

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Common Threads Project,

The last year of the decade flew by for us. In 2019, our organization gained strength, increased capacity, and brought greater public awareness to the issues we all care so deeply about. We were busy with many exciting initiatives that we'd like to review with you.

In the following pages, you will see that projects in Democratic Republic of Congo and Nepal have continued and expanded. It has been exciting to see these developments and to work with our superb partners in the field.

In September, I had the honor of joining our DRC-based circles in their sessions on a supervisory visit. That was a deeply moving experience for me as I got to see the circles in action, and meet the women and girls immersed in their courageous journey of healing. The Kamba Moja clinical team was inspiring to watch.

It was a thrill to host an international training workshop in October for 25 specially selected clinical experts-- art therapists, social workers, psychologists, counselors, and trauma specialists. From this creative and skilled group will emerge future Common Threads trainers.

Because of your steadfast support, we have been able to establish a more solid base to support our projects. With your continued help we are sure to flourish in the new decade: strengthening roots and nurturing growth and at our existing projects, and planting seeds in promising new sites.

With deepest gratitude and our warmest wishes for the year ahead,



Rachel A. Cohen, PhD
Founder and Director



Rachel Cohen is a clinical psychologist who has been in practice for over 30 years. She founded Common Threads in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2012. Now based in New York, she continues to serve as the organization's Executive Director.

MISSION

Common Threads Project's mission is to help women heal from the enduring psychological effects of sexual and gender based violence in the context of war and displacement by building local capacity through training, launching scalable interventions, and conducting efficacy research.

VISION

We believe that all survivors of sexual and gender-based violence are entitled to high quality psychological care. Our vision is a world in which everyone who survives trauma, regardless of circumstance, has access to that care.



WHAT WE DO

- We build local capacity through training. Rather than placing cultural “outsiders” in our projects, we train local mental health providers to provide treatment following our methodology. This helps ensure treatment is culturally appropriate, and that the intervention will last beyond our organization’s involvement.
- We launch scalable interventions. Our projects provide a model of care that can be implemented on a larger scale. Over time, our partner organizations become centers of excellence, providing a model for new projects to follow.
- We conduct efficacy research. It is our responsibility to ensure that the treatment we help provide is effective in both reducing psychological symptoms and improving mental health.

Common Threads Project is designed to be one component of a holistic approach in which a system of coordinated security, legal, medical, economic, educational and social services are also provided for survivors.



BY THE NUMBERS

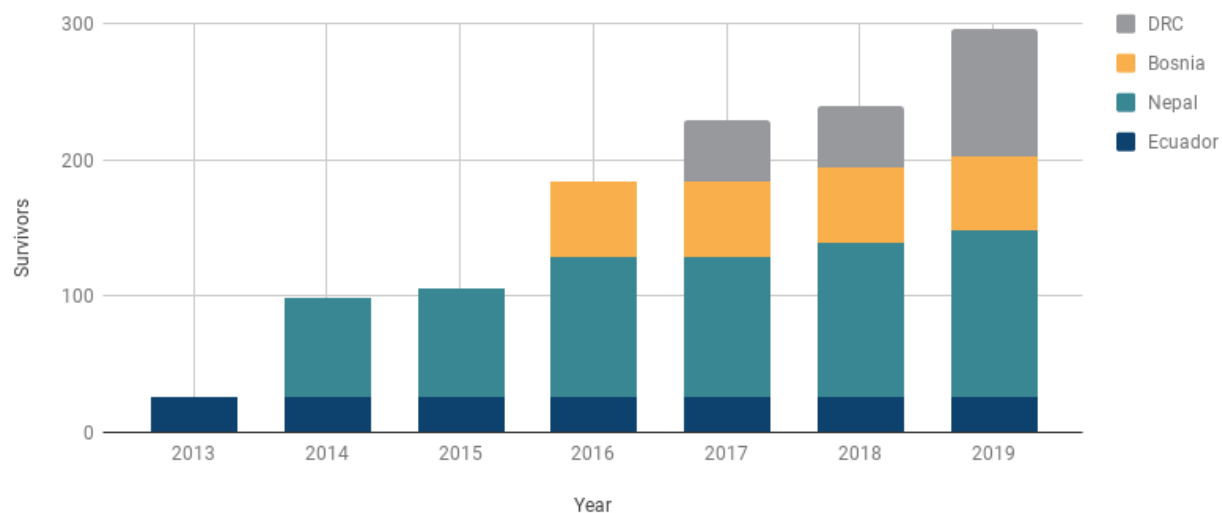
4 countries reached

80 facilitators trained

22 sewing circles completed

296 survivors served

Survivors



YEAR IN REVIEW

January

TPO Nepal launched a Common Threads group for trafficked women

Patricia Friedman joined our Executive Board

February

Oak Foundation selected Common Threads Project for participation in their Emerge consulting program

