

2025 - 2026

ANNUAL REPORT

our BRIDGE for KIDS

LOVE EDUCATION RESPECT DIVERSITY








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our BRIDGE for KIDS

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

There are moments when the mission of an organization becomes especially clear. This was one of those years.

As immigrant and refugee families across Charlotte faced growing uncertainty, ourBRIDGE did what we've done for the last twelve years: listen and show up. Sometimes that meant helping a family find food or housing. Sometimes it meant creating a safe place for a child to learn and play, connecting a family to mental health services, or simply being someone a family could trust.

Throughout this year, I've seen how much strength and hope exist in our community. This hope drives our work and asks something of all of us: to imagine differently and keep building a better future for all.

At ourBRIDGE, we recognize both the challenges families face and the tremendous potential within every family and child. We are proud to stand alongside families as they navigate change and build the futures they envision for themselves.

This work is not easy, but we have never done it alone. The community that stood with us during one of Charlotte's most challenging moments is building a city that welcomes and celebrates all. A city where immigrant and refugee neighbors are supported, where families have the resources and relationships they need to thrive, and where every child–regardless of status or circumstance–can dream beyond their wildest imaginations.

This past year also marked an important transition for ourBRIDGE. As Sil Ganzó, my longtime mentor and the founder of ourBRIDGE, passed the torch, I had no doubt that our team would carry forward her vision and courage. I am especially proud of how our staff supported one another and families throughout this year.

Thank you to our families for trusting us, and to our volunteers, partners, and supporters for being part of this work.

There is so much more work to do. And I am grateful we get to do it together.

With care,
Salma



Salma Villarreal Siraj
Executive Director

OUR MISSION

ourBRIDGE fosters the education, acculturation, and well-being of refugee and immigrant children and their families.

We do this through:

Out-of-School Programs

Our afterschool & summer programs are free and non-faith-based, built around a culturally-responsive and trauma-informed curriculum.



Family Wraparound Support

Our Family Support team navigates complex systems with families and improves access to essential resources and community.



Community Engagement

Our team builds meaningful connections between the Charlotte community and our immigrant and refugee neighbors through education, volunteering, and celebration.



WHY WE'RE HERE

ourBRIDGE is the only non-faith-based organization in Charlotte, NC, that has an afterschool curriculum developed specifically for immigrant and refugee kids.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools 25-26 Data:

30k+ students learning English in CMS

1 in 3 students speaks another language other than English at home.

CMS students represent 177 countries and speak 174 languages!

WHO WE ARE



BRIDGE Kids in our afterschool program represent 30 countries and cultures! It only makes sense that our team would reflect that.

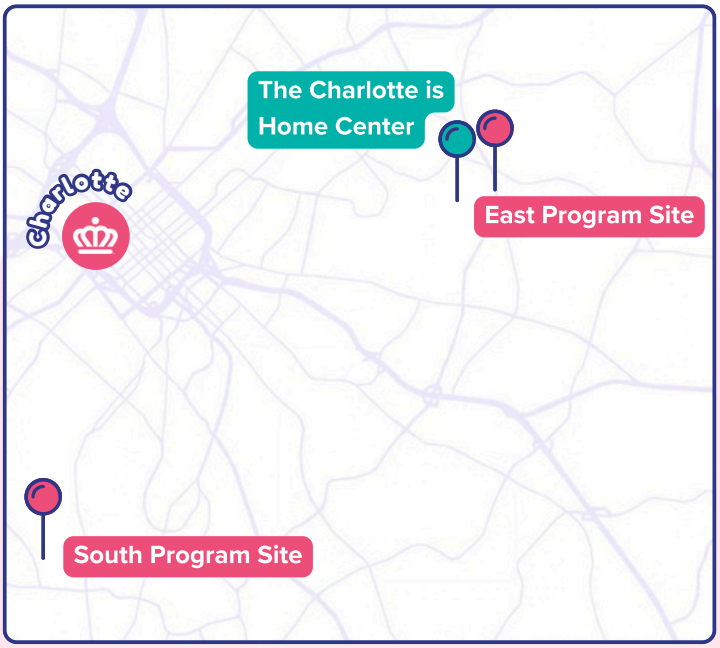
Our staff are prepared to support the whole student, both academically and socio-emotionally. One hundred percent of our staff is trained and coached in Trauma-Informed Care, Child-Teacher Relationship Training (CTRT), Cultural Humility, and more.

