



# Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village

## 2017 Annual Report

It takes a village to transform a child





Our Dear Friends,

The story of the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village is one of family. It is the story of 523 teenagers from around Rwanda coming together to become brothers and sisters. It is by building bonds of community and a family that they find hope, healing, and transformation.

The power of family is the story of 2017, of every one of our ten years, and of each of the 1,128 kids who have called the Village home. At the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village, we believe family is made through intention, love, and common values. We are committed to healing, educating, and loving the orphaned and vulnerable youth of Rwanda, and in doing so, empowering them to build lives of dignity and contribute to a better world. The basis of this transformation is the ASYV family.

Let this annual report tell our story of 2017: the healing that a family's love can provide, the educational accomplishments children are capable of when they're given the right tools, and the transformation that confidence and opportunity can enable. We invite you to carry on Anne Heyman's legacy: meet our kids and see the hope in their eyes, experience the joy and pride of our sixth graduating class, understand the love the mamas have for their Village kids, and appreciate the role that you have played in making change in the lives of 523 of Rwanda's most vulnerable youth in 2017.

We are deeply grateful to our global ASYV family of engaged donors and partners who have joined us in this work and made ten years of transformation possible. Your commitment to ASYV is exceptional; the programs that you have built, your visits to the Village, and your generous financial support have enabled us to change the lives of our kids and the future of Rwanda. Thank you for your partnership!

With gratitude,

Laurie Toll Franz, Board Chair

Jean-Claude Nkulikiyimfura, Executive Director

Vincent Kalimba, Village Director

Shiri B. Sandler, Managing Director



The ASYV Family spans the globe,  
with its heart in Rwamagana, Rwanda.



**Our Mission:** Through healing, education, and love, the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village empowers orphaned and vulnerable Rwandan youth to build lives of dignity and contribute to a better world.

**Our Vision:** All children deserve a loving family and a safe home. We believe the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village can serve as a model of how to heal a traumatized society through caring for its children.

**Our Model:**



A Loving Family



Education



Health & Wellness



Enrichment Programs





## The Heartbeat of the Family: Our Students

Our students are the most important part of the ASYV family. The best interest of the child is at the center of every decision we make in the Village.

### How We Found Our Class of 2020

ASYV's students come from each of Rwanda's five provinces and 30 districts. In partnership with local communities, schools, and the Rwanda Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, we identify impoverished and orphaned youth whose circumstances put them at serious risk. Through a compassionate and careful interview process, we then recruit those candidates who exhibit the need and the drive to thrive at ASYV.

During site visits at potential students' homes and schools, we met with their parents, guardians, teachers, and community members. We also conducted interviews with the candidates themselves to assess their need, interest, and ability to succeed at ASYV.

**Teams of 2-3** ASYV staff members embarked across the **5 provinces** of Rwanda to interview candidates and compile data to assess vulnerability.

We considered four main factors:

Social and family life

Economic status

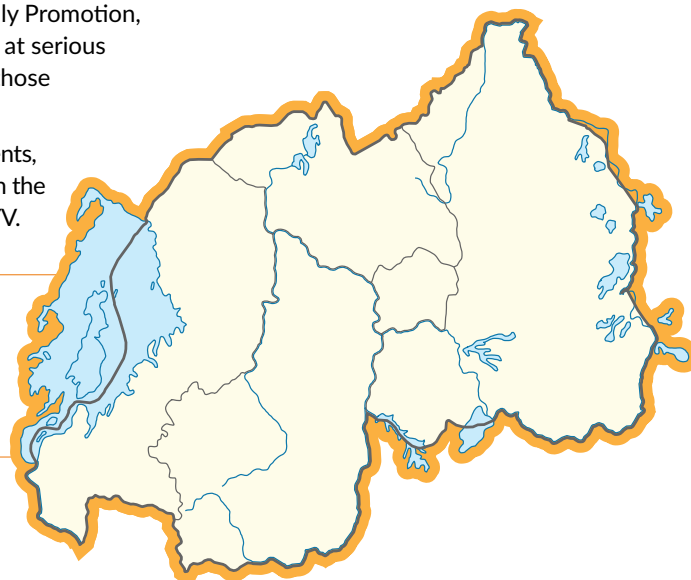
Education status

Health

**463**  
candidates were considered

After a seven-month selection process, decisions were made to select

**128**  
incoming students



### Where Our Students Come From

We recruit Rwanda's most vulnerable youth because we believe that they have the resilience needed to overcome trauma to build dignified and meaningful lives. Through the opportunities available in our Village, they have the power to cultivate an inner spark of hope into a transformative vision for the future.

