



# Headwaters

RELIEF ORGANIZATION



Annual  
Report  
2022

Building Hope  
Building Resiliency

# Letter from the President

Hello Everyone,

On behalf of Headwaters Relief Organization's Board, I would like first to commend the strong efforts and outstanding achievements of the entire Headwaters Organization and support team. The global events of 2022 will once again have far-reaching and long-term implications for our Headwaters' operations. These are difficult times, from the lingering conditions created by the persistent COVID virus with ongoing variants, to the political divisions that ignite civil unrest within our nation, and beyond that, the international tension and conflicts that fester.

It is important for Headwaters to not be deterred. We have kept our focus on the goals defined by the missions to be undertaken. This means careful evaluation of the requirements and needs of the communities and people to be served in response to disasters. This includes areas both within the borders of our country and globally. To meet our objectives, the team has needed to be more creative than ever to prioritize and deliver solutions to provide goods and services for both the immediate and long-term well-being of those that we seek to help. The challenge has been to find ways and means to move forward with our strategic objectives by overcoming barriers that would otherwise limit our ability to respond to disasters and to make a positive impact. There are seemingly endless lists of distressed places and people. In a perfect world, we would be there with volunteers and financial aid, helping hands and boots on the ground. The success of Headwaters, however, has been its ability to recognize where it can use its limited resources to be most effective. Historically, our efforts have been constrained by available funding, from direct sponsors and fund-raising events to grants from foundations and other organizations with the mission of disaster relief and public health.

In summary, we owe a great deal of gratitude and appreciation for all of the volunteers, sponsors and board members for 2022. Headwaters cannot prevent or even slow down the global events that cause disasters. If each of us who is a Headwaters team member/supporter can focus our attention and psychic energies to find ways to share ideas and accelerate our efforts, we can make a difference. As an organization that brings hope, we seek the resources and the capacity to do the best, for the greatest number of people.

Best Wishes,  
Daniel G Leitner,  
Headwaters Board President



Front cover:  
Headwaters  
responding to war  
in Ukraine. Photo  
credit Eli Albancy

Back cover :  
Hurricane Ian,  
Fort Myers,  
Florida



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

We all have heard stories of heroes- their feats and triumphs. With Headwaters, we have witnessed what a committed group of individuals can achieve.

A faithful pledge to bring more aid made 17 years ago, amidst the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans has led to us becoming what Headwaters Relief Organization is today with more than 3000 volunteers and thousands of volunteer hours clocked all across the globe, annually.

The year 2022 was remarkable in its own way for disaster relief and public health challenges- the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, the billion-dollar Hurricane Ian making landfall in Florida, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine- in national and international headlines daily. Regardless of the challenges ahead, Headwaters has remained committed to our mission statement of inspiring volunteerism, helping build connections between the volunteers and the community we serve.

Locally, here in Minnesota, our volunteers participated in weekly events to support the resettlement of evacuees from Afghanistan. Our volunteers worked with the dolls and toys we have created from our work with similar populations. We worked with the Multi-Agency Resource Center that supported Randall, Minnesota, to assist their recovery efforts. Volunteers helped people with cleanup, gutting, debris removal of their homes damaged by the flooding.

Following the damage caused by Hurricane Ian, Headwaters volunteers worked with residents and other families in Fort Myers, Florida. As with all disasters, the cleanup work and the psychosocial adjustment to the disaster continues long after the media ceases to cover the disaster.

Headwaters condemns any form of violence including human rights violations. Immediately after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we started working with our global contacts providing support to refugees seeking shelter in Europe. Our volunteers locally put together children's' activities as a part of our efforts to support the children forced to leave their homes. Headwaters' volunteers travelled to various parts of Europe working with refugees from Ukraine. We also provided training to nongovernmental agencies and other foundations working with these refugees on psychological first aid and compassion fatigue.

At the end of every year, we want to pause and celebrate the journey initiated by helping one community. It is amazing to recall that the small steps volunteers from the headwaters of the Mississippi took in 2005 have resulted in an organization with a footprint in more than 20 states inside this country, and 15 countries internationally. Our initial disaster relief work has grown to include psychological services, public health, medical support, social justice advocacy, women's empowerment, and anti-human trafficking work.

New Year, New Spirits, Heightened Enthusiasm. We remain committed to our mission to inspire volunteerism, help build connections and support communities in need. All this is possible because of you.

Thank you,  
Dr. Roshan Khatri



## PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Hello Everyone,

In 2022, Headwaters continued to expand programs in Minnesota, New Orleans, Nepal and Ukraine, in addition to supporting other communities after disasters.

A significant new area was the volunteer support we provided Afghan families as they resettled in Minnesota after leaving Afghanistan when the American troops left. Our volunteers worked in collaboration with the state of Minnesota and other nonprofit organizations to assist Afghan families in temporary housing while they were waiting for permanent housing. Volunteers prepared rooms for the arrival of families, supported families in navigating available local resources, and helped support children during a challenging transition period.

We continued to support girls in Nepal with our book *Stronger Together* along with the Asha Doll. *Stronger Together* is about girls supporting each other to reach their goals, including staying in school. The Asha dolls and *Stronger Together* create an empowering message for girls. Currently, if girls in Nepal and India have dolls, they usually have blonde hair and blue eyes to match the western standard of beauty. A doll that looks like them is a positive role model that encourages cultural and racial acceptance, and builds self-esteem.

