



AMAANAH  
REFUGEE SERVICES

# 2023 IMPACT REPORT



AMAANAH

## LETTER FROM THE CEO



I am ecstatic to announce that Amaanah Refugee Services is marking a significant milestone in our journey: our 15th anniversary of serving the refugee community in Houston. This remarkable achievement fills me with pride and gratitude as we reflect on the meaningful impact we've collectively made over the past decade and a half.

For more than 15 years, Amaanah Refugee Services has stood as a beacon of hope and support for our New American neighbors. Through our educational, mentorship, relief, and athletic programs, we have worked tirelessly to empower individuals and families to rebuild their lives and thrive in their new homeland.

As we celebrate this milestone, we must recognize that our journey is far from over. Amaanah remains committed to expanding our reach and deepening our impact in the face of ongoing challenges and evolving needs, Amaanah remains committed to expanding our reach and deepening our impact.

Together, we have shown that when we unit with purpose and passion, we can make a profound and lasting difference in the lives of those who have overcome immense adversity to be here. Our 15 year anniversary is not just a celebration of past achievements, but a testament to the boundless possibilities that lie ahead when we work together to help people.

As we continue to the next chapter of our journey, I am optimistic and determined we can have a deeper impact on our community.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to our mission to helping people rebuild their lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jida Nabulsi'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jida Nabulsi

