



Lutheran Immigration
and Refugee Service

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

SECTION 1: OFFERING HOPE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

SECTION 2: RAISING OUR VOICES IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

SECTION 3: SUPPORTING WELCOME

A LETTER FROM LIRS LEADERSHIP

Last year challenged us – as individuals, as an organization, as a nation – in more ways than we ever thought possible. The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic affected nearly every aspect of life in the United States and around the world, and our work at LIRS was no exception. Our team demonstrated resilience in adjusting our internal operations to adhere to protocols, shifting from an in-office to home-based workplace and re-envisioning events for the virtual world, all while tending to families and communities in need of our attention and care. Programmatically, we endeavored to keep hope alive for the people we serve as the country closed its borders, including to the most vulnerable refugees and migrant children and families at our southern border.

The pandemic’s challenges, in conjunction with a fraught political atmosphere, a presidential election, and a nationwide reckoning with racial and social justice, made 2020 one of the most consequential years in our 81-year history. Despite extraordinary upheaval, one thing remained constant: our fierce dedication to refugees and immigrants and to the Biblical call to “welcome the stranger.”

As we close this year, we have reflected upon how these experiences require us to reimagine what the future can hold for LIRS. We have built new systems and designed creative means of working that meet our needs in both the short- and long-term. We have employed new technologies and strategies. And throughout, we have stayed true to our unique expertise and capacity to deliver high-quality services and to champion the rights and well-being of those we support. We have remained nimble and impassioned, and now, we look toward a horizon of promise and potential.

Our work would not be possible without our remarkable network: our partner and affiliate organizations; congregations and communities of faith and good will; tireless advocates willing to raise their voices for refugees and immigrants; financial supporters and volunteers; and all those who believe in and support the holy work of welcome. We thank you.

The challenges of 2020 are not behind us – the year’s lessons have become a part of us. We look forward to the ongoing journey ahead as we continue to pursue and forge a more welcoming nation.



EVAN MOILAN
Board President
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service



KRISH O'MARA VIGNARAJAH
President & CEO
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

\$342,000

In just four months, we were able to provide \$342,000 in emergency financial assistance to 361 families.

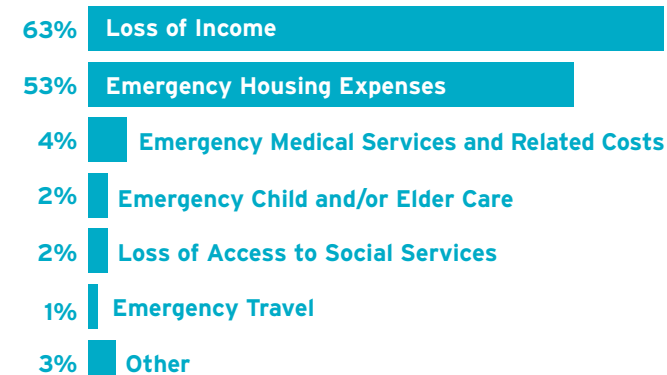
NEIGHBORS IN NEED

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, LIRS knew we had to take action for the immigrant and refugee community. Our New American family was hit hard by COVID-19 and its effects; many lost their jobs in the service, hospitality, and production industries, while many more risked their lives on the front lines of healthcare and food production. Many of our immigrant brothers and sisters were excluded from government stimulus packages, while others were hesitant to get medical care for fear of retribution.

We established **Neighbors in Need** as an emergency fund to serve these critical needs.

LIRS would like to extend our sincerest thanks to the funders that helped make Neighbors in Need possible: Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP), Latter-day Saint Charities, Friends of Refugees, and Refugee Council USA (RCUSA).