Our 50+ member team represents **25 countries and cultures from around the world:**

USA, Laos, Mexico, Russia, Ireland, UK, Dominican Republic, Peru, El Salvador, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Ecuador, Argentina, Bosnia, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Venezuela, Canada, Syria, Afghanistan, Burma, Colombia.

Our team **speaks 24 languages**, allowing us to connect with our BRIDGE Kids and their families in meaningful ways:

English, Lao, Spanish, Russian, German, French, Swahili, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Urdu, Arabic, Pashto, Punjabi, Ga, Ewe, Twi, Fante, Hindko, Burmese, Farsi, Dari, Hindi, Portuguese.



AFTERSCHOOL

250 K-8 Kids

East Site (Givens Aldersgate):
150 K-8 Kids

South Site (CMS Pinewood ES):
100 K-5 Kids

92%
demonstrated progress in literacy*

99.6%
grade promotion

"ourBRIDGE is a safe space for students where they are able to learn."

"It seems to help fill gaps that schools can't."

-CMS Teachers

An afternoon at ourBRIDGE



Arrive at ourBRIDGE (transportation provided)



Culturally-Responsive Meals
36,221 nutritious, culturally-relevant meals provided.



Community Circle

- What is your favorite holiday celebrated in your country?
- Describe your emotions today using a color.
- If you were president, how would you lead your country?



Homework Time
89% of BRIDGE Kids showed improvement turning in homework*



STEAM-Based, Culturally-Responsive Curriculum Activities
Includes access to play therapy and one-on-one literacy tutoring
154 hours of play therapy
360 hours of literacy tutoring



Free Play
Child-led, imaginative, active play



Home
20,000+ rides to and from home

*According to 2025-2026 NCDPI Teacher Surveys

FAMILY SUPPORT

Crisis Response: Operation Charlotte's Web

In November 2025, U.S. Customs and Border Protection carried out a weeklong, targeted immigration enforcement operation in Charlotte. Our team mobilized a community–wide response supporting over 2,300 families across Charlotte with groceries, household essentials, and urgent necessities like baby formula and diapers.

550+ volunteers, 40+ small businesses, and 20+ community partners came together that week. Together, we collected groceries, packed boxes, and made deliveries across Charlotte.

We couldn't have done this without our community. We're so grateful to everyone who showed up for us and each other.





We connect families to free or low-cost resources in their first language, including food, clothing, beds, healthcare, and legal services.

1,000+ Families*

worked with, in their preferred language

This is three times as many families as the previous year.

$86,000+

Emergency funds provided (in partnership with United Way of Greater Charlotte)

100% of parents

said ourBRIDGE helped them feel more in control of things in their lives, like their child's education.

The Charlotte is Home Center

A community center bringing vital resources together under one roof. Here neighbors will find:

- Wraparound family support
- Emergency funds*
- Community closet
- On-site pantry
- Diapers*
- Play therapy*
- Advocate Health Community Health Worker*

- **Charlotte Community Health Clinic** - Low-cost healthcare, dental clinics, and adult mental healthcare
- **Amani Kids** - Wraparound support for African Diaspora Youth and their families





ourBRIDGE offers these resources thanks to partnerships with United Way of Greater Charlotte, The Diaper Bank of NC, UNC Charlotte Dept. of Counseling & Advocate Health.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At ourBRIDGE, we know this work takes a community. We partner with organizations to bring quality resources to our Afterschool and Family Support programs and host community-wide events like International Fall Fest. We also offer trainings and presentations on culturally-responsive approaches, such as Words Matter and Cultural Humility.

39 Community Events **110** Community Partners

INTERNATIONAL FALL FESTIVAL

Since 2014, International Fall Fest has brought together neighbors from around the world for an afternoon of food, music, and dance.

What began as a small gathering in a parking lot has grown into a beloved tradition welcoming thousands of community members each year.



"I have never seen so many different people in the same place!"
- Local Director of Corporate Responsibility

"The best event of any kind I ever attended"
- Tom Hanchett, Charlotte Historian

Next International Fall Festival:
Saturday, October 16, 2027

If you would like to support this free annual community event, reach out to development@joinourbridge.org

VOLUNTEERING

Whether you want to support our out-of-school programs or community events, there are so many ways to get involved.

Huge thank you to all of our volunteers in 25-26 that made our programming possible. Together, they gave more than 3,600 hours of their time!





