



# 20 ANNUAL 22 REPORT

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2022

[www.womenofwise.org](http://www.womenofwise.org)





## Mission

To support immigrant and refugee women, girls and those on the feminine gender spectrum\* in their journey of self-actualization through culturally-responsive education, advocacy, systems change and resource development.



## Vision

A world where immigrant and refugee women, girls and those on the feminine gender spectrum, are celebrated for their leadership, honored for their wisdom, and recognized for their contributions to an equitable, just and violence-free world.

\* We use the terms “women” and “girls” to include individuals on the feminine gender spectrum.

# Table of Contents

Letter from  
our Executive  
Director

2

Our Team

3

Impact  
Overview

4

Map: Where we  
are from

5

Our Programs

6

Our Mentors

13

International  
Projects

14

Highlights from  
the Year

15

Gratitude

17

# Letter from our Executive Director

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Dear Friends and Family of WISE,

This past fiscal year has truly been a year of accomplishments and great strides forward in meeting our mission. We embarked on the first year of our five-year strategic plan, which outlines the goals, activities, and timeline that will guide our organizational development moving forward. Most notably, the plan includes a revised mission and vision statement and expanded organizational goals that represent the changes to WISE since our 1995 inception.

To jumpstart our strategic plan, we welcomed three new board members as the tenures of two past board members ended. We made revisions to our communications strategies, including revamping our website and social media content to be inline with web accessibility standards and redesigning our branding with the support of volunteer professionals. Our organization embarked on our third and final project year at Washington Technology Magnet School to implement sexual violence prevention education, and has so far trained over 500 youth in grades 6th-12th in the active bystander intervention method.

We also expanded our partnership internationally in a collaborative project with Liberian nonprofit, Organization for Women Empowerment (OWE). WISE was able to receive a travel grant from the U.S. Department of State to travel to Liberia to provide capacity building support and facilitate the healthy relationships curriculum for families and community service providers.

As an organization we are looking forward to the continued implementation of the strategic plan, and creating more partnerships with other community-based agencies, funders and cultural communities. Please keep us company on this journey. You are a vital part of our continued success.

Best wishes,

Pamela Zeller, Executive Director



# Our Team

**Pamela Zeller**  
Executive Director

**Pakou Khang, MDP**  
Communications & Development  
Manager

**Stephany Lopez**  
Girls Getting Ahead in Leadership  
Program Coordinator

**See Lee**  
WeLEAD Program Coordinator

**Ayman Mohamed, M.Ed**  
Healthy Relationships Program  
Coordinator

**Kohpa Vang**  
Sexual Violence Prevention Program  
Coordinator

**Zamzam Dini, MA, LAMFT**  
Parent Encouragement Specialist

## Board of Directors

Eliana Reyes, Chair

Pa Nhia Khang, Secretary

Javi Monardez, Treasurer

Amra Racic, Member

Yuri García Peña, Member

Linda Lee, Member

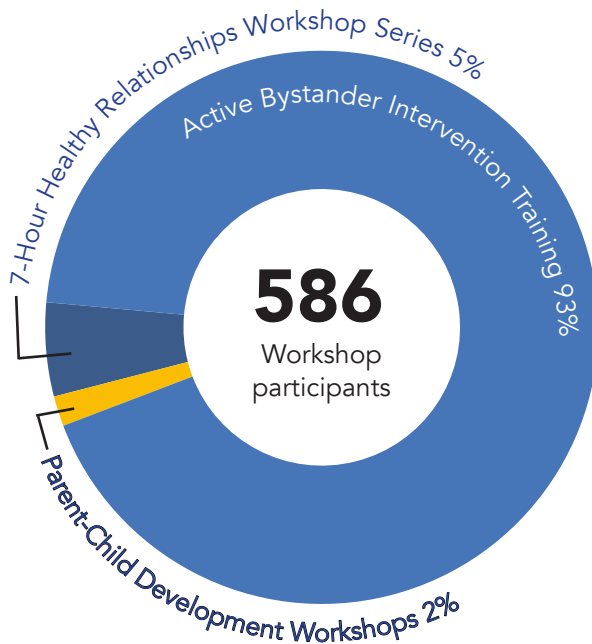
Anahita Champion, Member

Melany Guzman, Member

Stela Center, Member



# Impact Overview



The majority of program participants are Karen, Somali, or Hmong.