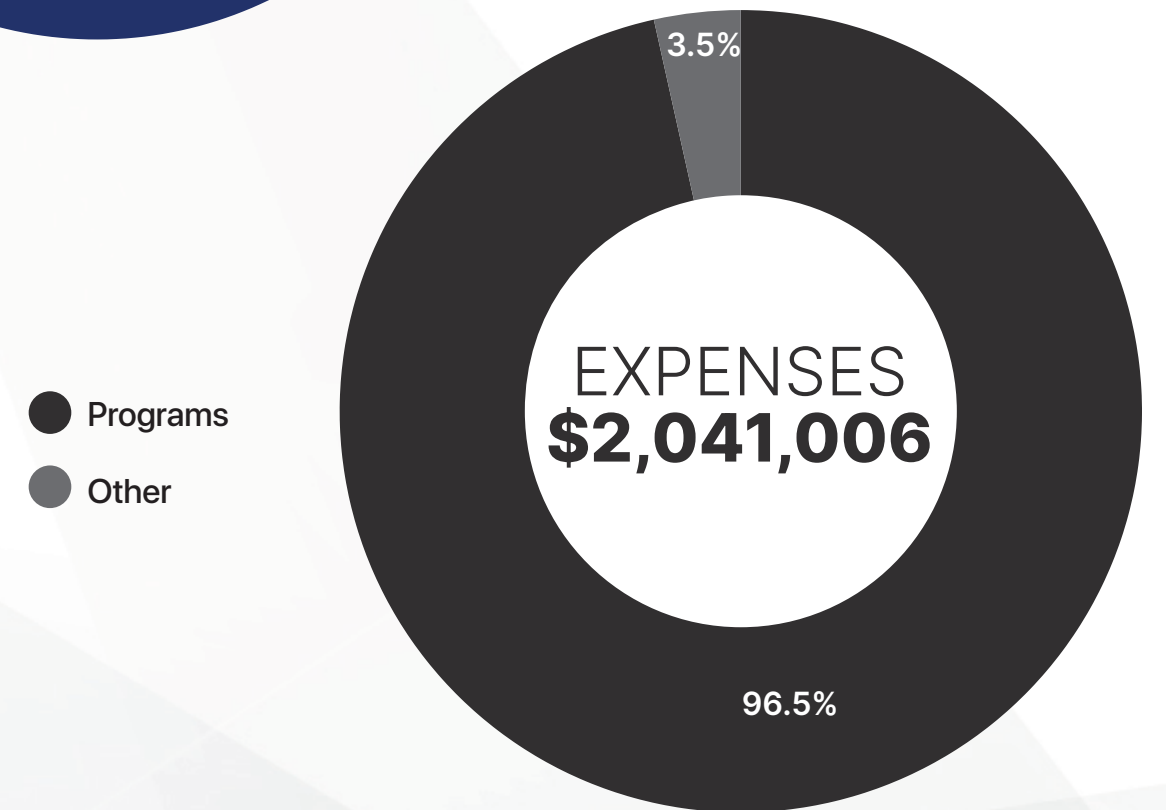
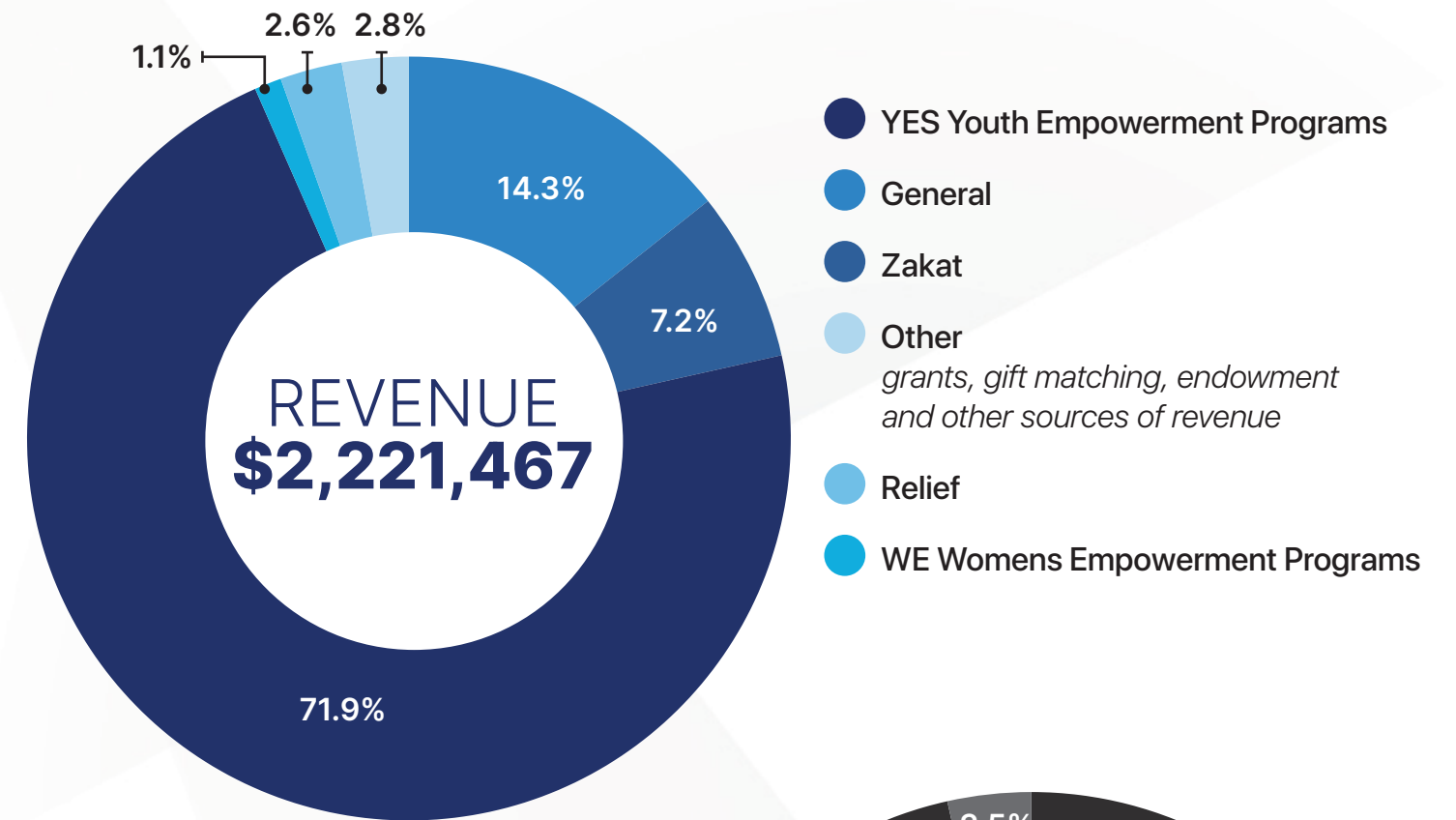
# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to embrace and empower those who seek refuge in the United States, providing the support, guidance and resources they need to build brighter futures.