NEIGHBORS IN NEED DISTRIBUTED SUPPORTIVE FUNDS TO FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS TO ADDRESS:



This single mother of four lost her job as a dishwasher in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She was extremely troubled about her unemployment status and feared her family would have to leave their home. The children shared their mother's anxiety, intensified by uncertainty surrounding their father's detention in immigration custody. Fortunately, the family gained approval from Neighbors in Need and were allotted funds to ensure they could meet rent. The children also received electronic tablets to learn English and advance their other studies virtually. The mother has since been able to return to work and to achieve some financial stability.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

HOPE CAN'T BE QUARANTINED



The pandemic forced the whole world into unprecedented isolation. But for those in immigration detention, the experience represented a whole new level of isolation and despair, intensified by the government's decision to indefinitely postpone visits from friends, family, and volunteers in an effort to slow the spread of the virus.

While the decision was based upon public health directives, these visits are a vital source of hope for our immigrant neighbors, hungry for contact with the outside world — and frightened by their increased risk of virus transmission in detention.

In response, LIRS launched **Hope Can't Be Quarantined** — a call to action for communities across the country to remind those in immigration detention that they are not forgotten.

WAYS TO HELP



WRITE A LETTER TO A FRIEND IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION TO SHARE A MESSAGE OF HOPE



PRAY THAT GOD WILL PROTECT THOSE IN DETENTION FROM DISEASE AND DESPAIR



Donate to support detention visitation networks



LEARN ABOUT THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM



SHARE A PICTURE OF STORY OR LETTER-WRITING USING #HOPECANTBEQUARANTINED

A PRAYER FOR THE PANDEMIC

Loving God, protect those in any danger, especially those who are ill or isolated. Care for those who tend the needs of the sick. Guide our leaders to make decisions for the good of all your people.

Heal us from our fear and surround us with your peace so that we might bring your healing love to those who are frightened or alone. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

OFFERING HOPE AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER

OVER THE COUNTER (OTC) MEDICAL SUPPLIES PROJECT

The LIRS **Over the Counter (OTC) Medical Supplies Project** was created to provide essential medical care to asylum seekers at the United States’ southern border. From June 2019 through June 2020, the OTC Medical Supplies Project provided over-the-counter medical supplies and free medical check-ups to asylum-seeking families and individuals in four major cities along the U.S.-Mexico border: Phoenix, Arizona; San Luis Rio Colorado, Mexico; Las Cruces, New Mexico; and Juarez, Mexico.



MEDICAL CARE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

8,596	4,515	\$8.50
ASYLUM SEEKERS RECEIVED MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND CARE	CHILDREN SERVED	AVERAGE COST PER PERSON



In addition to the medical supplies, **One Hundred Angels**, LIRS’ local partner in Phoenix, set up a vaccination clinic in San Luis Rio Colorado, and provided personal protective equipment (PPE) to partner organizations like the Cruz Roja Mexicana and the General Hospital of San Luis Rio Colorado.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

- 250+ VOLUNTEERS
- 70% MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS
- 10 VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION SESSIONS
- ~10,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS

“As soon as the families received the medical assistance and medication provided by LIRS, their physical, emotional, and spiritual beings were improved forever. This grant allowed us to impact so many individuals, making their lives turn [into] a much more comfortable and secure reality in a matter of minutes.”

CECILIA GARCIA, CEO, ONE HUNDRED ANGELS

PANDEMIC RESPONSE



THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC, LIRS AND OUR PARTNERS HAVE GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND TO SERVE OUR CLIENTS' NEEDS. SPECIAL COVID-19 PROVISIONS INCLUDE:



Medical supplies for elderly clients



Education about COVID-19 signs, symptoms, and safety precautions in clients' native languages



Social distancing-safe "porch check-ins"