**Our incoming Class of 2020 struggled to overcome profoundly difficult challenges before they arrived in the Village.** And yet, despite these challenges, each of our kids believed they could succeed at ASYV.

**76%** had lost their mother or father

**20%** of our incoming students had been forced to survive on one meal per day or less

**24%** were orphaned of both parents

**34%** had suffered at school due to a lack of access to electricity at home

**"A vulnerable child is a person under the age of 18 exposed to conditions which do not permit them to fulfill their fundamental rights for their harmonious development."**

Ministry of Local Government, Information and Social Affairs, "National Policy for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children" Rwanda, 2003.



## Our Family Makeup

We kindle our students' spark of hope by providing them with a much-needed sense of safety and stability. Grouped into four grades and 30 student families, the kids of ASYV become brothers and sisters to their peers. Supported by a family mama, our kids have committed themselves to the idea that ASYV should be a warm and loving home to those who need it. Reflecting contemporary Rwandan demographics, ASYV's student community of 523 was 62% female and 38% male in 2017. Like their older brothers and sisters before them, our Class of 2020 laid the foundation for their family identity by selecting a unique name for their grade, Umurage, or "Heritage."

523

Students aged  
14 - 21

30

Families

196

Males

327

Females

## Our 2017 Classes

Umurage  
(Heritage)

Isonga  
(The Best)

Imena  
(Bravery)

Icyizere  
(Hope)

## Our Kids' Futures

Equipped with the skills and values they need to make a difference, our kids have achieved some truly remarkable milestones. By December 2017, ASYV had graduated 730 students, including the 125 graduates of our Class of 2017, Icyizere Grade.

Reflecting ASYV's focus on healing the world, **86%** of our Class of 2017 graduates have gone on to participate in Rwanda's six-month Urugerero National Service program.

**341** graduates are now attending universities in Rwanda and around the world, bringing the Village's spirit of hope to communities across the United States, Canada, China, and beyond.

Of the 605 alumni in our first five graduating classes, **70%** are now enrolled in tertiary education, formally employed, or both.

**10%** have recently graduated from university.

## Marceline's Story

"I have been fighting since I was a kid. I'm not a survivor,

I am a **warrior.**"

— Marceline (Class of 2020, Umurage Grade)

Marceline, age 17, is a first-year student at ASYV. Before coming to the Village in 2017, she lived in Kanombe, located in the Kicukiro District of the capital city, Kigali. An orphan of both parents, Marceline was raised by her grandparents and then by her aunt, where she was responsible for the care of two young cousins. "Things became harder," she says. "I needed school fees and sometimes I would be at home for weeks waiting. My studying was very poor, my mind was not working, and I was not curious in many things." Life changed when Marceline arrived in the Village. She discovered a love for science and decided her focus would be Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. She took up the guitar and developed an affinity for crafting. "At ASYV, I've learned to think out of the box and now I know how to express myself." With the support of her student family, the Mahatma Gandhi Family, Marceline has built confidence. When she graduates from the Village, she aspires to continue her studies and then become a surgeon so that she can help people who are suffering.



