

CREATING OPPORTUNITY Through Teaching English



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

GR**W**
helping immigrants thrive



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD

God's Faithfulness in a new Season of Growth

The board continues to be encouraged that GROW is unmistakably God's organization and that His hand remains upon it. Over the past five years—through COVID, leadership and staff transitions, and a season without an Executive Director—the Lord has faithfully sustained and blessed GROW.

During 2023–24 strategic planning, the board agreed that GROW could not expand without dedicated leadership. In January 2025, God graciously answered our prayers through the hiring of **Rachel Conley**, a cross-cultural worker with Mesa Global, as **Executive Director**. Through this partnership, GROW now has a full-time Executive Director for the first time—allowing GROW to strengthen our operations, expand our reach, and serve more students.

Since January, Rachel and the team have accomplished much, including:

- Responding to new federal policy changes
- Educating volunteers on immigration issues
- Hiring and onboarding staff and recruiting volunteers
- Implementing new and revised policies and procedures
- Strengthening church and donor partnerships
- Revising the Bible materials
- Producing GROW's first annual report!

Alongside organization progress, the board also continues its own development. We extend heartfelt thanks to **Dennis Blankenbeckler**, Elder with Northeast Community Church, who served faithfully since GROW's inception, and warmly welcome **Kyuboem Lee**, Associate Pastor at Renewal Presbyterian Church and Missio seminary professor. We are prayerfully seeking additional members who will invest their time, talent, and treasure in this exciting organization (contact board@growesl.org).

We are also deeply grateful for our partner churches, donors, and prayer supporters. Your generosity and faith make it possible for GROW to teach English with excellence and share Christ's love with immigrants across Philadelphia. As we look ahead together with hope, may the Lord bless you and keep you, and make His face shine upon you.

With gratitude and glory to God,

-Karen Hojda

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEET OUR BOARD of DIRECTORS:

Karen Hojda,
Executive Director,
Private Family
Foundation

Jennifer Hogg,
Executive
Administrator,
Serge Global, Inc.

**Randall
Yardumian,**
Tax Manager, EA,
Bee & Bergvall

Azor Hui,
Licensed Clinical
Psychologist

Kyuboem Lee,
Pastor,
Professor,
Missio Seminary



Our Mission

At GROW, we help immigrants thrive through teaching ESL, life skills, and friendship.

Our vision is to see immigrants and their neighbors thriving in community and experiencing the love of Jesus.



Teaching ESL

We serve immigrants and refugees through six levels of conversational English class, designed to increase fluency so that immigrants can thrive in their new communities.



Life Skills

Our curriculum is designed with life application, helping our students navigate everyday life from grocery shopping to medical appointments and job interviews.



Friendship

GROW provides a welcoming community where our students and families develop authentic, caring relationships, fostering a sense of belonging in their community.

A Letter From our Director

Five years ago, my husband, children, and I landed in Philadelphia during the pandemic, abruptly relocating from South Africa. It was a season of loss, disorientation, and culture shock. Yet, God used that experience to give us a glimpse of the challenges our immigrant neighbors face every day.



After serving with GROW as a volunteer and support staff member, it was a great privilege to step into the directorship this January.

Teaching English addresses one of the greatest felt needs our immigrant neighbors face—without it, thriving in the U.S. is nearly impossible. Through teaching language, we help our students navigate life in the U.S. and move forward with hope.

At a recent orientation, our Mayfair Program Director, Sue, shared: *“I love being part of this ministry; GROW has drawn me deeper into the heart of God.”* Her words capture what many of us feel. Service doesn’t just transform those we serve—it changes us as well. Through GROW, we are learning to love more deeply, serve more selflessly, and let our hearts be burdened for the hurting in our community. God radically loves our immigrant neighbors, and we are honored to walk with them as they build their lives in the USA. We are often inspired by their hard work and resilience.

To our volunteers, donors, and friends—thank you. Your generosity and prayers make this work possible. With hope and expectancy, we look forward to all God will do as GROW continues to thrive and expand its impact.

Rachel Conley
Executive Director



EVERYONE COMES WITH A *story*

Since 2014, we have welcomed
3,486 students from **78**
countries.

2024-2025 Year Metrics

544 Students

6 Levels Offered

1620 Class Sessions Held

42 Countries Represented

16 Conversation Cafes

48 Children Cared For

10 Gained US Citizenship!

Highest Countries of Student Origin



Becoming a U.S. citizen is a tremendous achievement, representing years of language acquisition, perseverance, and hard work.

