



Serving
More
Neighbors

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



festa[®]



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Neighbors and friends,

When we see lives changed, people moving out of poverty and bias stripped away, the drive to grow and expand cannot be stopped. This year, all the work and strategic planning we have done behind the scenes for the past five years paid off and **we expanded our programming to serve 35% more children and families!**



In March 2023, our social enterprise, **Festa Business ESL**, began with our long time partner Kimball Midwest as our first customer. Festa taught their employees English and their managers Spanish on site. A vice president of the company who attended the Spanish class said, “We knew we would learn the language, but we were surprised at how much these classes built relationships and camaraderie amongst us all at work.” This social enterprise meets a number of critical community needs at once: allowing businesses to attract and retain employees, personally and professionally developing employees as they become bilingual and offering foreign-born New Americans opportunities for professional advancement.

Festa's flagship 3-Generation Family ESL program **grew to serve a record 727 people!** We continue to be the only organization serving the entire family, meaning women have the increased ability to invest in their education while their children are receiving top-quality care.

In the fall of 2022, five women from Dublin, Ohio, asked Festa to bring our expertise to Dublin and open a 3-Generation Family ESL program in their community. They saw their neighbors struggling at the area charities and food pantry and did not see anyone's situations improving despite years of support. They were certain Festa's approach would be the key to moving families from surviving to thriving. Because of key donors willing to make major financial investments in the community, we are thrilled to **open our second location of 3-Generation Family ESL in Dublin October 4, 2023 where we expect to serve 400 people and 200 volunteers.**

Five organizations in the Northland neighborhood of Columbus are asking Festa to come to their area next, and we are having conversations with the Ohio Restaurant Association and school districts about the expansion of this life-changing program.

This summer, we **added adult English classes to our Free Summer Lunch Camp** so parents could stay two days a week and grow their English language education while their children were at camp. This expansion allows us to offer much-needed ESL programs all year.

We will not stop here! Thanks to the support of our many friends and partners, we are well on our way to achieving our dreams of expanding throughout Columbus, into Ohio and across the country.

Join us today!

Kim Emch
Founder & Executive Director



festa® 2023

1,813  total children served



35% INCREASE

from FY22

48

family 
zip codes

 **1,026** families served



18% INCREASE

from FY22

67 

countries
of origin

10,974

meals served



SINCE 2007

185,045

meals served

Year in Review



885

total unique
volunteers

65

volunteer
zip codes



12,016

total
volunteer
hours

2,559

total
program
positions
filled





Testimonial

Afghan Family

“

*“A language barrier
is no match for the power
of human connection.”*



In January of 2022 we met a family of seven — five children plus a mom and a dad — who arrived in our country from Afghanistan after the US troops withdrew and the Taliban conflict intensified. They had to leave quickly and they arrived in our country with little more than the clothes on their backs. They got adopted by a local church that Festa partners closely with — a team of 15 people who wrapped their arms around this family. They started with setting up a home. It's extremely difficult to find affordable housing for families of any size, let alone a large family of seven, but finally the team secured a three bedroom townhouse and they went after furnishing it. No one in the family spoke English because their plan had never been to come to the United States. They were like deer in the headlights as they stepped into the airport shuttle to meet their new English-speaking friends. However, a language barrier is no match for the power of human connection. In no time, the family and the volunteers fell in love with each other and became family.

The first thing the church group did was to enroll this family in Festa's 3-Generation Family ESL program. The mom and dad began attending ESL classes and all 5 children got the education support they needed, from preschool to homework help. From there, things began to fall into place. Dad was able to get a full time job, to which volunteers drove him daily at 5:30 a.m. before driving the children to school. The children got settled in school and quickly soaked up their new language there and at Festa's 3-Generation Family ESL program.

