



# IMPACT REPORT 2021

STEP BY STEP:  
A JOURNEY  
TOWARD PEACE





# From Our Leadership



Fear. Universal to the human experience, it's a powerful emotion—powerful enough to start a war.

When people fear not having enough to eat, when they're anxious about how they'll provide for their families, when they're afraid that another bomb is going to fall, when entire communities must contend for the same few resources, violence can feel inevitable. Sometimes peacemaking looks like political leaders gathered at a negotiation table. And sometimes, it looks like food baskets for hungry families.

Our relief programs meet the basic needs of people caught on the frontlines of conflict, but they do more than that—they help families feel secure and reduce the risk of further conflict. These programs help to mend the frayed fabric of communities that have been devastated by violence. When people have food to eat, medical care for their families, and a stable roof over their heads, they can start to move beyond fear and begin rebuilding their lives together. **And in 2021, you helped our friends do just that.**

## You were there with relief.

Immediate relief helps mend the wounds of war, but preventing the next war requires long-term solutions. That's why we work to create jobs and businesses for our refugee and displaced friends throughout the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America. War can turn someone's life upside down, but starting a business can help them reclaim it. You also made sure that the hundreds who came through our tech hubs in 2021 received top-notch IT training, which helps connect them with the global workplace to find stable employment. Borders and boundaries once defined their lives, but now, our friends transcend both with their newfound ability to connect to the global hiring marketplace.

## You were there with jobs.

In the midst of a continuing pandemic,<sup>1</sup> in the midst of uncertainty and fear, our friends bravely started businesses and learned new skills that provided income, stabilized communities, and created peace. At the same time, people all over the world gathered in their living rooms and on Zoom to have hard but needed conversations, choosing to engage across lines of difference so that together we can live beyond our fears.

Our team had to engage in some of our own hard conversations recently. We listened as several former staff members shared grievances with our leadership, and we discerned what waging peace *within* our organization would look like. Peacemaking at any scale requires an honest assessment of what is in order to build what can be. And there's so much we can keep building together.

## You're an integral part of this global community of peacemakers, and it was an honor to wage peace with you in 2021.

## Thank you for being there.

With love and gratitude,

JR Pershall, Chief Growth Officer, and Preemptive Love Program Directors

<sup>1</sup>Throughout the year, our team practiced appropriate health and safety measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.





A group of children  
playing during a food  
relief distribution  
at a refugee camp in  
Lebanon

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# Understanding the Need

## IRAQ



Our friends in Iraq continue to recover from decades of conflict and violence with 4.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>2</sup> Of the nearly 1.2 million Iraqis who are internally displaced, 70% have been displaced for more than five years because of the war with ISIS.<sup>3</sup> Many homes were destroyed amidst the fighting and remain uninhabitable. Those who have returned home require ongoing assistance and support to meet basic needs because job opportunities are few. A Turkish offensive in Syria continues to create new waves of Syrian refugees fleeing to Iraq, and COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted our displaced friends, resulting in reduced incomes, increased gender-based violence, and disruptions to education.

The Syrian civil war, now in its 11th year, continues to devastate the lives of our Syrian friends. More than 13 million Syrians require humanitarian support to survive, and 6.7 million people remain internally displaced.<sup>4</sup> A lack of sustained access to health care, education, housing, jobs, and food has exacerbated the effects of war and pushed millions of people into endemic poverty.<sup>5</sup> The drastic depreciation of the Syrian currency has made it extremely difficult for families to put food on the table and meet basic needs with 12.4 million people food insecure.<sup>6</sup> The longer the conflict lasts, the more persistent losses become over time for our friends in Syria.

