walked through Water for Ishmael's door. Jannah began to experience the hope and love of Jesus!

Our staff and partnering churches put a face and feet to that love. Food and furniture arrived at Jannah's apartment. She started to learn English – in a safe women-only environment. Staff and volunteers visited her family, helped them with paperwork and appointments, provided food and transportation, and gave selflessly day after day.

Jannah was soon pregnant with her first child. Again, WFI and churches were there with her through the frightening process of giving birth in a new country. After her maternity leave, Jannah walked in the door to WFI and said to the precious baby in her arms, **"Look, home."** Jannah continued learning English lightning fast in spite of extreme poverty, her husband's changing jobs, and pressure to send money home to Afghanistan.

Like other humanitarian parolees, Jannah and her husband had no local-residency paperwork with their names on it. The result—ineligibility for government assistance and eviction.

***BUT NOW Jannah knows people who serve Jesus.
We walked with her family through the long legal process.
God even provided a WFI staff member who spoke their
language to translate for the family in court!***



Jannah has now moved to Michigan. Despite the distance, WFI staff and partner churches are still connected with her, visiting, encouraging, praying...lovingly walking with Jannah's family.

Our vision is to see every international Connect, Belong, and Become.

From a Dining Room Table to a Welcoming Community

2003

English Class for Arab Women
with childcare in a home

2006

American School for Women and Children
moves to rented facilities @ Washington Church

2009

Grant Funding
WFI begins receiving local and national grants

2012

American School for Children
is licensed by the state of Ohio

2013

Welcome Toledo-Lucas County
WFI joined with other service providers in
Welcome TLC initiative

2014

Non-Profit Excellence Award
Toledo Community Foundation awards WFI
American School for Evening
opens to serve whole refugee families

2015

Strangers No More
WFI launches Capital Campaign

2016

Citizenship
WFI leads Naturalization Assistance Project with
partners Adelante and ABLE
First Summer Family Literacy Program
Launched American School for Kids

2019

Purchased WFI Building

2020

Grand Opening of our WFI Building

2021

American School for Children
awarded Step Up to Quality 3-Star rating

2022

Workforce Development
partnership with Cherry Street Ministries to expand
GO-UT comes under WFI Leadership
WFI Community Garden is started

2023

WFI Welcome Corps is Launched
WFI is in the process of being certified as a Private
Sponsor Organization (PSO)

Welding in English

“Afghanistan.” “Taliban.” These words are no longer in the headlines, but they will forever be in the hearts of the Paiman

brothers. For the last couple of years, new gates and doors were a constant reality for the Paiman brothers...leaving behind and entering new.



Kabul, Qatar, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Toledo. “*Scared, sad, but happy to be safe,*” is how they describe their feelings.

Then, they walked through Water for Ishmael’s door. Here they have found welcome, English teachers, and so much more. They found real help to make a new start. They found friends—they found family.

The brothers are now the first graduates of the Water for Ishmael–Cherry Street Ministries Workforce Development project: welding. They have moved from working in a dog-food factory to jobs that will provide for their sister and widowed mother. They also have bigger dreams. Amir eventually wants to have his own welding shop and help the poor in Afghanistan. His brother Hadi also wants to help the poor and someday become a mechanical engineer.



CHERRY ST.
MISSION MINISTRIES

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Northwest Ohio

Sometimes doors are big and heavy. You need help to open them. This year God answered our prayers to provide training for living-wage jobs for our international friends through **partnerships**. We are **deeply grateful** and **honored** to work with Cherry Street Ministries, Lott Industries, and the YWCA in Workforce Development projects.



20 Years of Open Hearts and Open Doors



No Longer Strangers



Water for Ishmael's 20th year of serving the international community of greater Toledo, Ohio! What a journey from a prayer meeting to our own WFI building that those we serve call "home." Staff, volunteers, donors, funders, and community partners welcomed, served, and loved those who came through WFI's door. **They are no longer strangers** but *citizens, business owners, coworkers, community volunteers, and friends.*

Together Toledo is embracing the world!

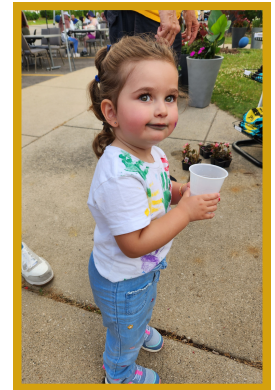


God has given us the privilege and joy of doing this!

