

# 2025 IMPACT REPORT



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**Water for Ishmael's 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 skills to become successful.**

## CONNECT. BELONG. BECOME.

Dear Friend,

Every year, Water for Ishmael celebrates the end of our summer program with a visit from the ice cream truck. I stepped outside my office on this special day just to soak up a little of the joy of moms and kids carrying projects home, chatting excitedly about progress made, and enjoying their treat with friends. Adopted “aunties” were wiping sticky fingers and warning every one of the melting gooey puddles of ice cream while laughter bounced across the happiness in the air.



There were so many languages and so many nations represented among those women and children right there in our little parking lot in Toledo. **God has truly brought the world to us.** They have come to us seeking a better life and a better future. They have come escaping horrible war and persecution at home. They have come to be reunited with family.

Yes, they may fit into certain categories like “immigrant,” or “refugee,” but to us, they are simply **the person in front of us.**

And today, the question that I am asking myself, the question that I am asking you, the question that I believe God is asking us is this: ***What are we going to do with the person in front of us?***

As Christians, we know that these precious ones are created in the image of God. We know that “God determined the exact times and places where they would live, so that they would seek Him and find Him, because He is not far (Acts 17:26-27). **And more than that, Jesus himself commands us to welcome the hungry, the thirsty, and the stranger living among us (Matthew 25).**

This year, would you continue with us in this joyous work of partnering with the local church to build a welcoming community for the person in front of us, to share the hope and love of Jesus Christ with them and to empower them with skills to become successful?

My friends, thank you for joining us and empowering us to welcome the person in front of us living in an unfamiliar, unpredictable, and not always welcoming world. **Your gifts make an eternal difference.**

May God reward you for your kindness.

Janelle Metzger, Executive Director

## OUR SINCEREST THANK YOU!

**Thank You to Our Church Partners:** *Through your generous gifts, warm encouragement, and steadfast prayers, you are helping us to be an extension of the Body of Christ as we welcome the stranger in front of us, care for the needs of the strangers living in new and unfamiliar places, and bind up the deep wounds of internationals traumatized by war. Thank you for loving the international community through us in Christ.*

**Thank You to Our Donors:** *With every penny you commit to the cause of sharing the hope and love of Jesus with internationals and empowering internationals with skills to become successful, you make an eternal investment. Your gifts put smiles on the faces of immigrant and refugee children preparing for kindergarten. Your gifts provide a quality English education for our clients and help them to find their voice in our community. And your gifts inspire us to keep going on difficult days. We could not keep the lights on in our building without you, much less do this work that God has called us to do.*

**Thank You to Our Volunteers:** *You give so much of your time and so much with your time. You are the friend who comes alongside a new international neighbor and helps her to learn how to read, how to sew, how to make sense of the world around her. You kneel beside an immigrant gentleman in our classroom and help him with his English work. You give a young refugee woman and her children a ride to our classes so their lives can be changed forever. You are the continual wind beneath the wings of our staff and our clients.*



**And a Very Special Thanks to Our Board:** *You are tasked with making many difficult decisions with little to no glory or reward. Yet your calm, steady, deliberative leadership year after year guides Water for Ishmael's work toward sustainability, helping to ensure that there will be a Water for Ishmael for the next generation of internationals who come to Toledo.*

**From Janelle:** *To my teammates: You are the lifeblood of Water for Ishmael. Your passion for Jesus and practical love poured out in excellent service honors our Lord and points people to Him every day. Thank you for giving so much of yourselves to welcome the stranger.*

# AN OVERVIEW OF OUR PROGRAMS

## American School for Women (ASW)

ASW offers six levels of English for women, all taught by women. There is a strong emphasis on fostering relationships and connections within the community.



## American School for Children (ASC)

ASC is a safe and affirming environment for dual-language learners ages 6 weeks to 5 years, including ESL and kindergarten readiness.



## American School Evening (ASE)

Multiple levels of employment-focused English for both men and women.



## Conversation Partners (CP)

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

# AN OVERVIEW OF OUR PROGRAMS

## Workforce Development (WFD)

WFD offers immigrants with limited English training for the workforce, including job-specific English and connections within the Toledo community.



## American School for Kids and Teens (ASK/T)

A warm and inviting space, ASK/T offers support for young people to learn, make friends, feel included, and gain new abilities.



