

Notre Dame Mission Volunteers

# 2023-2024 Annual Report

Leading Together





## Dear Friends and Supporters of Notre Dame Mission Volunteers,

The 2023–2024 service year marked a vibrant chapter in our shared journey—one guided by our theme: **Leading Together**.

At every level of our work, from classrooms to community centers, from site teams to the national office, we witnessed the power of leadership that is collaborative, courageous, and rooted in mission. Together, we took bold steps forward—launching a strategic planning process that engaged voices across our network, celebrating 30 years of our partnership with AmeriCorps and the remarkable impact of our AmeriCorps members, and deepening our commitment to transforming communities through education and compassionate service.

This year, our members engaged tens of thousands of children and adults across the country. Nearly 70% of them remained in their service city—a powerful reflection of the connections they built and the lives they touched. Many shared that their experience deepened their passion for education, awakened a sense of purpose, and gave them new tools for working across lines of difference. Over 80% reported learning to collaborate more effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, affirming the lasting impact of the service experience.

Internally, we strengthened our infrastructure, welcomed new team members, retained a full

national staff, and enhanced our communication and outreach efforts. We also laid the groundwork for exciting future possibilities, with the development of new program models that will help us adapt and thrive in changing times. Throughout it all, we've remained anchored in our mission—and energized by the belief that we lead best when we lead together.

We are especially grateful to our site managers, program staff, Board of Directors, and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, whose guidance and partnership helped us grow with integrity and purpose.

To each of you who supported us—through your time, your advocacy, your prayers, or your generosity—thank you. Your belief in our mission has carried us forward and continues to inspire everything we do.

With deep appreciation and hope,

**Ted Miles**  
Executive Director

**Lou Charest**  
Chair, Board of Directors



# Leading Together

Before the Notre Dame Mission Volunteers came to be, the co-foundresses of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Julie Billiart and Francoise Blin de Bourdon, bonded over a shared dedication to a life of service. Their hearts to serve others united them and gave them the ability to lead in their own ways while both working toward a common goal of bringing goodness into the world. The roots of our organization are grounded in the theme of “**Leading Together**”.

Our theme is also grounded in one of the Sisters’ hallmarks: “**We create community among those with whom we work and those we serve.**” The ability to lead together can begin with coming together and centering our hearts and minds toward our common goal of serving the people in our communities.

Leading Together requires the confidence to walk freely in your gifts while having the humility to encourage others around you to do the same.