March

Our faculty travelled to DRC to hold a training with Panzi Foundation

April

Maureen Brotherton joined our Executive Board

May

Teen participants were selected for a pilot program in DRC

June

TPO Nepal held an exhibition of story cloths created by women in all of their many Common Threads circles

New circles began in Kavumu and Bukavu, DRC

July

Common Threads Project received shipments of story cloths from our partner organizations around the world

An article on Common Threads Project, written by Betsy Greer, appeared in the magazine Surface Design



Nepal - see p. 9



DRC - see p. 11



Story cloths

YEAR IN REVIEW

August

Common Threads Project was awarded a grant by Pro Victimis Foundation to continue work in Bosnia and Herzegovina

September

The Oak Foundation renewed their support of Common Threads Project

Common Threads Project was featured in the New York Textile Month magazine "Talking Textiles"

October

Phase II of circles in DRC began

Executive Director Rachel Cohen presented at the Sexual Violence Research Institute International Symposium in Cape Town, South Africa

November

Executive Director Rachel Cohen presented at the International Mukwege Congress in Liège, Belgium

Board Member Patty Friedman hosted Common Threads Project's first event

A piece on Common Threads Project was published in the Washington Post

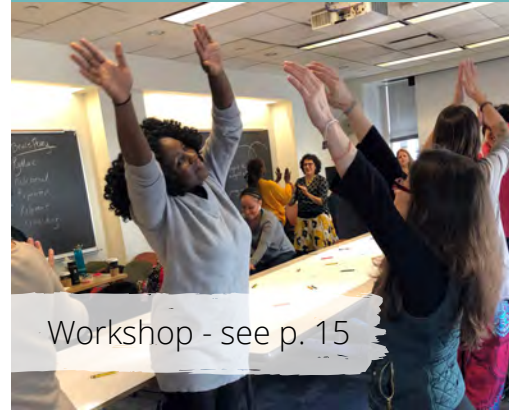
December

Gifts from individual donors surpassed \$100,000 for the year

DRC circles concluded and evaluation began



Teen groups - see p. 11



Workshop - see p. 15



Fundraising - see p. 14

NEPAL

Sajha Dhago, the Nepal-based iteration of Common Threads Project, continues to thrive as an independent program. For the past several years, our Nepal circle facilitators at TPO Nepal have run their own circles with minimal supervision from Common Threads Project. This followed the first several rounds of projects in this region under the careful direction of our organization, until the local facilitators had become skilled enough in the methodology to not only run circles, but to train other facilitators.

Our Nepali colleagues expanded Sahja Dhago in 2019 to include circles for trafficking survivors. TPO Nepal plans to continue the program, and will hopefully be able to grow Sahja Dhago even further.

To celebrate the 14th anniversary of their remarkable organization, TPO Nepal held an exhibition of story cloths created by Common Threads circle participants.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Since the conclusion of our previous program in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018, Common Threads Project has taken some time to study outcomes, to benefit from our prior experience and to find ways to strengthen the partnerships on the ground. We have been able to refine the program and secure funding for additional survivor's circles.

Common Threads faculty Cynthia Uccello and Catherine Butterly have taken the lead to renew the Bosnia project undertaking careful planning and preparation with our partners, Vive Žene and Žene sa Una. Pro Victimis Foundation has demonstrated their confidence by providing a generous three-year grant to take this project to the next level. Our faculty will hold a training for local clinicians in February and March 2020 to prepare clinical staff for the start of several new circles. The new project will include 5-6 circles, serving 70-90 survivors with opportunities for expansion in the future.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

“Kamba Moja,” Common Threads Project’s program in Democratic Republic of Congo, began 2019 with an intensive training for psychosocial staff at Panzi Foundation.

