

2023

Annual REPORT

Shelter. Healing. Hope.



**SOLIDGROUND
INTERNATIONAL**





Dear Friend of Solid Ground International,

We celebrated our ten-year anniversary this year. We were thrilled to host an event attended by many of our alumni, including three former residents who joined us in 2013. Now licensed social workers, *Corina, Jacinth, and Lydia came to SGI when they had no options for safe housing. I remember the day each of them arrived in our transitional home and the different circumstances that precipitated their admissions. After being trafficked as a teenager, Corina worked hard to

go to college. She considered quitting during her second year because she did not have a stable home environment. Two years later, with help from us and our partners, she graduated and has been employed full time since 2015. These are only three examples among many of the residents who come to our transition homes and benefit from a supportive environment.

We continue to provide transitional housing that encourages growth for our residents. Not only do they advance educationally, they also strengthen their mental health, learn to manage complex emotions, persevere through relational challenges, and acquire essential life skills for their futures. We enjoy spending time together whether it is Sunday karaoke in the homes or Saturday evening affirmation activities.

The growth of residents is particularly evident in our Aspire program, which we launched in 2021. Candis says, "Living in Aspire gives me a lot of learnings. For my co-residents, I learn to communicate and understand them. I also learn to manage my time and responsibilities because there is no staff to tell us that we should clean along with my school and personal responsibilities. The experiences here will help me when I will live on my own."

Pedrine, another Aspire resident, shares this reflection: "SGI has been a wonderful blessing in my life, allowing me to change my fears into strengths, heal, breathe, be more responsible, and grow into the best version of myself." Pedrine and Candis will graduate from college in 2024.

On a personal note, I remain full of gratitude for the important transformations SGI achieves in the lives of our residents. Their laughter, hope, and perseverance actively remind me of the uniqueness of each story. Each narrative provides inspiration for the next ten years of helping our future residents flourish. Thank you for being a crucial partner in shaping their lives and for motivating us to press forward.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Kimberly M. Shields

Board of Directors

Lukuang Lynette Hsu, MD - *Chair*

David Wolter - *President*

Sandra Borgest - *Secretary*

Romina Yeganeh - *Treasurer*

**In all cases, resident names have been changed to protect privacy.*



Annual Report 2023

Assisting survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence since 2013

Our Vision

Solid Ground International is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the restoration of individuals exploited by human trafficking and gender-based violence

Our Mission

The mission of Solid Ground International is to provide housing, healing, and hope through the establishment and maintenance of transitional housing. We create safe environments and provide supportive services to enable residents to overcome their trauma and flourish in their independent lives.

Program Details



Family-style housing near employment and educational opportunities



Educational financial assistance, academic tutoring, and job onboarding support



Financial assistance for residents who need medical, dental, and mental health care



Individualized case management support from a full-time, registered social worker



Onsite training in financial management, home life, healthy relationships, health and hygiene, and accessing community resources



Social and spiritual development activities

Our Impact to Date

Total number of residents served: **75**

Total number of residents in 2023: **25**

Educational Accomplishments

College Graduations:	High School Graduations:	Vocational Training:
16	22	22

What We Are Singing in Our Homes

“Having You Near Me”
“My Heart Will Go On”
“Always Remember Us This Way”
“Like My Father”
“Same God”

Our Favorite Recipes

Chicken tinola (chicken vegetable soup)

Fish escabeche



Madelyn: A Story of Perseverance

“Be grateful for what God has given you – a light to lead you on your journey.” – Madelyn

We would like to share Madelyn’s story with you in her own words. Madelyn was admitted to SGI at two different times and graduated from college in 2020. She is the lead social worker for our partner organization.

My story of healing begins 16 years ago when I stayed in another center on a southern island in the Philippines. The nuns rescued me because I was a victim of severe abuse. In 2012, I came to Cebu to study social work. One of the nuns found SGI and told me SGI is willing to help me so I can focus on my studies. As part of my agreement to stay in SGI, I had to follow some rules. To make my story short, I only lived in SGI for six months. My manifestation of trauma came back, and I violated the rules. I decided to leave SGI. I had a boyfriend at that time whom I thought would stay even in my darkest days, but he left me pregnant, which is how I became a single mother.