## SYRIA



<sup>2</sup>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), <sup>3</sup>UNHCR, <sup>4</sup>UNHCR, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), <sup>5</sup>The World Bank, <sup>6</sup>UNOCHA



## LEBANON



Our friends in Lebanon continue to suffer from a deepening economic and political crisis. With government corruption and an ongoing failure to implement reforms, the World Bank names this one of the top 10 most severe global crises since the 19th century, while many experts believe it may be in the top three.<sup>7</sup> Nearly 80% of Lebanese people live near or below the poverty line,<sup>8</sup> and families suffer from fuel and electricity shortages alongside the inability to buy enough food and drinking water. Our friends in Lebanon also continue to recover from the 2020 Beirut port explosion that ripped through homes, businesses, and places of worship, displacing 300,000 people.<sup>9</sup>

For more than four decades, our friends in Afghanistan have known the constant peril of war. Nearly 6 million Afghans have been driven out of their homes by conflict, violence, and poverty.<sup>10</sup> In 2021, Afghans faced intensified conflict, the withdrawal of international forces, and the takeover of the country by the Taliban in August. Persistent drought and COVID-19 exacerbated the impact of the government's collapse, leading to outright economic catastrophe for those already in poverty. More than half the population—24.4 million people—are in need of humanitarian assistance, and a staggering 23 million people are projected to be in emergency levels of food insecurity in 2022.<sup>11</sup>

## AFGHANISTAN



## ISRAEL-PALESTINE



Fifty-four years of Israeli military occupation and ongoing resistance by Palestinian armed groups continue to render our friends in Israel-Palestine in need of support. Nearly 2.45 million Palestinians require humanitarian assistance, 50% of whom are children.<sup>12</sup> In Gaza, where Palestinians have lived under a blockade since 2007, Palestinians are trapped in a cycle of poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity. Our friends in Gaza have limited access to basic services such as medical care, safe water, and electricity. Few have educational and employment opportunities. An escalation of hostilities in Gaza in May 2021 killed hundreds, injured thousands, and displaced tens of thousands of people.

<sup>7</sup>The World Bank, <sup>8</sup>The Middle East Institute (MEI), <sup>9</sup>Human Rights Watch (HRW),  
<sup>10</sup>UNHCR, <sup>11</sup>UNOCHA, <sup>12</sup>UNOCHA



# 2021 Impact in the Middle East and Asia

Relief and peacemaking in the form of agricultural projects that create jobs and sustenance, one-to-one businesses empowering individual families, top-notch IT training to increase employability, and artisan makers at work.

## LEBANON

**4,680**

people served with 2,440 month-long food packs

**153**

homes renovated for more than 200 victims of Beirut port explosion since August 2020

**15,109**

meals to children in school

## ISRAEL-PALESTINE

**110**

children in Gaza received nutritional aid

**39**

children received psychosocial trauma care

## SYRIA

**13,548**

people served with 8,000 month-long food packs

**33,226**

clinic visits for adults

**45**

Makers earned income for their products

**14,772**

clinic visits for children

## IRAQ

**4,200**

people served with 600 month-long food packs

**9**

homes rebuilt for 62 Yazidi victims of genocide

**300**

blankets provided for winterization project

**121**

Makers earned income for their products

**1,045**

pounds (474 kg) of crops harvested

**883**

tech workers trained to secure quality jobs in the modern workforce

**567**

one-to-one businesses opened

## AFGHANISTAN

**3,500**

people served with 500 month-long food packs





# Ending War in the Middle East

Preemptive Love has grown considerably since our early days providing heart surgeries for Iraqi children, but we've remained deeply rooted in the Middle East. It's a region associated with war, but that doesn't tell the full story. In every community impacted by violence, "normal" life persists: children attending school, men and women providing for their families, people hosting their neighbors for tea.

Our Middle East teams are hard at work to support families as they navigate life in the midst of challenging circumstances. In some countries, families are rebuilding after war and genocide, creating a new future for themselves. They're opening businesses and investing in their communities. In certain countries where the situation is dire and tensions are high, people simply need food and medical care to survive. Whatever the season our friends are in, your partnership ensures that we're there to wage peace in the ways they need it most.