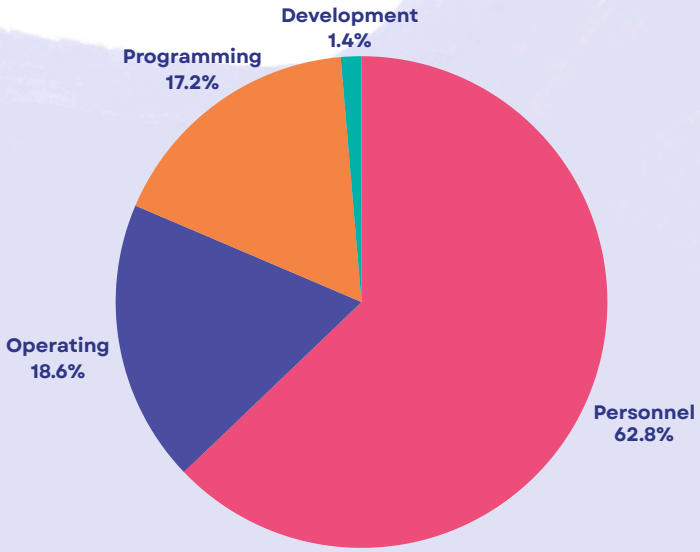
Interested in volunteering? Reach out to volunteering@joinourbridge.org

ANNUAL BUDGET

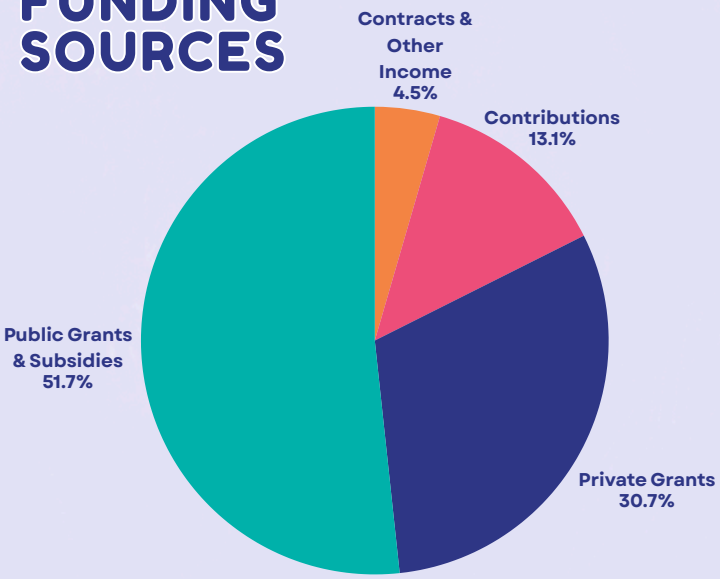
2025-2026 BUDGET:

$2.6M

EXPENSES



FUNDING SOURCES



DONATE HERE!

We were able to meet our 2025-26 budget thanks to the generosity of our donors, which include individuals, corporations, faith communities, and public & private grant makers. We are deeply grateful for this support!

There is so much more work to do, and we know we can't do it alone. In the year ahead, we'll continue showing up for families, while also expanding our play-based approaches to literacy and social-emotional support for children.

We'd love to talk with you about what's ahead and how you can play a part. Contact us at development@joinourbridge.org or 704-326-1041.

THANK YOU

for your support and belief in our mission







www.joinourbridge.org
@ourbridgeforkids
development@joinourbridge.org
(980) 272-6022

Thank you to the incredible individuals and organizations who have generously given their time, resources, and expertise. Your support makes our work possible!