**16**  
staff and board members



**46+**  
program partners



**20**  
college mentors and volunteers



**12**  
college and high school graduates



**21**  
Green Dot Active Bystander Trainings



**8.75**  
hours of Healthy Relationships Workshops



**35%**  
average increase in social media following



**54**  
donors and grantmakers

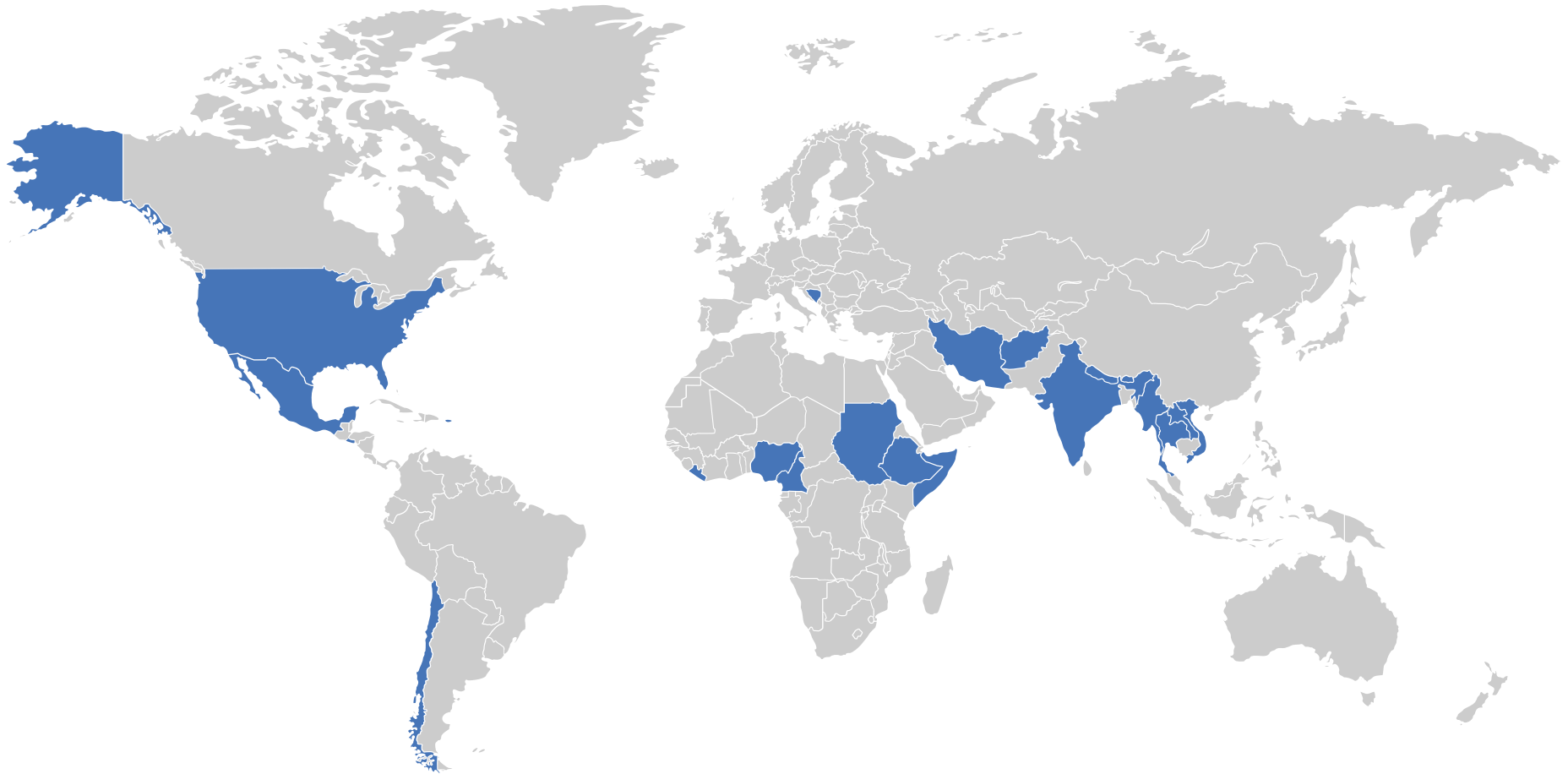


**\$26k**  
in individual and corporate giving



## Where we come from

WISE staff, board, and program participants represent 20 ethnicities from all over the globe. This includes Nepali, Hmong, Oromo, Somali, Mexican, Karen, Burmese, Thai, Cameroonian, Vietnamese, Nigerian, Salvadoran, Liberian, Turkish, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Arabian, Iranian, Bosnian, and Chilean.





# WISE Programs



# Girls Getting Ahead in Leadership (GGAL)

The Girls Getting Ahead in Leadership (GGAL) program is an after school academic support and leadership development program for 6th-12th grade immigrant and refugee girls. GGAL youth attend a variety of activities and workshops to help them develop their identities, interests, and agency.

Activities and topics covered in 2022 included:

- College access and exploration
- Financial literacy
- Career exploration
- Race, culture and ethnicity
- Mental health, self care and meditation
- Health, nutrition and cooking
- Arts (painting, DIY, theater arts)
- Storytelling and literacy
- Conflict resolution
- Self-advocacy
- Healthy relationships
- 25 field trips/off-site activities
- Planning and budgeting a team fundraiser