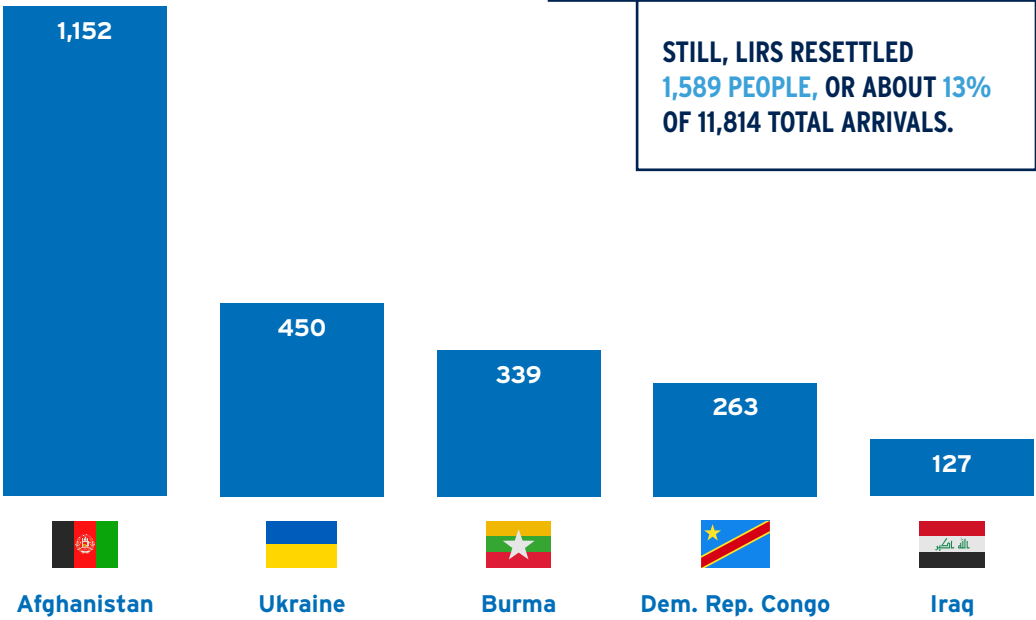
Advocacy on behalf of refugees and immigrants to receive government support, testing, and treatment for the virus

REFUGEE AND MIGRANT SERVICES

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

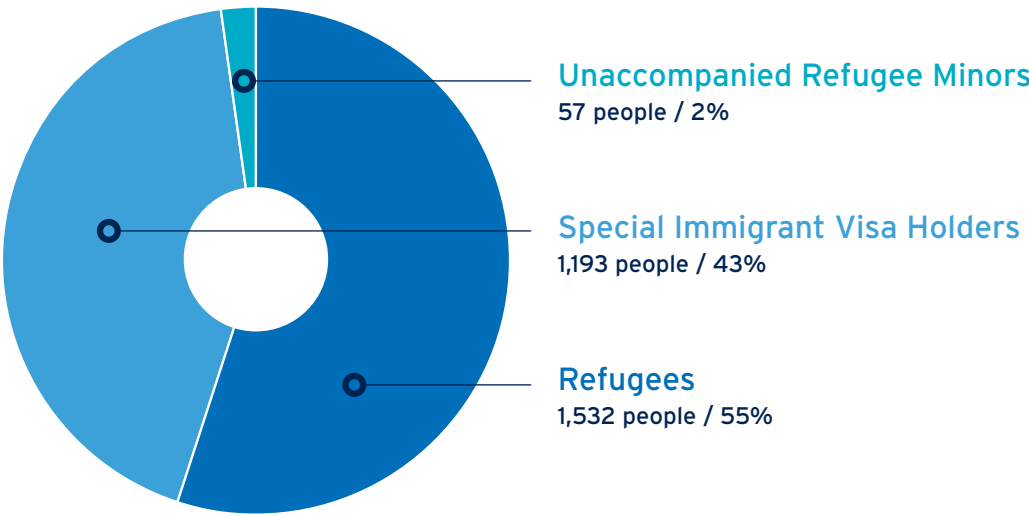
TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR 2020

The largest majority of our newly arrived neighbors came from the following five countries.