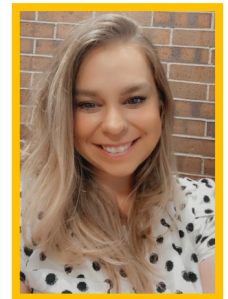
As the war in Ukraine created unsafe conditions, many women and children fled the Ukraine while their husbands, fathers, sons and daughters stayed to fight. Headwaters supported Ukrainian refugees through partnerships with other organizations working with the refugees in Europe. Headwaters' volunteers at home created therapeutic children's activities to use with our partner organizations along with our children's book, *Together We Stand*. We were also asked to provide training on compassion fatigue to organizations working with Ukrainian refugees.

At the end of the year, Hurricane Ian devastated the Fort Myers area of Florida. Our volunteers traveled to Fort Myers to assist with clean-up. Our team of volunteers were able to help homeowners with disposal of damaged items as well as removal of wet and moldy sheetrock. Our social workers provided emotional support to homeowners as well.

During the upcoming year we are planning more activities that allow volunteers to participate in our work from here at home. We have been making care packages for our troops overseas for years. This year we will expand that work and schedule monthly activities that includes packing activities related to therapeutic work with children.

We truly appreciate our volunteers and supporters. Your commitment to Headwaters Relief Organization allows us to continue to fulfill our mission and serve individuals affected by natural and man-made disaster.

Ashley Emy  
Headwaters Program Director



# Board of Directors



Dan



Judy



Brad



Amy



Dave



Tony



Mary



Delrae



Kelly



Susan

# Team Members



Roshan



Ashley



Cheryl



Rebecca



Toni



Joel

# Board Member Spotlight

Amy R. Kelly



Amy is a successful entrepreneur who has a proven track record of innovation and leadership. She also loves to travel and experience new places and cultures, and has been a frequent volunteer with Headwaters. In her business, Jett Beauty, Amy focuses on delivering high-quality, customized experiences to women who turn to the company to help them feel better. She brings this same quality standard to her work with Headwaters.

Volunteering ran in Amy's family. Amy remembers her grandmother, who volunteered at the local hospital, receiving a 50-years-of-service award. She has, in turn, involved her family in providing services to others.

Amy found inspiration in the volunteer experience. On one of her early trips to Haiti, she visited an orphanage and saw a little boy who was the same age as her son, who had been abandoned by his family. A sweet child who spoke English fairly well, he asked Amy about her children and what their lives were like. The contrast in circumstances between the children was heartbreaking, but in the coming years the little one gave her perspective on any hardship she encountered in her life. Her brother Patrick, who served as military policeman with the National Guard, went to Haiti too, dedicated to protecting his big sister and the other volunteers. Over the years, Amy has seen her children and many others transformed by the volunteer experience. Volunteer work has built bonds between family members, and has raised awareness of how much need there is in the world. Equally important, Amy sees how much impact a small but dedicated group of people can have on a devastated community.

Amy is passionate about volunteering. Her company has incorporated the model of volunteerism as a corporate value. Amy's employees take donations at store locations, are encouraged to join Headwaters relief trips, and facilitate fundraising events to support Headwaters. The anti-trafficking efforts of Headwaters ties into Amy's focus on women in her business, fostering self-esteem and promoting the value of education for girls who are too often left behind. She is a champion for women of all ages.

Dr. DelRae Messer

In her professional life, Dr. DelRae Messer has known great success, building a chiropractic practice, then taking a sustainable lifestyle weight loss and wellbeing program online in partnership with Isagenix International, a global nutrition and wellbeing company. She earned a Woman of the Year award in 2021. Her personal quest has been to help working women find balance and fulfillment, and break through any limits they encounter.

Her contributions as a volunteer and board member of Headwaters are equally laudable. In 2020, she funded the writing, illustration and printing of an award-winning children's coloring book called, "When We All Stayed Home," which was quickly followed by a Spanish edition, "When We All Wore Masks," and a final edition, "When We All Got Vaccinated," all to help children process the phases of the global pandemic.

As a child, her passion for volunteering was nurtured by her mother, who modeled compassion and empathy as she took her children to a nursing home to comfort and befriend the elderly residents. Years later, after experiencing an unexpected professional loss, she was asked to join a Headwaters disaster relief trip and found herself surprised at the positive power of that experience. DelRae believes that volunteering is a key factor in helping her navigate uncertainty and personal and professional challenges, and so she studies and speaks on the neuroscience of service and its positive effects on the mental and emotional wellbeing of the volunteer.

DelRae's most recent project for Headwaters involved the co-creation of 2000 diverse baby dolls and partnership in writing, illustrating and printing a children's book on the prevention of human trafficking. She is also devoted to raising funds to underwrite Headwaters relief trips through monthly events that raise awareness of the tremendous services being provided by volunteers around the globe, while supporting the volunteer model that has allowed so many in the Twin Cities to help others through traumatic loss.



# 2022 Timeline

## January

“Real Leaders” held their 4<sup>th</sup> annual ranking of purpose driven businesses. “Real Leaders” highlights diverse groups of companies from around the world that prove that businesses can thrive and help build a better world. Headwaters was one of the 200 companies that were honored.