**40% of GGAL youth are in middle school**



**60% of GGAL youth are in high school**

**78** girls were served in GGAL in 2022



GGAL youth cook healthy dishes during their nutrition class with the University of Minnesota Extension.

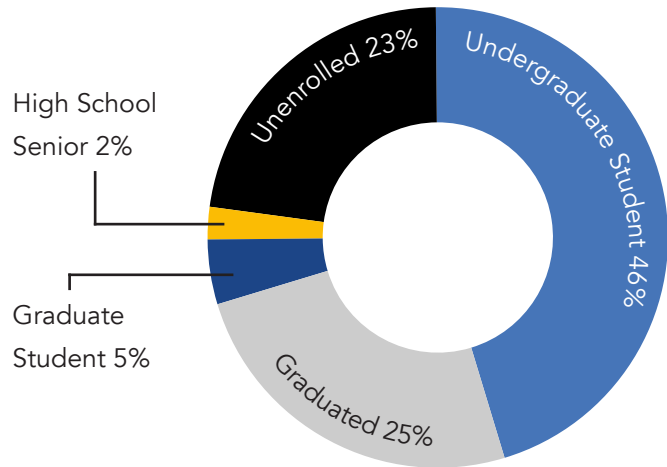


# WeLEAD

The WeLEAD program supports immigrant and refugee women who are interested in pursuing post-secondary education and receiving professional development support.

In 2022, WeLEAD served 44 immigrant and refugee women. Two received their associates degree, two received a certification in a vocation of their choice, and eight high school seniors from the GGAL program transitioned to the WeLEAD program to continue their post-secondary goals.

**WeLEAD Enrollment Status (Fall 2022)**



NOTE: "Graduated" participants are those who have graduated college but continue to receive career development assistance. "Unenrolled" participants are those who are doing a gap year or are not in school but receive post-secondary enrollment assistance and/or career development assistance.

WeLEAD students are enrolled in **11** post-secondary or vocational programs across Minnesota



GGAL High School seniors receive college preparation support with GGAL and WeLEAD program coordinators.

## Healthy Relationships

The Healthy Relationships program works with GGAL youth to ensure they have the knowledge and tools to develop healthy relationships with their peers, family, and partners. The program teaches youth about open communication, respect, setting boundaries, and being able to intervene in dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, and other forms of relationship abuse.