Brazil
Afghanistan
Georgia
Haiti
Ukraine
China
Dominican Republic

Celebrating Our Incredible Volunteers!

2024 - 2025

At the heart of our program is an incredible community of volunteers who generously give their time and talents to serve, creating a space where everyone feels welcome and knows they belong.

Even beyond teaching English with excellence, our volunteers celebrate life's milestones with students - birthdays, weddings, baby showers, and citizenship parties!

144
WEEKLY VOLUNTEERS



100
CONVERSATION CAFE PARTNERS

12,330
VOLUNTEER HOURS!

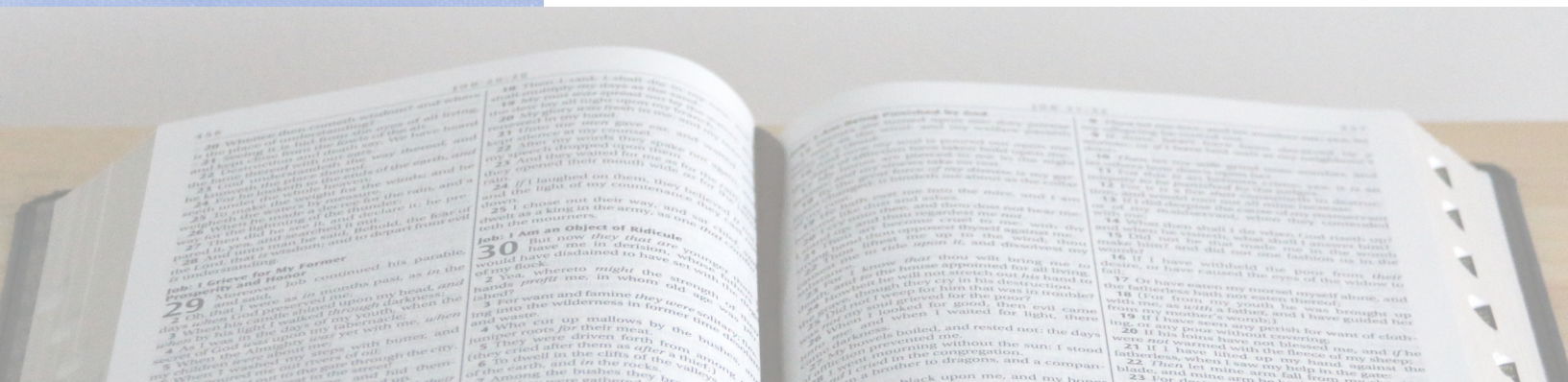
64 CHURCHES REPRESENTED

Teachers * Teaching Assistants * Childcare Helpers * Door Greeters
Substitutes * Conversation Cafe Partners



Sharing
God's Love

Every GROW class includes a short Scripture reading and prayer which strengthens students' English skills and introduces them to what we believe as Christians—that Jesus offers hope and salvation to all people. These lessons build vocabulary, reading comprehension, and fluency through meaningful discussion. Participation is always voluntary, but many students engage and enjoy this time!





Volunteer With Us!

Scan the QR code
to apply:



"Volunteering with GROW brings me incredible joy. Each week, as I look into the faces of my students —people made in the image of God from all over the world—I'm reminded of how special this work truly is. While we are teaching them English, we're also showing them the love of Christ. Over time, we become more than just a class; we become a family, a community. And to me, that's what it's all about."

-Carrie
Level 1 Teacher



COMMUNITY Engagement



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

New refugees and other immigrants in the community often have needs far beyond what GROW alone can provide. This year, we compiled a comprehensive list of resources and are prepared to refer our families to food banks, free clothing, healthcare, housing, and social services as needed.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Student demand for classes at both sites far exceeds our building capacity. All classes are full with waitlists. However, our goal to inspire and equip local churches has been realized. In the last few years, six churches have begun their own ESL programs as a result of GROW's support, and mentorship. We are blessed to have a program that is effective and reproducible!

IMMIGRATION SEMINAR

In March, GROW partnered with two volunteers from the Christian Legal Clinic of Philadelphia (CLCP) to host an immigration seminar. As immigration becomes an increasingly difficult and divisive subject, we were blessed to have an immigration attorney talk to us about the complexities of the immigration system and answer questions about shifting policies. It was a very informative time!

BENEVOLENCE FUNDS

This year, we raised \$7,600 in benevolence donations to provide immediate relief to students experiencing hardships. We provided rent and grocery support to two asylum seeking families in partnership with their local churches! We were also able to provide scholarships to several students.





Our Students Love GROW!

99%

Reported they
enjoyed
English class!

