



**Sudan Relief Fund**

3220 N Street NW, Suite 302  
Washington, DC 20007  
888-488-0348  
info@sudanreliefund.com  
www.sdnrlf.com

VISIT US ONLINE  
AT SDNRLF.COM OR

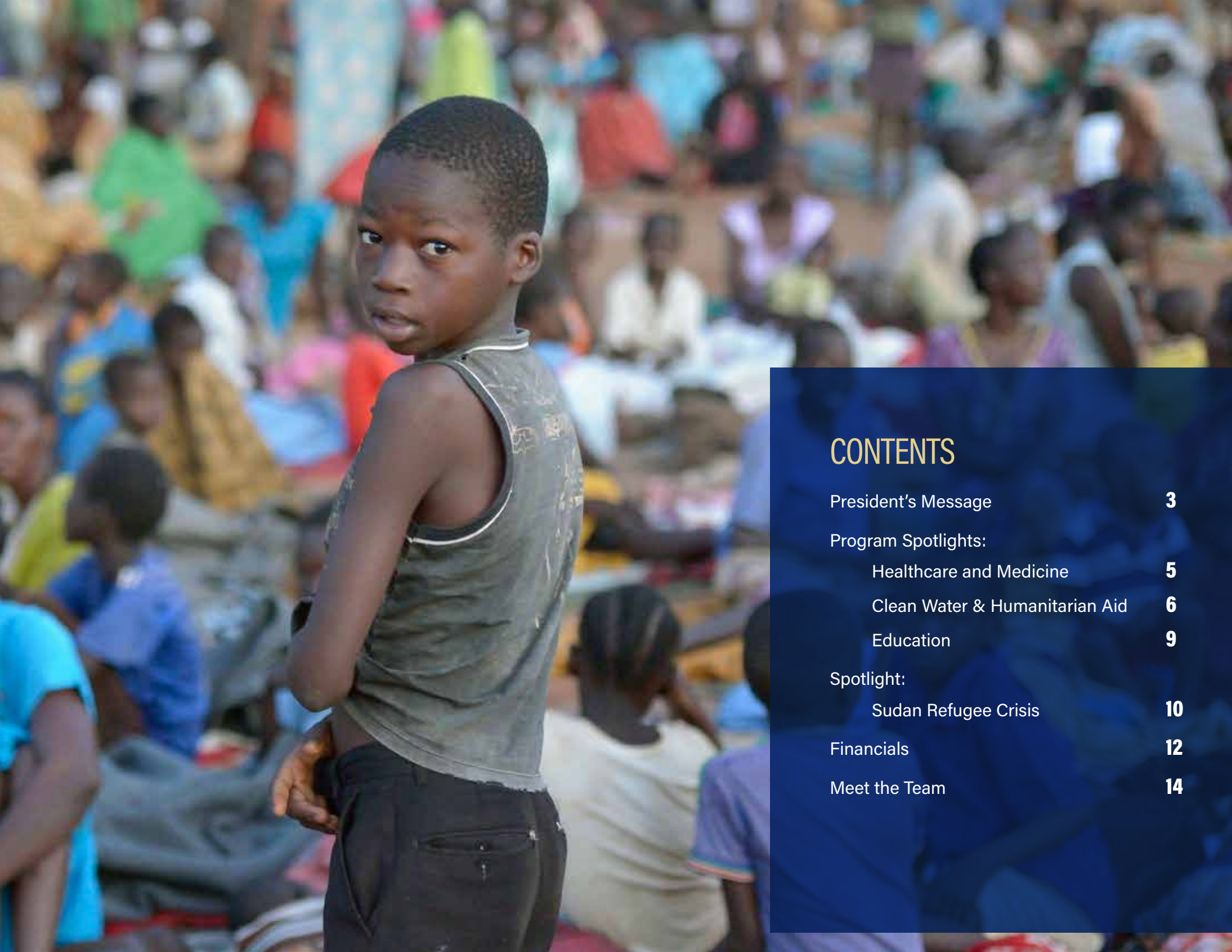
**READ MORE  
STORIES HERE.**



# 2023

ANNUAL REPORT





## CONTENTS

President's Message	3
Program Spotlights:	
Healthcare and Medicine	5
Clean Water & Humanitarian Aid	6
Education	9
Spotlight:	
Sudan Refugee Crisis	10
Financials	12
Meet the Team	14

# DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST,



**Neil Corkery**  
President  
Sudan Relief Fund

2023 marked Sudan Relief Fund's 25th year of saving lives and providing hope across South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. Many challenges remain, but the generosity of our donor community and the dedicated work of our partners on the ground continues to make a tangible difference in the lives of those in need.



2023 was a challenging year for the people of South Sudan. Struggles born of violence, flooding, lack of infrastructure, disease, and other factors were exacerbated by the renewal of violence in Sudan in April. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and returnees fleeing across the border from Sudan to seek shelter in South Sudan placed further strain on communities already struggling with limited resources. Yet the faithful commitment of our donors and partners in 2023 helped us make a great difference in the midst of so many challenges.

The advent of conflict in the region came on the heels of the historic and hopeful visit of Pope Francis in February, a trip he called a "Pilgrimage of Peace." The spirit of hope stemming from that visit has helped sustain our work in the following months. The Holy Father made clear

that the people of South Sudan are very close to his heart, and that he strongly desires the world take greater notice of the trials afflicting the region. Sudan Relief Fund Program Coordinator, Fred Otieno, obtained an audience with the Holy Father during the visit. Otieno recalled, "It was an encounter that I'll cherish for the rest of my life. It's evident the Holy Father cares deeply about the people of South Sudan, and he stands with all those suffering." The Pope blessed the work of Sudan Relief Fund (SRF) during the audience.

We have worked faithfully in the months since to bring that blessing to bear in the lives of those we serve. Your partnership in 2023 helped us continue our lifesaving efforts to shelter orphans, care for expectant mothers and infants, ensure access to clean water through the establishment of wells, and

provide medicine and access to healthcare in remote regions where people need it most. We've taken encouragement in this work from Pope Francis's message during his visit: *"Let us refuse, once and for all, to repay evil with evil. Let us accept one another and love one another with sincerity and generosity, as God loves us."*

Saint Paul assures us that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39). We continued to trust in that love in 2023, and to do our best to share it with others. With faith and hope, we will trust in the same love in the coming months and years as we work together for peace and healing in South Sudan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. A. Corkery". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



**MEDICAL CARE FROM SUDAN RELIEF FUND  
MEANS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
LIFE AND DEATH.**

# HEALTHCARE AND MEDICINE

## Mother of Mercy Hospital, Nuba Mountains

The tireless work of Dr. Tom Catena in the remote Nuba Mountains of Sudan was a shining light in 2023. The only hospital in a 300-mile radius and the sole option for over 1.3 million people, Mother of Mercy provides lifesaving care to hundreds of patients every day. SRF proudly partners with the hospital, supplying all of the medicine at the main facility.

Perhaps the most deeply felt impact of the hospital is in the maternity and prenatal care it provides: a great need in this region, where maternal and infant mortality rates in childbirth are among the highest in the world. Each year, over 500 women are able to give birth safely and successfully at the hospital thanks to the recently expanded maternity ward.

In addition to our work with Mother of Mercy, SRF provided medicine to dozens of remote clinics across the Nuba Mountains. Given the breadth of this region and the fact that its roads may be washed out and impassible for months at a time, these clinics help bridge the gap in lifesaving medical care for thousands of people who cannot make the long journey to the hospital to receive basic medicines.