The trained clinicians were prepared to facilitate circles to be held in Bukavu and in Kavumu in South Kivu province. The project launched three circles, including for the first time, a pilot program designed to assist young teens and their babies born of rape. Because of intense stigma, most of these girls have been rejected by families and communities at just the moment when they are most vulnerable. Panzi Foundation provides them with a safe place and an opportunity to get the support they so desperately need. We worked with two of our superb Kamba Moja facilitators to develop a program geared for the particular needs of these young girls. They met an enormous challenge, and created a nurturing environment in which the girls could make significant recovery from trauma and loss. We will continue to refine this special program.

Cont. on following page.

Circle facilitators Rose, Rohda and Esther in Bukavu, DRC



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Kamba Moja's recent cohort of circles concluded in December, marked by a lively gathering to celebrate the accomplishments of the resilient participants. With much enthusiasm, survivors shared experiences in the program, showed story cloths, and described profound changes they have experienced in their lives over the course of six months in Kamba Moja. As always, there was singing, dancing, games and laughter.

After the conclusion of our 2019 DRC circles, Panzi Foundation conducted an outcome evaluation of Kamba Moja. They surveyed forty participants and found resoundingly positive results, concluding that the women who participate in our program experience it as valuable and effective.

The adult circles have chosen to transition into "Phase III" in which they are empowered to lead their own independent support group. The future of these groups is determined entirely by the survivors themselves.

A new round of three Kamba Moja circles will begin in February.



GROWING OUR TEAM

Common Threads Project welcomed two new members to its Executive Board in 2019.

Patricia Friedman is a multi talented woman: she is a consummate community volunteer in several organizations in Chevy Chase, Maryland. She is also a pediatrician, geneticist, trained forester and naturalist, and certified yoga instructor. She has been a supporter of Common Threads Project since its founding, and brings unmatched energy and commitment to her role as board member.

Maureen Brotherton brings a wealth of non-profit experience to the board. With her daughter Tia, she co-founded Teens In Public Service (TIPS) in 1997. TIPS is a Seattle based non-profit connecting teens with paid internship opportunities in the community. Maureen currently sits on Seattle University's Board of Trustees and Achon Uganda Children's Board. In past years, she was President of Seattle Rotary Service Foundation Board, chairman of Seattle University's Board of Regents and Seattle University's College of Arts and Sciences' Leadership Council, and served for several years on Seattle Children's Hospital's Uncompensated Care Board and The Villa Academy Board of Trustees. She has a master's degree in Not-for-Profit Leadership from Seattle University. Maureen and her husband, Joe, are the proprietors of Doe Bay Resort & Retreat on Orcas Island.



Patricia Friedman



Maureen Brotherton

REACHING OUR GOALS

Oak Foundation, one of Common Threads Project's leading grantmakers, selected Common Threads Project for a special consultation program created by Resource Alliance called "Programme Emerge" to strengthen our strategic and resource development efforts. We have worked with consultants over the past several months to design and implement a development strategy that will enable us to realize our mission. Oak Foundation also accepted our proposal to continue their financial support of Common Threads Project for an additional three years, with a grant of \$250,000.

We are grateful to have secured project funding for our Bosnia and Herzegovina program from **Pro Victimis Foundation**, who funded our prior work in this region. Pro Victimis Foundation has granted another \$160,000 CHF through 2021 to enable us to expand our reach in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Executive Board member **Patty Friedman** hosted a lively Common Threads Project's first fundraising event at her home in November of 2019. Approximately fifty attendees gathered to hear inspiring stories of survivors from Executive Director Rachel Cohen, and view story cloths created by our participants

**OAK**
FOUNDATION

FONDATION
PRO VICTIMIS
GENÈVE

SHARING OUR WORK

In October of 2019, Common Threads Project hosted a 4 day intensive clinical workshop in New York City. We gathered our faculty from Geneva, the UK, Washington DC, and New York, and invited 20 of our most esteemed colleagues for an experiential introduction to Common Threads methodology. Art therapists, trauma therapists, social workers, and psychologists from across the US, Europe, Latin America, and Asia participated. We painted, practiced breathing techniques, sewed story cloths, discussed theory, and debated clinical strategies. The energy generated will fuel future programs and staffing. Advanced training and apprenticeships will equip these talented clinicians to join our team. The workshop was sponsored by the Global Mental Health Lab at The New School.

Rachel Cohen had the opportunity to present the work of Common Threads Project at several conferences in 2019 including at the Sexual Violence Research Institute International Symposium in Cape Town, South Africa in October, and at the International Mukwege Congress in Liège, Belgium, in November.