# OUR VISION

We envision a future where all refugees have an equal chance to build happy and productive lives in America, flourishing independently, and contributing positively to the community.

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



# TEACH 360

In 2023, Amaanah Refugee Services collaborated with the Houston Independent School District and Alief Independent School District to extend assistance to refugee and immigrant students. Throughout the 2022-2033 academic year, Amaanah actively engaged with 5,765 students across diverse on-campus initiatives. Among these, Amaanah's Teach 360 programs provided mentoring for social and emotional growth, academic tutoring, and language acquisition support directly on school campuses.



**57**

TOTAL CAMPUSES SERVED



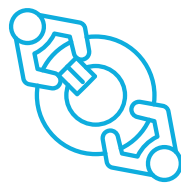
**23**

MENTORS



**14**

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION COACHES



**5**

TUTORS



# RELIEF PROGRAMS

The Hajra Begum and Justice Waheeduddin Ahmed Meal Program (HJMP) was established by Kashif Aftab in 2022 with a noble mission: to alleviate the food insecurity challenges faced by our refugee community. Recognizing the critical need for sustenance among vulnerable families, the program was born out of a commitment to ensure that no individual or family goes hungry.

Since its inception, Amaanah Refugee Services has diligently expanded the reach of the HJMP to accommodate more families in need. Through strategic partnerships and the unwavering support of compassionate donors, we have been able to extend a lifeline to those facing the harsh reality of food insecurity.

Families enrolled in the HJMP receive a monthly food card stipend, providing them with essential resources to supplement their food access. This stipend not only empowers individuals to make choices based on their dietary needs and preferences but also fosters a sense of dignity and autonomy in accessing nutritious meals for themselves and their loved ones.



**200** FAMILIES **IMPACTED** NEARLY **1000** PEOPLE

In addition to our primary initiatives, our Relief programs stand as a pillar of support for families facing hardships. Through these programs, we provide essential assistance such as hot meal distributions, provision of school supplies, distribution of warm jackets and blankets, access to fresh produce, grocery stipends, and partial financial aid. The success of these programs hinges on the unwavering commitment and dedication of our volunteers.



**9300**  
POUNDS OF  
FRESH PRODUCE

**4957**  
PEOPLE SUPPORT  
THROUGH RELIEF EFFORTS

**4725**  
INDIVIDUAL  
MEALS GIVEN

# SCHOLARSHIPS

Amaanah Refugee Services has proudly embarked on its third scholarship season for the 2023-2024 academic year, continuing its commitment to support refugee education. This season, we awarded scholarships totaling \$50,500 to 15 deserving individuals, enabling them to pursue their educational goals at universities, community colleges, or vocational certification programs. Among the recipients, 5 were female and 10 were male, reflecting our dedication to fostering educational opportunities across gender lines within the refugee community.

These scholarships, infused with hope, serve as a beacon of support for our resilient refugee population. The awarded funds cover essential expenses such as tuition, books, supplies, and provide partial assistance for rent and utilities, ensuring that financial burdens do not impede the pursuit of education and a brighter future.

In 2023, Amaanah initiated its Guiding Stars mentorship program aimed at bolstering support for scholarship recipients. This program paired each recipient with a dedicated volunteer mentor from the community, who provided guidance throughout their academic pursuits and regularly checked in to ensure their well-being.



# FARIBA'S STORY



In Afghanistan I was not silent in the face of oppression, working behind the scenes and not giving up. Also, I was a teacher for two years in an Islamic school where we had difficult and special rules. Because I was teacher of this Islamic center, I had to wear heavy full clothes and a hijab. I wore a special hijab, and this was a kind of hijab that I had to cover myself with, although it was difficult for me to wear it and it called Chadari. Because I needed this duty to be able to support my family financially, I had to endure it.