**Headwaters After School Program** continued after winter break. Volunteers assisted the children, providing educational support and leadership development. The After School Program was funded by a grant from the ISA Foundation.

Article on the Asha Dolls was published in the Press and News, highlighting our work to support the educational campaign in Nepal.

## February

**We hosted our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Mardi Gras Gala** on February 19, 2022. It was a wonderful night with volunteers, supporters, and friends. There was a Jazz Band, a piano player from New Orleans, great food, a silent auction, a live auction, a magician, and a tarot card reader. It was a great night where we shared our stories and celebrated our success.

## March

**Afghan Evacuees Resettlement Program** - Headwaters' volunteers participated in this weekly event at the request of state officials to support the settlement of recent evacuees from Afghanistan. Our volunteers also used the dolls and toys we have created for our previous work with a refugee population. Our volunteers used our book *Home is Where the Honey Is*. The book explores the children's reactions to having to quickly leave their homes and their friends to travel to a camp in a strange place with new people where they don't understand the language or culture. The book explores the concept of working together to build a new life.

**Meals on Wheels** - Our volunteers also started contributing to the Meals on Wheels programs, which supports families and individuals by delivering precooked hot meals to their locations.

Board member, Dr. DelRae Messer, held a volunteer event to package craft supplies for Headwaters. We used the crafts when we traveled to Poland and Hungary and partnered with organizations there to work with Ukrainian refugee children.

## April

**CCX Ch.12 article** - Our work with refugee and displaced children in Europe was covered by the Channel 12 news media.

**Compassion Fatigue Training** - Headwaters created a training and trained members from various international organizations supporting the Ukrainian refugees in Europe.

## May

**National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (NVOAD) Conference** - Headwaters participated in the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster's (NVOAD) conference in Baltimore, MD. Our mission with our booth was to bring awareness and to provide other organizations with our COVID coloring book *When We All Got Vaccinated*. We were able to connect with several organizations interested in receiving our coloring books and were able to send 2000 coloring books to other organizations.

**40 Under 40 in Public Health, Catalyst Award**- Dr. Roshan received the 40 Under 40 in Public Health Catalyst Award for his work with Headwaters and its initiatives.

**Headwaters' volunteers** assisted, along with other organizations, with temporary housing for the families that came here after American troops withdrew from Afghanistan. We started on this project when the first families arrived in Minnesota in October 2021. The program ended on May 31, 2022. Most of the residents we assisted were able to find homes and the additional resources needed to assist in their transition to the United States. The children started school in April. The Bloomington School District allowed older girls to attend school as many of them were not able to continue their education in Afghanistan.

## June

**Together We Stand** - We published our book *Together We Stand* written in Ukrainian and Russian for use with the displaced population due to the war. We also created supportive educational materials, caregivers guide about the book, in Polish and Hungarian. This is our 10th unique children's book. We provided training to the teams of teachers and caregivers who would be working with the children and using the books and materials. We also worked directly with children at several locations.

**Work in Europe** - Headwaters was asked to provide compassion fatigue training to support organizations working with Ukrainian refugee children and families, across several countries in Europe. Volunteers working directly with the children and their families. The volunteers expressed appreciation for being able to talk with us about their experiences with the children and families and the difficulties they sometimes have personally while doing this work. We traveled to a number of areas where the children and their parents, all refugees, were being received. We were able to make great contacts with the organizations involved. We provided training on our books and accompanying materials and the activities put together by our volunteers.

## July

**Internship position**- We hired a part-time writer to assist us during her internship. She interviewed and wrote about our volunteers' experiences, focusing on the many volunteers who assisted us in Haiti over many years. She also interviewed some of the people who live in Haiti who worked with us there.

**Randal Relief Trip** - Headwaters participated in the Multi-Agency Resource Center that was held in Randall, Minnesota to assist affected residents in finding resources to support their recovery efforts.

Randall is about 2 hours north of our Headwaters office in Golden Valley. They experienced significant flooding from excessive rainfall and overflow from the river. Several Headwaters' volunteers gave of their time to assist people with cleanup of their homes. We took our Headwaters' trailer of tools and supplies. The first house we went to was gutted and the debris was put into a pile outside. We took that debris pile and moved it into a dumpster. With another home, our team removed drywall and sprayed the home with a mold treatment. We also removed drywall in the basement of another home that was damaged by the flooding.

**New Orleans Mental Health Resource Center**- Headwaters continued our mental health resource center for youth in New Orleans. The Youth Center serves children in the Ninth Ward neighborhood, in addition to the parishioners of the New Salem Baptist Church. Our program provides educational support and encouragement to the children and a safe place in the community.

## August

**Fourth Annual Golf Tournament**- We held our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament on August 19, 2022. Volunteers and golfers came out to enjoy a day on the course, in the midst of inclement weather. We still had an amazing day. We provided dinner and held a silent auction and raffle for funds to support Headwaters' programs.

## September

**The Guardian article** - Our footage from Ironton, Louisiana where our volunteers worked providing disaster relief the previous year was used to cover a report on the anniversary of the storm. This article highlights the hurdles individuals in poor communities face after disaster.

**Most Admired CEO** - The Bizjournals recognized Rebecca Thomley as among the most admired CEO's for 2022.

**Give Back Event Minneapolis** - Our board member Dr. DelRae Messer hosted a volunteer event to help clean up at a Minneapolis school. Volunteers spent the morning cleaning up the playground area and doing some light landscaping to remove leaves and other debris.