TOTAL RESETTLEMENT

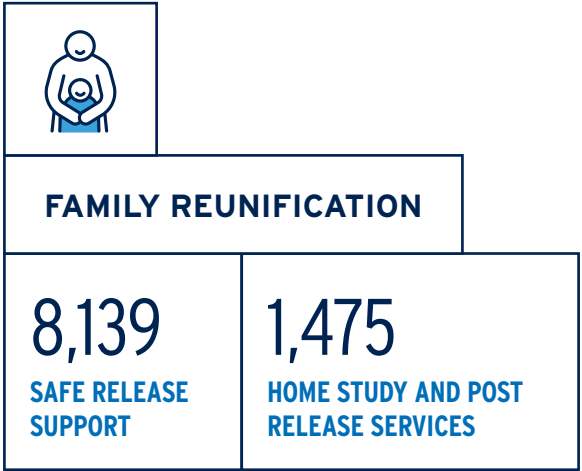
In total, LIRS resettled 2,782 people through the USRAP, the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program, and the Special Immigrant Visa program.



IN 2020, THE REFUGEE ADMISSIONS CEILING WAS SET AT 15,000, AN HISTORIC LOW.

STILL, LIRS RESETTLED 1,589 PEOPLE, OR ABOUT 13% OF 11,814 TOTAL ARRIVALS.

440 CHILDREN SERVED BY LIRS
IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM IN 2020



REUNITING FAMILIES

Through our network of trusted community partners, LIRS provides assistance to the U.S. government to identify family members in the country and ensure that children in our care are safely released to loved ones who are well-equipped to care for them. After families have been reunified, we provide extended support to particularly vulnerable families as they adjust to life together and navigate the immigration system.

ADRIANA'S STORY

Adriana arrived in the U.S. in 2018 and was eventually placed in Long Term Foster Care (LTFC), where she was quickly found to be legally blind and in need of a kidney transplant. While Adriana was being cared for by the LTFC program and a devoted foster family, her mother, Lucia, was residing in another state. Lucia had resettled in the U.S. several years prior and quickly initiated efforts to reunify with her daughter, but a series of complications arose that prolonged the reunification of mother and daughter.

Lucia remained dedicated to her daughter and completed a series of requirements that were established by the local court, which included group therapy and significant medical training with Adriana's transplant team at the local children's hospital. Despite being illiterate in both English and Spanish, living in a different state, working a full-time job with no benefits, and having other children to take care of, Lucia frequently traveled between states via public transportation to visit with her daughter and complete her medical training for Adriana.

As Lucia worked to reunify with Adriana, the LTFC program also supported Lucia by fundraising for her travel costs, providing her with places to stay and ensuring she received updates on her daughter's health. Finally, after a nearly three-year process and a successful kidney transplant, Adriana was finally reunified with her family and is now living with her mother, stepsiblings and stepfather.

ADVOCATING FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Advocacy team works to ensure that the US Government’s laws and policies support the public policy objectives of LIRS: the welcome, protection, stability, and integration of migrants and refugees into our country.



HOW LIRS ADVOCATES

8,792

MESSAGES SENT TO CONGRESS

11

BILLS ENDORSED

2,155

WEBINAR REGISTRATIONS

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

LIRS mobilized faith leaders and resettlement partners across the country to obtain governor and county-level consent after the release of the Trump Administration executive order that allowed states to block refugee resettlement. LIRS and three other resettlement agencies challenged the order in court. A total of **42 governors** had consented to allowing refugee resettlement in their states prior to the issuance of a preliminary injunction by the US District Court in Maryland that blocked the implementation of the executive order.

On February 26, 2020, President and CEO Krish O’Mara Vignarajah testified before the Maryland General Assembly in support of **Maryland House bill HB677, Dignity not Detention Act**, which would ban private prisons in the State of Maryland.

LIRS successfully led a collaborative campaign to obtain signatures from **state and local elected officials** in support of welcoming refugees in 2020. The sign-on letter collected 540 signatures from mayors, state, and county officials in every state.

LIRS successfully led a **sign-on letter** effort to increase refugee admissions for fiscal year 2021. The letter was sent to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo and was signed by 243 bishops and ministers from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in addition to LIRS President and CEO, Krish O’Mara Vignarajah, and Charlotte Haberaecker, President and CEO of Lutheran Services in America.