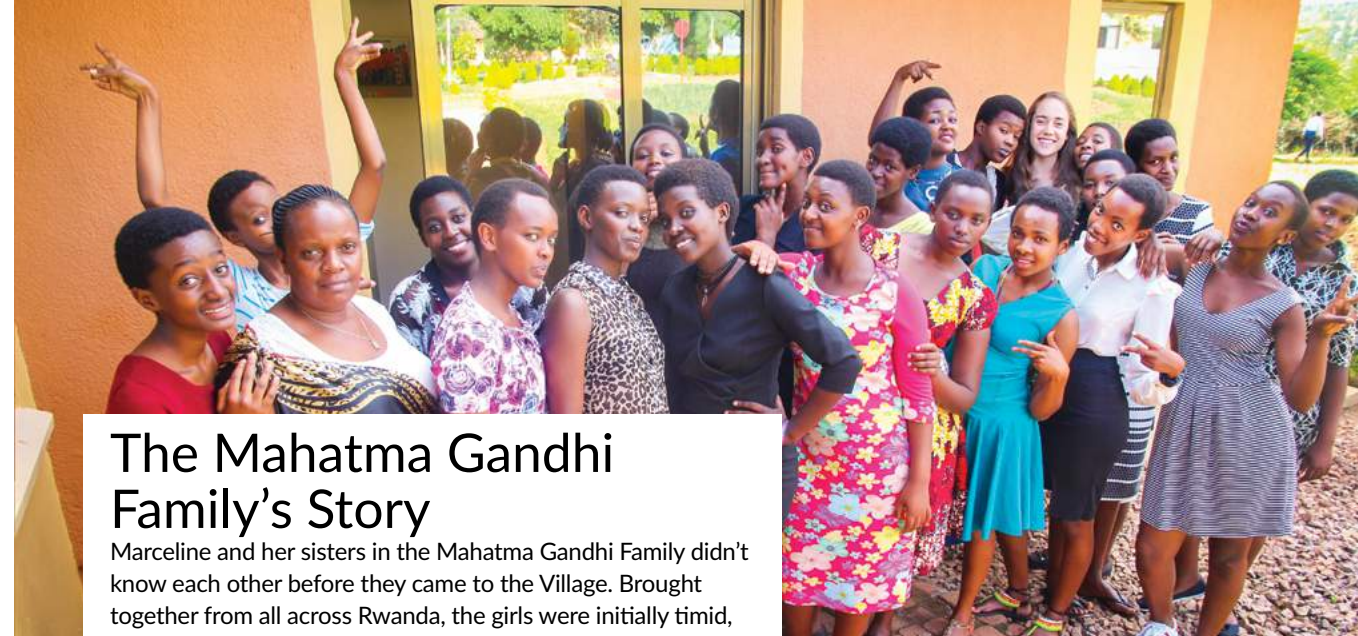


## The Family that Raises Them

Once our students have arrived in the Village, we provide them with a loving and supportive family environment. Comprised of 16-24 students each, our 30 student families form the bedrock of their life in the Village. Each student family is named by the students themselves and benefits from the care and attention of a live-in staff member known as a family mama. With first-year students receiving additional support from international Fellows, called cousins, and recent Village graduates, called big brothers and big sisters, newly arrived kids feel like they are a part of the family.

In January 2017, the day our new students arrived, one of our cousins introduced himself to a member of ASYV's Class of 2020 for the first time. He said, "I'm excited to be your new cousin. This is my first time in Rwanda." Our new student replied, "This is my first time having a family."

Many of our incoming students have felt a similar sense of isolation growing up, like they had been forgotten by their community. By providing each of our students with a family, we are doing more than giving them a place in our Village. We are teaching them that they matter.



## The Mahatma Gandhi Family's Story

Marceline and her sisters in the Mahatma Gandhi Family didn't know each other before they came to the Village. Brought together from all across Rwanda, the girls were initially timid, unsure of what living with strangers might mean. But when they first stepped foot on to ASYV's grounds, they were greeted with so much love. First by their Mama, Agnes, who has been working at ASYV since its very beginning, and then, by their new cousin, a Fellow named Marie-Claire.

"I like how we collaborate as a team."  
— Louise

## Mama Agnes

Mama Agnes joined the Village family in 2008, when the very first class arrived. The Mahatma Gandhi Family is her third student family. "I have many kids who are very close to me. When they come from school they knock on my door, they call 'mom!' I like it. And the kids like to call me mom because in their old life they didn't have any person to call mom." Mama Agnes is known to her kids for her humor, although she knows there is a time and place to be stern. "Sometimes I am serious and another day I am fun. It's better to be fun," she says. In addition to serving as a support system for her family, Mama Agnes also teaches sewing to the rest of the Village community, helping students to create work they're proud of. She is known in the Village for having great advice and for being a thoughtful listener.



"Everything we do here is because we want to step in our mom's footsteps." — Diane

## Cousin Marie-Claire

A graduate of Florida State University, Marie-Claire joined ASYV as the International Visitors and Volunteers Fellow for 2017. Our Fellows serve in both professional and family roles during their year in the Village.