**Jett Beauty Grand Opening featuring Headwaters Booth**- Jett Beauty invited Headwaters to have a booth at their grand opening celebration. Jett Beauty's owner, Amy Kelly, is a board member and has been a tremendous support in many ways but also significantly to promoting our Asha Dolls. Our Asha dolls were created for girls in India and Nepal as dolls that look like the schoolgirls there. Jett Beauty promoted the dolls by adding the option to purchase a doll or donate a doll with any service.

## October

**First Annual Halloween Party**- We held our First Annual Halloween Extravaganza on October 20, 2022. The event was planned by our board president, Dan Leitner and his daughter, Emily Waldo and put together by a team of volunteers and donors. We had more than 30 children and their families participate in a Halloween costume contest, a dance competition, and many more children's activities. This was a fundraising event to engage parents. The children had a wonderful time.

**Nepal educational support program** - Our volunteers continued our work to support the young girls educational campaign and antitrafficking initiatives in the Everest region of Nepal. Our doll Asha even made it up to the base camp.

**New Orleans Fall Festival** - Headwaters held a Halloween party at our youth center for children in the community in the Ninth Ward. There were games, prizes and a pizza party.

## November

**Headwaters Florida Relief Trip**- Headwaters volunteers assisted elderly residents and others in Fort Myers, Florida, an area affected by Hurricane Ian. Three of our volunteers drove our Headwaters' trailer with all our tools and supplies from Minneapolis to Fort Meyers. Our team worked with homeowners to remove damaged belongings and massive amounts of sheetrock that was damaged and moldy from homes; we also provided mold remediation. While the homeowners' needs vary, they all have a story to tell. Our volunteers were able to offer emotional support as homeowners searched through damaged items and tried to find their treasured possessions. They were grateful that we could assist them with volunteer time, so they did not need to pay for help with the clean-up work. Residents continue to clean up and try to regain a feeling of normalcy. Like all disasters, the clean-up work and the psychosocial adjustment to the disaster continues long after the media ceases to cover the disaster.

**Upgrade Your Impact Event**- Dr. DelRae Messer is hosting monthly breakfasts to build a community of women, who desire to rise with intention, create authentic connections and upgrade their impact. November's breakfast featured LeAnn Case to talk about upgrading your impact to lead and serve on another level, while experiencing a joy-filled life. Women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, leaving many of us feeling emotionally exhausted, overwhelmed, and uncertain of our next move.

**Give to the Max Day**- Headwaters Relief Organization participates in this Minnesota annual on-line day of giving in November each year, updating our website to reflect current and on-going programs.

## December

**New Orleans Mental Health Resource Center**- Headwaters had a holiday party at our youth center in New Orleans. We had crafts and gifts for the children along with holiday treats.

**Military packing event** -Headwaters' volunteers came to bake treats for troops. We had 15 volunteers assist us in making treats that we sent to troops that were overseas and away from their families this holiday season.

**Upgrade Your Impact Event** - December's monthly breakfast featured Dr. Jennie Hilleren PhD, a marriage and family therapist, to talk about healthy emotional coping techniques, finding motivation after trauma and an unconventional way of setting goals, in a time of uncertainty..

# Relief Efforts

## Headwaters' help in recovery from Hurricane Ian

Hurricane Ian hit Florida on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, as a category 4 hurricane with wind speeds as high as 155 mph. Hurricane Ian was the deadliest hurricane to hit Florida since 1935, causing over 150 fatalities, displacing over 40,000 people, and causing over 50 billion dollars in damage.

Headwaters volunteers immediately assisted elderly residents in Fort Myers, Florida, affected by the hurricane. Two of our volunteers drove our Headwaters' trailer with all of our tools and supplies from Minneapolis to Fort Meyers. Our team removed damaged belongings, sheetrock that had water damage and mold; we also provided mold remediation. While the homeowners' needs vary, they all have a story to tell. Our volunteers were able to offer emotional support as homeowners searched through damaged items and tried to find their treasured possessions. They were grateful that we could assist them with volunteer time.

Residents continue to clean up and try to regain a feeling of normalcy. We are continuing our support to their recovery.



## Cleanup and recovery in Randall, Minnesota



Randall, MN is a small town about 2 hours north of our Headwaters office. We had a group of our volunteers, help clean houses that were damaged by a storm. Volunteers were able to take our trailer to Randall, MN, to assist families with clean up after the recent flooding and windstorms. The trailer was an amazing addition to help us achieve our mission of bringing hope and building resiliency in communities after disaster. We were able to bring more tools and have room for additional volunteers.

Headwaters also participated in the Multi-Agency Resource Center that was held in Randall to assist residents in finding resources to support their recovery efforts.



## International Work

Times of war and natural disasters are desperate times. Desperate times call for support from us all. Headwaters' volunteers travelled to different parts of Europe and worked with individuals from Ukraine, Poland, and Hungary. Many were refugees-parents and children who crossed the border to seek safety from the conflict in their country. Many of the refugees were mothers with their children. The fathers and older brothers often stayed behind to fight for their country. We also worked with NGOs (non-governmental organizations) at shelters on how to use a book that was specifically developed for the children and families impacted by the Ukrainian war. The book, "Together We Stand" and the accompanying caregiver's guide, were written in four languages: Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and Hungarian. As children and caregivers explore the pages of the book, a story of a child's family experiencing this war is told.