## Nzara Hospital and the Safe Motherhood Project

Nzara Hospital, one of the only functioning healthcare facilities in all of Western Equatoria,

South Sudan, has been another beacon of hope in SRF's work in 2023. With only two full-time doctors, the hospital's staff still manages to provide quality treatment to over 300 patients each day. Many of these are expectant mothers or mothers and their newborns. Some are HIV patients, or facing other illnesses like malaria, tuberculosis, or leprosy. In this region, maternal, neonatal, and under-five mortality are all among the highest in the world. And yet many of these diseases are treatable if adequate care and resources were available.

SRF is working to help remedy this unconscionable situation. We proudly fund the CHAMPS (Children and Mothers Partnerships) program at the hospital to confront the scourge of maternal and infant mortality head on.

Mothers who once had no choice but to give birth on a dirt floor without sanitary conditions or medical aid are now bringing their children into the world in a safe, clean medical environment, enjoying, not least of all, the peace of mind and comfort this brings.

## Saving the Next Generation

Also, in Nzara, SRF supported in 2023 the work of the Comboni Missionary Sisters to save children born with HIV through healthcare, nutrition programs, and education. The Sisters' care goes beyond providing the vital treatment

needed to keep the ravaging effects of HIV on the immune system in check. They aim higher: not mere survival, but flourishing. They provide food programs and education for hundreds of orphans and vulnerable children. Nourished in mind and body, these children have avenues opened to them they could have never dreamed of otherwise. Where children of HIV were once denied the chance to go to school, now some go on all the way through university!



**Your partnership brings healthcare to remote areas, such as Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan.**

# CLEAN WATER AND HUMANITARIAN AID

## Wells and Clean Water Access

Access to the basic necessity of clean water, which so many of us take easily for granted, is still beyond reach for about half the population of South Sudan. The problems which stem from lacking this basic essential cannot be overstated. In some cases, thirsting families turn to contaminated water sources, risking waterborne diseases like cholera or typhoid. Other needy people, particularly women and young girls, have to face the risks of being attacked as they make long journeys to faraway water sources, carrying back containers up to fifty pounds in weight when full, simply to provide for their families.

In 2023, Sudan Relief Fund made great steps to help remedy this dire situation, particularly in the state of Western Equatoria. In the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio, through the funding of a generous SRF supporter, we finalized the construction of seven wells in seven parishes across the Diocese, providing safe water access for the many internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region as well as their Christian host communities. The Diocese reports that “the seven parishes and their parishioners are very grateful to Sudan Relief Fund for the overwhelming support for the water wells,” and pledge their prayers for our work and our supporting donors.

In addition to this work, SRF also provided hand pump wells and solar-powered submersible wells all across remote parts of South Sudan, impacting tens of thousands of people.

## Displaced Persons in Ave Maria Parish

Ave Maria parish near the Western border of South Sudan has served for years as a beacon of hope and a haven of respite in the jungle for those who had to flee violence or natural disasters. Though many of the displaced persons who had escaped into the region were able to return to their homes in 2023, several thousand remain, especially the elderly and handicapped, who will likely be residing in the parish permanently. SRF, with the help of our generous partners, has supported the lifesaving work of Ave Maria parish with vital aid. With the partnership of our donors, we provided food items, gardening tools, and seeds for long-term food stability. We also provided new water wells, and education to the youth and adult populations, with the construction of new schools and the development of an adult vocational program.

## Care for Orphans, Elderly, and Other Vulnerable Persons

Throughout South Sudan in 2023, SRF, with the aid of our donors, has helped ease the burdens of religious communities and other partners working to care for orphans, the elderly, and other vulnerable persons.