Little Lina

Immigrant families walk through so many New Doors. Their children are faced with new doors, too. Water for Ishmael's childcare door is one.

Lina had never been apart from her mother. Her mother needed to learn English to be able to find her voice and help Lina in their new life here.



To Lina, the sounds coming from the teacher's mouth were unintelligible. The teacher looked different than her mother. Lina let everyone know she was scared, confused, and unhappy when she came through the door to her class. Her crying could be heard down the hall. Lina's mom showed the anguish she felt all over her face. Each morning, the drop-off was a real struggle.

Our childcare staff understands the unique needs of Lina and other young children in immigrant families. Day after day, Lina's teacher held her, played with her, and gently encouraged her. Yet, still she cried until exhausted. Her father was ready to pull both mother and baby out of our school. But they decided to stay a little longer.

The whole staff began to pray for Lina. Things started to change. Less crying. Soon her tears dried up so quickly that everyone was stunned. *Lina's feeling of security grew each day.*

Lina had learned to TRUST someone other than her mother—a vital developmental step. Now Lina LOVES coming through her classroom door!

WFI Welcome Corps

WELCOMECORPS



In 2021, 122,000 Afghans unexpectedly left their homes for safety when Kabul fell to the Taliban. The USA's "Operation Welcome Allies" brought many of them to America without the normal systems for resettlement. At that time, God put it on our hearts to help. Water for Ishmael was uniquely poised to mobilize churches and community groups to serve those who needed help immediately. Since then, we have done what we could to welcome Afghans and now Ukrainians.

In 2023, The US State Department's new initiative "Welcome Corps" approved **Water for Ishmael to be certified as a Private Sponsor Organization (PSO)**. An answer to prayer! Soon Water for Ishmael will be able to recruit, support, and oversee volunteer groups who want to sponsor United Nations-vetted refugees for resettlement in partnership with the UNHCR and the US Department of State.

The Door to a Safe Place

Exploring what you believe with others requires knowing you're in a safe place.

Each week students in the American School for Women can choose to listen to a story from God's Word and discuss it with staff and other students of various faiths.

After hearing the story of the African Man, a teacher and her students from China, Cameroon, Brazil, Syria, and Jordan discussed the story.

Gradually, the questions the students asked were far beyond the story, and the discussion was passionate. *Yet, they trusted each other with their deep beliefs.*

These women felt safe enough to ask difficult questions and to talk about what they believed or didn't believe. Though it was challenging to talk about beliefs in English, Water for Ishmael is a place where respect and love fill the building.

Water for Ishmael is a SAFE PLACE to ask questions.



Doors of Opportunity

Important Things in 2003

Phone books & floppy disks
Blockbuster & iPods
1-hour photo stands
an atlas in your car

2003 to 2023

*20 years in a rapidly
changing world*

Things We Didn't Have in 2003

Facebook & Fitbit
Android & iPhone
Netflix & selfies
Gmail & Instant Pot

Stop and think about events that affected people around the world since 2003. More than 29 wars, terrorist attacks, coup d'états, the Arab Spring, famines, earthquakes, Ebola, COVID-19, poverty, migrant crisis in Europe—the result is people on the move! They are looking for safety and a better life. Some will come here. These are people of courage and potential.

In 2003, there were 39,320,000 forcibly displaced people. Today—108,400,000. Most of them will be able to go home someday, but a few will come to Toledo.

No matter what brings internationals here, **Jesus's command remains, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."**

For 20 years, Water for Ishmael has been able to love and serve the various waves of internationals in our community—*Saudi Arabian families of University of Toledo students, Syrian and Iraqi refugees, Afghan parolees, and now Ukrainians. Every time, you, our donors and volunteers, have worked with our staff to adapt to meet the needs of the current group. Thank you!*

As we look to the future, the challenges will be great, but this is God's work. The opportunities to embrace the nations will also be great! *Together let's continue to show the hope and love of Jesus to internationals in Toledo.*

"From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us." Acts 17:26-27

Will you give today to serve internationals who walk through our door?



ONE VOICE
FOUNDATION

website: onevoice.foundation
phone: (419) 450-9022

Would you like to create
your own legacy fund?
Schedule a call through
the One Voice Foundation
website.

*Reach
Out!*

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