This book was created to assist children and their families by normalizing potential reactions and supporting them in learning how to cope with these possible physical and emotional changes, thereby assisting them in developing resiliency. This book also provides suggestions for adults on how to carefully monitor their children, risk factors, and some of the possible difficulties of working with displaced children.

Headwaters was also asked to provide compassion fatigue training as well as psychological first aid to support organizations working with Ukrainian refugee children and families across several countries in Europe. Volunteers working directly with the children and their families expressed appreciation for being able to talk with us about their experiences and the difficulties they sometimes have personally.



We continued our work in Nepal with both our trafficking campaign as well as our newest campaign focused on promoting the education of girls. Our Asha doll is part of this campaign. We reached additional communities this year, and in fact, our Asha doll made it all the way to the Everest base camp.



# Global Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.” In 2015, at the United Nations Conference, more than 190 world leaders committed to addressing the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice by 2030.

We each have a role to play if we’re going to achieve these goals. Headwaters Relief Organization’s activities currently support 10 of these 17 goals.

We share with each Sustainable Development Goal one example of how our work in 2022 addresses reaching these goals.



## 1. No Poverty

Global poverty had a historic decline between 2015 and 2018. Owing to the global pandemic, the global poverty rate increased sharply. This has been exacerbated by rising inflation and the war in the Ukraine.

Headwaters responded to the Covid-19 pandemic providing support to families and children. Headwaters also responded to the war in the Ukraine providing support to the refugees and to the organizations serving them.



## 2. Zero Hunger

The number of people going hungry and suffering from food insecurity has been rising since the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 crisis combined with the war in the Ukraine has disrupted global food supply chains and has created the biggest global food crisis since the second World War.

In addition to our work with Covid-19 and the war in the Ukraine, we have launched nutrition education programs wherever we serve. This year it was a core component in our after-school program in New Orleans.



## 3. Good Health and Well Being

Ensuring healthy lives and supporting wellbeing at all ages is essential for sustainable development. By mid-2020 Covid-19 had infected more than 500 million people worldwide. It impacted health services and lowered life expectancy. Immunization coverage dropped for the first time in 10 years, and deaths from malaria and tuberculosis increased.

Headwaters worked to provide education to families and children about the pandemic nationally in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Internationally we provided assistance in 15 countries. In addition, we provided health and wellbeing education and training in our after-school program in New Orleans and to our children sponsored in Haiti.



## 4. Quality Education

A fundamental element in creating a peaceful and prosperous world is quality education. School closures brought about by the pandemic had devastating consequences. It is estimated that 147 million children missed more than half of their in-class instruction. These closures have affected girls, children in rural areas, children from ethnic minorities, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds greatly.

Headwaters creation of the book “Stronger Together,” which is about girls continuing their education, directly focuses on this concern. This book was brought to multiple communities in Nepal.



## 5. Gender Equality

Gender equality remains a fundamental right. Progress in many areas, such as time spent on domestic work, unpaid care, and decision making regarding sexual and reproductive health saw major setbacks. Violence against women is endemic and women’s health services already poorly funded, were greatly disrupted.

Headwaters continued with the Asha Doll campaign which is designed to educate, support, and empower young girls to fight gender inequity. Through this doll and accompanying material, girls can navigate the path of self-awareness.



## 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth

It is important to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Sadly, the pandemic precipitated the worst economic crisis in decades and reversed gains that had been made toward decent work for all.

In all activities that Headwaters is engaged in, we strive to deliver services that a community can embrace and make their own. This creates opportunities for people to support one another and carry the information / education to other individuals and communities. This year jobs were created for individuals with the Youth Center in New Orleans, for an internship with Headwaters in Minnesota and for support in our work in Nepal as well as Haiti.



## 10. Reduced Inequalities

The goal to achieve sustainable development reducing inequalities is fundamental to Headwater’s work.

Headwaters work with Afghan evacuees, supporting them in the resettlement program, directly addresses this goal. For every 100,000 people worldwide, 311 are refugees outside their own country. This reflects a 44% increase.



## 13. Climate Action

The impact of climate change includes floods as well as droughts. The number of people at risk for displacement is expected to reach an estimated 700 million by the year 2030. It is also believed that the frequency and severity of storms such as hurricanes is directly affected.

Headwaters responded to flooding in Randall, Minnesota and to Hurricane Ian in Florida.



## 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

We want to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. We want justice for all, and for institutions to be inclusive at all levels.

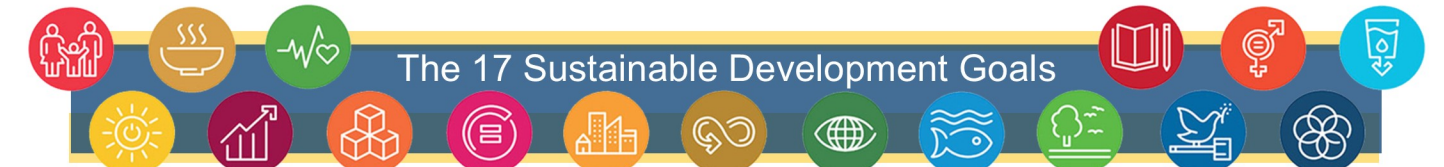
Headwaters, in the creation of the children’s book, “Together We Stand,” worked in several communities to promote these values in support of refugees from the Ukraine.