## Church Engagement

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

## Toledo International Hospitality Program (TIHP)

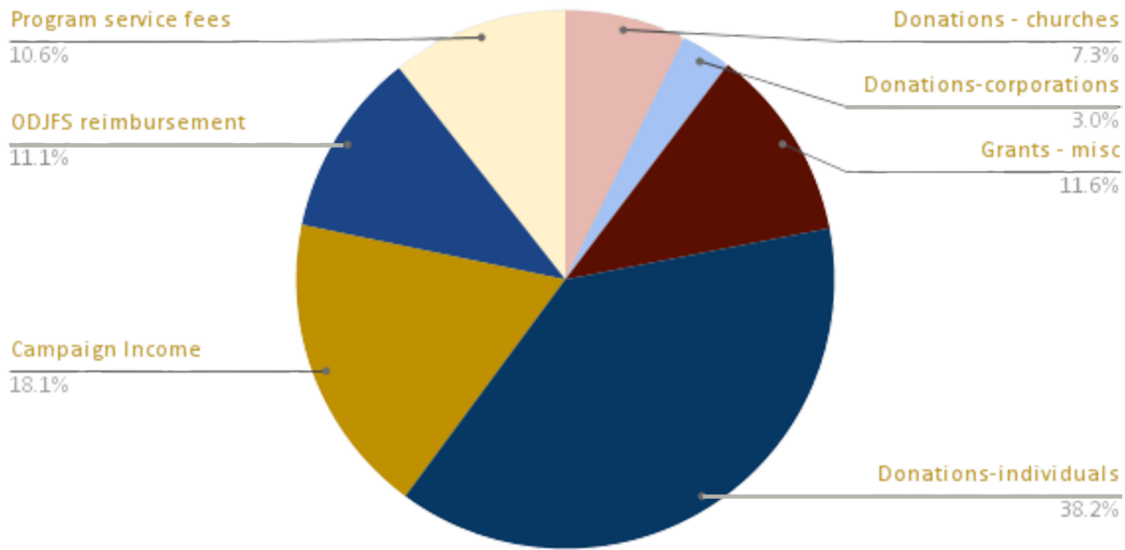
Connecting Internationals with Americans for the purpose of friendship, hospitality, and learning about American culture.



# STEWARDSHIP OF FINANCES

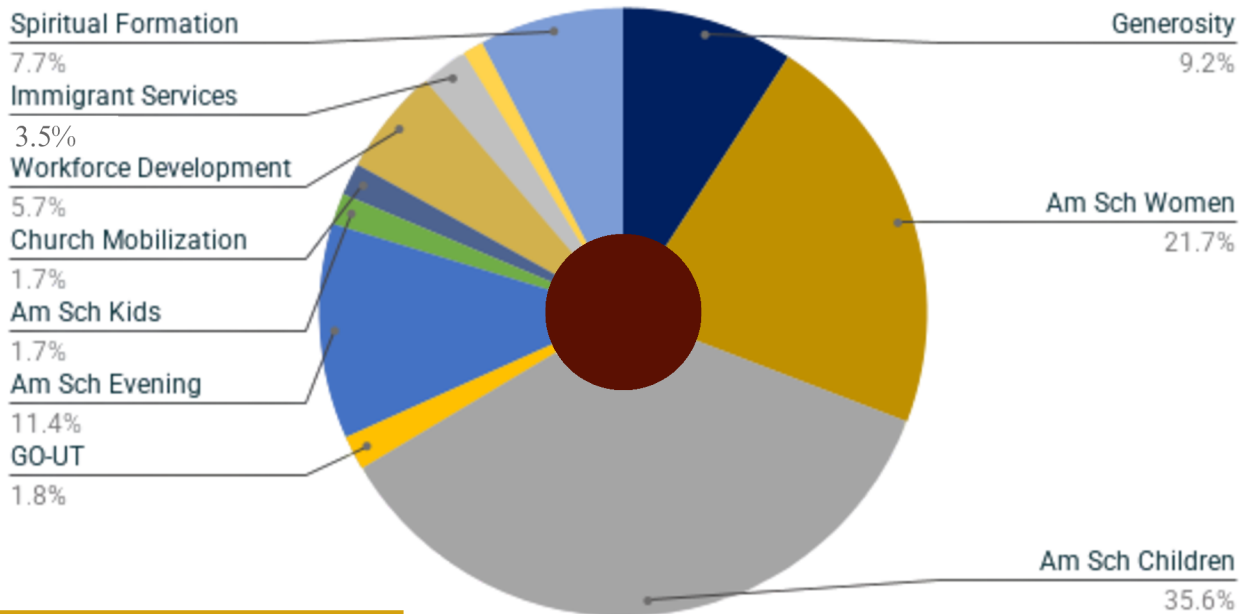
We believe every good gift is from God, and it is our responsibility to steward it all for His glory. As we partner with Him in this mission, we leverage our finances to meet the real needs of real people.

## WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



2026 TOTAL BUDGET: \$1,283,604.00

Donut hole represents 19% fixed costs which support all programs.



## WHERE THE MONEY GOES

**WORLDWIDE IMPACT**

**Our ESL students represented 12 languages.**

**We served 301\* total clients at Arco Dr.!**

**181 volunteers served.**

**Workforce Development graduated 17 students!**

**Our ESL students represented 23 countries.**

**We welcomed 64 refugee families!**

**319 people sponsored refugees.**

**Volunteers gave 5,636 hours!**

**GO-UT served 39\*\* university students.**

**YOU make all of this possible!**



Scan the QR code to get involved!

\*not including refugee families who were sponsored  
\*\*not including Household Items Giveaway

### “Isa Help Me?”

One day earlier this year, Damsa and Nageenah from Afghanistan were sitting in their English class at WFI. They were crying. Damsa’s brother, at home in Afghanistan, was facing significant troubles. Tatyana, their English teacher, saw their sadness, and asked them if they knew that Water for Ishmael’s staff prays for students. Damsa asked Tatyana, “Teacher, do you pray Isa? (Isa is the Arabic name for Jesus.) Tatyana told her that yes, WFI’s staff prays to Jesus.

Somewhat astonished, Damsa asked, “Isa help me?” Tatyana said, “Of course he will help.”



**“I love WFI because I get to make friends with people from all over the world and introduce them to my friend Jesus.”  
- Andy, Chair of the WFI board**

### Women of Grit

One of the words that best describes Water for Ishmael’s students is *gritty*. They work so hard. They sacrifice so much. They are survivors who just keep going. Jonise is one of those gritty survivors. She came to WFI early last year from Haiti, alone except for her little girl, Ambar, who has been attending our children’s program while her mother has been studying English in our women’s program.

She had no car, no driver’s license, and walked to WFI every day regardless of weather. She was placed into English Level 1, and after one semester, moved up to Level 2. Day after day, she stayed for hours after her classes were over to study at WFI. At the end of WFI’s awards ceremony in May, she said to Hannah, director of our women’s school, “I want to thank you, Miss Hannah, for giving me the opportunity to study and improve my English. Now, my English is better, and I am talking with people. I can go to the offices [JFS and other offices] and I don’t translate!”



**“The students and staff at WFI inspire me with their diligence, resilience, and ingenuity. It’s delightful to be able to support them as they achieve their goals. May God continue to bless this wonderful ministry.”  
- Betsy, Board Member**

## Helping Families

“Can you help me?”

That’s a pretty common question at Water for Ishmael. Over the summer, Abdul from Afghanistan stopped Janelle, our Executive Director, in the hallway to ask her this question. “I already passed Level 3 [of English],” he said, “but I want to study more. Can you sell me a book so I can study on my own?”

Of course, we always want to respond “Yes!” to requests like this. Even though our summer class offerings were limited this year, Janelle asked Abdul to write down his name and number so she could get back with him.

While Abdul wrote down his contact information, Janelle noticed that Abdul’s 18-month-old son, a student in Water for Ishmael’s daycare, was pulling out markers and naming the colors: “Blue. Yellow. Pink. Black.”

We celebrate this young learner and his dad! It is wonderful to help whole families move forward in learning.



## Our New Assistant

Rasha is from Sudan. In 2023, she began studying in Water for Ishmael’s English for Specific Purposes (ESP) program, working hard to obtain the vocabulary she needed to become an office assistant. She then took advantage of Water for Ishmael’s partnership with Cherry Street Mission’s vocational training program to obtain training in office assistant work and passed the program with flying colors! Afterward, she became a volunteer as an administrative assistant at Water for Ishmael, helping to monitor the door for building safety, answering the office phone, taking over-the-phone and in-person messages, and greeting clients and visitors at the door.

But wait, there’s more! Rasha has also been helping out in our English classes, becoming a teacher’s aid in phonics and literacy classes. And in December 2024, she passed her citizenship test, becoming a U.S. citizen in January 2025.

Office assistant. Teacher. Citizen. Well done, Rasha!



**“Having the opportunity to teach Workforce Development to students who have worked so hard has been inspirational, humbling, and one of the highlights of life.”**  
- Brenda, Staff

## Eternal Impact

Water for Ishmael is proud to be a part of Global Opportunities at the University of Toledo (GO-UT) and the wonderful hospitality programs that GO-UT provides for international students at the university.