"Despite barriers of culture and language, we all know what to do to make each other smile and laugh. To know that to them I will always be their 'cousin' is so special."







## The Community that Nurtures Them

ASYV's holistic model means that while living in our family structure, students are also part of a larger supportive community, with a dedicated education system, enrichment programming, and a health and wellness clinic devoted to their needs.



### Formal Education

Many of our students were only able to attend school irregularly prior to their arrival at ASYV. To set the stage for all students to succeed, our Liquidnet Family High School begins with a remedial Enrichment Year. Our teachers then guide their students as they choose a "combination," one of seven academic tracks approved by the Rwanda Ministry of Education, which range in subject area from History-Economics-Geography to Physics-Chemistry-Biology. With instruction in adaptable skills like entrepreneurship, computer literacy, and English-language comprehension, our curriculum prepares our students for the rigors of higher education and employment.

In 2017, we introduced an after-school study hall period named STAR, or Study Time to

Achieve Results, which helped our kids receive more support than ever before. 98.4% of our graduating Class of 2017 passed Rwanda's national exam, a rate 8.85% higher than the national average. Combined with the efforts of our Career Development Center, where 100% of graduating students developed a realistic exit plan, our most recent alumni have gained the skills they need to take their next steps with confidence.

### Health & Wellness

The Barry Segal Health & Wellness Center provides crucial medical and psychological services to the Village, with our team of nurses and social workers treating students in need of immediate care and counselling. Our Health & Wellness team also leads weekly life skills workshops, during which they deliver youth-friendly instruction on subjects ranging from diet and exercise to sexual and reproductive health.



In 2017, we expanded our commitment to health education with an increased focus on HIV/AIDS and unplanned pregnancy prevention. All students were tested for HIV, and a confidential support group was made available to HIV+ students. We also led a series of unplanned pregnancy prevention workshops, covering such topics as common myths about sexuality, pregnancy prevention strategies and the potential consequences of unplanned pregnancy, and saying "no" in unwelcome pressure situations. 2017 was the first year ASYV did not register any cases of unplanned pregnancy acquired during the program period.

### Life Enrichment Applied Programs (LEAP)

Enrichment programs empower our kids to explore their own unique passions, with after-school programming ranging from athletics to the arts. LEAP also invites our kids to gain practical experience with electronics, mechanics, and computer science at the Gelfand Family Science Center, while clubs and other student-run activities provide hands-on leadership experience.

In 2017, our students excelled both inside and outside of the classroom. The winner of our science center competition, Angeline Tuyisenge, developed a machine capable of closing windows automatically when it detects rainfall or darkness, and an ASYV alumna, Peace Grace Muhizi Umutesi, led two of our student groups in organizing a series of women's empowerment events called Lift Her Up. Our student government took ownership of the Village's Tikkun Olam community service programming, this year, as it evolved into the Tikkun Olam Leadership Program. Participating students taught two local families about proper nutrition, tutored local youth in English and computer skills, and partnered with EarthEnable to supply four at-risk families with waterproof flooring, reducing their vulnerability to parasites and infectious disease.