## 17. Partnership for the Goals

The Global Development Goals can only be reached with strong commitments to cooperation and global partnership.

Headwaters works in partnership in almost all activities. We continue to be members of organizations that work to coordinate services in times of disaster, and we seek out partnerships in new endeavors. We presented in Baltimore in May 2022 to the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) promoting partnerships there.





# Volunteer Spotlight

## Melissa Hofstede

**Melissa Hofstede** is a Headwaters volunteer as well as a long-term employee of Meridian Services, a related entity to Headwaters Relief Organization. Melissa is a senior administrator in our case management/social work department. The Orion Associates and Meridian company employees are asked to engage in at least one volunteer activity per year. The volunteer activity can be a company sponsored event, a Headwaters event or an activity of their own choosing. Melissa has provided great leadership by her example of volunteering in many activities, not only to company employees, but to community members and in choosing to volunteer with Headwaters.

Over the years, Melissa has participated in Headwaters' responses including disaster relief trips to Colorado, Texas, Missouri and in 2022 to Fort Meyers, Florida. She has served in a leadership role in many of these trips. This year, Melissa represented Headwaters as part of a group of volunteers that worked with Hennepin County and other disaster relief organizations to support Afghan refugees in temporary housing. The refugees were housed locally and provided with clothing and personal items as well as access to information about other resources while they waited for permanent housing. Melissa noticed that the children didn't have toys so she led a drive for donations to give each girl a gift of an Asha Doll. The name Asha means hope. Asha Dolls were created to represent school girls. In Afghanistan girls were not encouraged to stay in school. A doll that looks like them is a positive role model that encourages cultural and racial acceptance and builds self-esteem. Donations were also used to purchase Legos for the boys.



Melissa and her husband Tony live adjacent to a golf course. They have been key organizers of the annual Headwaters Golf Tournament. This event has now become an annual fundraiser for the organization. Melissa is able to excite and engage her fellow case managers to participate in this event both as golfers and volunteers. Tony's business partners and friends also participate in the golf tournament. Melissa, Tony and their children are all involved in making the golf tournament a success. Melissa's children sell refreshments at one of the golf holes. Melissa says she appreciates the opportunity to provide volunteer experiences to family members through Headwaters. Melissa's daughter assisted with a resource fair and on-site childcare after the Drake Hotel fire in Minneapolis. Her nephew and niece have both volunteered with Headwaters as well. Most recently, Melissa's niece came with Tony and Melissa to work in Fort Meyers.

Melissa expresses her interest in promoting the mission of Headwaters which is to instill a passion for service in volunteers. She remembers when Rebecca spoke about the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina. Melissa was inspired and believes that more personal testimony from

volunteers about their experience will engage people in our work. Melissa provides that example to all who know her. She is truly committed to those in need. We appreciate Melissa's dedication and commitment to Headwaters Relief Organization.



# Know Us Better

Headwaters' mission is to inspire a passion for volunteerism and service to others. Volunteerism has always been promoted by Orion Associates and its related companies. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a grassroots effort we called the River of Hope, evolved into what was later established as the non-profit, Headwaters Relief Organization. We chose to further commit to the core values of service and volunteerism on behalf of the related companies when we created an expectation among our employees that supported these values. Any management and administrative employee that chooses to work with the companies is provided paid time off to volunteer for an activity of their own choosing, such as a school event with one's children, church activities, the Multiple Sclerosis walk, Habitat for Humanity, and other community causes including Headwaters Relief Organization.

We are proud of the number of employees who volunteer each year, as it symbolizes our commitment to the community. Thirty-five percent of these employees decide to volunteer for Headwaters and since 2009, an average of 97.2% employees of the related companies volunteer for at least one activity per year. We believe that as an organization, in order to promote volunteerism and community service, we need to demonstrate our own level of commitment. Headwaters Relief Organization continues to inspire us to give to our communities.



# Partnership

Headwaters seeks to develop partnerships that enhance our work and that of our partners. In a partnership, while taking an active interest and supporting one another, we can work together to support those in need.

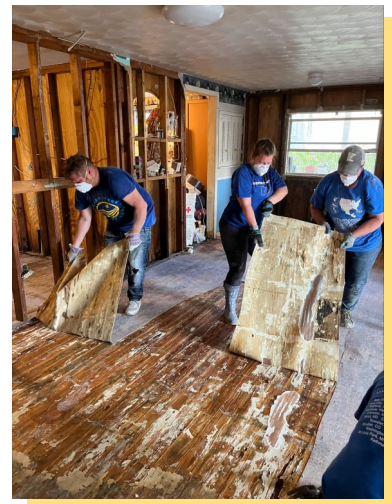
Headwaters focuses on three key elements in establishing partner relationships:



**Communication** - Partners need to understand the goals and strategic priorities of each other. Learning about each other's strengths and expertise creates the opportunity to understand how we can collaborate.

**Collaboration** - This happens when we strategically align our goals and priorities. How will each partner benefit? What will be the end result of our work together?

