

CONNECTIONS



SOUTH SUDANESE ENRICHMENT FOR FAMILIES

A newsletter for the South Sudanese community,
volunteers, mentors, and supporters



Letter from the Executive Director

Greetings to all of our supporters! As we leave 2022 behind, we look back with immense gratitude for the time, effort and resources you have shared with SSEF. Your generosity has kept our **empowerment initiatives** resilient, and our **core programs** strong.

We have offered Financial Literacy courses in the past, and have now launched our Financial Fitness Program for all adults and families. With rising inflation and utility costs, SSEF will work with adults to dig deeper into the details of budgeting and improving credit scores.

Despite the financial challenges that persist, we are confident that with continued, focused support our community will succeed. Together, our determination makes a difference. Heartfelt thanks for collaborating with us on this journey.

Best wishes,
Susan Winship



Letter from the Board Chair

As I approach my twenty-second year in Massachusetts, my oldest child is almost finished with high school and my youngest, twins, are in kindergarten. SSEF has seen us through many different stages and assisted us in **accessing available resources**. Parenting has been so complicated with pandemic losses. Despite the hurdles, SSEF support has been a constant—from **Preschool Scholarships, Summer Enrichment, and continuing education** for adults—the assistance is life-changing.

With your generosity, SSEF's actions have significant impact. Our **educational initiatives** help parents connect to and communicate with schools. From Salem to Shrewsbury, Lynn to Lowell, each system is different and the need is great, but every step forward has lasting impact.

On behalf of myself and the Board, deep gratitude,
Yar Ayuel

THREADS: Napkins Sewn by SSEF Community Members

South Sudanese community members are sewing and selling beautiful cloth napkins made with African print fabrics. When parents are home from their day jobs and children are home from school, parents may supplement their income with sewing napkins. Thanks to Caleb and Bonnie Loring, and Amy Mower for investing in this program! See our website, SSEFBoston.org for more information.



2022 SSEF PROGRAMS

Educational Empowerment Initiative

Education has always been the priority for SSEF. Our **Educational Empowerment Initiative** launched to expand from **Preschool Scholarships** and **Summer Enrichment** to focused support for students who are struggling, pre-K to college. The pandemic has been a **major setback for children of color**, in addition MA standardized test scores have declined. The academic, social, emotional, and psychological impact on our children has been significant. Parents need support assisting their children and communicating with schools. Our **SSEF Educational Liaisons** have been working with **twenty** families as they navigate testing, services, and manage communication. Generous grants from **Foundation M** and the **First Parish Lincoln Jean Wood Preston Grant** will help us to expand our initiative.



The Preschool Scholarship Fund

This school year, we have **seventeen preschoolers**. Since 2018, SSEF has prioritized pre-K education by offering enrollment assistance and scholarships to families. Although some families may be eligible for Head Start or a public program, there are limited spaces and waiting lists. **Early education is vital to children's success**, but is cost-prohibitive. The Preschool Scholarship Fund allows families to take advantage of this crucial enrichment, with SSEF funding up to 90% of tuition, capped at \$4,000. Thanks to the **Wild Geese Foundation**.



Summer Enrichment

Summer enrichment is more than fun—it's an **immersive learning experience** to build confidence, and strengthen skills. Since 2004, children, 8 years and older, have had the option to attend overnight camp. SSEF's commitment to partnering with great summer programs continues. With your investment, forty-nine children attended residential summer programs and ten children took advantage of community day programs such as Camp Fire and Girls' Inc.

Thirty-four campers headed off to New Hampshire and Maine for outdoor adventures. Gratitude to partners, Camp Calumet and Camp Wyonegonic. **Fifteen** students thrived in academic summer sessions at Cushing Academy and Phillip's Academy Andover. Thanks to the **Adelaide Breed Bayrd, Fortune Family, and Gloria Dei Foundations** for steady support!