“[Playing sports] helps him go through this hard time in a healthy way, because it helps him release his tension and safely interact with his peers. We didn't even know about the food assistance! It is very needed ... and everyone is struggling to meet their needs for food.” – Rahman about his son participating in our youth peace-building and food assistance program in Lebanon



To learn more about our sports program, see Notes from a Field Officer: <https://bit.ly/3CRDSji>





## MINA

Mina and her husband are from Syria. In the midst of an 11-year civil war, where displaced families are forced to shift locations repeatedly, it's not uncommon for fertility to be affected. After numerous visits to doctors, Mina and her husband were faced with the possibility of never being parents. They felt shame and defeat.

Life changed when Mina heard about Dr. Hiba, an OBGYN at our medical clinic in Harasta, Syria. A month after extensive tests and a treatment plan from the doctor, the family learned the great news that a baby was on the way. Mina's husband wept with joy at the news, and Mina is thrilled to finally experience the joys of motherhood—a reminder that life endures even in the middle of war.



**You can read more  
great success stories at:**  
<https://bit.ly/3wlgxW6>



## KHALID

In 2014, ISIS invaded Khalid's hometown, forcing him and his family of six to flee to the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Upon their return, they discovered their house was destroyed. They had no choice but to live in a makeshift shelter, and Khalid worked as a day laborer earning \$20 per week. Finances were tight and debt accumulated. Their children could no longer attend school.


Our Job Coaches met with Khalid in early 2021. Together, they created a plan for him to start his own business selling propane bottles. Khalid's business quickly grew, and his income increased by 250% after just two months of operations.

As his profits grew, Khalid reinvested his earnings to purchase more inventory and eventually two vehicles to transport the propane bottles, expanding his reach into nearby villages so families in remote areas could cook and heat their homes. Eleven months after opening his business, Khalid now makes approximately \$2,000 per month, a staggering 2,208% increase from his income prior to opening his business.<sup>13</sup>

"Before implementing this business, I didn't have even one dollar to buy good food and clothes for my children," Khalid said. "But now, thankfully, I bought land to build a house, two cars, and provide for all my family's needs and beautiful clothes for the children so that they can go to school. I will never forget how Preemptive Love supported me and made life easier for me and my family."

<sup>13</sup>This percentage increase is calculated using standard accounting practices that define the number of weeks in a month across a one-year period as 4.333.



A photograph showing a man in a dark patterned shirt and a black cap being helped by two women. One woman, wearing a black headwrap and a patterned shirt, is smiling and looking at the man. The other woman, wearing a black t-shirt and a colorful patterned face mask, is adjusting a pink and white floral baby wrap on the man's back. They are outdoors, with trees and foliage in the background. Other people are visible in the background, some wearing face masks.

At our baby wrap distribution in Mexico, a father learns how to wear the family's new baby carrier. These carriers allow parents to safely secure their babies hands-free so they can carry their belongings as they travel on foot over sometimes treacherous terrain.

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# Understanding the Need



## MEXICO



Our refugee and migrant friends in Mexico face multiple and complex humanitarian situations due to violence, food insecurity, and increasing economic inequity in their home countries. Thousands of migrants and refugees from Central and South America seek refuge in Mexico at record numbers. Many arrive with nothing, not even basic essentials. They lack resources such as food, water, shelter, and hygiene and baby supplies, and there is little access to employment or educational opportunities. Many of them—including internally displaced Mexicans—are fleeing to the United States. While they wait for immigration decisions, they are at risk of kidnapping, assault, and sexual violence. The health and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have compounded the migration crisis.

The deteriorating socio-economic climate in Venezuela has created the second largest refugee crisis in the world. Venezuelans continue to suffer from hyperinflation, violent crime, political repression, and food shortages. Seven million people require humanitarian assistance.<sup>14</sup> One out of every three Venezuelans is food insecure, with some of our friends on the brink of starvation.<sup>15</sup> Basic necessities are out of reach for most families. The minimum monthly salary is just \$3.00,<sup>16</sup> and more than 75% of the population live in extreme poverty.<sup>17</sup> The collapse of the healthcare system has allowed the return of once-eradicated diseases, such as cholera and malaria, and children are increasingly dying of causes related to hunger and malnutrition.