After finishing high school, I started to study at a midwifery institute for two years. When done, I was supposed to get engaged to my cousin on behalf of my family, but I didn't accept it, and the next day without my family's knowledge, I left the city where I lived. I ran to My aunt's house in Kabul.

But the only thing that made me hate marriage in Afghanistan is that marriage in Afghanistan means that you can't be who you want to be, you must always obey others and you have to be a housewife, work hard from morning to evening, alone and have a child every year. When you get married, you cannot see or invite your parents or friends without the permission of your in-laws. I didn't want to be like a hidden woman, I just wanted to be a strong woman in all ways with some freedom.

When I went to Kabul, I continued my midwifery lessons and worked part-time with a doctor as an assistant. And I still went to one of the boxing clubs for my personal defense and my interest in sports. I often felt afraid walking alone sometimes. It was almost a forbidden option for girls to play sports in Afghanistan, so I didn't tell anyone about it except my father, so I always went secretly.

I wanted to leave Afghanistan for better life and then Taliban stopped me even bit me, but I didn't give up. I came to the USA after lots

of difficulties. I want to continue my education to be a nurse. I am working as tutor in one of elementary school helping Afghan students to learn English. The way that I am impacting others life, one of my Afghani students was very shy and didn't want to play or talk with other boy or men. So, I told her that it's alright to play with other girls or boys or talk with them and make friends. I saw her thinking about it, and now she has several friends. Another way I see how I make life better when I went to the elementary school as tutor students couldn't read and write Alphabet but now, they can speak read and write good English.

Because I am the oldest of 9 siblings, I am responsible of my family too. specially in this hard situation in Afghanistan there is not good economy situation and not good education situation so I'm working to pay my expenses and help my family and it's been almost one year that I'm in the united state but still I don't have a car and I'm going with bus to work, and for groceries and the weather is very different here sometimes it is very hot and sometimes rainy and very cold. But that is ok at least I have my freedom, and nobody can't force me to get married to someone that even I don't like him, and nobody can tell to don't go to school and you can't work or stay at home because you're a woman. But thank God I'm here that I can do what I want to do I can be what I want to be, and I can work. Anyway, I wanted to start college, and continue my education to become a nurse and honestly help patient or people and to become a financial independent woman. And to achieve my goals or dreams that I have as every normal girl. so, I applied to HCC college and now I'm taking one online ESOL level three class, but I paid for that because I don't have financial aid yet and I'm still waiting to accept for financial aid.

# BIG SISTER'S CIRCLE

The Big Sister's Circle has transformed lives through mentorship and friendship. Thanks for our core volunteers Sally, Oriana, and Salma who lead the different language circles have built lasting relationships. The Big Sister's Circle is a program dedicated to supporting women with mentors to help nurture their integration with someone they can relate to. Women are paired up with community leaders who speak their native language and this year we partnered with the University of St. Thomas to provide several levels of English to help with language acquisition.



## ENGLISH CLASSES WITH UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

In 2023 Amaanah Refugee Services formed a partnership for our refugee community to take English classes at the University of St. Thomas. St. Thomas offers several levels of English that refugees benefitted and graduated from at the end of 2023.

# REFUGEE TESTIMONIALS

## KATYA'S STORY

Katya, a single mother of two boys, fled Mexico for a fresh start. Arriving in the United States, she faced daunting challenges: a new language, a new country, and no support network. With no place to call home, she struggled to make ends meet.

In a stroke of luck, a friend offered her an apartment, providing shelter for her and her children. But the apartment was bare, lacking even the basic necessities. Katya resorted to salvaging items from dumpsters just to furnish her new home.

Amidst her struggles, a beacon of hope emerged in the form of Amaanah. With their support, Katya's life took a turn for the better. United States Anesthesia Partners (USAP) sponsored a complete home transformation for her, providing her with the essentials she needed to thrive.