- In Rumbek, at the Pan Ngath Orphanage and Women’s Shelter run by the Missionary Sisters of Charity, our generous donors provided funding for the costs of the orphanage and finalization of the construction of a brand new building.
- In Wau, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa provide holistic care for the poor, marginalized, elderly, prisoners, youth, and those afflicted with leprosy. SRF’s support of the Sisters in 2023 ranged from providing food and non-food items for the Agok Leper Colony, to the renovation of classrooms throughout several primary schools run by the Sisters, to the funding of education for poor children who previously lacked access to school.
- In Nzara, the children of St. Bakhita Orphanage are enjoying their safe and secure new facility made possible with support from our donors, after being evacuated from Tombura last year. In addition, we provided critical food and non-food items to care for more than 100 orphans living here during the tenuous ongoing food crisis in 2023.

**ONE WATER WELL SAVES  
LIVES & CHANGES AN  
ENTIRE COMMUNITY  
FOR GENERATIONS.**







**SUDAN RELIEF FUND IS HELPING  
CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL IN A  
SOCIETY THAT HAS LONG DENIED  
THEM THIS OPPORTUNITY.**

# EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Our Lord said, “I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). The Mission of Sudan Relief Fund is not only to alleviate the immediate concerns facing this young nation, but to build toward its long-term stability and prosperity. One of the chief ways we accomplish this is by investing in education.

## Primary and Secondary School Development

In 2023, we committed to funding the construction of several primary and secondary schools throughout South Sudan. At the Redeemer Nursery and Primary School in Juba, construction began on a new classroom for the kindergarten section, which currently meets in an overcrowded room far too small for the growing number of students. In Source Yubu, we began funding construction projects and resource purchasing for Don Bosco Primary School, as well as supporting ongoing costs like salaries for teachers and staff. Elsewhere, in Wau and Nzara, construction began on two new secondary schools, all thanks to the commitment of SRF’s generous supporters!

## A Brighter Future for Girls

Women and girls in South Sudan still face great challenges from stigma and negative stereotypes when it comes to educational and career opportunities. Only around 30 percent of girls receive a primary education; and for secondary school the numbers are staggeringly

lower with only three percent of girls continuing their education! SRF is dedicated to advocating for girls’ rights to go to school. In 2023, we continued our support of the Loreto Girls’ Secondary School in Rumbek with scholarship funding for girls to attain their education. We also committed to the advancement of women’s careers, especially in the fields of nursing and midwifery. The Catholic Health Training Institute in South Sudan began in 2010 with just 18 students, but has grown exponentially in enrollment, with many of the students being women. To date, over 350 fully qualified nurses and registered midwives have graduated from the rigorous training program, and the majority of them have gone on to serve the local communities where the need for qualified maternal and prenatal healthcare professionals remains urgent.

## Investing in Teacher Training

In 2023, we continued our partnership with the Solidarity Teacher Training College, where among over 800 graduates so far, over 70% have gone on to work in education in South Sudan. Over 43% of students currently enrolled are women, and in 2023, for the first time women entering the college outnumbered men! To aid this promising growth, SRF committed in 2023 to funding construction of a new building to provide much-needed classroom space for the rising number of matriculating students.

Your partnership with SRF is vital to all of this work, where we glimpse beyond the crises and dire needs of the present, to build the foundation for a brighter future and hope for a stable, prosperous nation.



**Education changes everything for their future. Together, we are building schools, training teachers, and positively impacting the next generation.**



**This boat transports 800 refugees to safety with each rescue trip.**

*“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”  
- Isaiah 43:19*

## “A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS”

### SRF Responds to the Unfolding Sudanese Refugee Crisis

The White Nile River runs through the Catholic Diocese of Malakal near South Sudan’s border. This is the northernmost territory in all of South Sudan, and the river eventually flows directly into the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. With the outbreak of a brutal civil war in 2023 in Khartoum and its surrounding region, that river has become for many thousands of people a last desperate road to freedom, the way in the wilderness for a modern exodus.

To some, the journey is sadly familiar. Of the hundreds of thousands fleeing the conflict zone, many are refugees twice over, South Sudanese who fled years ago during the civil war. Now they must abandon everything they’ve built to flee the threat of violence once more, risking their lives in the long journey back to a place they once escaped. Alongside Sudanese desperate to find safety, they face threats of injury, sickness, lack of food and water, and other perils on the dangerous journey to a place of refuge.