## VENEZUELA



## COLOMBIA



Four years after a historic peace agreement ended one of the world's longest civil wars, millions of our friends in Colombia remain in need of assistance as they emerge from the impacts of violence, natural disasters, and COVID-19. Although the 60-year-long conflict has ended, clashes with armed groups have persisted, creating additional displacement. More than six million of our friends in Colombia require humanitarian assistance, including ten million people who are food insecure.<sup>18</sup> Colombia also hosts the largest number of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Latin America with 1.8 million Venezuelans seeking refuge in the country.<sup>19</sup> Colombia's worsening economic situation, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has increased xenophobia and further divided communities.

<sup>14</sup>UNOCHA, <sup>15</sup>United Nations World Food Programme, <sup>16</sup>Reuters, <sup>17</sup>Reuters, <sup>18</sup>UNOCHA, <sup>19</sup>UNOCHA

# 2021 Impact in Latin America

Relief and peacemaking in the form of agricultural projects that create jobs and sustenance, one-to-one businesses empowering individual families, top-notch IT training to increase employability, and artisan makers at work.

## VENEZUELA

**12,390**

people served with 2,478 month-long food packs

**265**

people supported by agriculture projects

**2**

new businesses opened in 2 communities

**750**

people supported with hygiene kits

**4,388**

patients supported with medical care

**26**

persons identified as potential business owners in 2022

## COLOMBIA

**203**

people supported with hygiene kits

**24**

people supported by agriculture projects

## MEXICO

**1,868**

people served with 700 food packs

**500**

people given hot meals

**60**

baby wraps for infants

**2,318**

individuals supported with shelter essentials and improvements

**3,203**

people given short-term food relief in shelters

**290**

people served with hygiene supplies

**80**

people supported by agriculture projects

**11**

tech workers trained to secure quality jobs in the modern workforce





# Staging for Future Success in Latin America

When we began working in Latin America in 2019, we knew that violence plagued the region. We also knew that with the right resources and support, our friends could thrive. So many of them are on a journey: some are traveling north to seek asylum in the United States, others are crossing the Venezuelan border to find food and work in Colombia, and some are in shelters waiting for news regarding their immigration petitions. Supporting these friends requires flexibility and an ability and willingness to maneuver ever-changing circumstances—something our migrant and refugee friends know all too well.

Our teams meet our Latin American friends wherever they are in their journey to safety, to security, to peace. We bring baby carriers to mothers traveling hundreds of miles on foot with their children. We deliver hygiene kits to those who fled in the middle of the night with nothing. We build playgrounds in shelters for asylum seekers so children have a place to play as they wait. We set up mobile medical clinics to care for families in their own neighborhoods. We start businesses for people who don't want to leave but need income to help them stay. Experience gained from years of working in fluid circumstances helps our team respond to each need as it arises, to journey with our friends as they flee to relative safety.



“We usually don’t receive any help here. Sometimes we struggle looking for donors just to have everything we need to provide food to our people, but thanks to this distribution, our kids will have the food they need to be healthy. Without your help, these kids would be hungry.”

– Shelter Director in Mexico



In a valley settlement in Colombia, Venezuelan migrants and Colombians who lost their houses and jobs during the pandemic gather for a hearty community soup. Most of these families don't get to eat three times a day. Many adults forgo meals so they can feed their children.

Our team decided to organize a *sancocho comunitario*, a special event in which community members prepared Sancocho stew together to serve to everyone. Sancocho is a local dish that every household prepares when times are good—it fills the body and the soul with nourishment. In coordination with a local shelter, we gathered empty soup pots and brought bags of highly nutritious dehydrated soup and water. Each family brought something to contribute to the soup. Some brought vegetables or plantains. Others even brought meat. Juan helped with the wood and the fire; Jackie, Lili, Alejandra, and others helped chop vegetables; Pancho did the arduous work of peeling thick plantains with his hands because there were no knives left.