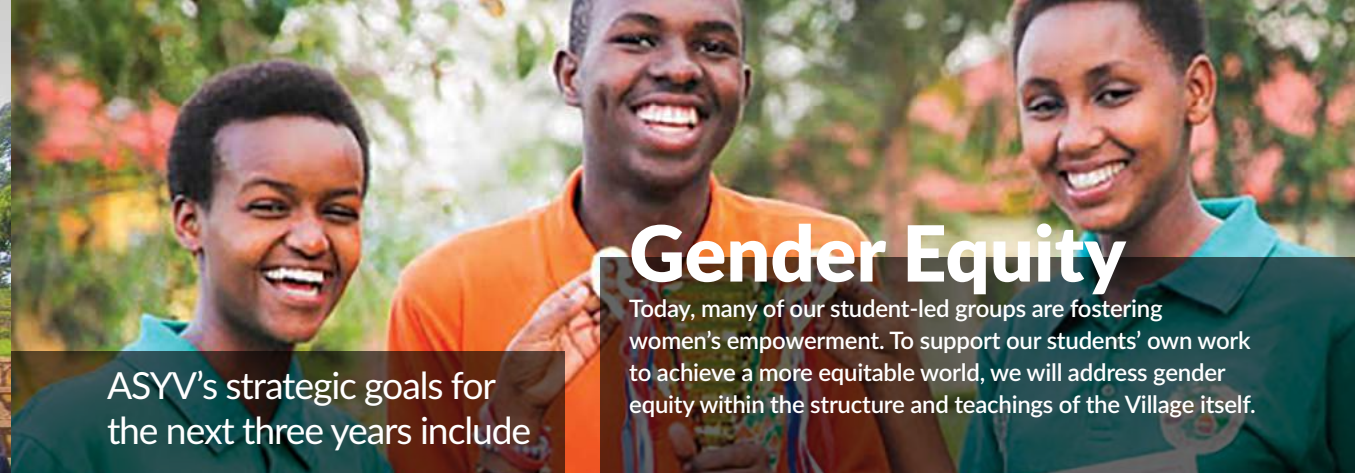




## Our Visions for a Bright Future

2017 was a year to celebrate our past and a time to look towards a promising future. Ten years have passed since we first broke ground on the land that would become ASYV, and as we recognize the fulfillment of Anne Heyman’s dream around us, we are ready to look towards a future where we will go further than ever before.

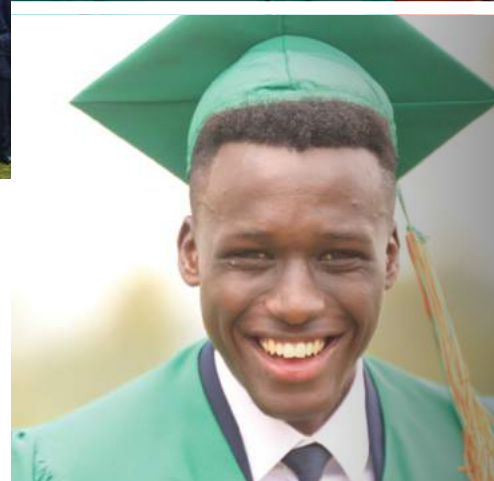
In October 2017, our Board of Directors conducted their annual retreat in a new location, convening on ASYV’s campus for the very first time. Our Board members experienced together the joys of Village life, culminating in our Class of 2017’s graduation ceremony. With these shared experiences in mind, they embarked upon the Village’s strategic planning process, crafting a clear vision and series of goals that will create a more effective and equitable Village by the end of 2020.



## Gender Equity

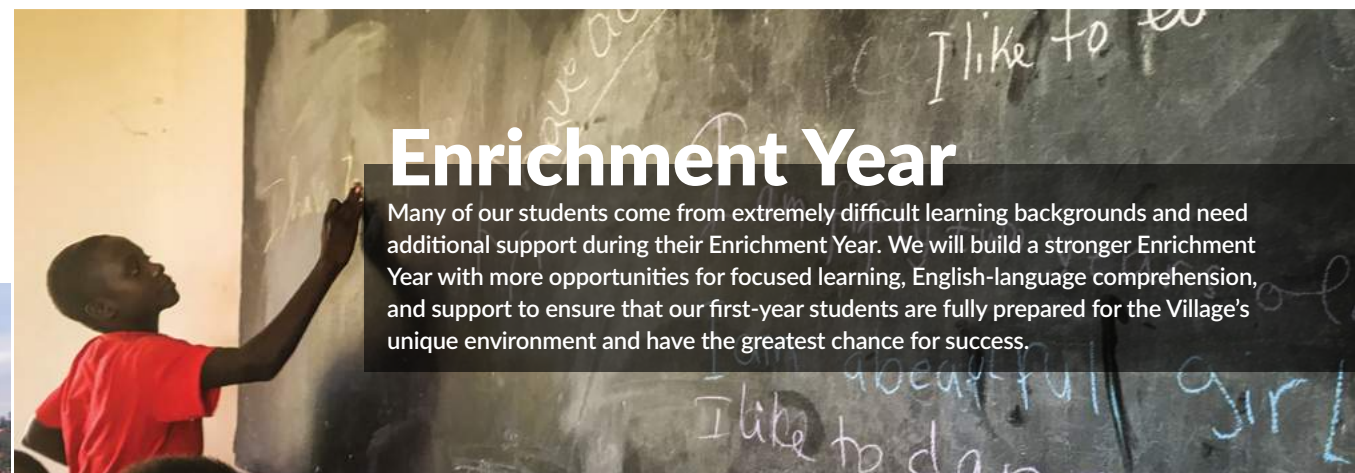
Today, many of our student-led groups are fostering women’s empowerment. To support our students’ own work to achieve a more equitable world, we will address gender equity within the structure and teachings of the Village itself.