Seeing the great humanitarian need as refugees and returnees began attempting to flee across the border in 2023, the Bishop of Malakal, Bishop Stephen Nyodho, reached out to Sudan Relief Fund to assist the Diocese in helping to provide a safer passage. We partnered with the Diocese to secure a ferry boat on the river to transport trapped refugees and returnees to safety. Since May, this boat has been able to transport 800 people on each journey, which takes two days to reach

Malakal from the border. SRF is proud to be one of the first groups on the ground helping these refugees and returnees in what is still a very dangerous region. We not only provide safe passage but food assistance along the way, an important resource for those who have fled often with only the clothes on their backs. We have been able to transport thousands to safety, all thanks to our supporters’ faithful generosity, and the boat continues its lifesaving journeys to this day!

For refugees who make it across the border to South Sudan, their struggles are by no means over. Once in South Sudan, they find their way as best they can to host communities who can assist them; yet many of these host communities already face great struggles of their own. Malakal itself has been severely impacted by war and flooding during the past two years. Tens of thousands of its own residents are already displaced persons who have fled violence, living in a United Nations Protection of Civilians (POC) Camp. A crisis of food insecurity and risk of starvation is the chief threat both to the host community and to the daily influx of refugees. SRF is working to provide desperately needed food resources even as we continue to help those stranded at the border to escape.

That refugees are fleeing to a place already facing such extreme difficulties underscores their desperate circumstances. As Bishop Stephen himself puts it, “When you are caught between two raging fires, you have to go through the one that’s a little less hot.” The bravery and

resilience of those undertaking the journey can hardly be overstated. Witness the case of just one girl we met on the banks of the White Nile, Martha. This had not been Martha's first experience fleeing violence. Originally from South Sudan, she fled north during the civil war, eventually ending up in Khartoum. Now, with the advent of violence there, she was forced once again to seek the path of peace amid violence and danger. The journey back to her native homeland makes her one of the many "returnees." She left most of her possessions behind, pooling what little resources she had with other families in a bid for safety. Despite these experiences, she had a smile on her face as she spoke to us, and her words were those of gratitude—she was just relieved to be away from the gunfire and bombings.

Providing safe passage to refugees who will still face hardship might seem only a bittersweet comfort from a distance, but to those who receive that assistance it is a lifesaving gift, giving them courage and hope for the trials ahead. Christians are called to bring the love of God to all those "who sit in darkness and death's shadow" and to pave "paths of peace" in the wilderness (cf. Luke 1:68-79). With the faithful financial and prayerful support of our partners and friends, Sudan Relief Fund is committed to fulfilling this duty, whether by providing a "riverboat to freedom," by transporting medicine to remote regions for the needy and sick, or by welcoming the desperate sojourner from war to a new and secure home.



**Your support brings critical food supplies and clean water to refugees fleeing violent warfare in Sudan.**



**Together we're fighting hunger for over 325,000 child refugees who've fled the war.**

# FINANCIALS

2023 was a truly consequential year for the young nation of South Sudan and for the people of the entire region. Our work last year meant perhaps more than any other recent year, the difference to many between life and death. Thanks to your generosity, under the grace of God, we have helped time and again to change the odds in favor of life.

In 2023, Sudan Relief Fund received \$6.5 million in support from our generous donors. As always, we endeavor to put as many of these funds as possible into immediate work helping those in need. Last year our total expenditures in emergency aid, ongoing support, and