Common Threads Project was honored to be featured in the fourth volume of the New York Textile Month magazine, "Talking Textiles". An article on Common Threads Project, written by Betsy Greer, also appeared in the most recent edition of Surface Design. Finally, an opinion piece on the work of Common Threads Project, written by Executive Director Rachel Cohen, was featured in the Washington Post Opinion section in November.



SHARING OUR WORK

We are fortunate that Common Threads field projects have loaned dozens of magnificent story cloths that were made in our healing circles in Nepal, Congo and Ecuador. These story cloths are on loan to us for the next several months as we arrange for more opportunities to view them. We are honored to be allowed to share these stories with a wider audience so as to amplify the voices of women affected by gender-based violence and trauma.

We are pleased to announce that a summary report on the findings of our pilot studies was produced by members of our Geneva-based Board. The comprehensive report asserts that “there is consistent evidence from four sites on four continents to suggest that Common Threads Project has been effective in facilitating transformative change for survivors in the following areas:

- Reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety and distress;
- Counteracting feelings of stigma, self-blame and shame;
- Developing effective coping strategies;
- Creating and developing community support;
- Developing voice and agency.”

We are grateful to Sarah Sargent, Paul March, and Sia Kessi for producing this valuable report.

In addition, members of the Geneva board produced an update of their Common Threads Project promotional video in 2019. You can view this version our website.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

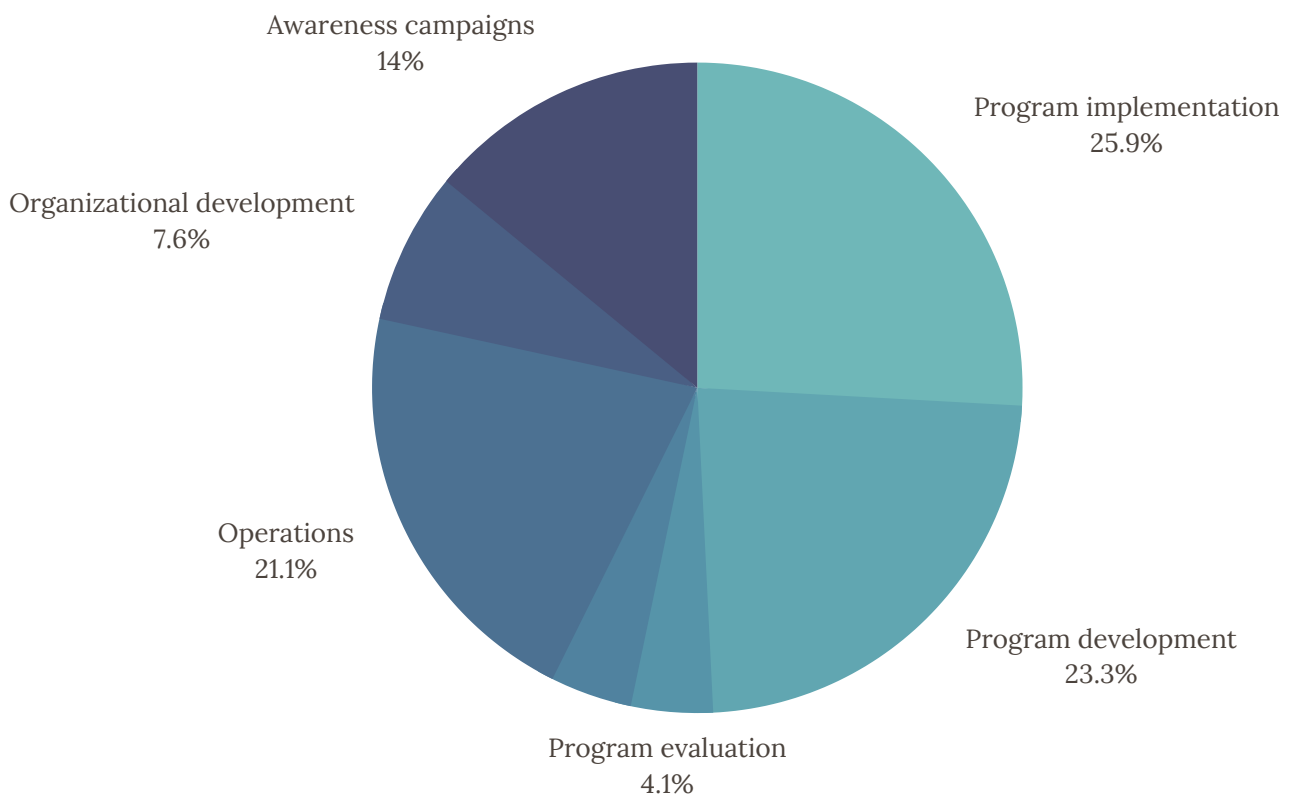
Thanks to our amazing supporters, contributions to Common Threads Project increased significantly in 2019. Personal donations increased by 75%, increasing from just under \$60,000 in 2018 to over \$100,000 in 2019. Our foundation support more than doubled thanks to various grants, moving from \$48,000 in 2018 to over \$100,000 in 2019. Gross revenue for 2019 totaled \$213,082, a 98% increase over 2018.