ASYV’s strategic goals for the next three years include



## Graduation Pathways

One of our primary responsibilities is to give students the aptitudes, internal fortitude, and understanding they need to lead dignified and self-sufficient lives following their graduation from the Village. By 2020, we will ensure that each student who leaves our gates has a set pathway to follow, including further education and career options.



## Enrichment Year

Many of our students come from extremely difficult learning backgrounds and need additional support during their Enrichment Year. We will build a stronger Enrichment Year with more opportunities for focused learning, English-language comprehension, and support to ensure that our first-year students are fully prepared for the Village’s unique environment and have the greatest chance for success.

## Local Leadership

ASYV was founded on international collaboration, with the long-term goal of Rwandan organizational leadership. We will transition responsibility for Village programmatic and legal oversight to our Rwandan Advisory Council, a body comprised of Rwandan experts and stakeholders, while continuing to increase overall representation of Rwandans in ASYV’s governance.





# Partners and Friends Across the Globe

ASYV is indebted to partners and friends around the world for their love, support, and care for our students.

In 2017, more than 400 visitors passed through the Village's gates, introducing our students to new communities, countries, languages, and boundless generosity. We thank those who open their hearts to the Village, allowing us all to learn from each other and grow our ASYV family.



**Young Judea**



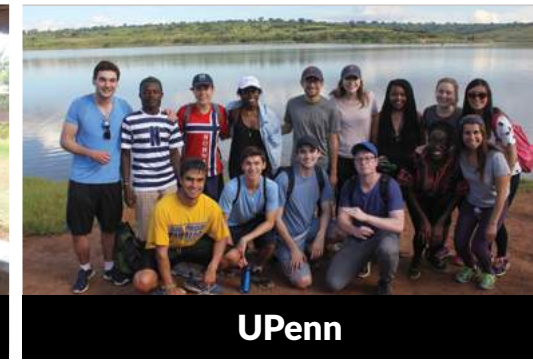
**Salem State University**



**ASYV Summer Trip**



**JDC Entwine**



**UPenn**



**Mastercard Foundation**



**GLOCAL**



**The Kerry Fund**



**Liquidnet Family Trip**



**Tufts University**



## Supporter Spotlight: Cummings Foundation, Inc.

"While many of [Agahozo-Shalom's] graduates go on to college... the overriding goal is to give students the tools to be responsible citizens with the ability to earn a living, be good parents, think straight, and contribute to a peaceful society." – [Starting Small and Making It Big](#), the new memoir by Bill Cummings, Founder of Cummings Properties, LLC and Cummings Foundation, Inc.

Established by Bill and Joyce Cummings in 1986, Cummings Foundation has supported numerous philanthropic causes in the Greater Boston area and Rwanda, including human

services, education, healthcare, and social justice. Following their first trip to ASYV in 2012, Cummings Foundation expanded its list of partners to include our Village. We are endlessly grateful for their steadfast support of our community, with a particular emphasis on the career development and skill-building programs that will help our students become self-reliant adults.

## Visitor Spotlight: Noble & Greenough School

ASYV was thrilled to welcome back the Noble & Greenough School for their second visit to the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village in March 2017. Eighteen students and five Nobles trip leaders arrived in the Village with smiles on their faces and nearly two dozen hockey bags worth of sporting equipment for our students. The group spent the week engaging with ASYV students, sharing how unique and also how similar their high school experiences could be with thousands of miles between them. Nobles also got to work building bunny houses for the Village's farm, painting the Lily Safra Amphitheater and Majora Carter Basketball Courts, and organizing books at the Liquidnet Family High School. Upon their return to the United States, Nobles presented ASYV with a check for funds they raised to further the Village's programs. We are grateful to Nobles for their commitment to the Village and we are proud to consider them members of the greater ASYV family.