**Notre Dame Mission**  
VOLUNTEERS



## During the 2023-2024 service year, NDMV members...

Engaged **20,409** PreK-12 Students in Academic Programming

Served **3,347** Adult Learners in Job Readiness Programs

Provided tech support to **126** students and family members *each month*

Connected with **82** frequently absent students *each month*

Assisted **41,556** individuals with food security projects

Served **138,742** meals

Helped distribute a total weight of **403,207** pounds of food

# Planting Purpose

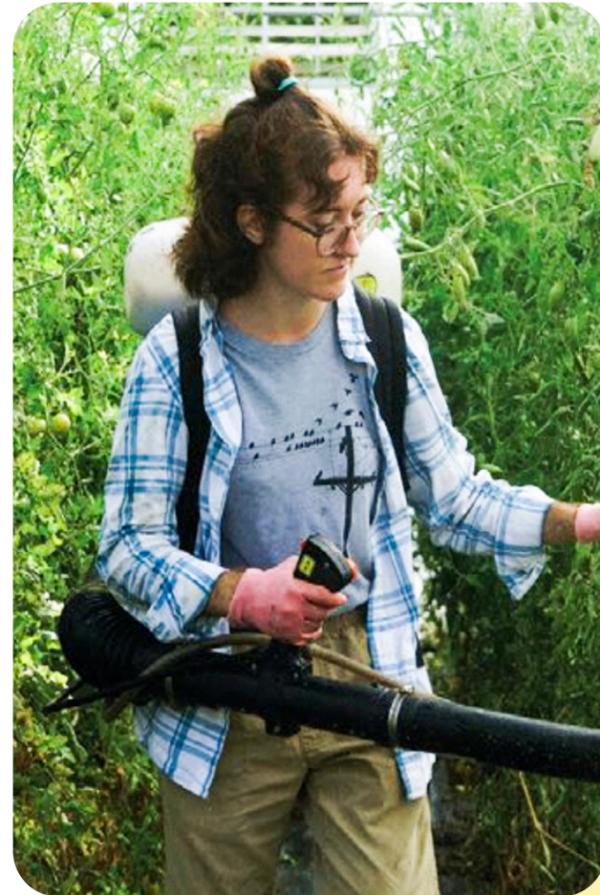
## Natalie Ross' Service Journey

Natalie is experiencing the sweet fruit of watching seeds of purpose grow into a life of service. Through NDMV, she serves at Mission of Mary Cooperative, a nonprofit organization that works on food justice issues on the inner east side of Dayton. They distribute fresh, locally grown produce to their community of various income levels. They also run nutrition and gardening education programs, and a CSA that provides healthy food at affordable prices to the community.

Natalie grew up believing she was born to do something bigger than herself. "I was an introspective and reflective kid," she said. She began to explore her faith more in college. Though her faith journey has been a beautiful winding road, there was one thing that has remained constant—she always knew she was drawn to do something fulfilling.

In her search to find that very thing, she came across the Mission of Mary Cooperative. She volunteered there during the pandemic when the most common options for volunteering were outside.

After volunteering, Natalie wanted to work there full-time, but she didn't have enough experience working on a farm. Notre Dame Mission Volunteers was her way in.



Her experience has continued to water the hope she felt growing up.

***"Being a part of an organization like this makes me feel less helpless. There is so much bad news. I know I'm connected to something beyond myself to make a big impact."***

Mission of Mary produces 60,000 pounds of food each year and is dedicated to putting as much of that harvest as possible on the tables of neighborhood families. They operate a CSA (community support agriculture) program that offers memberships at lower costs to families who cannot afford their regular produce prices. The program even gives people the option of paying with EBT.



Natalie explained that Mission of Mary focuses on Integral ecology. She explained, "Integral ecology is thinking about social issues as a part of thinking about the environment. Our model is to take vacant lots [of land] and turn it into something beautiful and productive that tends to the environment and the people who will experience the land and fruit of it."

Natalie has wanted to do something big and now understands what that means. She said, "I've discovered that a lot of the 'big' that's out there is not about me becoming bigger—it's about connecting to others. That has been so rewarding."

Natalie's experience with NDMV has led her to fulfillment and community. One of her favorite parts of NDMV is