More than 100 families participated in this beautiful event. It provided essential food for hungry families, but even more, it helped build communal bonds among those who now call this settlement home. Afterward, each family received a dehydrated soup bag, which serves up to 80 meals.

"We ate breakfast this morning, but we didn't know what we were going to eat for lunch," said one of our friends. "There is nothing left. This soup came at the perfect time."



# MIGUEL

Originally from El Salvador, Miguel is a proud member of the LGBTQ+ community. As the oldest child in his family, Miguel learned at an early age to be the pillar of his home and support his single mother and three siblings. He worked various jobs to help provide for his family. In 2012, the family faced threats of violence from a local gang, and Miguel was at special risk because of his identity. Fearing for their lives, Miguel and his family sought asylum in the United States. Miguel was able to help all his brothers move to the United States, but he and his mother were unable to make the journey and remained behind.

In 2019, Miguel heard of opportunities to enter the United States through Juarez, Mexico, so he and his mother headed north to try and reunite with their family. Facing strict border policies and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, they encountered great challenges.

Miguel's mother was finally able to enter the United States as an asylum-seeker and reunite with her children, but Miguel was stuck in a shelter at the border city.

In 2021, Miguel attended a recruitment session for our WorkWell Mexico program and immediately connected with staff. He shared his heart with them, recounting the joy he felt when his mother reunited with her children, but the pain he felt staying behind. Miguel enrolled in the English-immersive Business Information Technology (IT) course to improve his communication, business, and technology skills and to surround himself with a supportive community.

Miguel remains optimistic for his future, but shared that some days, the only thing motivating him to get out of bed was coming to classes at WorkWell. Miguel has graduated from the program but is still in the shelter awaiting entry to the United States. Since WorkWell, he has been able to find work to generate income while he awaits review and adjudication of his asylum claim.

WorkWell provides more than skills, knowledge, and job opportunities: it provides a family for those who have had to leave theirs behind. Miguel is excited to share his knowledge with others in any way he can, and he looks forward to the day when he can reunite with his mother and siblings.

"I just want to share my blessings and start paying it forward," Miguel said.



