



serving the local & international community

## Real Life 2021-22 Real Life Impact Report

Melissa Pearson, Real Life Program Director

April 2022

### INTRODUCTION

This Impact Report gives a general overview of the 2021-22 Real Life Program year. It includes locations and demographic served, activities, and quantitative data. A final report with all our financial and assessment data will be completed in June of this year.

### REAL LIFE HISTORY

Real Life is an after-school tutoring and life skills peer mentoring program that partners Youthlinc with a variety of organizations in the Salt Lake area. Real Life provides active, practical, after-school programming to youth with refugee or immigrant status in Utah.

Real Life was born through the visionary leadership of Ellie Seaborn, a Youthlinc employee at the time. She had been working with refugees at Hser Ner Moo Center and suggested Youthlinc focus on the teens, who were often overlooked by programs who resettle refugees.

In 2010, through the collaboration of Ellie Seaborn and Domoina Kendell, our first partner with Promise South Salt Lake, Real Life began working with refugees at Hser Ner Moo Center. Real Life has been growing and improving ever since.

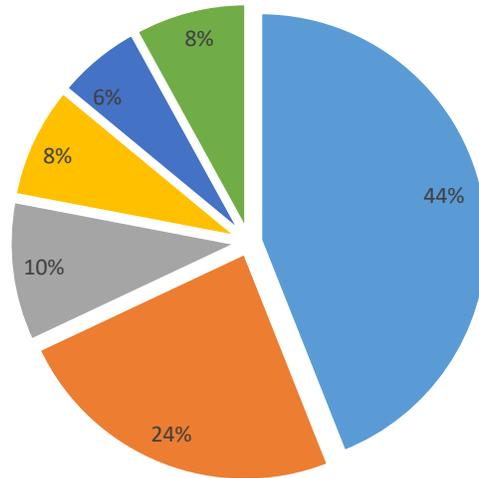
After a landmark grant from Synchrony Bank in 2014 and through a wonderful partnership agreement with Promise South Salt Lake, Real Life made a leap from two sites to five during the 2014-2015 year. Through additional community partnerships, Real Life added three additional sites during the 2015-2016 year and four additional sites during the 2016-2017 year.

In partnership with Promise South Salt Lake, Refugee and Immigrant Center - Asian Association of Utah, Salt Lake City School District, Granite School District, Project Access, and Umoja Generation. Real Life continues serving at twelve locations. Real Life provides profound opportunities to refugee and immigrant youth to practice and develop skills to make them more successful after high school. Youthlinc projects that Real Life programming will continue to influence 400+ students and 120+ volunteer peer mentors during the 2022-23 school year.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SERVED

Real Life currently serves:

- 400+ refugee teens in the Salt Lake area.
- 100% low-middle income families, 95% of whom qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch.
- 85% are Limited English Proficient (32+ different languages spoken)
- 38% male, 62% female.



■ African descent ■ Hispanic descent ■ White ■ Asian descent ■ Middle Eastern descent ■ Other

## REAL LIFE PARTNERS

Youthlinc is an organization that believes that partnerships are the best way to make our community impact as meaningful and robust as possible. We are so thankful to our partners and all the work that they do to make our program possible!