The Toledo International Hospitality Program (TIHP) is one of the flagship programs that makes GO-UT's work so special. In TIHP, families in the Toledo community volunteer to host international students from UT around once a month for meals in their homes, trips to the zoo or local Metroparks, Toledo Mudhens games, or other activities.

These times of visiting aren't just fun; they also make a big difference in the lives of students.

Last year, a family who volunteered in TIHP received a message from an international student they had hosted in the past. "Jamlah and I got baptized today," the message read. "We just wanted to thank you and your family for being such an important part of our journey. The seed you planted has grown, and we are so grateful for your guidance. You are truly a blessing!"



## Volunteer Testimonies

**"As I pray for the students at WFI, I am blessed to become dear friends with several very special ladies from all over the world, and I love them so much. I am enjoying the benefits of mutual trust and shared respect as we learn from each other and help each other in practical ways. What a privilege I have through WFI to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this unique way." - Jill, Volunteer**

**"Jesus's love abounds here. We love and support every student. Our students' determination, resilience, and graciousness inspire us to keep the mission of WFI moving forward." -Katie, Volunteer**



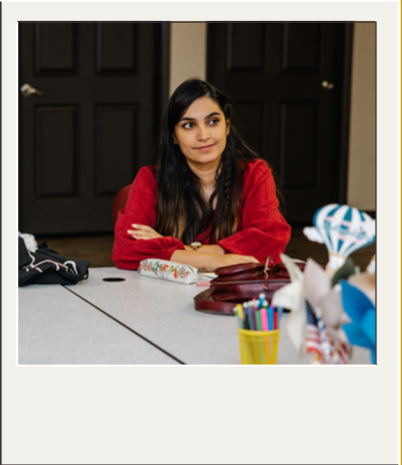
**REAL PEOPLE. REAL STORIES.**

**“I have had the honor of walking with people during the most vulnerable times of their lives. I have advocated for survivors of domestic violence through the court system and reminded them that they are not alone, that they are strong, and can be safe. I have empowered refugees who have fled war and genocide to be able to be independent in a new culture, new language, new everything world. These people are some of the bravest and most incredible people I have ever had the privilege of meeting. And I get to equip other Americans to have that honor, too.” - Mersadise, Staff**



**“I love engaging with the gracious staff and eager students, each of whom has a story I look forward to hearing. It takes courage to shape a new life, and each woman is taking that risk.”**

**-Mary, Volunteer**



**“It’s easy for our students to stick to their own little groups of people from their language or country. But on the first couple days of school, I witnessed the most beautiful sight. One of our Haitian students greeted every student she saw with a huge smile and a hug, like they were long-lost sisters! No matter where they were from, she was so glad to see them. It was a beautiful representation of cross-cultural friendships.” -**

**Ginny, Staff**

## Unexpected Opportunities

“My old life insurance policy paid out big benefits – and I didn’t even have to die first!

I was so surprised when David (our financial advisor) told us we were over-insured. I had bought a whole-life policy many years ago when the kids were young and frankly hadn’t thought about it since. The kids were now grown and out of the house; we just didn’t need that protection anymore.

He said we could donate the policy to Water for Ishmael. So fun! It didn’t really cost us anything. As a nonprofit, WFI was able to cash out the policy without a tax liability. And we got to deduct the appreciated value as a donation. It was a win-win.

You can do the same with stocks, bonds, even appreciated real estate.

If you’d like to have a truly lasting impact, consider WFI in your estate planning.

Water for Ishmael just celebrated 20 years of ministry – lasting way beyond our expectations when it was just Janelle and 3 ladies around our kitchen table. I don’t know how many more years I have on this earth, but regardless, I’d like to have an ongoing impact.

Psalm 102:18 says: “Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord.”

So we’re naming WFI in our will, and looking forward someday to meeting members of that future generation.

If you’d like to learn more about any of these giving options, please contact us. We have resources to help you through every step of the process.” - Mike Metzger, Volunteer Fundraiser

## Are you looking for more opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the person in front of you?

We are always offering tours and volunteer opportunities. We also have a secure donor database where you can view several options for partnering with us financially. We are deeply grateful for every person who partners with us to build a welcoming community for Toledo area internationals, to share the hope and love of Jesus Christ with them, and to empower them with skills to become successful.

**To set up a tour or discuss volunteer opportunities, please email [moriah@waterforishmael.org](mailto:moriah@waterforishmael.org)**



**To view giving options on our secure database  
please scan this QR code:**