In 2022, youth in the Healthy Relationships program developed

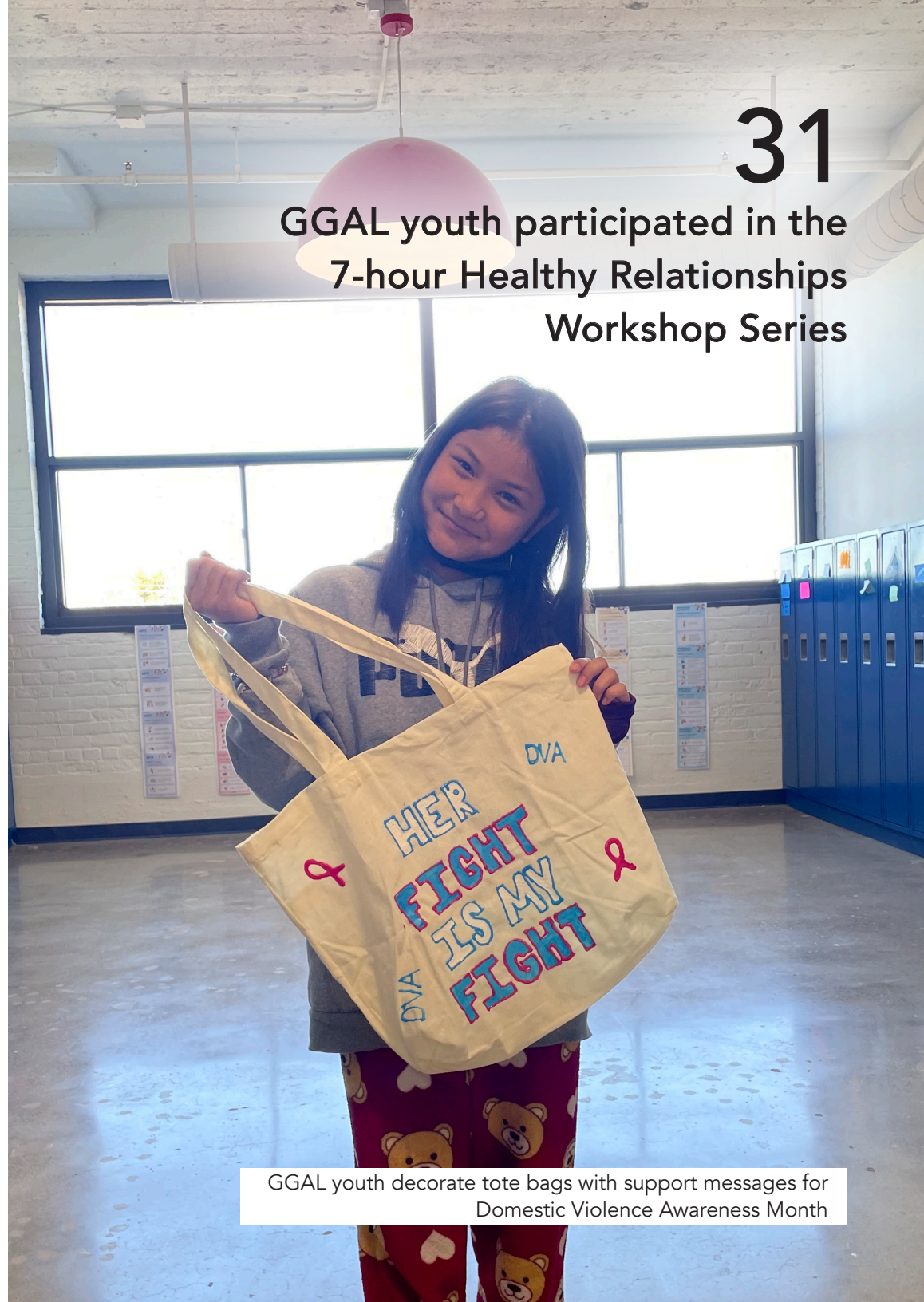
- **1 music video** on strengthening your voice against negativity and bullying
- **3 whiteboard animations** on consent, manipulation and possessiveness, and human trafficking



**Click to watch our healthy relationships and gender-based violence prevention videos**

# 31

## GGAL youth participated in the 7-hour Healthy Relationships Workshop Series



GGAL youth decorate tote bags with support messages for Domestic Violence Awareness Month

## Sexual Violence Prevention (SVP)

The Sexual Violence Prevention program (SVP) is a component of the Healthy Relationships program that specifically targets ending gender-based violence in our community, including sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking/cyberstalking, dating violence, and more. The program partners with a Hmong-centered domestic and sexual violence service provider, [Transforming Generations](#), and [Washington Technology Magnet School](#) to implement its work.