The financial focus of Common Threads Project in 2019 was the maintenance of current projects and development of future projects. Project implementation costs totaled \$39,523, 26% of our total budget, and included the costs associated with running the DRC program. Program development represents another 23% of the budget at \$35,656. These costs went toward the training of new faculty and development of potential partnerships, which will hopefully result in new projects. A small portion of the budget was reserved for program evaluation and clinical model development, each of which totaled \$6,208, or 4% of the total budget. Common Threads Project also dedicated \$21,444 or 14% of our 2019 budget, to awareness-raising campaigns, including participation in conferences and online movements, as part of our larger mission to bring global attention to the sexual and gender-based violence epidemic. Another \$11,536, or 8% of our budget, went toward the development of our organization, to better serve survivors in the future. Finally, operational costs totaled \$32,167, or 21% of our total 2019 budget.

2019 EXPENDITURES

2019 Expenditures

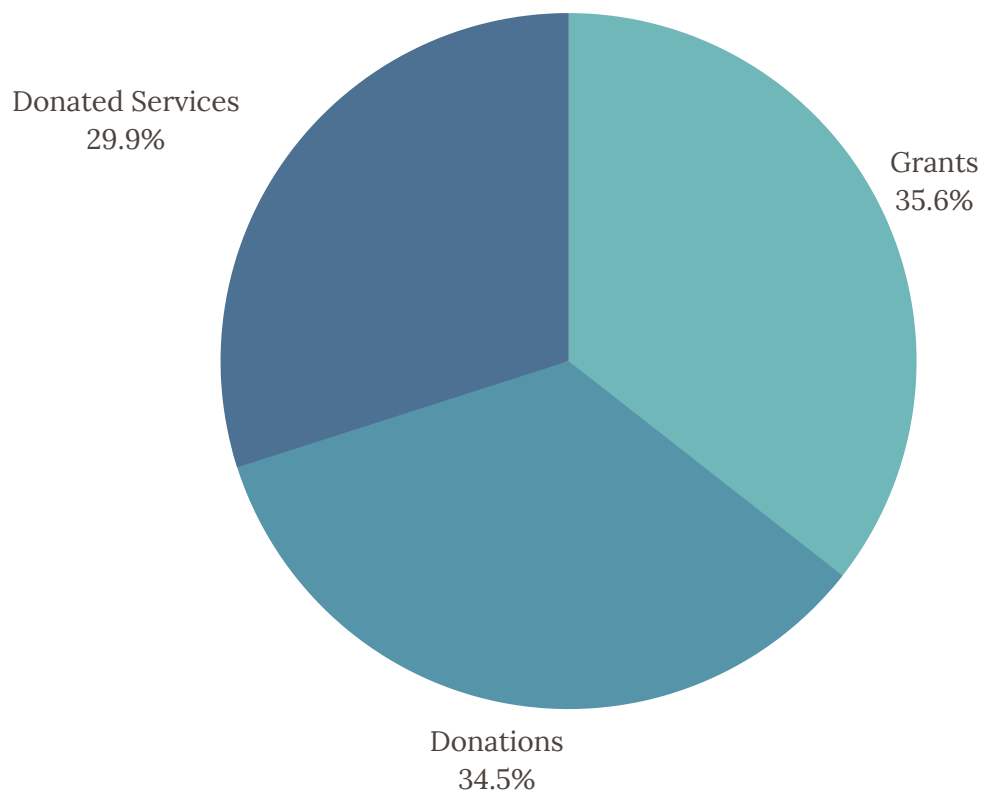
Program Implementation	\$39,523
Program Development	\$35,656
Program Evaluation	\$6,208
Clinical Model Development	\$6,208
Operations	\$32,167
Organizational Development	\$11,536
Awareness Campaigns	\$21,444
Total expenses	\$152,741