Katya expresses her gratitude: "Thank you, Amaanah, for giving me and my children a new beginning."



*"Thank you, Amaanah, for giving me and my children a new beginning."*

*Katya*



# AMAANAH LIONS SOCCER

It's been another busy year for the Amaanah Lions. 2024 saw the program enter its 6th season in the Houston Football Association, with over seventy young people involved in training and playing with our two teams. In June, the A team achieving its fifth successive promotion, earning a place in Division 1A, one of the highest levels of play in amateur soccer in the region. With just a handful of games remaining in the current season, the team sits in third place with a very good chance of another promotion. The B team began their fourth year in the league; They were champions of Division 2B last year, a remarkable accomplishment from a team that welcomes players of all levels. Off the field, the Lions family has been growing. Last year we attended our first Lions wedding, and just a few weeks ago our first Lions baby was born. Including our coaches we have been blessed with a remarkable six happy and healthy children in the last twelve months.

Our partnership with Lone Star College and 76 continues to yield results, and we proudly watched several graduations in 2023, with more expected this year from both Lone Star and the University of Houston Downtown. We remain incredibly grateful for their investments in our players and for everyone who continues to support our education programs. Lions players have continued their volunteer work with Amaanah, helping to staff and manage events all year round. Other highlights include hosting our largest local tournament to date, where we welcomed teams from across the local community and a visit from Little Amal, who joined the Lions for a kick around in the park. We also hosted players from all over Houston for our World Refugee Day tournament, and we plan to grow these events in coming years.

We are grateful to a new partnership with our friends at ZT Corporation, who have generously provided us with an indoor training location, along with their experience, support and advice. This is the first success of the new Lions Committee, which brings together board members coaches and senior players to focus effort on some specific objectives in the year ahead. This program is built on the people who give their time and energy, going above and beyond all reasonable expectation. Once again we express our heartfelt thanks to Amine Amrouni, David Thanoon, Chakir Cherif, Hakim Yassine and Tayeb Ahmadi for their tireless efforts in training, organizing and mentoring our players, and in delivering this program year after year.



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

It is with great excitement that we announce the 15th anniversary of Amaanah Refugee Services, marking a decade and a half of dedicated service to Houston's refugee community. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we extend our deepest appreciation to our remarkable team and volunteers whose tireless efforts have made this milestone possible.

In Houston, the name Amaanah has become synonymous with hope and sanctuary for those facing adversity. Our unwavering mission is to stand ready to assist refugees who choose Houston as their new home. We wholeheartedly embrace the diversity of each refugee's story and background, ensuring that differences are not obstacles, but opportunities for growth.

Amaanah is a critical second phase of resettlement for a refugee. This period lays a pivotal foundation in a refugee's journey and significantly enhances their prospects of long-term success and integration into Houston's social, economic, and cultural fabric.

As we commemorate this significant milestone, the Board reaffirms our unwavering commitment to expanding our outreach and enhancing our influence. The evolving needs of refugees compel us to remain adaptable and responsive. This year, the organization underwent a strategic review of Amaanah's services, leading us to launch ambitious initiatives aimed at expanding our reach and enhancing our impact. Our vision is to enhance our services, offering a broader array of support for our refugee community, while also providing a more extensive platform for our volunteers to engage.

Igniting our mission, we are launching the Amaanah Ambassadors program – a dedicated team of passionate volunteers who will champion the needs and priorities of our refugee community. This commitment ensures that our New American neighbors have the necessary resources to thrive and feel the comforting presence of a guiding hand along their journey.

With your support, we are confident that Amaanah can have an even more profound impact on the lives we serve. We invite you to continue the journey with us and play a bigger part in realizing our vision—where all refugees have an equal chance to build happy and productive lives in America, flourish independently, and contribute positively to the community.

Ahsan Muktar

# OUR PARTNERS

Partners

Alief ISD

Houston ISD

Alliance for Multicultural Community Services

YMCA

Interfaith ministries

Catholic Charities

Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation

Charities Aid Foundation of America

Chevron

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