Umoja Generation

## REAL LIFE LOCATIONS

<p><b>COTTONWOOD HIGH SCHOOL</b></p> <p>2:45 – 4:45 PM on Monday &amp; Wednesday</p> <p>5715 South 1300 East</p>	<p><b>JAMES E. MOSS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</b></p> <p>3:30 – 5:30 PM on Tuesday &amp; Thursday</p> <p>4399 South 500 East</p>
<p><b>HSER NER MOO</b></p> <p>4:00 – 6:00 PM on Monday &amp; Wednesday</p> <p>2531 South 400 East</p>	<p><b>KEARNS-SAINT ANN</b></p> <p>3:30 – 5:30 PM on Tuesday &amp; Thursday</p> <p>430 East 2100 South</p>
<p><b>UTAH INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL</b></p> <p>3:30 – 5:30 PM on Tuesday &amp; Thursday</p> <p>350 East Baird Circle</p>	<p><b>LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</b></p> <p>3:30 – 5:30 PM on Tuesday &amp; Thursday</p> <p>450 East 3700 South</p>
<p><b>SUNNYVALE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER</b></p> <p>3:45 – 5:45 PM on Tuesday &amp; Thursday</p> <p>585 West 3900 South #2</p>	<p><b>EVERGREEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL</b></p> <p>3 – 5 PM on Monday &amp; Wednesday</p> <p>3401 South 2000 East</p>
<p><b>OLYMPUS HIGH SCHOOL</b></p> <p>2:45 – 4:45 PM on Tuesday &amp; Thursday</p> <p>4055 South 2300 East</p>	<p><b>Tuscany Cove</b></p> <p>3:15 – 5 PM</p> <p>3849 West 3500 South</p>
<p><b>HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL</b></p> <p>3:20 – 4:30 PM on Monday &amp; Tuesday</p> <p>2166 South 1700 East</p>	<p><b>UMOJA GENERATION</b></p> <p>3:30-5:30 Wednesday</p> <p>*Virtual*</p> <p>12 – 2 PM on Saturday</p> <p>150 North 1950 West</p>

## REAL LIFE INTERNS

Before the Service Year began Real Life interns were trained in classroom management, volunteer management, and lesson planning. The interns used these skills to oversee the everyday aspects associated with Real Life at each of their individual sites.

It is the Real Life Interns' responsibility to ensure that programming runs smoothly each day. They learn to anticipate the needs of their site and work to facilitate lessons in a way that is cohesive with the site's personality and structure, while empowering the refugee teens and volunteers to take ownership of their various roles.

Through assistance from the Real Life Director, and experience, Interns learned best practices for each of their individual sites when it came to lesson facilitation and delegation. As the year progressed, Interns became more knowledgeable about their sites giving them the ability to use the strengths of their volunteers as well as the local teens to ensure that programming was a success. Real Life gave them the opportunities to expand on their leadership skills and learn to run a positive and successful program.

Total Real Life Intern hours served: 1,704

Total Real Life volunteer hours served: 2,782



“Being able to return as an intern to the same Real Life site I volunteered at in high school has shown me so much. Seeing firsthand the students I used to volunteer with growing up and excelling in their schoolwork and engaging in the lessons has been one of the most rewarding things. From helping the quieter students with homework and participating in the lessons and now seeing them ask for help on their own has been so meaningful. I also love seeing volunteers return and the ways they keep the connections they have had with

students in past years has been amazing. I am so excited to continue with this program in the years to come!”

-Grace Humeniuk, Real Life Intern (2020-Present)

“As a daughter of refugee parents, I wanted to further my understanding of the resources offered within the community and the obstacles that are faced by the younger refugee population of Utah. Being able to interact with students and understand them on a more personal level has been an eye-opening experience and I hope to learn more throughout my years with the program!”



-Kathy Tran, Past Real Life Intern (2019-2021)