2019 RESOURCES

2019 Resources

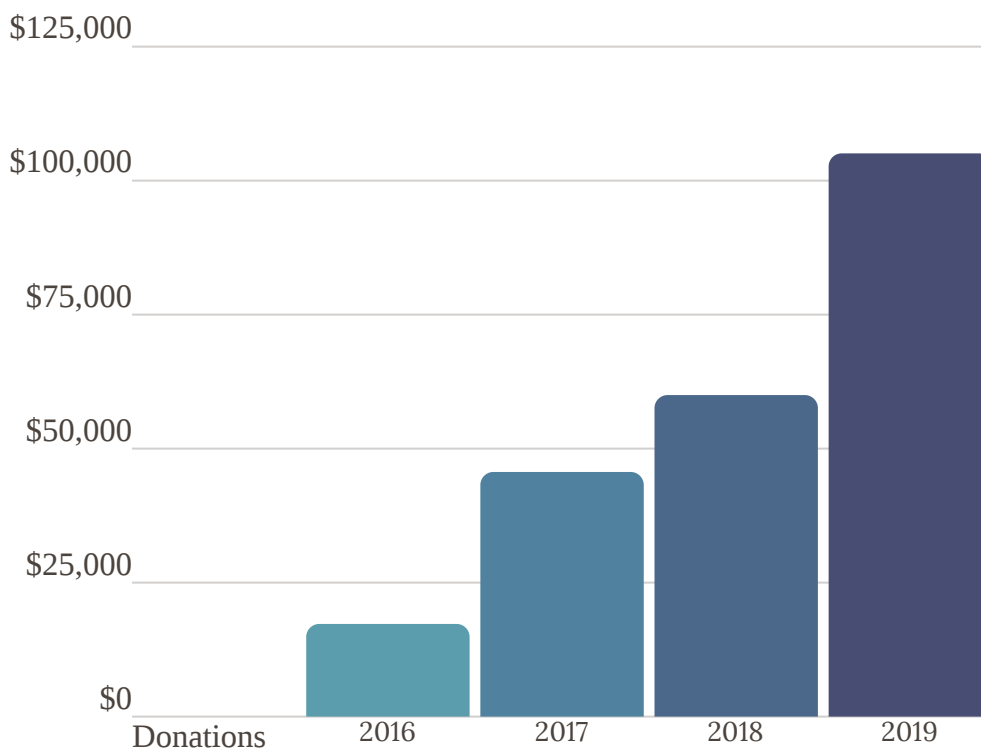
Grants	\$108,188
Donations	\$104,894
Donated Services	\$91,050
Total resources	\$304,132



YEAR-TO-YEAR FINANCIAL COMPARISON

Resources

	Grants	Donations	Donated Services
2016	\$71,000	\$17,100	\$162,673
2017	\$98,726	\$45,455	\$119,057
2018	\$48,000	\$59,799	\$143,815
2019	\$108,188	\$104,894	\$91,050