When I gave birth to my son, I had many realizations about myself. I was feeling broken and full of guilt with no father for my son. The same nun who helped me in the past told me SGI is willing to take me back. I grabbed the opportunity but had to ask my mother if she could look after my son until I graduated. Although it was hard to be away from him, it was necessary for our good.

In 2016, I returned to Cebu to pursue my studies. SGI helped me a second time to stand up. I learned how to cook, look for a job, pass my resumé to many establishments, and do the grocery shopping. When I was about to enroll in college, I found out I had a tuition balance. Therefore, I had to work as a cashier so I could pay off my remaining balance. Thankfully, SGI was always there and ready to help with my needs so I could continue.

Opportunities like those offered by SGI and their partners are rare, and they come and go if not valued. Our paths may not be the same, but at least SGI provides a safe environment for us to reach our educational and professional goals. What’s important is to keep moving forward and to be grateful for what God has given you – a light to lead you on your journey.



Resident Achievements and Life Skills Activities

Education and Employment

- Seventeen residents pursued college degrees in these majors: Psychology, Social Work, Welding and Fabrication Technology, Development Communication, Public Administration, Secondary Education in Values Education, Industrial Technology in Food Preparation, Social Work, and Graphics and Design.
- Five residents pursued high school education in grades 9, 11, and 12.
- One resident became a full-time employee as a cashier at a department store.
- One resident graduated from grade 12 and has full-time work in a wholesale store.
- One resident was successfully discharged from SGI and continued with her college education as an elementary education major.



Restoration

- One resident joined a 12-week group mental health intervention program offered by a partner organization. She is now a member of the organization's Survivor Leadership Council.
- Two residents gave back by serving in a training program for survivors of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and encouraged one of our residents to join the program.
- Six residents had regular mental health engagements with our psychologist.



Results of Life Skills Activities

- As a result of our life skills training, twenty-three residents have an active bank account, many for the first time.
- We had full participation in our Reproductive Health Seminar.
- We facilitated seminars on nonviolent communication and emotion regulation.
- The residents secured summer jobs.
- The residents practiced health and hygiene through dental and medical checkups.
- Six residents attended career counseling sessions with a registered guidance counselor.

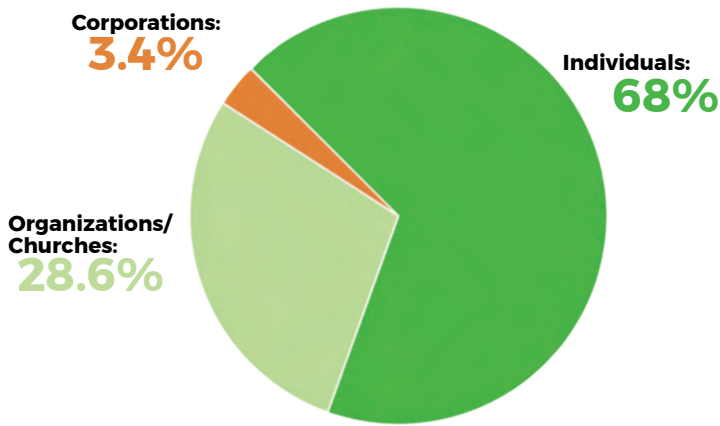
Alumni Highlights

- We hosted an alumni gathering to celebrate our ten-year anniversary. Eight alumni joined the celebration held in our transitional home.
- One resident became a permanent government employee as a social worker. Another resident gained employment as a contractual government social worker.
- One resident was employed by an international company as a procurement specialist.
- One resident maintained her employment as a team leader for a business process outsourcing company.