Summer Community Gathering

An awesome August day brought SSEF community members together at the Lincoln Codman Pool for swimming, food, and socializing! A great Saturday for all.

Much appreciation to all of our supporters and program partners!



GOING FORWARD

Women's Program

Financial Literacy for Women courses have been offered since 2021 to increase awareness and build confidence with finances. In partnership with Budget Buddies (now **Money Matters**) **forty-two women** have participated in this program! With this course as a base, the Women's Program provides in-depth support, emergency funding and funds for education—ESL, Driver's Ed, vocational training, citizenship classes—with the end **goal** being more **empowered women**. Gratitude for the dedicated, generous support from **Cathy Rogers**.



THREADS, SSEF's Sewing Project

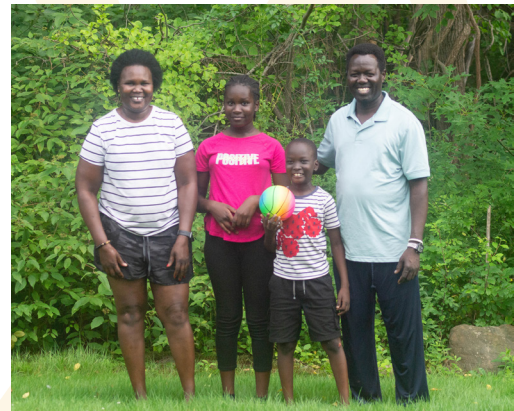
As mentioned, South Sudanese adults are interested in extra income opportunities that are flexible and family friendly. This Fall, four women were provided with sewing machines, lessons, and African print fabrics for making cloth napkins. Paid sewing projects for parents provide supplemental income! One maker commented on how satisfying the completion of napkins has felt and another appreciated learning a new skill.



Financial Fitness

Adults, families, college bound students, everyone needs financial stability for success and wellness, especially when facing the documented racism ingrained in financial institutions.

The 2020 **Getting Ahead Program** for families has been folded into the Financial Fitness Program for **all individuals** interested in committing time and energy to focus on finances: **credit scores, budgets, expenses, and goals**. With consistent attention and planning with SSEF's assistance, all participants in the Financial Fitness program will have access to **interest free loans** up to \$2500, as well as grants for approved "getting ahead" expenses. The cost of living in Massachusetts is rising rapidly and solid financial foundations will prepare the SSEF community to address housing and education needs.



Education Scholarship Program

Many adults strive to improve their employment situations with better pay or shorter commutes. Additional skills may give them more options, but the expense of continuing education is substantial on limited incomes. The Education Scholarship Program enables adults **to pursue better educational and vocational options** with support for GEDs, Certified Nurse's Assistant Programs and all educational degree programs.



South Sudanese Enrichment for Families

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10/22/22 Community Event: Cloth Napkins and Daffodil Bulb Sale

Appreciation to those who shopped and assisted with the fundraiser in support of our South Sudanese American women! Huge thanks to SSEF staff and all who helped with this effort:

Brilyn Boi, David Christenfeld, Charlie and Elizabeth Cooke, Nyanwut Chol, Caroline Dale, Aengus Delahunty, Nancy Goldberg, Barbara Hopland, Awur Khot Ajang Kuir, Achol Macam, Abak Marial, Ellen Morgan, Ruehl Nhial, Betsy Ogden, Anna and Kawa Wargo.

Great appreciation to our sponsors who made the event a success:



MA Housing Update: Instability and Major Upheaval

The housing crunch continues in MA with rising rents and limited affordable options. SSEF is working with a handful of families and young adults who are facing eviction. For example, a Malden family of five is living in a 2 bedroom apartment and must move by April. They are participating in the **Financial Fitness Program** as they assess their finances and consider options.



We are grateful for your investment in our hard-working community!

Go to **SSEFBoston.org** to donate by credit card or PayPal or donate by check:

SSEF, PO Box 492, Lincoln, MA 01773

Thank you for your continued support!