A year later Dad earned his driver's license, offering his family freedom. Mom's improved English has allowed her to become an entrepreneur. Through partnership with Festa, she started selling her spectacular food at a local farmer's market, and this has grown into a catering business for her. One of the church volunteers said, *"Of all we did to wrap around this family, the BEST thing we did was bring them to Festa's 3-Generation Family ESL program. Without this program, none of the help we gave would have mattered."*





Program Update

Free Summer Lunch Camp



“

Camp is good. The children get to know the rest of the community, it strengthens their personality, helps them cooperate with others, and helps the parents by saving money. Thank you.”

A Volunteer's Story

"mom went through the volunteer process to be able to come volunteer with her 7-year-old son who has Down Syndrome. They volunteered at RELC since it was a smaller group of campers. She and her son had a great time! After camp, Mom had the biggest smile on her face and was teary-eyed, saying how much her son enjoyed playing with the other children, and how she was able to even stand back and watch because he was fine without her. She said it warmed her heart to be able to watch him thrive socially. She followed up with an email later in the day: 'God bless you all. You are just wonderful, and I mean it from the bottom of my heart. I pray every day for you and all the kind volunteers affiliated with Festa. Thank you for all you do!'"

668

total children
registered
in camp

7,015

meals served
to children

\$36.96

per week saved on
grocery budget

100%

of children could
identify at least
one new friend they
made at camp

Parents chose to send their children to Summer Lunch Camp:

- So their children can learn and play in a fun/safe place
- To feel more a part of the community
- To help their family's budget
- So their children receive a healthy lunch





Program Update

3-Generation Family ESL



Hilliard

We are proud and humbled to have served a record number of people through our 3-Generation Family ESL Program this school year! At Festa, we are turning geography into rich community. Our whole team of dedicated staff, teachers and volunteers worked together to make this our **largest ESL program yet.**

727

total people
registered
in program

3,959

meals served
to children

80%

adult students feel
more connected to
their community

Dublin



We are thrilled to announce Festa's second 3-Generation Family ESL location! The Dublin community has a huge heart to serve our New American neighbors and asked Festa to bring our expertise to Dublin. It is a blessing to expand our capacity to provide essential English education to 400 additional people, infant to grandparent age. In Central Ohio, only 3% of adults who need ESL education are able to access it. With two program locations, Festa will serve 1,000+ New Americans this school year! A huge thank you is due to our partner and host, Indian Run United Methodist Church. It is an honor to work alongside a congregation so passionate about serving our neighbors!



ESL Teacher School

Are you interested in being a teacher?

The requirements are simple — you just need to know English and love people; we'll take care of the rest! We provide all training.

Learn more about paid and volunteer opportunities at
wearefesta.org/employment

Connecting Families to Resources



“While living in the camp, seeing any kind of vehicle, especially a plane, was a rarity. I was always drawn to them; I would watch the plane until it was lost in the clouds. Seeing the plane in the sky made me wonder where it was going, who it was carrying and how it worked to stay in the sky despite the laws of gravity. I flew for the first time when my family came to the United States when I was fourteen years old. When I first stepped onto the airplane, I decided at that moment that I would one day become a pilot.”

Festa has been connecting families and children to resources since our inception in 2007. We have lived life together with families over the course of almost two decades. We care deeply, we listen and we bridge connections to resources that change lives.

A high school senior shared with us his dream of being a pilot. He spent 11 years with his family in a refugee camp before coming to the United States.

In 2021, Kim Emch had a meeting with Festa’s longtime partner, Central Ohio United Way, to give them an update on what Festa was accomplishing and how we are growing and working to scale our programming. During that conversation, she shared the story of this young man’s dream and how Festa was working to help him navigate his educational options. After hearing the story, they said, “You won’t believe this but right before we got on this meeting with you, our executive director told us there’s a new organization called Capital City Young Aviators, and they’re looking for young people who want to learn to become a pilot. The program will result in them taking their first solo flight.” They were immediately connected with this young man. This young man was this new organization’s second passenger, after the executive director’s father. He’s well on his way to becoming a pilot. Through this connection, he’s also met other pilots, adults fully in their career, to network with learn from and plan his next steps.