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Community Partnerships

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Adventist Christian Academy
Alianza
Amity Medical Group
Arts & Science Council
Arts+
Ascent Housing
Baran Dance
Beds for Kids
Blue Cross Blue Shield
Blumenthal Arts
BOOM Charlotte
Bravestep
BreathINK
Briarwood Elementary School
Carolina Migrant Network
Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation
Central Piedmont Community College
Charlotte Bilingual Learning Center
Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy
Charlotte Eagles
Charlotte East
Charlotte Hornets
Charlotte Toolbank
Charlotte Works
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library
Charlotte Salsa Meetup
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Christ Church Charlotte
Cine Casual
Circle de Luz
Classroom Central
CLT Henna
Communities in Schools
Compassion Closet
Crisis Assistance Ministry
Despierta
Diaper Bank
DRC ApeParel
Eastway Middle School
El Patio
Ethiopian Community Association of Charlotte
Feliciano Luna
Fiestas Patrias
Garinger High School
Hispanic Federation
Intellicor Islamic School
International House
JW Grier Academy
Karenni Community of Charlotte
KIPP Academy
Kona Ice
Latin American Coalition
Latinos Run Charlotte
Les Amis des Leopards NC
Levine Museum of the New South
Levine Civic Engagement Grant - Irene Quinones-Olmeda, Mara Mcphail, and Andrew Simmons
Levine Civic Engagement Grant - Tara Solomon and Frida Ochoa
Mecklenburg Metropolitan Interfaith Network
Merry Oaks International Academy
NC Brazilian Arts Project
NC New American Navigator Program
Nourish Up
Obra Collective
Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic School
P3 Soccer
Pat's Place
Perry Counseling
Project 658
Queens University of Charlotte
Rocky River High School
Shamrock Gardens Elementary School
SHARE Charlotte
SoSSt
South Mecklenburg High School
St John’s Baptist Church
Tacos el Nevado
The Bulb
The Common Market
The Levine Scholars Program
Trips for Kids Charlotte
UNC Charlote Mebane Early Literacy Center
Undercurrent Coffee
Charlotte United FC
Vision to Learn
Windsor Park Elementary School
Winterfield Elementary School
YMCA of Greater Charlotte

Strategic Partnerships

Afterschool Alliance
Advocate Health
Charlotte Community Health Clinic
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Givens Aldersgate
Hood Hargett
Latine Justice Alliance of Charlotte
McGuire Woods
PorchLight Creative
Refugee Support Services
UNC Charlotte Department of Counseling
UNC Charlotte Department of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education
UNC Charlotte School of Social Work
United Way of Greater Charlotte
Woodlawn Community Fellowship

Volunteer Groups

Adovocate for Truth Foundation
Asociación de Latinos Motivando el Avance (ALMA)
Bank of America Hispanic-Latino Organization for Leadership & Advancement (HOLA)
Charlotte Bilingual School
Charlotte Coffee Club
Chi Uspilon Sigma
Christ Church Youth Ministries
DPR Construction
Duluth Gospel Tabernacle Youth Ministries
Endeavors
ENG Student Athletes
Forvis Mazars
Givens Aldersgate
Davidson College Bonner Scholars
Davidson College Immigration Justice Alliance
Latinos Run Charlotte
Legacy M.E.N.
Myers Park ourBRIDGE Club
NASCAR Community Impact
NC Extension Master Gardeners
New Engen CLT
Providence Day Service Club
RSM US LLP
Serenity Church
Shannon Park Neighborhood
Ballantyne Ridge High School Smiles for Kids
St. John's Baptist Church Youth Ministries
Transforming Nations Ford
UNC Charlotte Asian Student Association
UNC Charlotte Dept. of Sociology
UNC Charlotte Kappa Phi Lambda
UNC Charlotte Lambda Theta Alpha
UNC Charlotte Lambda Upsilon Lambda
UNC Charlotte Levine Scholars
UNC Charlotte Southeast Asian Student Association
UNC Charlotte Vietnamese Student Association
UNC Charlotte Alternative Service Break
UNC Charlotte LatinX Student Union
Union Church
Woodlawn Community Fellowship

Donors & Funders

Visionaries ($100,000-$200,000)

Merancas Foundation
Phyllis Schultz & Matthew Gromet

Sustainers ($25,000-$74,999)

Ally Charitable Foundation
Belk Foundation
Charlotte Merchants Foundation
DPR Foundation
Hispanic Federation
Ian Family Fund
Leon Levine Foundation
Rockefeller Philanthropy
RSM US Foundation
Z Smith Reynolds Foundation

BRIDGE Builders ($5,000-$24,999)

100 Women Who Care
Alex Nichols
Alpha & Omega Foundation
Atrium Health
Brent Bauer
Chilanta Community Foundation
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Ekta Shah

Eric & Martha Eubank
Erika Gantt
Ginter Foundation
Grace Presbyterian Church
Hal Levinson
Heather Campbell Knull
Holy Covenant United Church of Christ
James Family Foundation
John Murdock
Kyle Todd Public Service Foundation
Miranda Family Fund
NC Foundation for Public School Children
Neeley Koester
Paul Thomas
Provident Benevolent Foundation
Reisner Drutz Fund
Richard Thomas
Robert D Saussy JR
Rotary Club of Charlotte South
Spencer Provost
Susan Young