You can read more great success stories at: <https://bit.ly/364MA1Z>

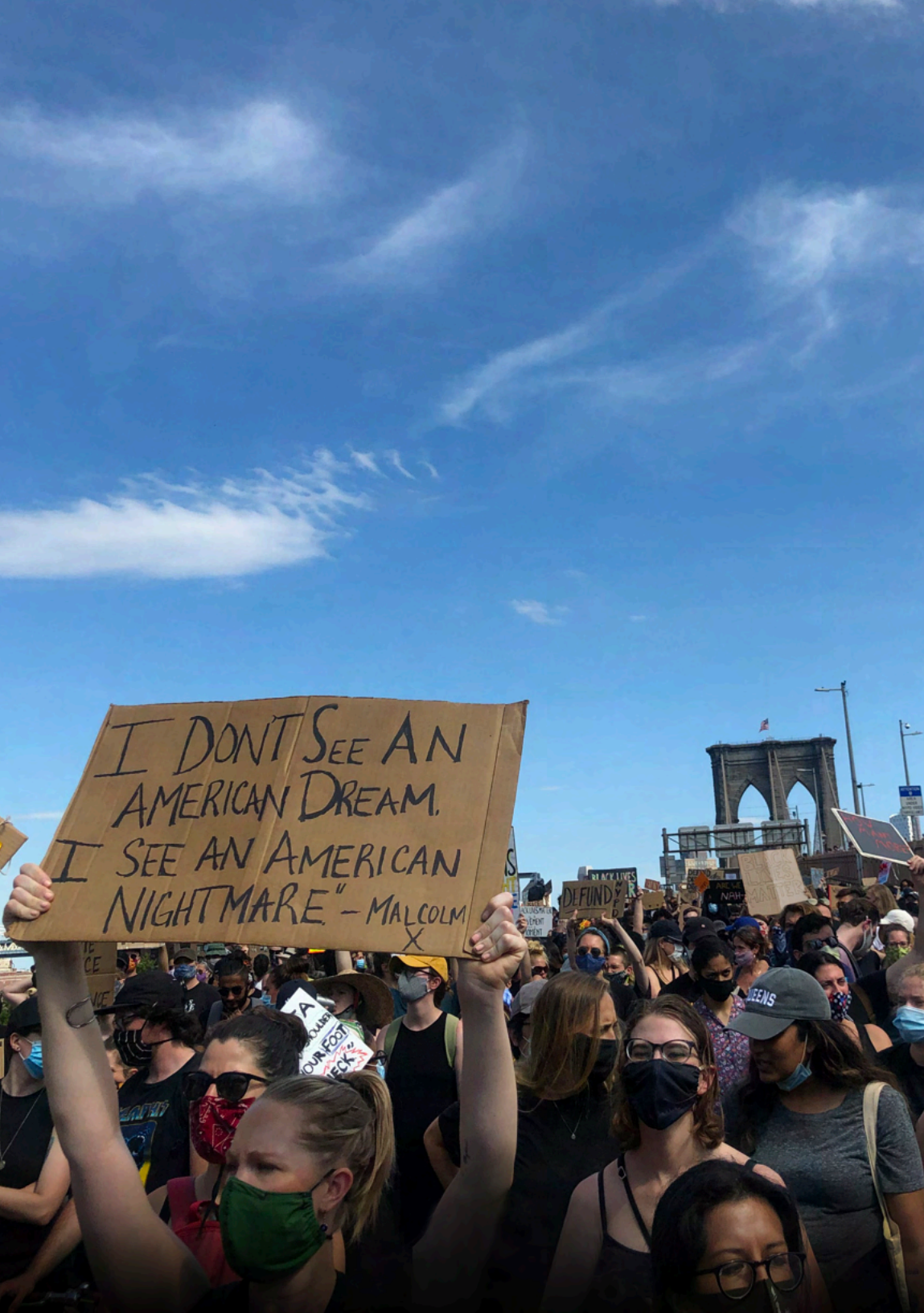




Preemptive Love's Generation Peace partnered with local fitness community Atlanta Run Club to explore the story of two men who came from different cultures to create an inclusive community surrounding the routine of running. Out of this partnership was born the powerful short film *Carried by Community*.







# The United States and the Global Peacemaking Community



By all measures, the United States remains a deeply polarized nation.<sup>20</sup> Communities are sharply divided over issues like immigration, policing practices, and racial justice, with partisan lines drawn more and more sharply each day. Gun violence threatens public safety and hate crimes recently reached a 12-year peak.<sup>21</sup> Economic challenges—spurred in part by the COVID-19 pandemic—have made it harder for even middle-class families to make ends meet, with 37.2 million people living in poverty. Amidst enormous challenges and communal fracturing, many Americans lack the needed skills to dialogue with others in meaningful, substantive ways, choosing instead to remain entrenched in their preferred camps.

<sup>20</sup>The Polarization Index, <sup>21</sup>CNN



# 2021 Impact in our Global Community

## 34 Gatherings in 32 locations<sup>22</sup>

12 new Gatherings in 2021,  
200 people from 10  
countries, 100 sessions  
hosted

## 2,693 attendees from 13 countries across our workshops, events, and webinars

Love Anyway, Anti-Racism,  
Peacemaking & Parenting, Gun  
Violence Prevention, Mother's  
& Father's Day panels

## 5 Generation Peace college chapters

200 individuals mobilized  
through Speak Your Peace, watch  
parties, and a group run

**Workshop Attendees Say:** 90% feel more equipped to effect change in their community or world. 97% now perceive failure as a necessary part of growth. 78% are better equipped to develop relationships with people who look, think, and/or believe differently than they do. 79% feel more capable of handling challenging situations with those who are different from themselves.