# With the Deepest Gratitude to Our Supporters...

It takes a village to transform a child. Thank you for being part of our Village, our family.

## THE INTWARI (HERO) SOCIETY

We are proud to recognize donors who have invested more than **\$1,000,000** in ASYV and in our students' futures.

Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation  
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Liquidnet Holdings, Inc.  
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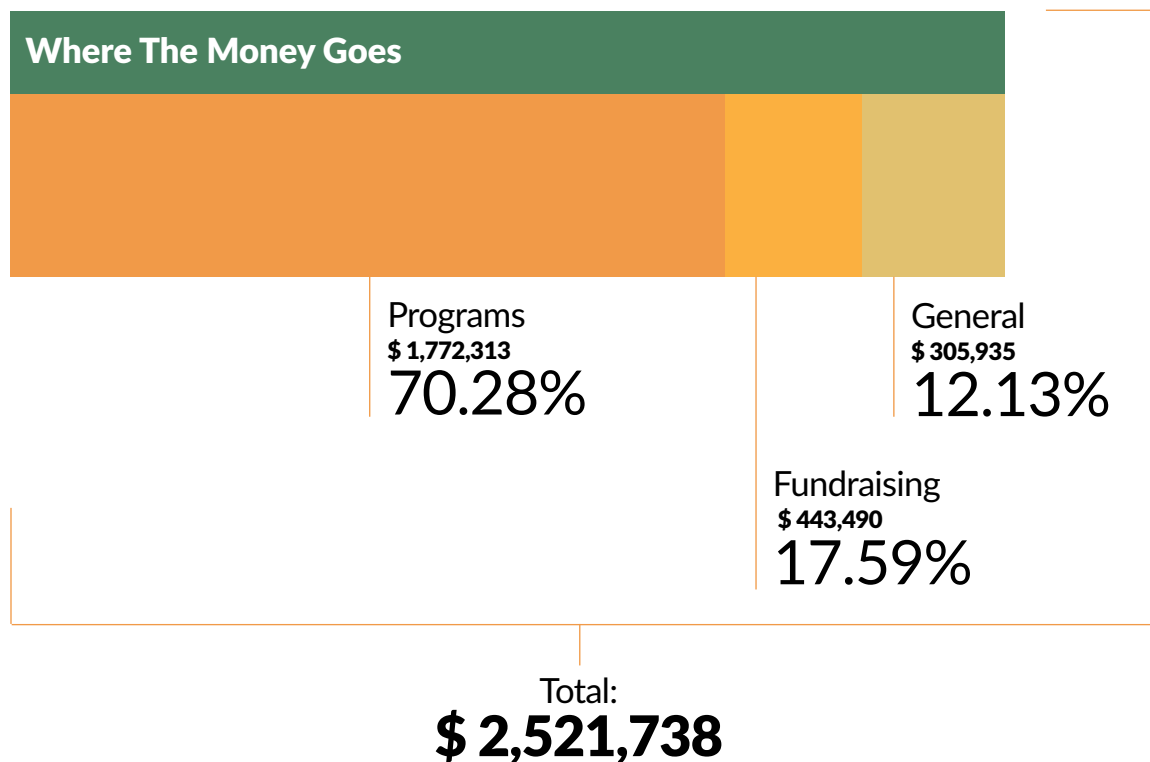
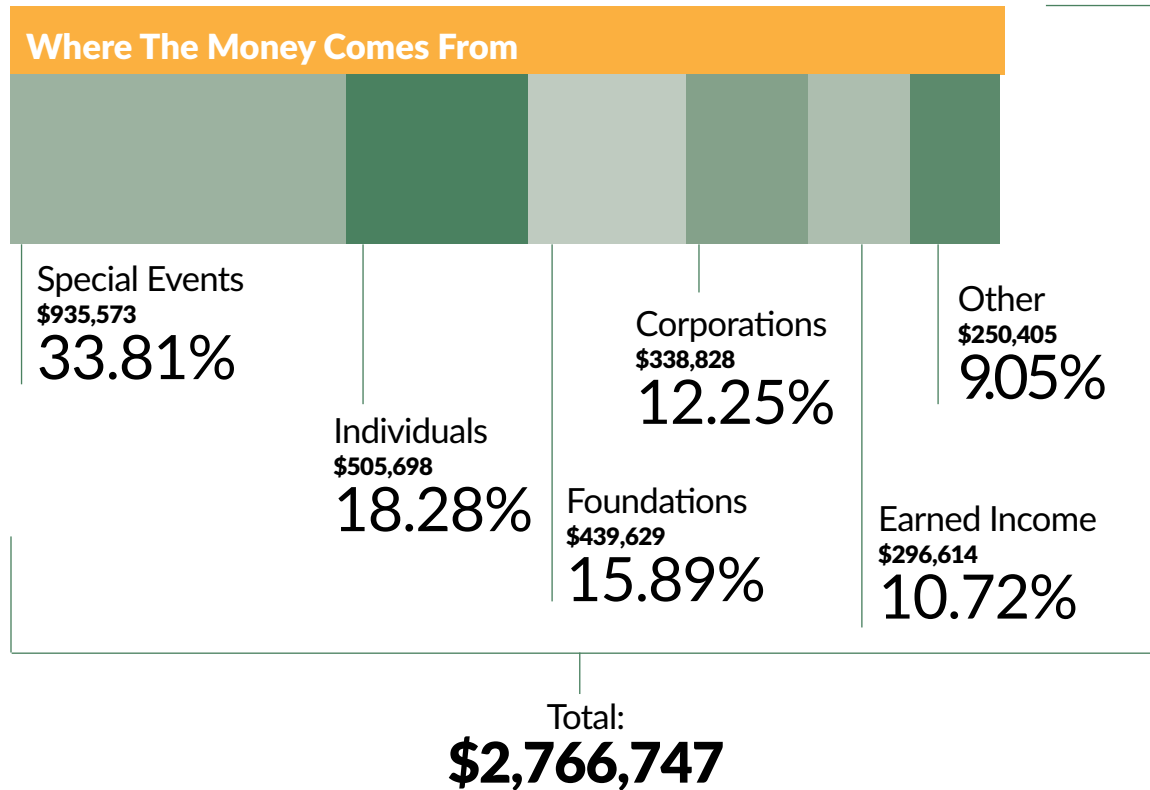
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Thank you to those generous donors who shared gifts up to \$250 for their support, without which the Village could not continue its important work to heal and empower vulnerable youth in Rwanda.