Champions ($1,000-$4,999)

Abigail Woodall
Addison Bortz
Alex & Mallory Bunn
Alexandra & Russell Altenburg
Alisha Gale
Allen & Jessica Saxe
Amy McGarry
Angel Rutledge
Anne Pipkin
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Ascent Housing
Blair Tucker
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BOOM Charlotte
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Brennan McNulty
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Burns Family
Carlos Parada
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Catherine Whitmire
Cathleen S. Kocourek
Channing Bruce
Christ Episcopal Church
Courtney Mixon
Deborah Majewski
Diana Curti
Digital Apparel Printing, LLC
Dorothy England
Douglas Cosby
DreamKey Partners Inc
Duke Energy Foundation
East Fork Pottery
Eckes Family Fund
Edgar Rodriguez
Elise Coleman
Elizabeth Dillon
Elizabeth Monterrey
Emily & Mike Gaffney
Erik & Bethany Johnson
FNB Community Foundation
Frances Clos
Frances Duncan
Gary Andrew
Gavin Dowell
Gillian Small
Gregory Novick
Harris & Eliza Kempner Fund
Haynes Warren
Ingrid & John Amols
Jacqueline Stedman
JD Harris
Jennifer Cubillos
Jeremy Needham & Rick Hudson
John Scott & Katie Trotter
John Zulch
Julisa Edwards
Katherine Norman
Katie Gauntner
Katrina Sanchéz Standfield
Khishaana Folger
Laura George Haynes
LeDayne Polaski

Letisha Manning
Lisa Phillips
Manolo's
Martin Nystrom
Mary Ann Cross
Mary Long
Masuma Bahora
Matt Drollette
Matthew Corbett
Matthew Ward
McGuire Woods
Michael & Leslie Marsicano
Michael Smith
Mind, Body, & Soul Inc.
Miriam Espaillat
Mohammad Daher
Monica Galletto
Monique Sullivan
Myers Park Covenant Church
Nancy Galimi
Natalie Cowart
Natalie Smith
Nathan Morrison
Nightswim Coffee
Nikunj Shah
Not Just Coffee
Patricia Kropf
Percent Impact Foundation
Piedmont Club Foundation
Quynh Bowman
Rachel Roberson
Raj Natarajan
Rebecca Lewis
Rebecca Tanner
Renovatus Church
Richard M Schulze Family Foundaiton
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Robert Monaghan
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Rod Morris
Rosalba Esparragoza
Ross Weatherford
Sarah Belk
Sarah Crosland
Sartain Lanier Family
Satoshi Watanabe
Scott Shannon
Scott Spanbauer
Snug Harbor of Charlotte
Staci Mills
Stacy Baum
Stephanie Palmaro
Temple Beth El
The Tow Foundation, Inc.
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TIAA Asian American BRG
Tom Hanchett & Carol Sawyer
Tyler Richardson
Vandana Walawalkar
Varian Shrum
Veronica M. Calderon
Will Metcalf
Women's Impact Fund
Worrnovell Family Fund







our COMMUNITY

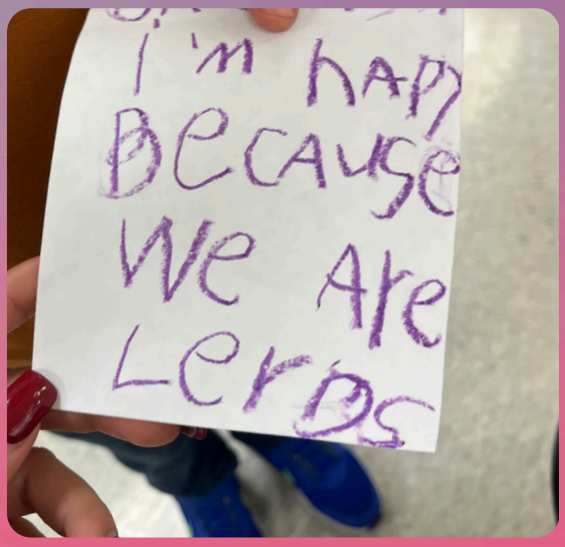












our FUTURE



ourBRIDGE



























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