***"Being able to meet with other members. It has introduced me to people I would've never met before."***

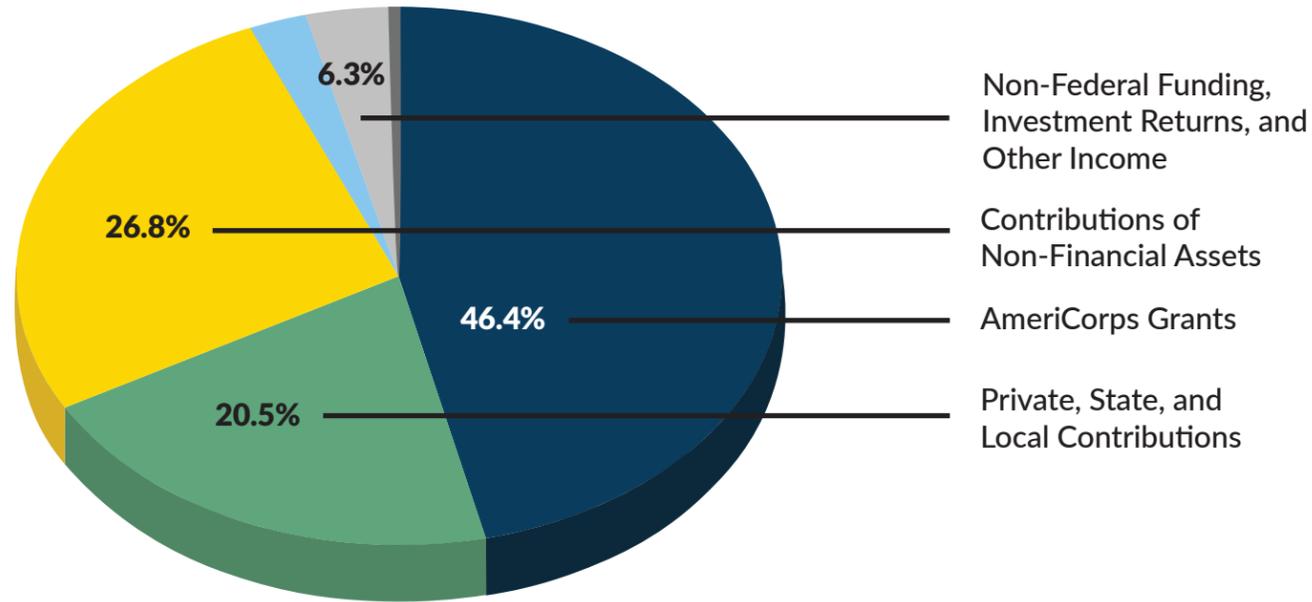
Natalie believes that "at the end of the day, everyone needs to eat, no matter how tired you might feel. If you're looking for motivation, it's always there. People need to eat, and people need to be able to eat healthy." It is that profoundly simple for her.

This experience has taught Natalie that we can't solve every problem. She explained, "When it's just you by yourself, it's so easy to be overwhelmed and feel like you can't do anything. When you're connected—whether that feeling comes from your site placement, through being part of NDMV, or whatever that group feeling is—that's really helpful. I've always found that to be true."