The Advocacy department developed and released **“LIRS Immigration Policy Priorities”** for the Biden-Harris Administration and new Congress. The priorities included a list of ten areas that need to be reformed to advance a more humane and just immigration system. The list can be viewed on the LIRS website and along with the recording to our Congressional briefing.

On December 14, LIRS provided an **advocacy training to 15 migrant and refugee leaders** in collaboration with the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice located in Oregon. The training prepared leaders on basic advocacy skills and upcoming federal immigration legislation. Leaders were invited to participate in LIRS’s upcoming advocacy events.



WORLD REFUGEE DAY

LIRS held its first ever **virtual advocacy day** in honor of World Refugee Day. We had 56 participants (refugee and faith leaders) and 20 volunteer staff conduct 67 meetings with Congressional offices across 28 states. Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren delivered a special message to the LIRS network and Senator Ben Cardin highlighted LIRS’s work in his World Refugee Day floor statement.

CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION: LEADING THE CHARGE

For more than 80 years, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has assisted forcibly uprooted people from around the globe. But increasingly, we are seeing an unprotected group seeking refuge: migrants who are forced to flee due to environmental changes.

In 2020, we committed to gathering the best and brightest minds to fully understand the realities of the climate migration crisis and to begin generating real, actionable solutions to assist those affected by climate displacement.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

Climate Migration: Understanding Challenges and Generating Solutions

LIRS's Inaugural Climate Week NYC 2020 event, **Climate Migration: Understanding Challenges and Generating Solutions**, took place on September 23, 2020. The virtual panel drew participants from across the globe. Esteemed panelists included Walter Kaelin, former UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons; Faye Matthews, Legal Policy Advisor, National Wildlife Federation; David Gardiner, president of Gardiner and Associates and former Executive Director of the Clinton White House Climate Change Taskforce; and Collin O'Mara, President and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation.

God, Migration, and the Climate Crisis

Where does faith fit into the understanding of climate change and humanity's role in it? How can faith communities mobilize to help those affected by climate displacement? What can people of faith do to protect our planet and those living on it? These were just a few of the topics addressed in **"God, Migration, and the Climate Crisis"** by environmentalist and *New Yorker* columnist Bill McKibben, ethics and climate justice expert Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, and Pastor Tommy Richter, who saw firsthand the effects of climate change on his congregation in a remote Alaskan village.

PEOPLE DISPLACED BY CLIMATE OR WEATHER-RELATED EVENTS

2020 
22.5 million people

2050 
200 million people



EMBRACING THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Over the course of the year, we leaned into virtual events—making the most of the online format to expand our audience, interact with attendees, and spread our message further than ever before across platforms.

OUR EVENTS

COVID and Beyond: Rebuilding Our Immigration System

Beyond Borders and Barriers: Creating an Equitable World for Migrant Women and Girls

