



JOY IN THE JOURNEY

**WHEAT RIDGE MINISTRIES
ANNUAL REPORT | 2015**



Joy in the Journey

The Apostle Paul advises Christians in Romans 12 how to conduct themselves, emphasizing a God-pleasing attitude of gratitude and joy: “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Paul goes on to emphasize the Christian’s social responsibility that derives from that joy. “Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

The joy of service, of actively caring for others and meeting their needs, has been expressed as the feeling of lightness and peace when one lets go of the burden of self to serve another. Conversely, there’s the joy of knowing kindness and acceptance for the first time. When we feel loved just as we are, we experience the joy of being who God created us to be.

Finally, there is the joy in the journey. Wheat Ridge Ministries is honored to walk alongside health and human services ministry partners and experience the wonder of God at work in their midst. We rejoice at all of their stories and consider it a privilege to share them with you. These stories and celebrations are only able to happen because of your continued prayers and support and for that we are thankful.



Our Mission

Wheat Ridge Ministries seeds new ministries
of health and hope
in the name of the healing Christ.

Wheat Ridge Ministries has been seeding new start-up
ministries for more than 60 years!

People Served in FY2015

During Fiscal Year 2015, Wheat Ridge grant recipients
served over 76,200 people
through their projects!

These projects work in the United States and around the world to bring health and hope to church and non-church, young and old, needy and broken.



Volunteers Engaged in FY2015

Volunteers are the lifeblood of so many nonprofit organizations. During Fiscal Year 2015,
over 9,700 individuals volunteered
their time with Wheat Ridge grantees for a total of
164,361 hours!

“God is not unjust; He will not forget your work
and the love you have shown Him as you have
helped His people and continue to help them.”
Hebrews 6:10





Grants Awarded in FY2015

- 39 WeRaise Crowdfunding Grants totaling \$260,601
 - 13 Burst Grants totaling \$64,500
 - 10 GrantsPlus Grants totaling \$402,935
 - 9 Joshua Grants totaling \$42,300
 - 2 Select Grants totaling \$76,000

73 Total Grants — \$846,336



Donor Support in FY2015

Everything Wheat Ridge Ministries does is made possible by our generous, faithful supporters.

We received donations from 18,982 individuals during fiscal year 2015. Our volunteers helped us make thousands of thank you calls and write hundreds of thank you notes.

WeRaise – Using Social Media for Social Causes

Wheat Ridge's innovative crowdfunding website, WeRaise.us, continues to attract inspired leaders looking to launch new health and human services projects, with most attaining or surpassing their goals. WeRaise is also proving to be a high-engagement platform with donors and supporters while increasing awareness of worthwhile ministries and securing funding for their efforts.



FY2015 WeRaise Highlights

ACTS Church in Leander, Texas, raised funds to purchase equipment and materials to fill their **ACTS of Love Early Childhood Education Center** for its August 2015 opening. The center was established to provide affordable childcare specifically for young parents who are pregnant or who had children during high school. Acts Church exceeded their \$10,000 goal by 31%, and their WeRaise success led to the church applying for and receiving additional grant funding from Wheat Ridge.

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) funded a **Feeding Children Everywhere** service project to be held during the 2016 LCMS Youth Gathering, which will bring 30,000 youth from all over the country to New Orleans. Their goal: raise \$25,000 to fund an additional 100,000 meals packed. Through WeRaise, LCMS met their goal in about six weeks, with 268 supporters.

Mirror Ministries in Richland, Washington, funded a part-time **Specialized Human Trafficking Advocate** to work with identified victims of human trafficking, one of the fastest-growing criminal enterprises worldwide. The advocate will work with identified victims to connect them with services to meet their immediate and long-term needs. With the funding, Mirror Ministries estimates that 40 victims will receive care in 2016 and at least 10 traffickers will be convicted. When their project closed, it was 157% funded.

With the spiritual and financial support of Wheat Ridge donors,
we are witnessing truly extraordinary efforts.

Grantee Highlight

A Joyful Experience

At Breakaway Camps in Missouri, Florida, and Minnesota, Lift Disability Network (LDN) provides families and individuals with relaxation, recreation and spiritual renewal. Wheelchairs are the norm. Leaving behind limitations is applauded. And campers experience the joy of living life to the fullest.