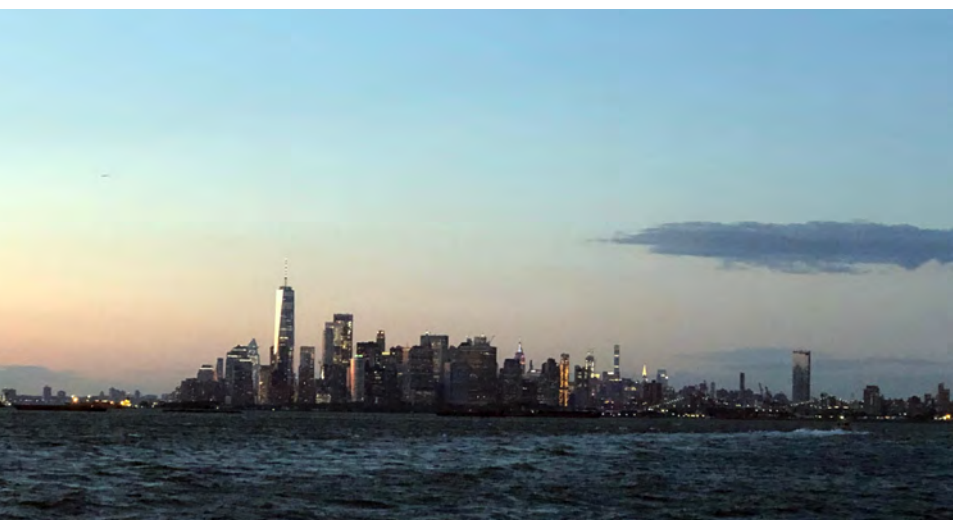
LOOKING AHEAD

NEW YORK

Common Threads Project continues to develop its partnership with Bellevue Hospital and New York University's Program for Survivors of Torture (PSOT). Plans are in the works for a New-York based pilot of Common Threads Project, adapted for a circle of diverse immigrant and refugee survivors at PSOT. In collaboration with our partner, we are actively seeking resources to bring this promising project to fruition.

SEATTLE

Common Threads Project is very pleased to be building relationships with multiple community-based organizations in the Pacific Northwest that are run by and for immigrant and refugee women. These include Mother Africa, Refugee Women's Association (REWA), Somali Family Safety Task Force (SFSTF) and Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS). We are in the process of securing funding to support the training, and we plan to hold a training for selected clinicians from these organizations in the coming months. Soon after that our partners will launch a number of Common Threads Project circles in the Seattle area. We will focus on capacity building, and growing the expertise of these therapists so that they can expand their reach in the future.



THANK YOU

Common Threads Project relies on private donations and grants to pursue its mission. We would like to thank these individuals and organizations for generously supporting Common Threads Project in 2019.

Adeyinka Akinsulure-Smith
Sam Aleinikoff
Aharon and Tamara Amit
Mariyy Anderson
Todd Anderson
Nada Arnold
Penney Baile
Jaime Banks
Celine Beaulieu
Jenny Berglund
Nina Black
Ann Blume
Patricia Bresky
Maureen Brotherton
Margaret Brown
Anna Chamberlin
Robin Chappelle Golston
Lucy Christopher Lichtig
Gail David
Olivier Delarue
Lane Dilg
Paula Ellman
Ruth Epstein
Patty Fleischmann
Patricia Friedman
Marcy Frosh
Barbara Furlong
Steven Galson
Lisa Garlock
Theresa Gillis
Hope Gleicher
Kathleen Goldsmith
Susan Greene
Eleanor Greene
Julie Griffin
Peter Haas
Joyce Hamel
David Hansen

David Harrell
Leslye Heilig
Lynn Hiestand
Eli Himovitz
Nicole Hochschild
William Holmes
Emmanuelle Holmes
Nancy Homer
Emily Homer
Bethamie Horowitz
Lucy Howen
Betsy Hundt
Marianne Iauco
Ebba Jantz
Caroline Johnson
Marla Kahalnick
William Kearney
Lori Kenepp
Laura Kittle
Nathan Kittle
Joan Brooks Baker and
Margeaux Klein
Judith Kornblatt
Phyllis Lerner
Suzanne Loftus
Jod Lourie
Michele Lowy
Neg Mahmoodzadegan
Shirley March
Mary Matheron
Meredith McClure
Constance McKee
Margaret McKeown
Judy Meade
Kathleen Meagher
Doris Meissner
Myrtis Meyer
Joy Midman

Joyce Migdal
Shelley Minden
Charles Molloy
Jule Monnens
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Susan Puritz
Maddison Raynor
Elizabeth Richardson
Jonathan Roberts
Michael Rosenzweig
Maria Rugani
Debbie Rugani
Miriam Sagan
Herbert Salomon
Griffen Samples
Norman Schneider
Elisabeth Sears
Lyssandra Sears
Laura Seger
sara Sennett
Pooh Shapiro
Deborah Shulman
Karen Simon
Bernice Steinhardt
Valerie Stewart
Kerry Swanson
Karen Tcheyan
The Statue Foundation

Rebecca Thompson
Teresa Tobey
Kristin Tregillus
Tally Tripp
Elizabeth Trosman
Anne B Walsh
Margaret Webster
Sallie Weissinger
Helen Weld
Julie Weston
Susan Whitman
Carol Wilner
Hans and Anne Wolff
Doug Yarrington
Donna Zerner
Barbara Zeughauser
Marla Zipin
Jo Anne Zujewski