<sup>22</sup>Preemptive Love Community Gatherings are small groups led by two peacemakers who share at least one difference with each other. Gatherings meet monthly for the sake of listening, understanding, and nurturing relationships with intentionality for the sake of peace.



# The United States and Global Community

As Mother Theresa said, “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.” It’s a simple truth. But in a fractured world where polarization deepens and divides widen, it’s easy to forget. Even in nations like the United States where open war isn’t visible, the seeds of war are planted every time people fear their neighbors or feel threatened by difference. Through Preemptive Love’s Community programs, you’re helping us mobilize peacemakers in the United States and across the world so that those seeds never have a chance to grow. You’re co-creating space for people to dialogue with folks who look, think, and believe differently. You’re helping students harness their power for peace. Together, we are equipping peacemakers with the skills and understanding they need so that we can stop the next war before it ever starts.



“Thank you for a wonderful time at the Peacemaking & Parenting workshop! It has given us some good shared language as we navigate peacemaking every day, all day. The content was equally accessible to kids and adults at the same time.” – Alex in Pennsylvania





## ELIZABETH & JUSTIN

Elizabeth was in the middle of reestablishing her life after relocating just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Seeking some normalcy amid big life changes, she reached out to her friend, Justin, a flight attendant. They are not only different from each other in race—Elizabeth is white, and Justin is of Hawaiian descent—but also in ethnicity and sexual orientation. Together, they decided to host a Preemptive Love Peacemaking Gathering—one of the few held in person throughout the pandemic. They hosted their sessions with community members masked and outdoors, caring for each other's physical wellbeing while providing an emotionally safe space for members to have honest, brave, and meaningful conversations.

"We want to create a space to find shared humanity, a common thread within who we are, cultivating empathy for the people in our community rather than resentment for people, groups, or concepts," said Elizabeth. "If we can get people to replace resentment with empathy, then we can build bridges."



## NATE & CASSIE

Nate recently attended our Love Anyway Workshop and was most impacted by the week's lesson on the power of apology.

"I realized I needed to apologize to my roommate. I wrote him a letter . . . we had a nice discussion and it turns out that we both misinterpreted some of our actions and communications recently," Nate said. "But it was really good to clear the air and remove smoke, real or perceived, that might have been interfering with our relationship. Thanks all for the support!"

Nate is a prime example of putting what he learned in the Love Anyway Workshops into practice. Nate's courage and vulnerability were an inspiration to others in the group and encouraged another participant, Cassie, to take action as well.

"I sent a letter to a friend I had a falling out with. I saw it in the mailbox and thought of taking it out twice. It felt like my heart was in the mailbox," Cassie said. "Now I feel freer, and if nothing else, I 'spoke my peace' and honored my feelings."

Love Anyway Workshops inspired hundreds of people to effect change in their relationships and their communities in 2021. A global community of peacemakers is built one person, one apology, one tough conversation, and one reconciled relationship at a time.



You can read more great success stories at: <https://bit.ly/3KWQW9U>



# Thank You!

This vision to end war and stop the spread of violence is an audacious one. Some days, it seems downright impossible. But each day, this global community of peacemakers keeps showing up, renewing our shared commitment to friends around the world whose lives have been impacted by violence. Together, we claim that war is not inevitable, that communities can flourish, that a more beautiful world is possible. For all that your partnership enabled in 2021, thank you. Let's keep waging peace together.





# We love hearing from you!

Do you have any questions? Do you have ideas for more ways we can work together to wage peace and #loveanyway?

We want you to fully understand your impact—your essential role in waging peace in the world's most polarizing conflicts—so you can share the work we do together with friends, family, colleagues, and constituents.

**Please let us know how we can serve you better.**



**PREEMPTIVE  
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