### SVP Highlights in 2022

- 2022 marks the SVP program's third project year
- 545 youth were trained in the Green Dot Active Bystander Intervention method
- 21 Green Dot trainings were facilitated for students in 6th-12th grade at Washington Technology Magnet School

# 545

youth received Green Dot Active Bystander training



WISE staff participate in a social media campaign to bring awareness to domestic violence.

## Parent Encouragement

The Parent Encouragement program connects immigrant and refugee parents to resources that will help them navigate educational and economic systems and support for their children in their educational journeys.

In 2022, the program facilitated in-person workshops for Oromo parents on four topics:

- Building early childhood relationships
- Adverse childhood experiences and trauma in children
- Social and emotional learning in children
- School-age child development

The program also facilitated parent-centered workshops in Liberia (see more on page 14) and developed a monthly podcast focused on highlighting immigrant and refugee voices in our community.



**Listen to our podcast:  
From Surviving to Thriving**

**[Apple Podcast](#) | [BuzzSprout](#)**

**10**  
parents in Liberia  
participated in  
child development  
workshops



GGAL students create gift baskets for newly-arrived Afghan families.

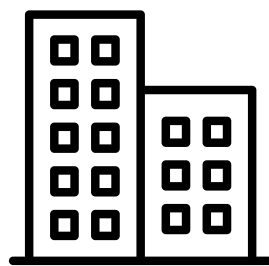
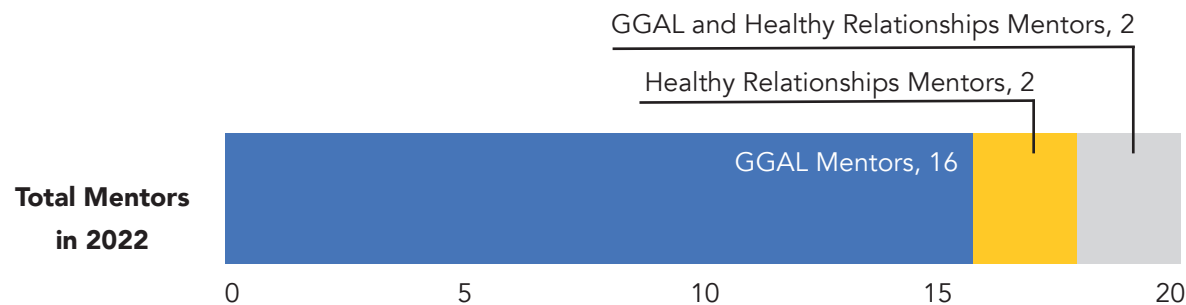


# Our Community & Supporters

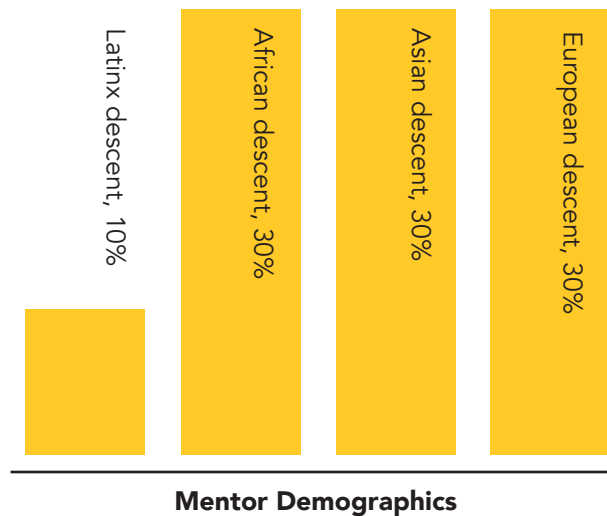


# Our Mentors

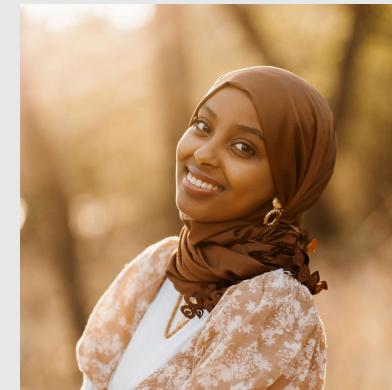
Mentors support program coordinators in all aspects of program activities, including homework help, facilitating activities, student supervision, data entry, transportation, and more. Mentors develop skills and knowledge in youth development, group facilitation, immigrant and refugee issues, mandated reporting, and more.