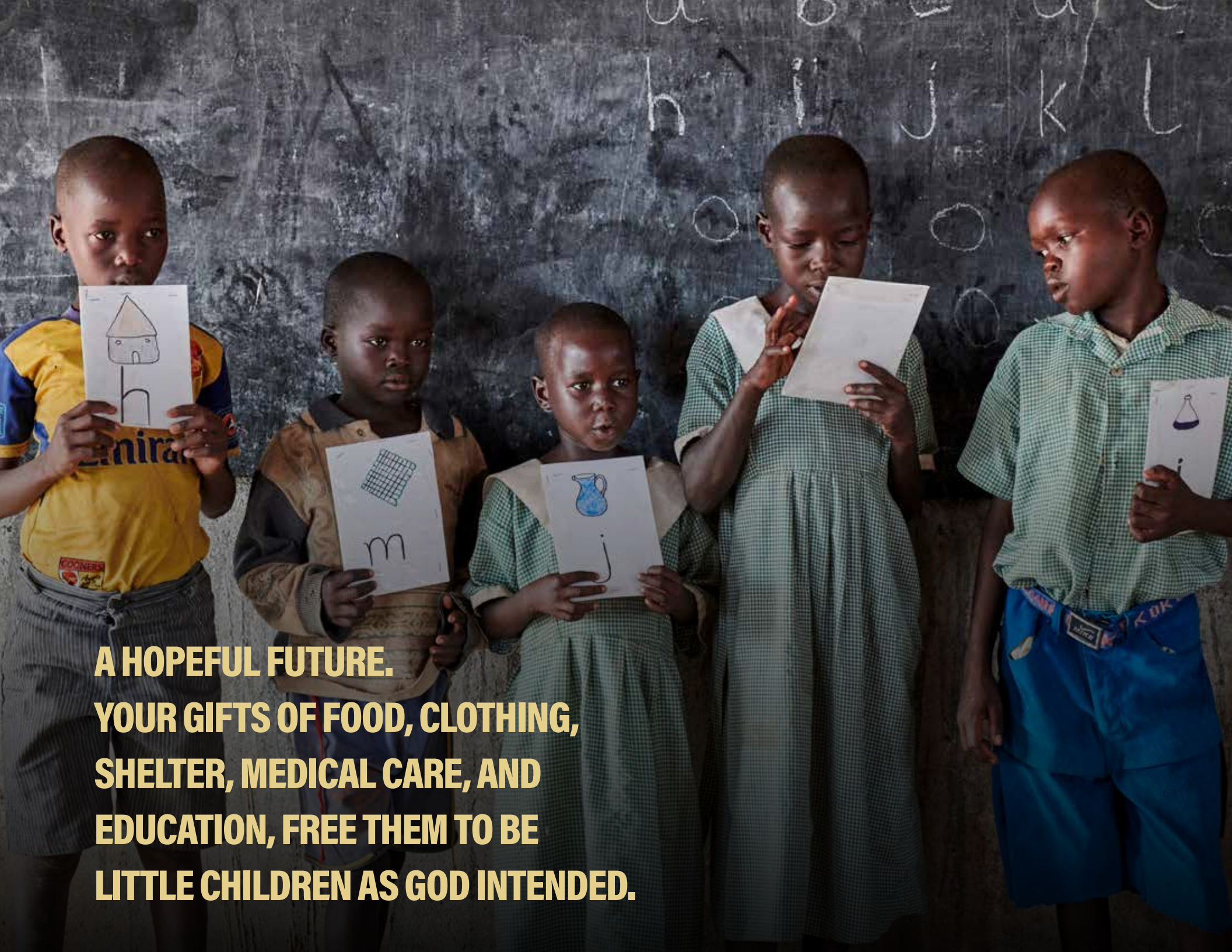
essential projects were \$4,627,162. Even in the midst of war and conflict, while helping to save those most impacted, we have not slackened in our mission to secure a safe and prosperous future for South Sudan.

We are especially thankful to members of the Sudan Relief Fund Mercy Society, who showed their commitment to the people of South Sudan through personal contributions of \$1,000 or more in 2023. In addition, Sudan Relief Fund is thankful for the kindness and generosity of our numerous foundation partners who continue to make this transformative work possible.



