



in love &
gratitude



“HOW ARE *refugees* DOING IN MISSOULA?”

I GET THIS QUESTION A LOT. Sometimes the answer can be tricky. “Good,” I say. “Great,” even. Personally, my days are filled with toothy smiles while navigating language barriers, watching a tutor hard at work with a student, wonderful aromas rising up from a pot, a new baby’s sweet curls peeking out from a handmade blanket, and giggles at the hilarious look of ill-fitting snow pants when skiing for the first time. I get to feel, to my core, all of these moments of a human embraced by the love of a community, but I am not so naïve as to think it has been easy for any of these families. Not so blinded by my own excitement to realize that even [a safe, welcoming, and supportive new home](#) can’t be a complete substitute for a life once lived surrounded by family and friends now far away. It is a balance. But here we are, and here you are. Showing up, doing the good work, and making a real difference. In the coming pages, I think you will see a lot of the same things I see when I look at our work this past year—[courage, inspiration, determination, and an incredibly supportive community that works hard to uplift and guide our new neighbors](#). I hope what is captured in our first attempt at a neat and tidy impact report is also a window into a story of humanity—one that isn’t always neat and tidy, but dynamic, thoughtful, adventurous, and always, always led by love and hope for the future.

In love and gratitude,



Mary Poole, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Every day, 37,000 people are forced to flee their homes because of war, terror, conflict, and fear of persecution.

That's more than 70.8 million people worldwide who are displaced, losing homes and loved ones along the way.

Soft Landing Missoula is rooted in helping Montana do its part to address the needs of displaced people from around the world.

Despite our city's rich history of previously welcoming refugees, 4 short years ago Montana was one of only two states not participating in refugee resettlement. When Soft Landing started in 2015, it paved the way for the International Rescue Committee to re-open its Missoula office and welcome refugees once again.



There are **70.8 million** forcibly displaced people in the world.

25.9 million are categorized as refugees.

63,726 refugees (less than .5%) were resettled across the globe in 2018.

THE MISSION

Soft Landing Missoula creates a welcoming, supportive, and informed community that helps refugees and immigrants integrate and thrive.

In FY 2019, Missoula welcomed 100 individuals through resettlement by the International Rescue Committee, bringing the total since 2016 to around 345 individuals. Montana's new neighbors come from the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, **Eritrea**, **Syria**, and **Iraq**.



A woman wearing a white hijab is smiling and looking down at a young child. The child has a pink flower in their hair and is wearing a pink cardigan over a floral-patterned shirt. The background is a warm, out-of-focus indoor setting.

BASIC NEEDS

Community Resource Center

Soft Landing's safe and welcoming community center is the hub for all Soft Landing programs and a place where clients feel valued and supported.

3,100 *client visits:*

EACH MONTH, WE SAW MORE

THAN 250 VISITS from clients accessing community resources, one-on-one guidance, an emergency food pantry, and gently-used donated household items.

200 *volunteers*

DEDICATED A TOTAL OF 5,160 HOURS

providing one-on-one support to refugee individuals and families and helping the Community Resource Center operate smoothly.

**LIFE SKILLS:
ADULTS**

English Language Learning Support

Soft Landing provides English Language Learning opportunities for working mothers and other individuals with reduced access to English classes through one-on-one tutoring and by providing childcare in partnership with the Lifelong Learning Center.

MORE THAN 45 *volunteers* **PROVIDED SUPPORT**
to refugees working on improving their English skills.

25 *tutors* **PROVIDED 1,179 HOURS** of one-on-one English instruction.

259 *hours* **OF WEEKLY CHILD CARE**
allowed those with small children to attend English classes on a regular basis.

Driver's Education

For many refugees, obtaining a driver's license is an important step toward achieving independence. Soft Landing offers driver's education classes to help refugees prepare for the written exam.

34 *clients*
ATTENDED OUR CLASSES,
an additional 10 received support
with other driving-related needs.

4 *teens*
RECEIVED FULL SCHOLARSHIPS
from Soft Landing Missoula to take
Missoula County Public Schools Traffic
Education Course.





**LIFE SKILLS:
YOUTH
PROGRAMS**

Soft Landing collaborates with local organizations to connect families to a variety of activities and experiences in and around Missoula. These opportunities are a way for families to discover all that Missoula has to offer and to just have fun together.