Mentors in 2022 were recruited from 5 universities and colleges in Minnesota



## Get to know our mentors



Mentor, Ahlaam, hopes to guide her mentees to live their dreams

[Read more >>](#)



Mentor, Thuy An, develops lasting relationships with her mentees

[Read more >>](#)

# International Projects

In August 2022, WISE' Parent Encouragement Specialist, Zamzam Dini, spent three weeks in Liberia delivering women's empowerment, girls' leadership, healthy relationships, gender-based violence prevention and intervention, and nonprofit capacity-building training to local service providers, parents, and youth.

WISE collaborated with former Community Solutions Fellow, Florence Dorley, and Liberian nonprofit, Organization for Women Empowerment (OWE), to facilitate the training.

The collaboration trained

- **3 nonprofits** on capacity-building, including on NGO infrastructure, fundraising, and women and girls' empowerment
- **10 parents** on child development
- and **20 girls** between the ages of 12-19 on healthy relationships and active bystander intervention methods



## WISE welcomed three Community Solutions Fellows in 2022

Every year WISE hosts international professionals from the Community Solutions Program (CSP), sponsored by the US Department of State. Fellows spend a 4-month fellowship at WISE developing knowledge and skills to bring back to their home country.



### Hau Nuam Vung, Myanmar

Hau Nuam works with the women's groups at the Myanmar Baptist Convention to develop their skill sets and enhance their social and economic status.



### Florence Nakayi, Uganda

Through Thread of Life, Florence trains mothers to sew and design products that can be sold and ultimately increase their financial independence and stability.



### Kaylee Kua, Singapore

Kaylee oversees the program operations at Daughters of Tomorrow to ensure low-income women and mothers receive holistic livelihood support.

[Read more about CSP fellows and their projects >>](#)

# Highlights from the Year



WISE staff host a picnic celebrating their friends and family.



WISE staff paint ceramics during a quarterly staff retreat.



The Healthy Relationships program launches their second music video.



GGAL youth and mentors prepare food for their end-of-summer picnic.



WISE receives the Damus Award from the University of St. Thomas.

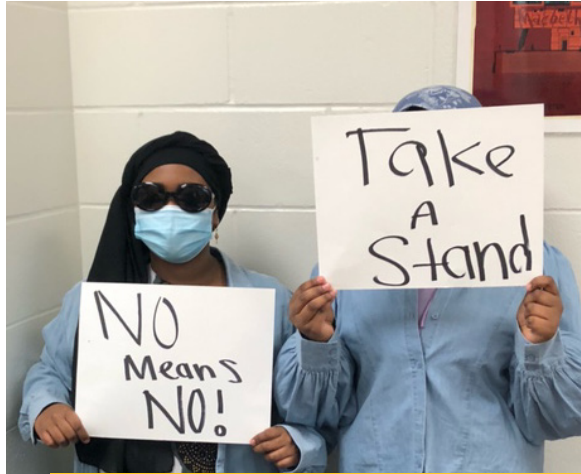


GGAL youth film a music video about healthy relationships.





# Highlights from the Year continued



GGAL youth bring awareness to sexual assault for Denim Day.



GGAL youth celebrate a year of GGAL at Valley Fair.



GGAL youth participate in yoga and meditation during summer program.



GGAL youth take a tour of the University of Northwestern.



GGAL high school seniors attend an all-day retreat for college prep.



GGAL youth host a fundraiser to raise money for their end-of-year field trip.

# Gratitude

Thank you to all our program partners, mentors, donors, and grantmakers for their support in 2022.