## FINANCIAL LITERACY

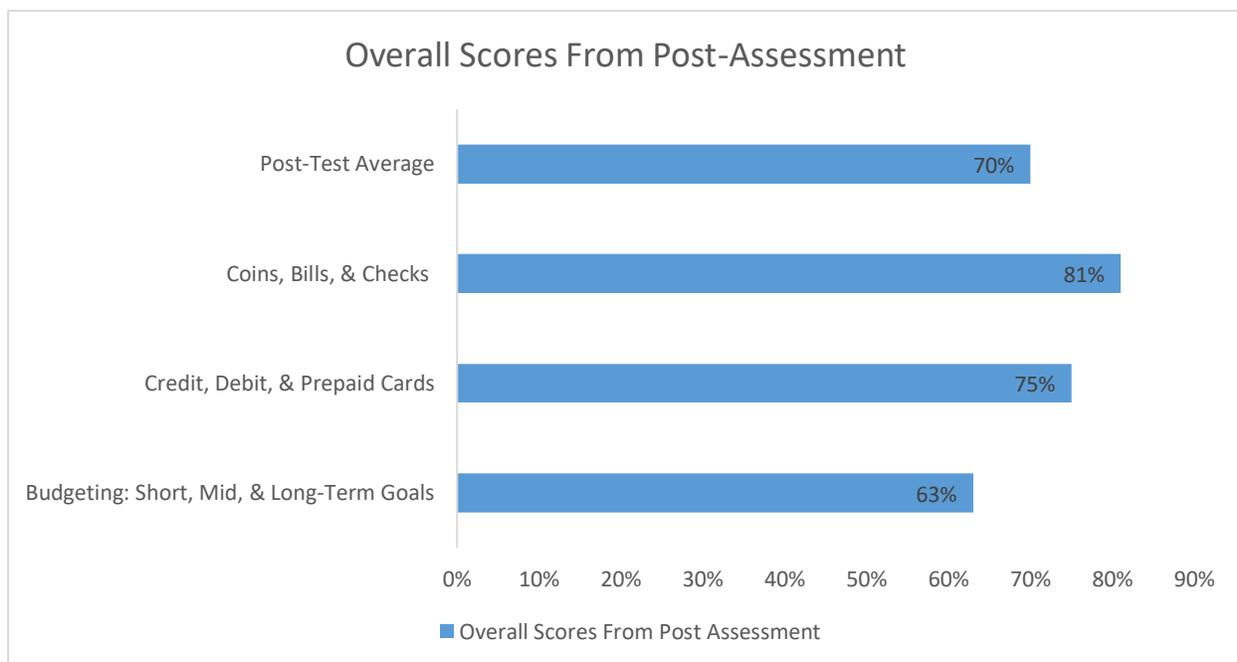
This year, Real Life continued to utilize the financial literacy curriculum written and administered by employees at Merrick Bank. We are grateful for this partnership and appreciate all the time and resources Merrick Bank supplied to create this visual and interactive curriculum, which included the following lessons:

1. *Currency & Banking: Coins, Bills, and Checks.*
2. *Currency: Credit Cards, Debit Cards, and Prepaid Cards.*
3. *Budgeting Basics*
4. *Budgeting and Financial Goals*