Total assistance given out for 2022-23

\$10,127

cash

\$150

gift cards

59

cases for 2022-23

Since March of 2020, we’ve given over **\$100K** in resources (rent, electricity, water, etc.)



Program Update

Good Tidings Christmas Store

309

families shopped for

948

children

1,878

gifts donated

81

unique volunteers

"Gift cards are a very popular choice for families shopping for teenagers, and as such, our gift card supply was wiped out before the end of the first day at the store. I hopped on social media and asked the community to donate money to purchase more. By the end of Monday we received \$390; by the next morning, we had \$630! Our Good Tidings committee decided to allot some of this money for gas gift cards and spend the rest on Target gift cards. The Target checkout was slow-moving that morning and I got to chatting with the gentleman behind me in line. He shared he was also shopping for Christmas gifts for his teenage children. When it was my turn, the cashier began ringing up 24 \$20 gift cards. She asked what they were for and I took the opportunity to share about Good Tidings and the rest of Festa's work.

"The total came to \$480. When I swiped my card, the transaction didn't go through — either the store or the bank blocked the purchase due to it being a 'suspiciously' high number of gift cards. By that point, the line behind me was growing and I paused for a few seconds trying to think of what to do. As I'm standing there considering my options, the man I had been chatting with takes out his wallet and says, 'Ma'am let me pay for that.' I was in shock! I reiterated the large total but he stepped past me toward the cashier. I'm still saying, 'Sir, really, I'll just step aside and call my bank to tell them it's a legitimate purchase...' He said, 'It's for a good cause, right? Then it's done,' and he paid for my entire purchase. I was just in awe of his immediate action and extreme generosity to a complete stranger."

This holiday season, we were able to serve the largest number of families in Festa history! We are thanking God for His faithfulness this season as well as all our community partners who donated time, money and items to make the store possible.





Program Update

Excellerate / Business Teachers

“During the first week of the restaurant, the decor team, who works hard in the days leading up to the restaurant opening to create an atmosphere that matches the theme, felt disappointed that they weren’t getting to participate as much on the day of. Together, we brainstormed ideas of what to do. One of the children talked about making a dragon costume that the group could walk around in to support the Chinese New Year theme, and I was so impressed by this idea and decided it needed to happen!

“I was able to get boxes from Aldi to turn into sections of the dragon body, and the decor team plus some of the serving team got to work decorating the boxes. They worked for two days decorating and assembling. They worked together to decide the order the boxes should go in - alternating red and yellow to match the main colors of the decor - and how to secure them together.

“On restaurant day, we got to walk around the restaurant with our dragon. I was so excited to see this vision from the children become a real thing that they got to share with everyone. It turned out even better than I was expecting, and it was such a cool moment to parade through the restaurant with the children!”





14

restaurant kitchen
helper volunteers

15

excelerate
business
teachers

308

restaurant
guests





Volunteers of the Year

Award Honorees



Jannat Alabdullah

**Greyson N. Estep
Youth Volunteer Award**

Jannat attended Festa programs as a child for years, and as soon as she became a high school student, she begged to be a Festa Teen Intern. She attended Festa 3-Generation Family ESL and Festa Free Summer Lunch Camp almost every day this year! Jannat is a natural leader and has a huge heart for serving her peers.

*155 volunteer hours
as a teen volunteer*



Angie Staten

**John C. Witherspoon
Volunteer Award**

Angie began serving with Festa in 2010 when she felt God calling her to lead a Free Summer Lunch Camp site as a volunteer during her summer off from teaching. When the children began running their own restaurants in 2012, Angie stepped into the role of lead kitchen volunteer, ensuring safe and clean food practices. She has watched thousands of children at summer camp grow up and become volunteers, start their careers and thrive in adulthood. She is beloved by children and staff alike.