Adriana Rimpel	Elena Rolfs	Josh Levy, Washington Technology Magnet School
Adrienne Korey	Elias Oguz, Washington Technology Magnet School	Julie Guidry, Upstream Arts
Ahlaam Abdulwali	Elisabeth Rudin	Kalease Smith, SOS Ramsey County
Alexis Schoeller	Esperanza United	Katherine Gray
Alla Hassan, SOS Ramsey County	Famous Dave's	Kathy Kinne and Rich Renikoff Family Charitable Gift Fund
Amanda Ward	Felix Martinez Paz, Esperanza United	Katie Bradley, Theater Mu
Ana Nouel	Florence Nakayi	Katrina Akinseye
Anonymous Donors x3	Florence Dorley, OWE	Kaylee Kua
Aretha Togbah, OWE	FR Bigelow Foundation	Kendall Doom, Washington Technology Magnet School
Augsburg University	Franny Redpath	Kimberly McCormick
Bao Vue	Gold Lor	Korrianna Rapely
Benjamin Stock, Washington Technology Magnet School	Hanin Omran	Kristina Rogalla
Blong Peter Vang	Hau Nuam Vung	Lady Midnight
Brient Pokornowski, Humboldt	Hidden Hems	Le Thi Ha
Brooke Moore	Hli Xyooj, Transforming Generations	Macalester College
Carole Miller	Holly Johnsen	Maddie Morehead
Carolina Silva	Humboldt High School	Maichee Xiong
Cecelia Willie, OWE	Idil Mohamed	Mainhia Thao
Chaia Xiong	Isela Cereso Mendiola	Majestanina Vang
Chaunce Hollingsworth	Ivette Izea-Martinez, Esperanza United	Marbook Foundation
Christy and Lyndon Shirley Charitable Fund	James Teplah, OWE	Marina Gazel
Community Solutions Program	Jaralyn Roberts	Mary M.
Cynthia Sandberg	Jennifer Haberman	Massiel Munoz
Damus Award: University of St. Thomas	Jessica Vasquez	MayTong Chang, Transforming Generations
Dehlia Vang	Jina Rahimi	
Donaldson Foundation	Joannah David, OWE	
Doris Benson		

# Gratitude continued

Melinda McBride, Washington Technology Magnet School  
 Michelle de Joya, Theater Mu  
 Mina Himlie  
 Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
 Minnesota Council of Nonprofits  
 Minnesota Department of Education - Office of Higher Education  
 Minnesota Department of Health - Sexual Violence Prevention  
 Minnesota United FC  
 Morgen Chen, Theater Mu  
 Muriel Ambrus  
 Neima Hassen, Washington Technology Magnet School  
 Network for Good  
 Organization for Women Empowerment  
 Oromo Community of Minnesota  
 Orsolya Mancs, Catchafire  
 Otto Bremer Trust  
 Pa Ia Xiong  
 Pa Nhia Khang  
 Pakou Khang  
 Pamela Zeller  
 Panyia Khang  
 Pheng Thao, Transforming Generations  
 Phia Yang, Washington Technology Magnet School  
 Pranathi Kandikonda  
 Robin Wetzel

S. Alfreda Browne, OWE  
 Safiyo Mohamud  
 Saint Catherine University  
 Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation  
 Saint Paul Public School District - Flipside  
 Samira Salah, Washington Technology Magnet School  
 Sarah Monson  
 Schoua Na Yang, Transforming Generations  
 See Lee  
 Sejong Academy  
 Seng Xiong, Transforming Generations  
 Sheng Vang  
 St. Cloud State University  
 Stephanie Oliva, University of Northwestern  
 Stephen Lu  
 Subhika Rao  
 Tabatha Nelson  
 Teddy Grimes, Extensive Knowledge Productions  
 Theater Mu  
 Thi Bui  
 Thuy An Tran  
 Tiffany Kobus  
 Transforming Generations  
 Tyteeona Howard  
 University of Minnesota Extension  
 University of Minnesota Twin Cities  
 University of Northwestern - St. Paul

US Department of Justice - Office of Violence Against Women  
 Veronica Massalley, OWE  
 Violence Free Minnesota  
 Washington Technology Magnet School  
 Xay Yang, Transforming Generations  
 Youth Intervention Programs Association  
 Zach Woodgrain