- **EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY: \$1,914,541**
- **HEALTHCARE AND MEDICINE: \$1,468,561**
- **CLEAN WATER AND HUMANITARIAN AID: \$1,244,060**

**TOTAL IMPACT: \$4,627,162**



**A HOPEFUL FUTURE.  
YOUR GIFTS OF FOOD, CLOTHING,  
SHELTER, MEDICAL CARE, AND  
EDUCATION, FREE THEM TO BE  
LITTLE CHILDREN AS GOD INTENDED.**

# MEET THE TEAM

## NEIL CORKERY

President



Since joining Sudan Relief Fund in 2005, Neil has traveled frequently and extensively to South Sudan, developing close working relationships with bishops and numerous groups working in the country, especially Solidarity with South Sudan; Aid to the Church in Need; Catholic Medical Missionary Board; and various religious congregations such as the Comboni Missionaries, the Jesuits, the Congregation of Christian Brothers, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), and various Franciscan communities. In his travels

throughout South Sudan, Neil has met with and learned from caregivers, doctors, relief aid workers, and local civilians to better understand the country's most urgent needs and challenges. With support from donors, Neil is dedicated to providing help, peace, and hope for the future by striving to fulfill immediate needs and aiding in authentic, integral human development necessary for long-term growth and stability in South Sudan.

## MATT SMITH

Senior Vice President



A graduate of Baylor University and Princeton Theological Seminary, Matt's entire professional career has been spent in the nonprofit sector out of a desire to "help the least of these" (Matthew 25:40). After spending years as a fundraising consultant for a variety of nonprofits, he joined Sudan Relief Fund in 2022 with a goal to bring lasting change to the world's newest country. In his role as Senior Vice President, Matt serves as an advocate for the vision and mission of Sudan Relief Fund and oversees fundraising strategy.

He considers it a privilege to bring individuals into a close relationship with the organization by connecting their giving to Sudan Relief Fund's work on the ground in South Sudan. In addition, Matt works closely with the President to cultivate partner relationships both domestically and internationally. Above all, he finds joy in listening and learning from others.

## DAVID DETTONI

Director of Operations



Before joining Sudan Relief Fund as Director of Operations, David served with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a United States federal government commission

created by Congress to advise the President and Congress on policies to promote international religious freedom. Mr. Dettoni has led many official delegations to the African continent, including countries such as Nigeria, Sudan, South Sudan, and Eritrea. He has developed a unique expertise on persecution, the religious dimension to ongoing conflicts in the region, and religiously motivated violence/terrorism. He also served as the co-staff director of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

## FRED OTIENO

Program Coordinator, South Sudan



Fred Otieno is of Kenyan nationality and a former religious brother. Fred holds a Bachelor's Degree in Sustainable Human Development, and a Master's Degree in Project Planning and Management. For

the last four years, Fred has overseen Sudan Relief Fund projects in the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio. During this time, he has been responsible for identifying the different interventions of various projects and linking them with Sudan Relief Fund. Fred currently oversees projects in other dioceses of South Sudan. He says, "Sudan Relief Fund creates a positive transformation in the lives of marginalized people, thereby promoting their human dignity. This is a true manifestation of Christ discipleship. Sudan Relief Fund is a Godly driven organization, and this is my motivation in living the Gospel daily. God bless Sudan Relief Fund and all of the donors who support this organization."

## KATE MELLON

Director of Development



Kate Mellon is the Director of Development for Sudan Relief Fund, where she has served for more than ten years, liaising with donors and managing critical functions of the organization to further

its work and illuminate the plight of the South Sudanese. Kate has a Bachelor of Science in Business Management, which she earned from George Mason University. She has spent considerable time traveling across South Sudan to gain a broad perspective of the projects funded and the scope of Sudan Relief Fund's work in this nation. Committed to the mission, Kate finds it rewarding to be an integral part of an organization that does so much to save lives and help suffering people in South Sudan.