# The Funds that Fuel Us



Charts reflect 2017 Unaudited Financial Statements, exclusive of non-cash expenses such as depreciation and in-kind donations. Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village, Inc. is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

# Our Family Leadership

## A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR BOARD, COMMITTEES, AND STAFF

### Anne Heyman, Founder, Board Chair Emeritus

When Anne Heyman founded the Village, she created a family. She was our students' matriarch, an inspiration who believed that they could make the world a better place. Today, our students and alumni honor that belief in the way they live their lives. With a kind word and a helping hand, they carry Anne's legacy forward.

### Board of Directors

Laurie Toll Franz, Board Chair\*  
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 Jeff Schwartzman, Secretary \*  
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 Bill Bertolet  
 Ran Goshen  
 Kathy Harris  
 Gideon Herscher  
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 Jason Kotik  
 Christy Lamagna\*  
 Jason Merrin  
 Samuel Merrin  
 Seth Rosenzweig  
 Ben Snyder  
 Liz Stern  
 Brian Walsh  
 Anne Heyman, Founder  
 Board Chair Emeritus  
 (1961-2014)

\* Denotes an Executive Committee Member

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### Staff Leadership


Jean-Claude Nkulikiyimfura,  
 Executive Director  
 Vincent Kalimba, Village Director  
 Shiri B. Sandler, Managing Director

With thanks to founding Directors Lisa Issroff and Samuel Merrin, who concluded their terms of service in 2017. Lisa, who chaired our Program Committee with deft expertise, continues to serve the Village as a member of the Program Committee. We are grateful for their years of leadership.






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## Our Mission:

Through healing, education, and love, the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village empowers orphaned and vulnerable Rwandan youth to build lives of dignity and contribute to a better world.