*Free Summer Lunch Camp
every summer since 2010*



In Memoriam



GREYSON N. ESTEP

Greyson Estep began volunteering as a young child in 2009 with his mother and older brother. He came every day to Summer Lunch Camp year after year. Greyson passed away in February 2023. As parents, we may think we are bringing our children with us, but sometimes we are simply the vehicle for our children to get where they are meant to go. This was the case with Greyson; he LOVED serving with Festa. He made it his mission to make friends, play and take on responsibilities to help run camp - serving lunches, cleaning up, setting out hula hoops and activity supplies to make camp fun for all. He was even given his very own green t-shirt traditionally reserved for adult staff members that he wore proudly! Greyson was well known throughout his life for caring deeply about and advocating for marginalized people, and he loved music in every form.



JOHN C. WITHERSPOON

John Witherspoon was a long-time resident of UA and member of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church, retired CEO of ABB and Festa's first volunteer. He passed away in May 2019. When Kim was introduced to John and told him about the mission of service God had given her, he famously said, "You had me at 'hungry children.' What do you need me to do?!" John was also our first board member. Kim considers him a "cherished friend and mentor, and a special person God gave to me as a father figure. I don't think I ever would've had the courage to move forward with all of this had it not been for John. We laughed, cried and served God arm in arm. I learned so many things from him - everything from how to take the door off a refrigerator to how to ask boldly!" John served with us for the first 10 years, and his legacy and influence will always be with Festa.

INTERNATIONAL festa-val

August 27, 2023

\$90,000

raised

46

countries
represented

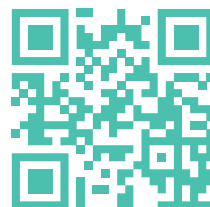


1,853

tickets sold

215

volunteers

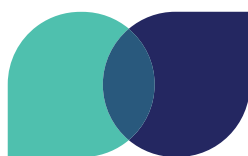


Scan to watch our Festa-val recap video



“The impact this program has made in our workplace is amazing. It has brought an even greater sense of community and inclusion to Kimball Midwest, where one of our core values is treating everyone like family! Thank you so much, Festa!”

— Dave McCurdy,
Chief Operating Officer,
Kimball Midwest



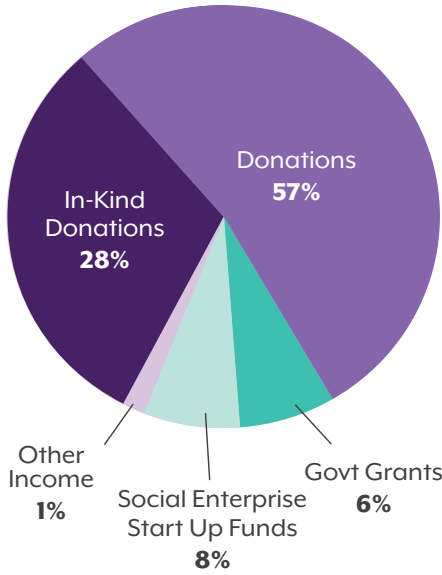
festa
BUSINESS • ESL

Your business can hire Festa to teach English to associates and Spanish to managers on-site before working hours, making it free and convenient for them to become bilingual. This will close the communication gap among coworkers, strengthening the team and helping to attract new employees and retain quality talent at your company.

Make an appointment to discuss how Festa can customize your classes to fit your associates' needs. We contextualize the day, time, and learning levels to fit your industry perfectly!