LDN is committed to addressing the needs of the disability family by focusing on the major issues of the disability community: isolation, fatigue, poverty and hopelessness. Breakaway camps are part of LDN's comprehensive ministry to reach the estimated 1 in every 5 families affected by disability.

Missouri Breakaway Camp counselor Josh Pennington remembers the Cassidy family's first year at camp. Their daughter Lydia (a triple amputee, using a tracheostomy tube, absent of a lower jaw) climbed a tree via a repelling rope for the first time—and she did it by herself. “She used her nose to help push the repelling rope knots upward so she could climb!” he says. “And then their son Jacob, a wheelchair user, moved beyond his doubts and did sword fencing for the first time.” Friedman recalls yet another Cassidy sibling enjoying herself, as evidenced by the enormous smile on her face.

Thanks to Wheat Ridge donors, campers like these experience acceptance and adventure at Breakaway camps. The 2015 grant funds allowed LDN to expand some camps and establish new retreats for their families. Funds also help provide scholarships to allow all families access to this joyful experience.



Grantee Highlight

The Joy of Success

Since 2002, Lutheran Inner City Network Coalition (LINC) has restored hope and healing in neighborhoods across the country. In 2015, LINC received a grant for its Financial Empowerment Initiative in North Texas. This an effort focusing on the Hispanic population, which accounts for 56% of the total population growth in Dallas County and is the ethnic group most burdened by poverty.

The initiative includes a 12-week class called *Faith in Finances* (*Fe y Finanzas*), a class to equip members of the working poor with a Biblical vision for how the holistic healing of Jesus includes finances. LINC NT uses a curriculum written by the Chalmers Center for Economic Development and finds students through its Student Advancement and Leadership Initiative, ESL classes and public school outreach.

LINC NT Operations Director John Seale has seen families learn, grow and accomplish more than they ever dreamed. “In our very first *Fe y Finanzas* class, a couple attending told us that their goal was to save money so they could buy a house,” he says. “Not long after graduating with a financial plan in hand, they joyously told us that they had successfully made a down payment on their first house!”

Seale notes that Wheat Ridge’s partnership has been key to stories like these. “We believe that we are right where God wanted us to be,” he says. “Wheat Ridge has helped make that a reality.”





Grantee Highlight

Sprouting with Joy

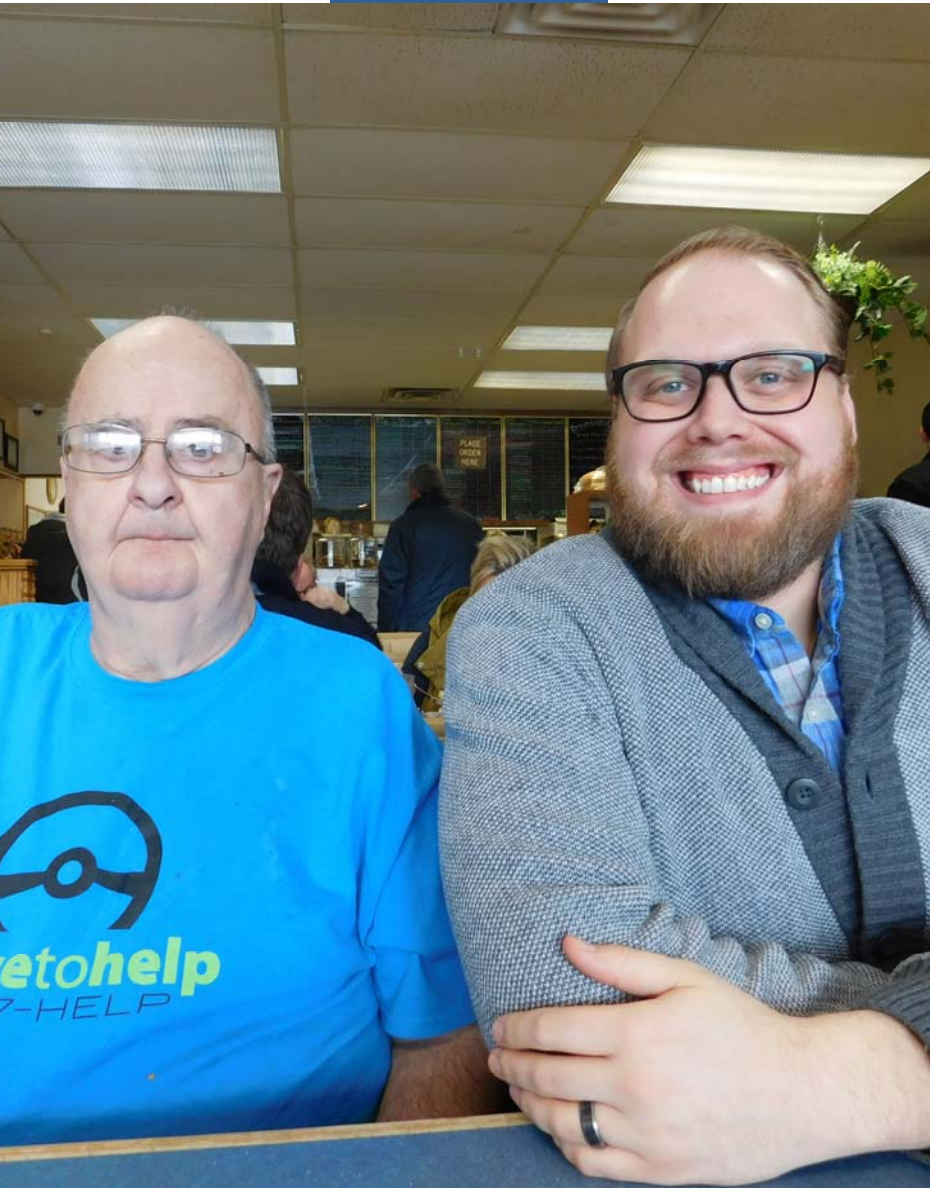
In Detroit, young people are learning about growing food, running a business, and creating a healthy eating environment in their neighborhoods. GenesisHOPE developed the Young Sprouts Food Entrepreneur Internship Program to provide youth ages 14-24 with experiential work and life skills to increase knowledge of agribusiness careers and community food movement opportunities.