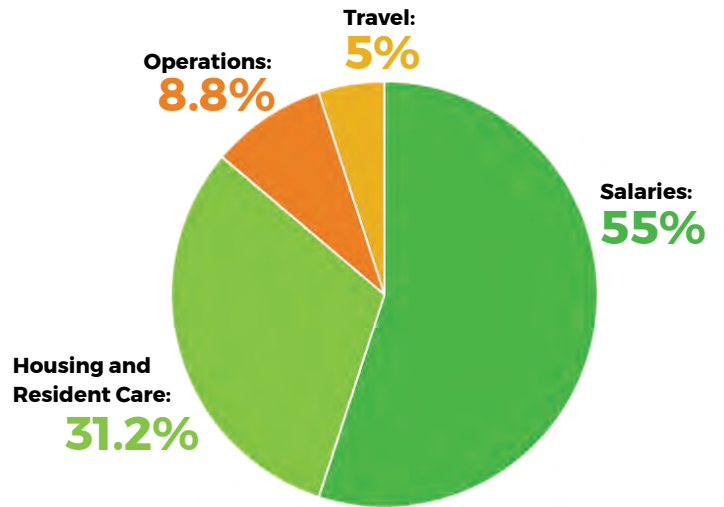
Financials

Source of Contributions



- Individuals:
- Organizations/Churches:
- Corporations:

Resource Distribution



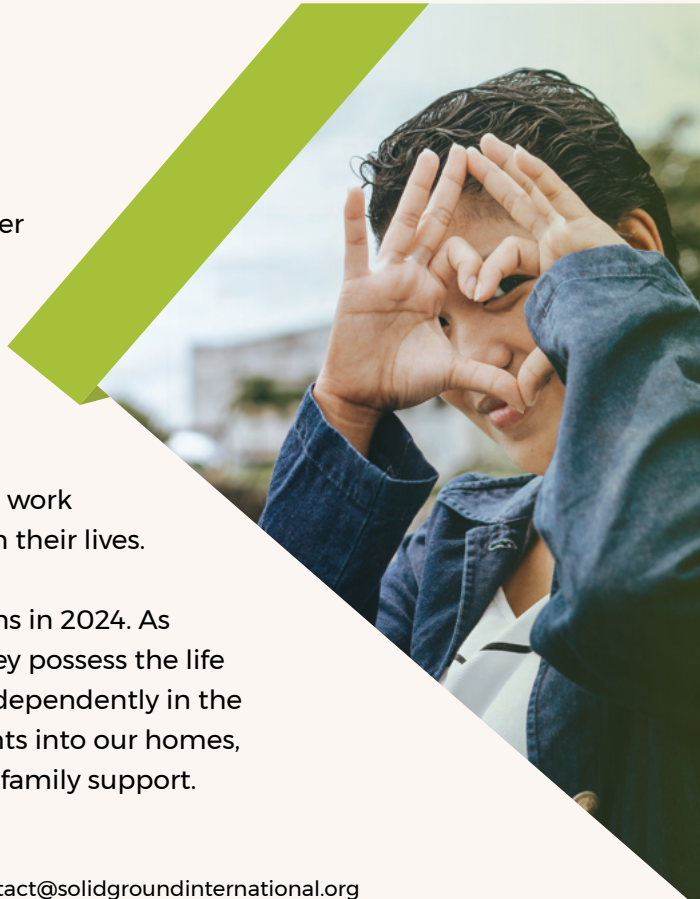
- Salaries
- Housing and Resident Care
- Operations
- Travel

Total Contributions:
\$162,613

Hopeful Anticipation for Another 10 Years Together

A decade has passed since we opened our first home. Over the last ten years, we've been so inspired by how the community of government and non-profits in Cebu work together to create amazing outcomes for survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking. We appreciate the partnerships with each of you. They not only help residents, but also provide a community for our team. As we look forward, we are excited to do continued good work together, setting up residents to achieve God's purpose in their lives.

We anticipate four high school and six college graduations in 2024. As the college graduates transition out of SGI, we believe they possess the life skills, employability, and inner strength needed to live independently in the community. We look forward to welcoming more residents into our homes, providing them with a place of belonging and a sense of family support.



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