115 *refugee teens*
& *kids* **SCHOOL-AGED AND
YOUNGER LIVE IN MISSOULA.**

90% *of refugee families*
**PARTICIPATE IN SOFT LANDING
ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES.**

Last year's adventures included:

- Nature Walk with National Wildlife Federation
- ZACC Rock Camp
- Fly Fishing with Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Swimming lessons
- Dance classes
- Gymnastics
- Community Gardening with Garden City Harvest
- Soccer

REFUGEE YOUTH RESILIENCY

First-generation youth often have less access to social and recreational opportunities, face language and academic challenges, and have adult-sized burdens placed upon them as children. Soft Landing addresses this by offering after-school tutoring, one-on-one mentoring, and regular social and recreational opportunities for youth.

15-20 *middle & high school students*
REGULARLY ATTEND twice-weekly after school tutoring sessions.

20 *refugee teens* **ENGAGED** in monthly recreational, social, and educational outings with Soft Landing. Highlights include [an overnight](#) in Glacier National Park, a visit to UM campus, and [team building at the Missoula Parks & Rec ropes course](#).





UNITED
WE EAT

Soft Landing's food-based programs provide refugees with economic opportunity and job skill-building experiences, while introducing Missoula to rich and flavorful cooking traditions that serve as a cultural bridge to a shared table.

all food programming

GENERATED \$20,000

in supplemental income that went
directly into the pockets of
14 chefs & bakers.

4 supper clubs

FEATURING CHEFS

from Iraq, Congo, and Eritrea at Masala.

15-WEEK *take-out
meal service pilot*

(United We Eat @home)

4 holiday cookie sales

**COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
& OUTREACH**

Soft Landing Missoula remains committed to actively engaging our community and state in gaining a better understanding of the resettlement process and of refugees' contributions to our communities, and by providing opportunities for cultural sharing.

1,425 *people*
LEARNED ABOUT refugees in
Montana at 29 state-wide events.

250 *people* **ATTENDED**
the World Refugee Day Cup
Soccer Tournament & Community
Celebration in June.

1,000 *people*
PARTICIPATED in 9 events during
Welcoming Week in September.



OUR COMMUNITY



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We are forever grateful to the hundreds of passionate and generous supporters, donors, volunteers, foundations, businesses, United-We-Eaters, and soccer players who believe in creating a Missoula that is welcoming to refugees and immigrants, and one that celebrates all of the amazing gifts they bring to our town.

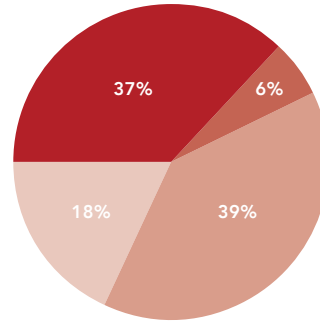
We're honored to work alongside many wonderful community partners who are dedicated to supporting refugees and immigrants in Missoula. Special thanks to the [International Rescue Committee](#), [Lifelong Learning Center](#), [Missoula County Public Schools](#), [Missoula City-County Health Department](#), [Missoula Alliance Church](#) and many other faith communities, and the [University of Montana](#).

Everything you've just read about in this impact report is possible because of our Soft Landing community. Thank you for being a part of it!

FINANCIALS

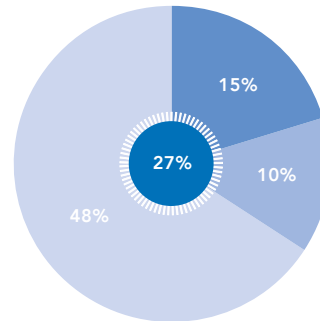
income

- Individual Donations: 37%
- Businesses: 6%
- Grants & Foundations: 39%
- United We Eat: 18%



expenses

- Core Mission Support: 27%
- United We Eat: 15%
- Youth Programming: 10%
- Other Programming and Direct Services: 48%



Soft Landing Missoula is fiscally sponsored by Social & Environmental Entrepreneurs, a 501 c 3 non-profit that provides administrative, fiscal, and programmatic oversight for startup projects like ours.

our staff

Mary Poole, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Molly Cottrell, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Greta Bates, FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGER

Maria Netzloff, DONOR ENGAGEMENT & IMPACT DIRECTOR

OUR TEAM

2019 *board of directors*

Alysha Goheen, PRESIDENT, MOUNTAIN HOME MONTANA

Brihannala Morgan, VICE-PRESIDENT, BORNEO PROJECT

Katie Klietz, SECRETARY, BIG SKY PUBLIC RELATIONS

Brian Fitzgerald, TREASURER, CLEARWATER CREDIT UNION

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