Young Sprouts owns and operates the SeedsGROW Farm, a market and community garden, a farm stand, and the Islandview Farmers Market. Interns participate in a 20-week program with training, networking, and marketing opportunities focused on agriculture, the environment, the food system, and business, marketing and leadership development. In 2015, Wheat Ridge provided Young Sprouts with a grant for farm improvements and to expand the number of vendors at the farmers market. After one year, the number of vendors increased from their goal of 10 to 27, and Young Sprouts was able to partner with community organizations to host four cooking demonstrations to increase awareness regarding the impact of fresh healthy food on health.

2015 was also Dylan Cash's first year in Young Sprouts—and he loves it. The 14-year-old says he enjoys working the farmers market Welcome/Information Table the best. "I've learned a lot and met a lot of great people," he says. "I also met a bunch of teens that came to volunteer. We worked on weeding the garden and laying down chips for the paths, and we built a compost bin and had fun listening to music, singing and dancing."

Thanks to Wheat Ridge supporters, Young Sprouts interns have the opportunity to find joy digging in the dirt and exploring the possibilities for food security for all.

Joy in Friendship



Like many agencies nationwide, Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota (LSSSD) saw the population of people aged 65 or older increasing exponentially. Not only did LSSSD witness the list of *Meals on Wheels* participants growing, but they became concerned about the isolation and loneliness of program participants. Their concern plus the energetic leadership of Michelle Madsen, Director of Mentoring Services, led LSSSD to create *Better Together*, a program matching older adults or “neighbors” with volunteers to provide socialization and friendship.

Better Together is one of only three programs like it in LSS agencies nationwide. LSSSD received a grant in April 2015 in honor of Madsen’s trailblazing work in this area and her leadership.

Madsen tells the story of Jim (72) and Dave. Although he had no problems meeting his basic needs, Jim had difficulty socializing. He lives alone and remaining family members are either in nursing homes or far away. Jim and Dave began their friendship by eating lunch after scouring for the best deals together. Over time, their conversation moved from the weather to good-natured teasing, discussion of medical issues, and planning future outings. In fact, they are planning a go-carting outing as soon as it gets warmer.

The grant allowed Better Together to develop recruitment materials, training curriculum, evaluation tools, and monitoring procedures. By fall 2015, they had matched 21 volunteers and neighbors, hopefully duplicating Jim and Dave’s friendship in various forms throughout South Dakota.