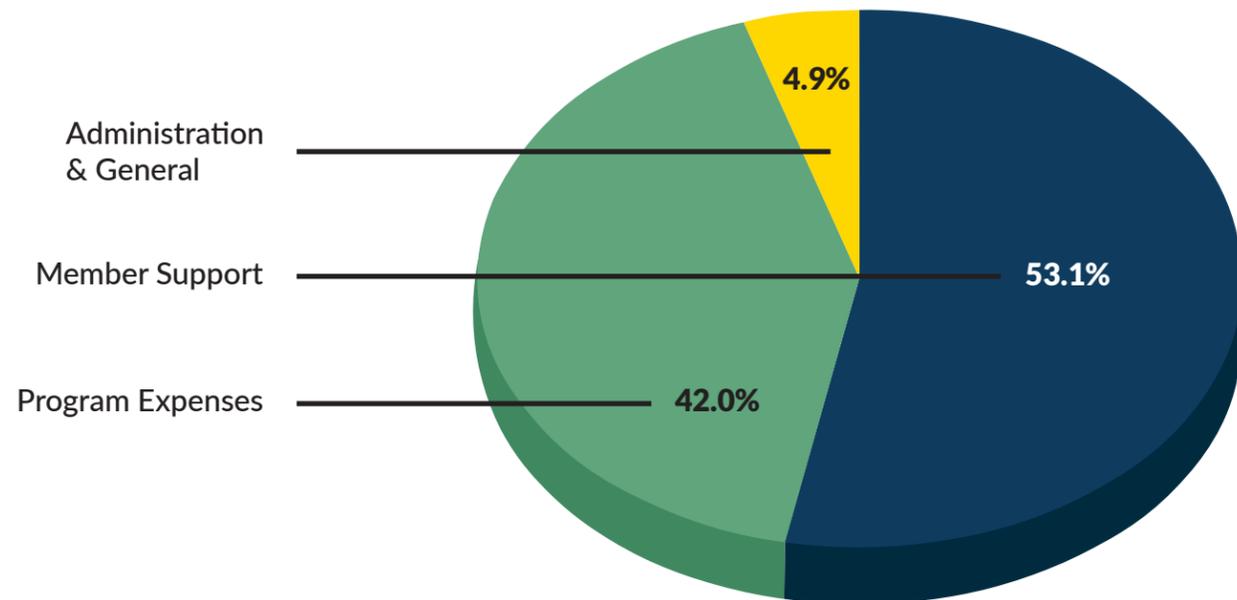


# Notre Dame Mission Volunteer Corporation 2023|2024 Operating Income & Expenses

### Source of Funds



### Use of Funds



3,347

Adult Learners Served in Job Readiness Programs

82

Absent Students Frequently Connected with each month

20,409

PreK-12 Students Engaged in Academic Programming

# Empowering Vulnerable Populations with Financial Education

with Yvonne O'Neill



**“Learning about finances can release people from pressure and stress that they don’t even realize they’re under,”**

Yvonne said. She is responsible for facilitating six finance classes a week for some of the most vulnerable populations in the United States: refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. The classes are part of a

nine-month program that the IRC offers to help new cultures and customs. Her financial literacy program includes classes related to budgeting, banking, credit, and loans, how to file taxes, and how to purchase a car. She even offers a car-purchasing workshop.”

**“I teach my students to navigate the financial system, which can be empowering,”**

Yvonne explained. She teaches about the differences between the financial systems where her students come from and where they are now, so that students can navigate the US financial system confidently. Each week, classes are conducted in a different language with an interpreter. Languages include, but are not limited to: Swahili, Spanish, Arabic, and Burmese. Yvonne has the opportunity to build relationships with her students and the interpreters.



Yvonne has a Master’s in Agricultural Economics from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. While working on her degree, she studied in Sierra Leone, West Africa, researching the biofuel industry. That experience opened her eyes to the humanity behind all the facts she learned in school. Being a part of the community directly brought the knowledge she was gaining to life. “I have a strong sense of reality with a very theoretical background,” she said. Her service opportunity with NDMV AmeriCorps is a fulfilling and inspiring way to apply the theory of economic theory she studied in school.

While Yvonne is teaching, she tries to remember what her students are going through. Some of her students have just completed a challenging journey to reach their new home in the US. She explained, “When we are talking about teaching people who have ‘I embrace their humanity,’” she said. “People who can make it through what they have been through can understand how to open a bank account if just given the information.” She puts the people first and the content second.

“I genuinely feel a deep passion about dedicating such a powerful skillset to people as a volunteer...AmeriCorps created a circumstance for me where I feel supported enough to pursue this as an option,” Yvonne said. She feels supported the most when she is frequently reminded of why she does what she does. Staying connected to her ‘why’ is the fuel that allows her to stay inspired while she teaches her students.

Yvonne is confident that she is making a lasting impact in the Atlanta community that will extend far beyond her year of service. She said, “The financial classes I teach are for generational wealth building...my students will pass on what they have learned to communities and those that come after them.” Thanks to Yvonne’s commitment to say “yes” to service, future generations can have more financial and economic opportunities. “Just arrived in the country, six classes about finance...you don’t know where they are emotionally or what they will even retain.” When her students are tired in her class, Yvonne gives them the space to rest.

# Mother to Many

Gaby Zubia is a living example of letting love drive her to bring goodness into the world. Gaby is an NDMV member who serves with the I Have a Dream Foundation in Boulder, CO. Rather than letting her experiences in life harden her heart, she makes a choice each day to keep it open. She wants to give children hope that they can find joy and purpose in life despite what they go through.