**Commitment** - We must be committed to our partners to ensure mutual success for the benefit of those we serve.

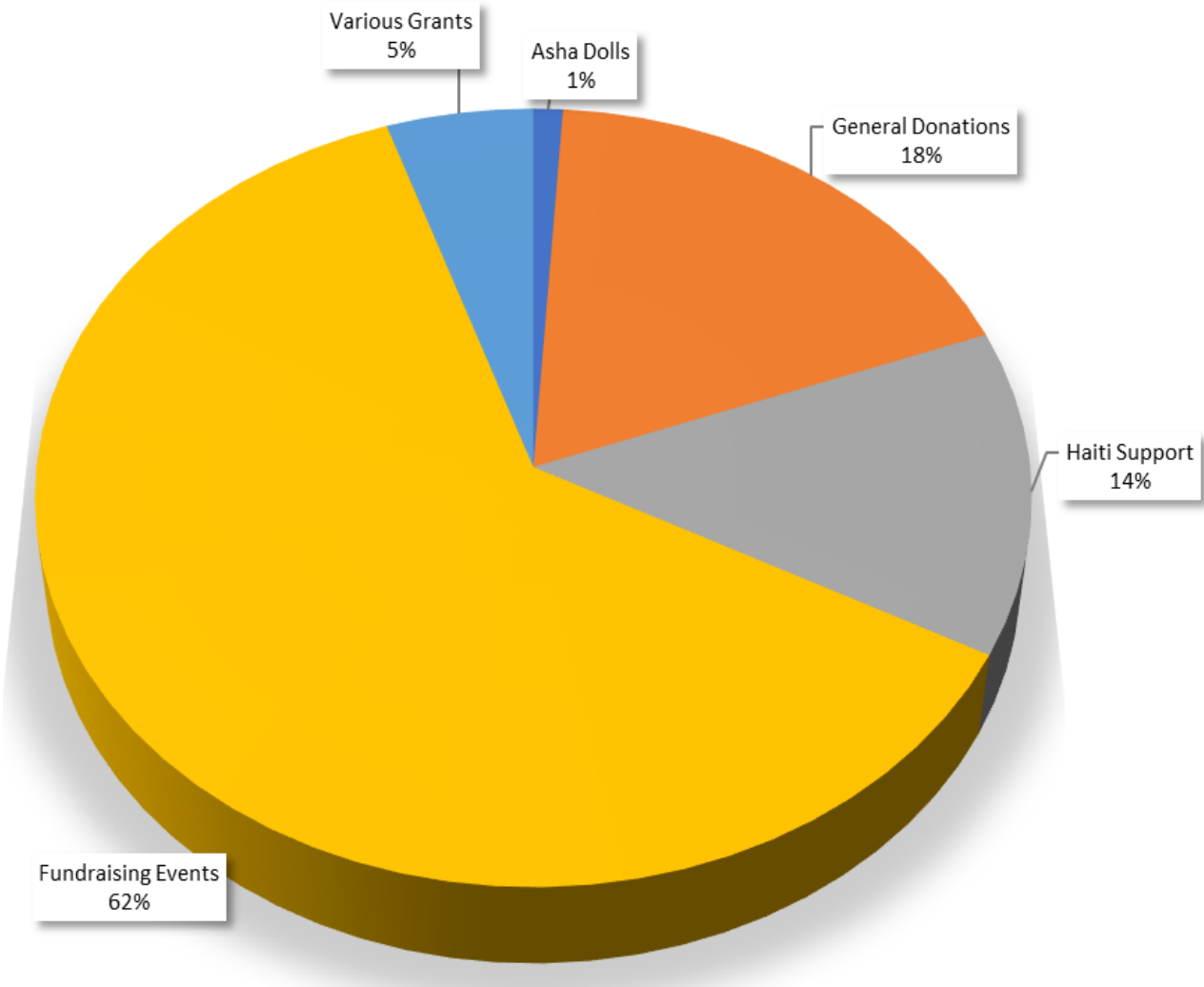


Headwaters, since its grassroots beginning as the River of Hope in New Orleans, has engaged in partnerships in all aspects of our work. The best example of this is the fact that we work with an all-volunteer workforce. As an organization we have partnered with countless faith-based, non-governmental (NGOs) as well as government services at every level. We have done this nationally and internationally. On our last international trip to provide support to refugees fleeing the war in the Ukraine, we partnered with no less than 27 organizations.

We believe that being able to partner effectively is one of our greatest strengths. In addition to helping us be more effective in our work, it has given us incredible friendships all over the world.

# Funding

2022



More than: 465 volunteers  
29,342 volunteer hours donated

# Fundraising

Thank you for your continued and generous support for Headwaters and its efforts.

Headwaters started as a grassroots effort of committed and passionate volunteers, many of you included, who wanted to support communities in need. Our efforts have become stronger, our voices louder and our commitments greater. This has been possible because of you.



Our ONE HUNDRED PERCENT model ensures that ALL the proceeds we receive are committed to the communities and people we serve.

# Awards/Media/Presentations



**Dr. Roshan Khatri**  
Executive Director  
Headwaters Relief Organization  
Doctoral Student  
Johns Hopkins University





Hazards are natural and inevitable while disasters can and therefore should be prevented.