Thank You!

Your gifts to Wheat Ridge Ministries help inspired congregations and organizations make an impact and bring joy in the lives of thousands of people around the world.

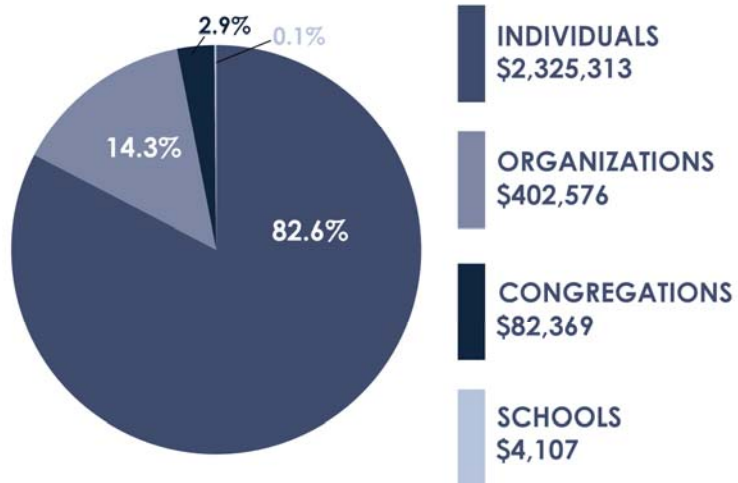
Visit www.wheatridge.org for more grantee stories.

Because of donors like you, Wheat Ridge and our program partners continue to work together to restore communities, meet challenges and joyfully celebrate accomplishments along the way.

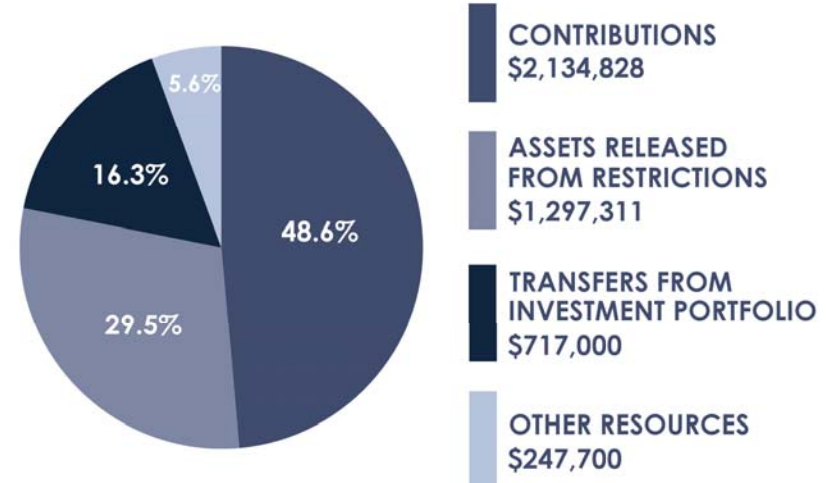


FY2015 Financials

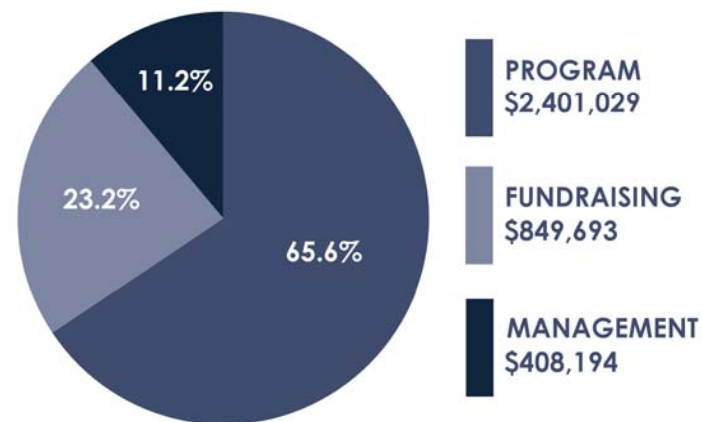
SOURCES OF CONTRIBUTIONS



BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING REVENUES



BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING EXPENSES



Wheat Ridge Ministries does not accept any government funding.
A full copy of our audit report is available online at www.wheatridge.org.



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