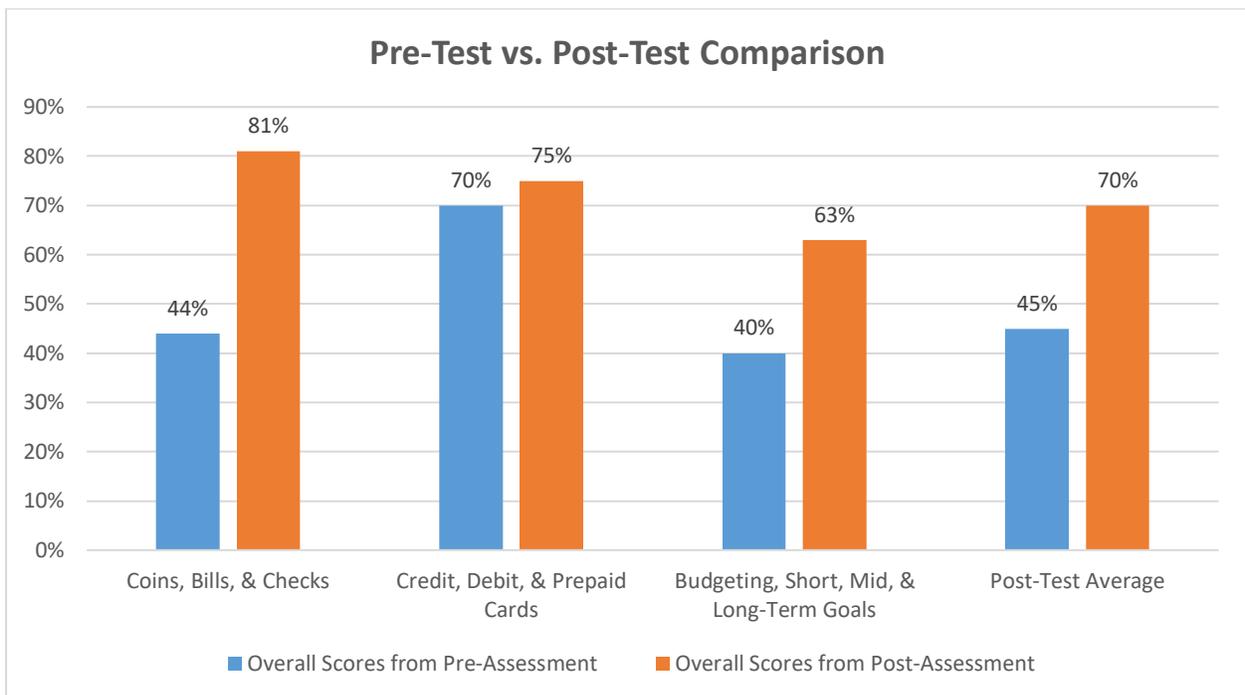


## ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

To measure the impact of our Financial Literacy and related lessons, Merrick Bank volunteers and Real Life Interns administered self-assessments, written assessments, and verbal assessments. Our goal has been to make these important financial literacy concepts more accessible to students with lower English proficiency, more active, and more practical to their lives.



The financial literacy unit contained four lessons and a review. The first lesson, *Currency and Banking*, focused on coins, bills, and checks. The objective of this lesson was to be able to identify all physical types of currency, understand the value of each coin and bill, and understand the basic elements of a check and how checks are related to currency. In the second lesson, *Currency: Credit, Debit, and Prepaid cards*, students were taught basic credit terminology, the impact of credit card and credit usage on their financial goals, and the differences between credit, debit, and prepaid cards. Within the third lesson, *Budgeting Basics*, students learned how to keep a record of their income and expenses, and how to divide their income into a simple spending budget- 'Spend, Save, Give.' The fourth lesson, *Budgeting and Financial Goals*, taught the students to decide whether their goals were short-term, mid-term, or long-term, and how to save accordingly. Each lesson had a set of activities to help the students have an interactive way to understand and retain the material.



The Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Comparison chart above shows the distribution of the assessment based on the curriculum category. As noted in the chart, there was a significant increase in post-test performance in comparison to pre-test performance across all subject areas.

- Coins, Bills, and Checks – 37% increase in post scores.
- Credit, Debit, and Prepaid Cards – 5% increase in post scores.
- Budgeting, Short, Mid, and Long-Term Goals – 23% increase in post scores.
- Total increase in test performance – 25% increase in post scores.

Merrick also piloted a new lesson this year for a few of our sites: Filling Out an Application. This lesson went into the do's and don'ts of completing an application and gave students the opportunity to practice applying for a job or a library card in a practical and hands-on exercise. Into the future, Real Life will continue to partner with Merrick Bank to offer financial literacy to all our students. In addition, Merrick and Real Life is in the process of developing a new curriculum surrounding job and college readiness. We are hopeful to transition between this new curriculum and financial literacy each year, offering an

engaging and meaningful variety of lessons to our students. We are grateful for this partnership and appreciate all the time and resources Merrick Bank supplied to create this visual and interactive curriculum!