Hope for the Holidays 2020

What's Next? The Future of Immigration Policy - 2021 and Beyond

Building Hope for Change: Calling Friends to Action

Climate Migration: Understanding Challenges and Generating Solutions

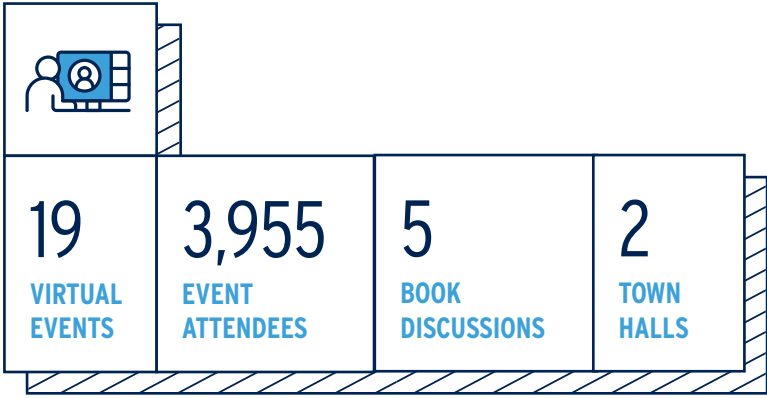
God, Migration, and the Climate Crisis

LIRS Culture Kitchen

A new web series, **LIRS Culture Kitchen**, focuses on the intersection of cooking and immigration. In the series, Krish meets with immigrant chefs, restaurant owners, and others in the culinary world to learn how to cook traditional dishes. Along the way, participants engage in insightful conversations about food, culture, the state of immigration, and what draws us to gather in the kitchen.

Virtual Book Series

In Fall 2020, we launched our first-ever **Virtual Book Series** featuring insightful interviews with authors and experts in the immigration landscape including NBC's Jacob Soboroff, *New York Times* editor Jia Lynn Yang, and award-winning author Sonia Shah.



ANNUAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS

LIRS launched several new national programs to engage and mobilize supporters and communities of faith, as well as a dedicated Volunteer Action Center connecting potential volunteers to opportunities to carry out the work of welcome nationwide.



**LIRS HAD 2,454
NEW VOLUNTEERS
IN 2020**

VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTER

The new **LIRS Volunteer Action Center** showcases ways to act, donate, advocate, pray, and learn more about supporting and walking alongside immigrants and refugees. Even in a year of stay-at-home orders, hundreds of individuals and communities from across the country visited the Volunteer Action Center and found ways to tangibly take action and show solidarity with new neighbors.



GATHER: AFGHANISTAN

Gather: Afghanistan brought together hundreds of families, congregations, and communities across the country to learn about the history and culture of Afghanistan, exploring the country through worship, food, art, and music.

STAND UP, SPEAK UP

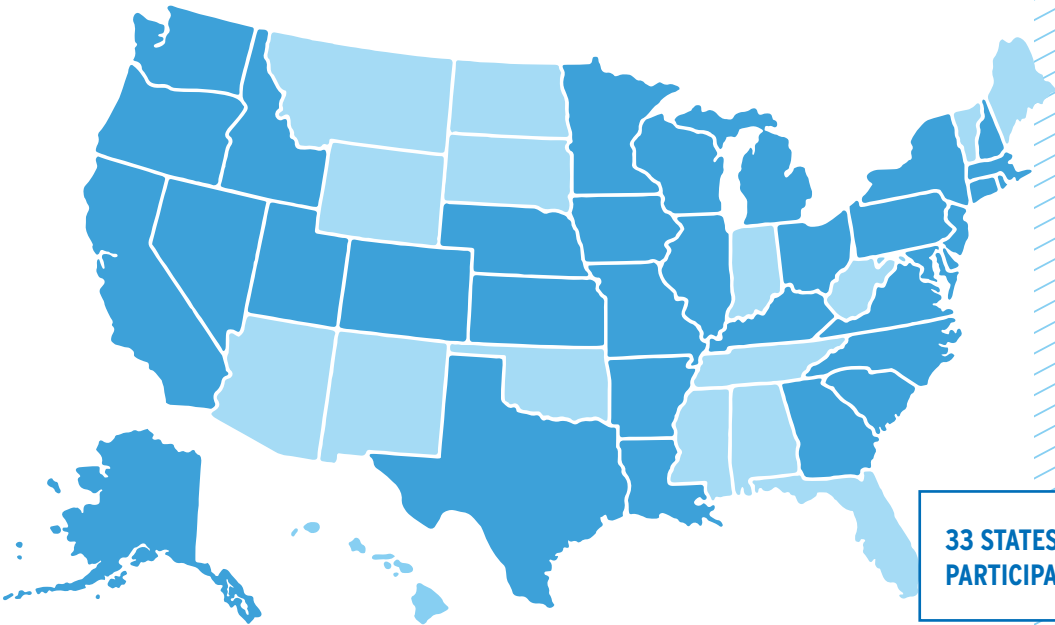
Launching in Spring 2021, **Stand Up, Speak Up** brings together interfaith communities across the country to lift a unified voice to welcome and advocate for immigrants and refugees coming to the United States. Resources outline tangible ways to support immigrants and refugees and engage in interfaith prayer, provide educational information on the recent impacts of policy and the global pandemic, and show how LIRS and our partners work in communities across the nation.



HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

In 2020, LIRS launched the 6th annual **Hope for the Holidays** program, continuing the tradition of providing hope for families impacted by immigration detention. Each year, communities from across the United States write Christmas cards and raise money to buy gifts for children in detention.

While the year brought many challenges—from the pandemic to policies to deter and prevent immigrants from entering the United States—we were able to continue our tradition of bringing hope and cheer to thousands of immigrants across the country with the support of our amazing donors, congregations, and communities.



**33 STATES PLUS WASHINGTON, DC
PARTICIPATED IN THE CAMPAIGN**

16,301
CARDS SENT

528
GIFTS GIVEN
TO CHILDREN

\$18,919
RAISED FOR
ASYLUM SEEKERS



“We consider ourselves fortunate to be able to support an organization which does so much to give hope and new life to so many.

We have met and sponsored refugees who we now count as dear friends. Refugees are courageous, resourceful, resilient members of the human family, and they make America a better place. LIRS is dedicated to welcoming these strangers and working on their behalf for justice. This work is moving us toward what we all desire for humanity - a kinder, more peaceful world. We are grateful to be part of this effort.”

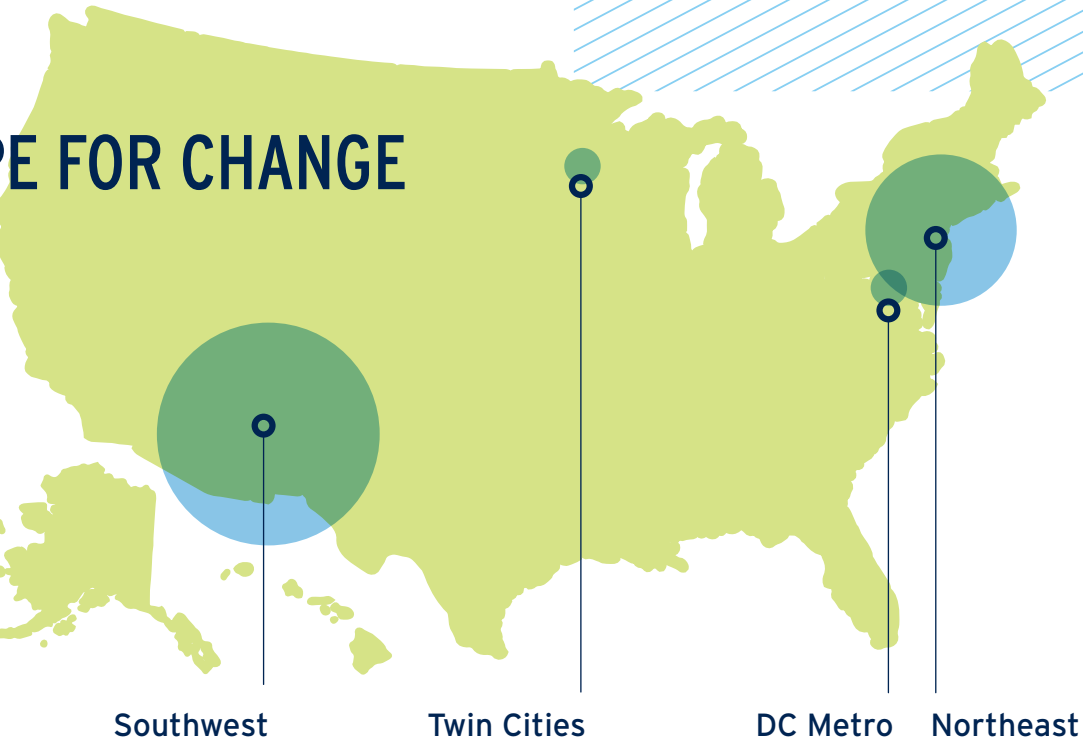
BILL AND LAUREN SWANSON



Andrew G. Steele joined the team as **Vice President for Development and Outreach** in July after serving in advancement at Wittenberg University and on the LIRS board of directors. Through extensive listening sessions with colleagues, external partners, and donors, he has established a vision for the future grounded in clear performance goals and metrics, robust development programs and volunteer engagement.