[Tweet](#)

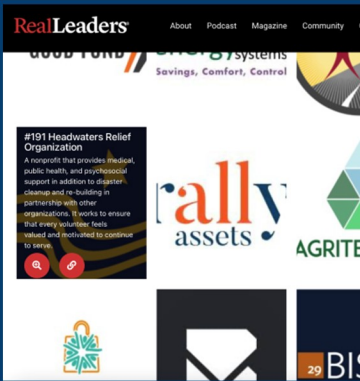
**2022 Most Admired CEOs: Beyond business, Rebecca Thomley champions humanitarianism**

Sep 22, 2022, 6:35am CDT




**#191 Headwaters Relief Organization**

A nonprofit that provides medical, public health, and psychological support in addition to disaster cleanup and re-building in partnership with other organizations. It works to ensure that every volunteer feels valued and motivated to continue to serve.



**SHAMIMSARIF**

## Why I'm Partnering with Headwaters Relief Organization



*The Athena Protocol* and *The Shadow Mission* are globally-set feminist thrillers that address trafficking and girls' education respectively. In the books, Athena is a top secret, socially conscious, all-female organization that combats injustice against women and children around the world.

I'm thrilled to be working with *Headwaters Relief* and will donate 100 percent of the affiliate fees I receive for each book purchased through the links on this site.

*Headwaters Relief* embodies three ideas I hold dear: embracing diversity, using volunteers as agents of change, and communication through story-telling.

One of *Headwaters'* award-winning initiatives is creating children's books as tools for education, and for helping victims build coping skills and develop resiliency. Through my earlier work, particularly *The World Unseen* and *I Can't Think Straight*, I've learned that stories can be empowering, giving us characters we identify with and a framework to understand our own lives and humanity. Certain themes tend to recur in my stories -

**America's dirty divide** | **Ravaged by hurricanes, a historic Black community fights for survival**

Supported by **OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS**

**Brianna Flin**  
Fri 16 Sep 2022 06:00 EDT

**America's dirty divide**

Producer / Editor / Graphics: **Brianna Flin**  
Executive Producer: **Josh Landis**  
Alvin Chang  
Series Editors: **Alastair Gee**, **Frida Garcia**  
Associate Producer: **Jocelyn Tabancauy Duffy**  
Director of Photography: **Brianna Flin**  
Editorial Partner: **Nexus Media News**

**Ironton**, a small incorporated community in Louisiana, was devastated by Hurricane Ida. But the destruction was not inevitable. Founded by freed people who were previously enslaved, Ironton residents had to fight for running water, sewage - and levees. Federally funded levees built after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 stopped short of Ironton, leaving homes to flood during Hurricane Ida. Now, this historic Black community is left to rebuild yet again.

This video is part of the America's Dirty Divide, a series examining the country's vast environmental inequalities and how climate crisis will make things worse.

**Dayton resident helps organization grow to provide 'hope' dolls**

Asha dolls donated to girls in Nepal, India

Alicia Miller | Jun 20, 2022 Updated Jun 20, 2022



Dayton resident Dr. Rebecca Thomley worked with Headwaters Relief Organization to create Asha dolls for girls in Nepal and India. These dolls look like the girls who would otherwise not have the opportunity to have a doll.

**CCX MEDIA** | NEWS | SPORTS

**GOLDEN VALLEY RELIEF ORGANIZATION HELPS WITH 'BIGGEST REFUGEE CRISIS IN EUROPE SINCE WWII'**

4:21 PM | Tuesday, April 5, 2022



Golden Valley Relief Organization Helps with 'Biggest Refugee Crisis in Europe Since WWII'

Watch on [YouTube](#)

# Store

Headwaters' mission is to help improve the lives of people around the world. We have unique handcrafted items for sale that were purchased from the places we have worked.

With every purchase of an item you are helping these local communities. You are also helping Headwaters to transform our world and support our goals of gender equality, decent work and economic growth. This reduces inequality and encourages responsible consumption with production.

100% of these sales goes back to the communities that we serve.



# Get Engaged

There are numerous ways to volunteer with Headwaters. When we are responding to disasters whether it is local, national or international, we send a call out for volunteers to our mailing list as well as through our social media channels. If you see a message calling for volunteers it is something you will need to respond to right away, letting us know of your interest.

There are other ways to volunteer with Headwaters that don't involve travel or a significant commitment of time. Headwaters fundraises annually. We have a Mardi Gras Gala in February/March and a summer Golf Tournament. We are always looking for volunteers for these events. Also, our partners and board members often sponsor activities locally for Headwaters.

Headwaters holds one event every month that engages volunteers in essential aspects of our services. These events are designed to engage children and adults in activities so that more people can volunteer and build a sense of commitment to community.

Headwaters Relief Organization is a disaster relief collaboration of volunteers that supports the needs of families and communities. Headwaters has responded to tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, fires and man-made disasters providing public health, psychosocial and medical support as well as clean-up and re-building.

Headwaters seeks to serve others. We forge connections between those who are being served, the Headwaters team and the community. We work to ensure that every volunteer, regardless of age, background, skills, or experience feels valued and motivated to continue to serve others. Headwaters seeks to build stronger communities and a better world for all through volunteerism.



**Headwaters Relief Organization has made a conscious choice to remain small - administratively as well as organization wide - in order to remain nimble and have the opportunity to respond to any and all situations that we feel we can provide the support needed.**





**Headwaters**

**RELIEF ORGANIZATION**

9400 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55427

[headwatersrelief.org](http://headwatersrelief.org)