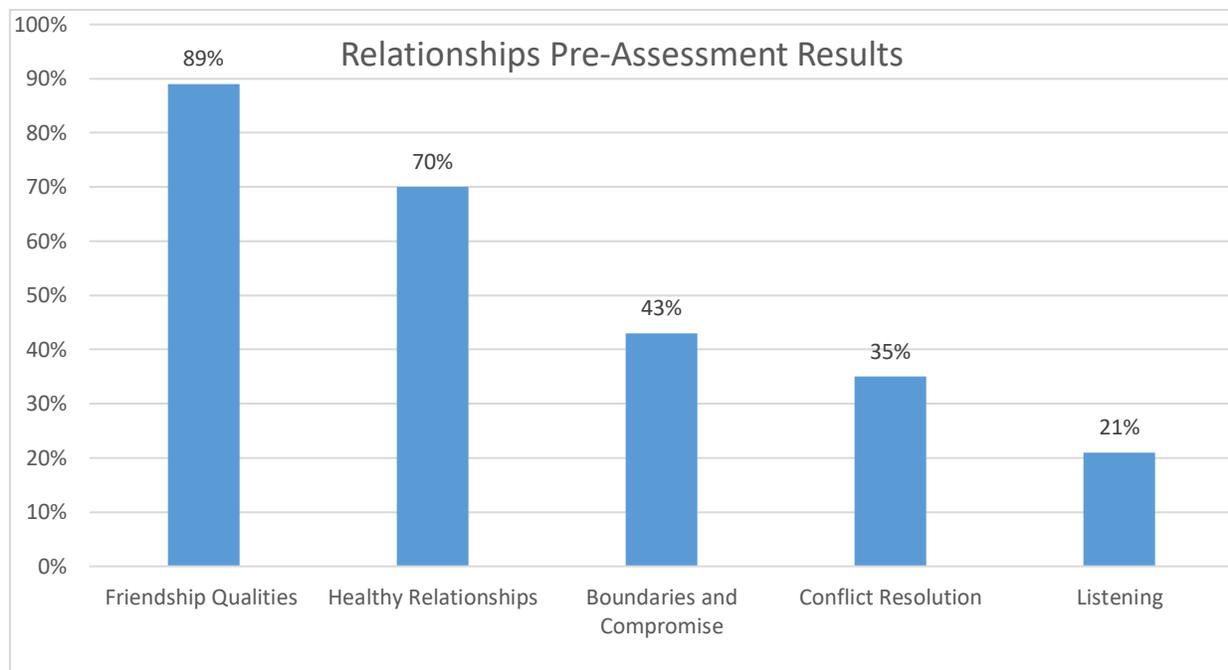
## ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT, LIFE SKILLS, AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Every lesson and activity Real Life offers gives youth practice and exposure to using English. Lessons specifically addressing communication and listening strategies are also carried out and were often integrated into the context of preparing for success in joining the workforce or getting into college. These lessons include team building and problem solving, healthy communications, career exploration, decision-making, anger management, anti-bullying, self-esteem, and stress management activities.

This year, Real Life students also focused specifically on a social and emotional learning unit which focused on building healthy relationships. This curriculum included the following lessons:

- Lesson 1: Friendship Skills
- Lesson 2: Healthy Relationships
- Lesson 3: Effective Communication
- Lesson 4: Working with Others
- Lesson 5: Negotiation and Compromise
- Lesson 6: Conflict Resolution Skills
- Lesson 7: Repairing Relationships

At the beginning of the unit, students were assessed on their abilities to define and identify components of relationships and communication in the following areas:



As indicated above, most Real Life students were able to identify good friendship qualities and components of healthy and unhealthy relationships. They identified the following that they looked for in friendship, as well as qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships:

Friendship Qualities	Healthy Relationships	Unhealthy Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart</li> <li>• Helpful</li> <li>• Nice</li> <li>• Same interests</li> <li>• Cool</li> <li>• Fun</li> <li>• Being there for each other</li> <li>• Good listener</li> <li>• Always has your back</li> <li>• Tells the truth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love</li> <li>• Quality time</li> <li>• Remembering important things</li> <li>• Treat them how you want to be treated</li> <li>• Boundaries</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Loyalty</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Patience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Disrespect</li> <li>• Rude</li> <li>• Greed</li> <li>• Jealous</li> <li>• Manipulative</li> <li>• Hate</li> <li>• Dishonesty</li> <li>• Gossip</li> <li>• Violence</li> </ul>

Real Life students had a more difficult time with boundaries, compromise, conflict resolution, and listening. While about 82% understood what conflict resolution was, only about 12% could identify the parts of a meaningful apology and how to make things right. Similarly, about 61% understood establishing ground rules and boundaries, but struggled when it came to compromising and upholding boundaries.