Email info@wearefesta.org





TOTAL INCOME

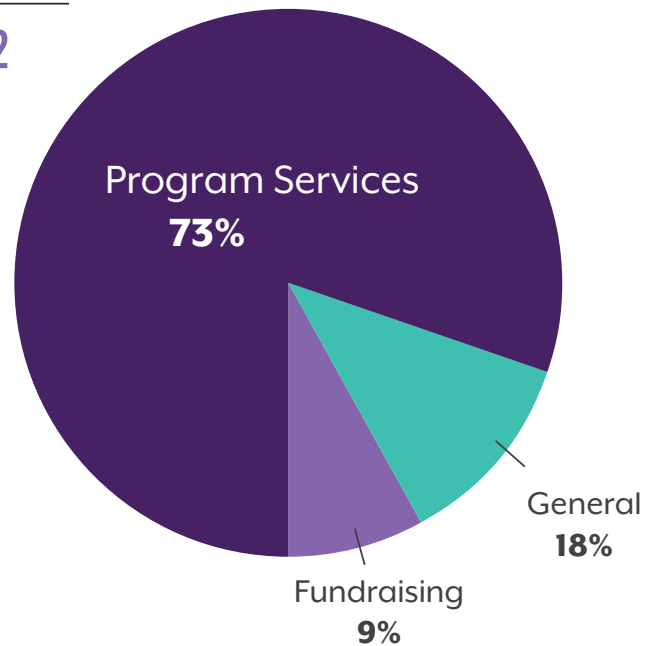
Donations	\$804,890
Government Grants	\$83,100
Social Enterprise Start Up Funds	\$116,250
Other Income	\$20,934
<i>*includes income from Festa Business ESL and Interest</i>	
In-Kind Donations	\$387,746
<i>*includes \$209,546 of donated volunteer service hours</i>	

REVENUE TOTAL \$1,412,920

TOTAL EXPENSES

Program Services*	\$973,199
General	\$235,008
Fundraising	\$116,255

EXPENSE TOTAL \$1,324,462





Our Partners

104.9 The River	Griffin Lantz Insurance
AJ Glover Foundation	Hexion Specialty Chemicals
ADAMH	Hilliard Area Realty
AEP Foundation	Hilliard Church of Christ
Battle Motors	Hilliard City Schools
Big Lots Foundation	Holowicki Enterprises
BMW Financial Services NA LLC	Honda of America Mfg., Inc
Cameron Mitchell Restaurants	Ignite Industrial Professionals
CareSource Foundation	Indian Run United Methodist Church
City of Columbus	Ingram-White Castle Foundation
Cornerstone Christian Fellowship	Kimball Midwest
Crane Group	Mercator Memorial Foundation
Cypress Wesleyan Church	Movement Church
Decker Vonau & Carr	New Hope Reformed Church
Destination Hilliard	ODW Logistics
Dublin Foundation	Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church
ECO Plumbers	Rock City Church
Equity	Siemer Foundation
Ernst Concrete	The Columbus Foundation
Franklin County Board of Commissioners	Tides Foundation
Franklin International	Upper Arlington Lutheran Church
Fyda Freightliners	United Way of Central Ohio
Good News Church	Willis Spangler Starling Law
Greater Columbus Arts Council	



Our Mission

Ending poverty
through life-changing
relationships with
neighbors and God



Ways to Engage

JAN - APR

- **3-Generation Family ESL Program**
MON - THURS EVENINGS

AUG

- **Community Garden**
- **Volunteer / Attend International Festa-val**

MAY

- **Community Garden**
- **Office Administrative Assistance**

SEPT - OCT

- **3-Generation Family ESL Program**
MON - THURS EVENINGS
- **Office Administrative Assistance**

JUNE - JULY

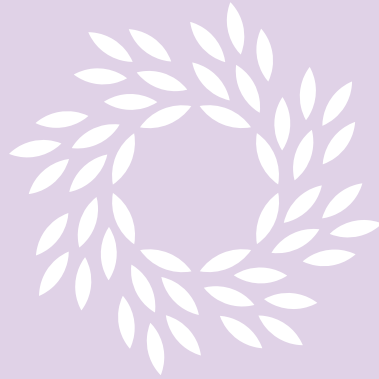
- **Free Summer Lunch Camp**
WEEKDAYS
- **Community Garden**

NOV - DEC

- **3-Generation Family ESL Program**
MON - THURS EVENINGS
- **Good Tidings Christmas Store**
DONATING + STORE VOLUNTEER

YEAR-ROUND

- **Donate Wish List Food & Supplies**
- **Prayer**
- **Translating Written & Verbal Communications**
- **Serve on a Committee**
- **Helping at the Office**



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