***“There was a dark moment in my life years ago—my daughter brought light to it.”***



Gaby said. Her daughter is a “dreamer”—a participant in the I Have a Dream Foundation Program.

Gaby described a dreamer as someone who is very talented and dedicated. “A dreamer is a student who comes from a difficult past and a heavy background who needs an extra shoulder to lean on,” she said. “A lot of the parents [of dreamer students] are undocumented, they did come from another country to pursue their dreams for their family.”



Gaby’s role in the I Have a Dream Foundation is not just a job, but a calling. She sees herself in her daughter and in her students, and this deep connection fuels her passion to serve. “What I love about serving is being able to show up for the students and heal my inner child while serving,” Gaby said. Gaby uses her opportunities to help kids feel valued, heard, cared for, and appreciated. “When I first signed up, it was because of the flexibility. I wanted to figure out how to give back to my community, be a mom,

and do what I needed to get done,” she said.

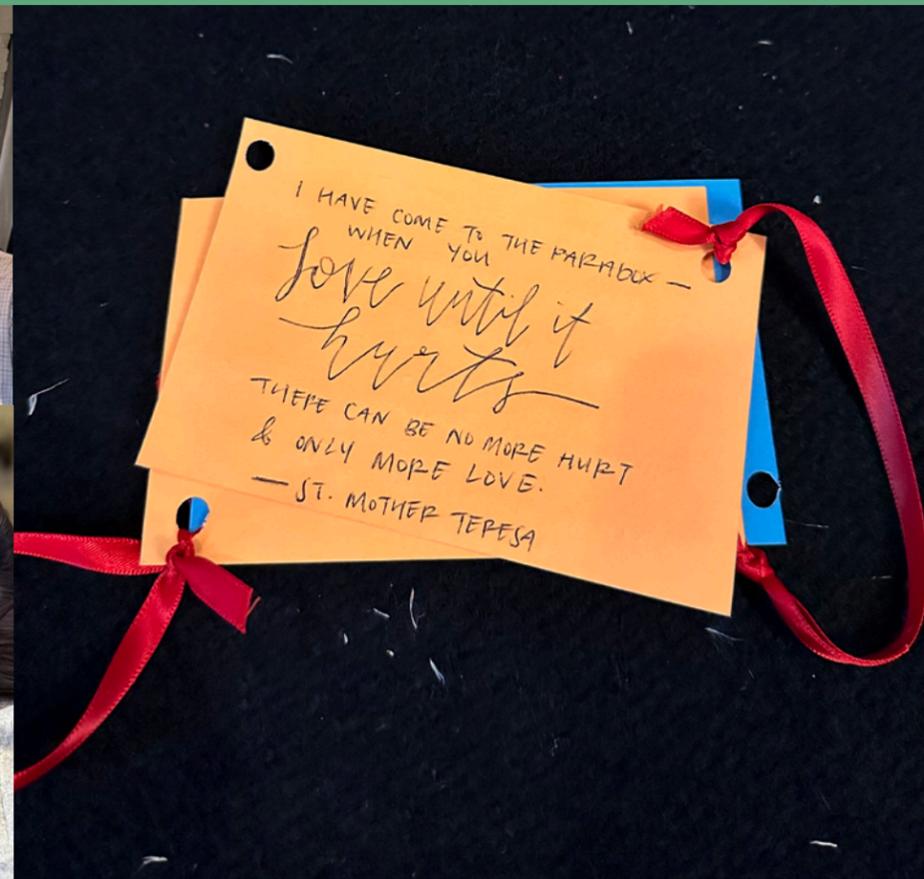
“I believe things fall into place when they need to. Something about Dreamers and the program gave me a chance to give back to the community I came from,” Gaby expressed.

Once Gaby got to know the students, she surprised herself. “I started to feel emotions for kids who weren’t even mine.” Now, she’s found an opportunity to be a mother to many.



# 2023-2024 Gallery







**Notre Dame Mission**  
VOLUNTEERS

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