This unit dedicated to relationships helped students to continue in their growth and development as they interact with each other, their friends, and families. By the end of the year, Real Life students will be able to do the following:

- Understand components of small talk and active listening.
- Identify and uphold ground rules and boundaries in their relationships.
- Establish options for compromise and engage in conflict resolution including meaningful apologies and making things right.

## COLLEGE READINESS

Throughout the past few years at Real Life, many students have indicated that they want to go to college and have a decent job, however, there are varieties of barriers that hinder them following through on that trajectory. The teens polled indicated the following concerns (listed in order of concern) as barriers for going to college:



This year, Real Life continued to utilize college preparation curriculum aimed at preparing high school students for post-secondary education. The thirteen-lesson curriculum includes topics such as:

- Acronyms and College Jargon
- ACT Preparation
- College Profiles and Searches
- The Community College Advantage

- Where to Get the Money
- Applying for FAFSA and Need Based Scholarships
- The College Application
- Letters of Recommendation
- Writing a College Essay

When asked to explain how Real Life has helped youth to be more confident about going to college, the biggest factors were:

1. Homework help offered made them more confident in their ability to achieve success.
2. Direct lessons on college, scholarship requirements, and filling out applications.
3. Friendship and encouragement from Youthlinc’s volunteers inspired them into thinking they could take advantage of college opportunities.

In May of 2022, Youthlinc will again offer a need-based college scholarship to Real Life high school seniors or college students of refugee or immigrant background. The following scholarships will be awarded:

- (1) \$5,000 scholarship
- (2) \$3,000 scholarships
- (2) \$2,500 scholarships
- (3) \$2,000 scholarships
- (4) \$1,000 scholarships

## MUSIC THERAPY

This year, Real Life piloted a brand-new music therapy program. This program was based around a clinical and evidence-based approach designed to help students to process events in their life in a healthy way through music. Its main goals include promoting wellness, managing stress, expressing feelings, and improving communication. The typical approach includes some combination of making music, writing songs, singing, dancing, listening to music, and discussing music.

This year, ten of the twelve Real Life sites engaged in 2-3 Music Therapy sessions. The first session was designed around team building and aided in helping the students begin to feel comfortable as they start to work with the Music Therapist, while also experimenting and playing with different musical instruments. The second and third sessions were created around the specific needs of the students at the sites. So far, these sessions have been addressing things like setting boundaries or exploring emotions while also engaging in fun games and activities such as Musical Truth or Dare. As the curriculum continues to grow, Real Life is hopeful to be able to provide students with the skills to deal with topics such as depression, anxiety, mindfulness, healthy relationships, regulation, self-care and more!

## STEM

Real Life incorporates activities that challenge and engage students while also building on the concepts that students are currently learning about in their math and science courses in school. Each Real Life site this year participated in STEM activities that helped the students to think critically and problem solve as a team to achieve the best result.

Real Life students participated an escape room activity, paper plate challenge, egg drop challenge, flying saucer challenge, sail car challenge, and a hoop glider and balloon powered car challenge. Teens were

1166 East Brickyard Rd – Salt Lake City, UT 84106 – 801-467-4417 - [www.youthlinc.org](http://www.youthlinc.org) – [office@youthlinc.org](mailto:office@youthlinc.org)

able to experiment, and problem solve through the scientific process to create some fun, interactive projects.

In addition, Real Life partnered with the ACS Student Chapter at the University of Utah. This club, led by college-aged Chemistry majors at the University of Utah offers hands-on science experiments for students with the goal of getting students engaged with science at a young age. Studies show that exposure to science at a young age will increase the likelihood of kids growing into adults who pursue math and science fields in the future. We are thankful for our partnership with ACS and the opportunity it provides Real Life to get more students excited about STEM!