BUILDING HOPE FOR CHANGE

Because we couldn’t visit LIRS supporters in-person this year, we launched **Building Hope for Change**, a virtual event series that offered a chance to learn about the challenges and successes refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants experience in our communities and nationwide. We held virtual receptions for supporters in these regions:



91% OF ALL REVENUE GOES TO SUPPORT VITAL LIRS PROGRAMS



FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Financial Position
as of December 31, 2020
Dollars in thousands

Statement of Activities &
Changes in Net Assets for the
year ended December 31, 2020
Dollars in thousands

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2019	2020
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$18,805	\$20,902
U.S. Government Receivable	\$5,305	\$7,055
Other Assets	\$3,417	\$3,096
Investment in Lutheran Center Corp.	\$3,388	\$3,420
Total Assets	\$30,915	\$34,473

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2019	2020
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable & Other Liabilities	\$9,516	\$11,539
Long-term Debt	\$2,095	\$1,886
Total Liabilities	\$11,611	\$13,425
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$18,653	\$20,512
With Donor Restrictions	\$651	\$536
Total Net Assets	\$19,304	\$21,048
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$30,915	\$34,473

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES & CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

SUPPORT & REVENUE	2019	2020
Contributions – Private Sources	\$8,417	\$3,414
U.S. Government and State	\$52,109	\$57,857
Fees and Other Revenue	\$2,600	\$1,801
Total Support and Revenue	\$63,126	\$63,072

EXPENSES	2019	2020
Program Services	\$52,653	\$56,541
Management and General	\$4,048	\$3,504
Fundraising	\$1,142	\$1,283
Total Expenses	\$57,843	\$61,328
<i>Change in Net Assets</i>	<i>\$5,283</i>	<i>\$1,744</i>
<i>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</i>	<i>\$14,021</i>	<i>\$19,304</i>
Net Assets, End of Year	\$19,304	\$21,048

THE LIRS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Board Chair**
Mr. Evan Moilan (Bastrop, TX)
- Vice Chair**
Mrs. Linda Stoterau (Orange, CA)
- Board Treasurer**
Mr. Dennis Wieckert (Alpharetta, GA)
- Board Secretary**
Ms. Elizabeth Wagner (Princeton Junction, NJ)
- Executive Member at Large**
Mr. Eddie Resende (Baltimore, MD)

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(Chapel Hill, NC)
- Ms. Selena Besirevic**
(Denver, CO)
- Mr. Ted Goins**
Lutheran Services Carolinas (Salisbury, NC)
- Mr. Jan Engkasser**
Thrivent Financial (Minneapolis, MN)
- Ms. Virginia Hultquist**
Thrivent Financial (Greensboro, NC)
- Mr. Randel K. Johnson**
Seyfarth Shaw LLC (Washington D.C.)
- Mr. John Moeller**
Inspiritus, formerly Lutheran Services of Georgia (Atlanta, GA)
- Mr. Carlos Peña**
Kleen Supply Company (Galveston, TX)
- Mr. Dustin Plantholt**
OptiMed Health Plans (Sparks, MD)
- Dr. Diana Pohle**
Jazz Pharmaceuticals (San Jose, CA)
- Ms. Evelyn Soto**
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Chicago, IL)



LIRS

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) welcomes newcomers who seek safety, support, and a share in the American dream. In collaboration with partners across the country, we run programs in two core areas: Children and Family Services and Refugee and Migrant Services.

LIRS HEADQUARTERS

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