70%

Were recommended
to move up to the
next class level!



Learning English is not just about learning a new language; it's about opening doors. Many of us are afraid to speak, thinking we won't make it. But today we can proudly say we have made progress, and that makes all the difference. The course has been more than a learning environment. It has been a space of support, friendship and overcoming challenges. We learn together, love together, and motivate each other. And that is the true value we have as participants — as a group and as individuals. Thank you very much!

Kesia

Level 2 Student



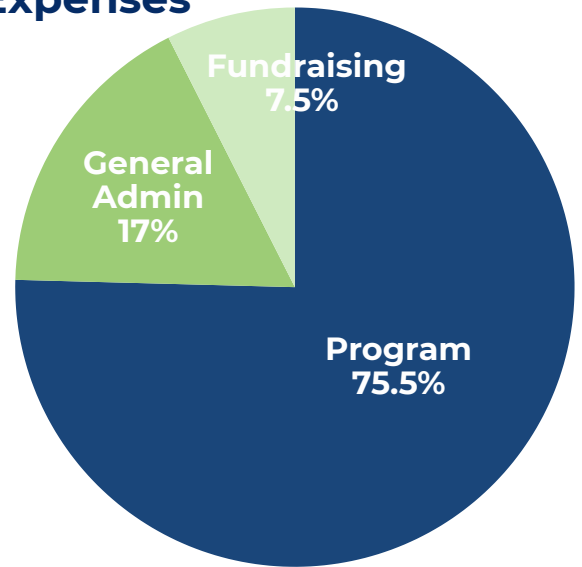
Our Finances

FOR THE 25-26 FISCAL YEAR

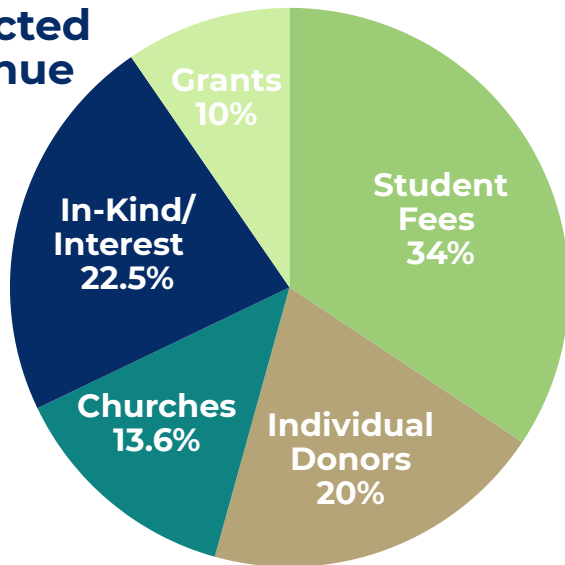
Our budget is a snapshot of how we steward the resources God has entrusted to us to further our mission. We are committed to integrity and financial transparency in all we do.

This past year, we give thanks for diversified streams of revenue—donors, partnering churches, and grants—that make our programs strong and sustainable. Your generosity makes this work possible!

Projected Expenses



Projected Revenue



GROW's Operating Budget: \$259,301*

*This includes \$52K in-kind giving through Mesa Global for our Executive Director's Salary.



I want to thank our amazing teachers for guiding us with patience, correcting our mistakes kindly, and always believing in us. Your support made us feel welcome, confident, and motivated to keep learning. To my classmates; thank you for sharing this journey. We helped each other, laughed through our mistakes, and celebrated every step forward. Learning English with you all felt less like a class and more like a community.

-Kerim
Level 5 Student

PARTNER WITH US!

As our budget has grown, we are seeking to raise an increased **\$30,000 in yearly donor contributions.**

Scan the QR code or give online: growesl.org/giving/



“For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”
Matthew 25:35



CONNECT WITH US

LEADERSHIP

Staff

RACHEL CONLEY

Executive Director

SUE DEHART

Program Director Mayfair

MEREDITH BRANSON

Program Director Bustleton

CHUCK AUGUSTINE

Assistant Director Mayfair, IT support

ALAN LEE

Assistant Director Mayfair

ROB ARNER

Assistant Director Bustleton

LAURA RUFF

Cafe Coordinator Mayfair

ALLISON DUNN

Bookkeeper



GROW

helping immigrants thrive

www.growesl.org



Our Mailing Address:

PO Box 48500

Philadelphia, PA 19149

executivedirector@growesl.org

Mayfair Location:

Northeast Community Church
3300 Tyson Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19149



Bustleton Location:

Seven Mile Road Church
525 Welsh Rd
Philadelphia, PA 19115