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Real Life helps our students take part in community outreach activities. We want the students to realize their power give back to their own community. The students have enjoyed their service, which affected family members, friends, younger refugee students, the homeless population Utah, and their community. The students have participated in the following community outreach activities:



- Made tie fleece blankets to benefit the homeless community in Salt Lake City.
- Made Valentine's Day Friendship boxes for participants to give to those that they love.
- Made and decorated fuzzy friendship socks
- Participated in a neighborhood clean-up day. The teens enjoyed being a part of beautifying their own local community.
- Created pony bead pal friendship bracelets
- Participated in creating seed bombs for Earth Day.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Real Life helps to provide community engagement activities for our students. These activities provide experiences this demographic rarely enjoy. Being present during Real Life programming qualifies them for these activities, which is a great incentive for attendance. Due to COVID-19 and restrictions set by our partners, Real Life was unable to hold as many field trips as we might in a typical year. However, that did not stop us from having as much fun as possible! Real Life participants were still thankful to be able to take part in the following activities:

- Attended a Jazz game
- Ice skating at the Gallivan Center
- College tour of the University of Utah
- Bowling at Fat Cats
- Roller skating at Classic Fun Center
- Go karting and mini golf at Boondocks Food & Fun



## WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Each year the World Refugee Day in Salt Lake City honors over 60,000 refugees that now call Utah home. This year, Salt Lake City will return to a regular World Refugee Day program, holding in-person events on June 17 and June 18, 2022. Youthlinc will collaborate with the Department of Workforce Services to run a portion of World Refugee Day at Big Cottonwood Park. To support this event, Real Life will seek volunteer support from donors and Youthlinc Service Year participants again this year.

This activity allows the Salt Lake community a way to celebrate the resilience of refugees. World Refugee Day is a great opportunity for Real Life to increase its visibility in the community as we help many people understand Real Life's role in serving the refugee community. We are happy to be a part of this event again this year and plan to continue to take part for many years to come!



## 2021-2022 DONATIONS TO REAL LIFE PROGRAMMING

### DIAMOND LEVEL \$20,000 +

- Synchrony Bank
- Merrick Bank

### PLATINUM LEVEL \$10,000 +

- Sorenson Legacy Foundation
- Low Family Foundation

### GOLD LEVEL \$2,000+

- UBS Bank USA
- Barker Charitable Foundation
- Ashton Family Foundation
- Lawrence T. and Janet T. Dee Foundation
- McCarthy Family Foundation
- Douglas J. and Geneva H. Fife Foundation
- Finwise Bank
- First Utah Bank
- Jesse and Marilyn Peck Foundation
- Kristi and Scott Phillips

### SILVER LEVEL \$1,500 and under

- Washington Federal Foundation
- Walmart Charitable Giving

## BUDGET NOTES

The 2021-2022 projected budget was adjusted as actual grant monies were received throughout the programming year. Although our fiscal year begins in September, many of our grants do not come in until later in the year. As a result, many of the grants received in 2021, help to fund the 2021-2022 program year. Any extra cash also supports unexpected expenses in the program year and unexpected growth.

In addition, in-kind donations vary each year, and we must retain a cash reserve to cover activities if they are not donated. This year we were fortunate to have a variety of items and services donated, including a field trip to a Jazz Game made possible by the Rudy's Kids Foundation, and discounts to Fat Cats, Classic Fun Center, and Boondocks for field trips.

Real Life is seeking continued financing to make programming possible at twelve locations next year. We are hopeful to receive continued grants from Synchrony Bank, Merrick Bank, Sorenson Legacy Foundation, American Express, Larry H. Miller Charities, and a variety of Salt Lake Family Foundations. The community support has been wonderful and we are confident that our regular donors will provide funding again this year and are hopeful to obtain further funding from new donors who are vested in the refugee and immigrant community.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING REAL LIFE POSSIBLE !