

CONNECTIONS



SOUTH SUDANESE ENRICHMENT FOR FAMILIES

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



Letter from the Executive Director

Greetings to our donors and friends! It has been a busy year, and we are proud to share SSEF's news from 2021 and plans for 2022. We wish Orelia Jonathan, Board Co-Chair, well as she takes a hiatus while completing her Ph.D.; thank you, Orelia, for your efforts for the past 3 years! We are thrilled to announce that Yar Ayuel, a "Lost Girl", (one of the original five who arrived in MA) will act as an interim Board Co-Chair.

Yar earned her M.B.A. in accounting from Assumption University and is now working for Boston Properties. She knows SSEF programming well, most recently serving as a mentor and coach in SSEF's Financial Literacy for Women course. She is the mother of six super children and looks forward to working on the expansion of SSEF's programs for women!

SSEF continues to invest in empowerment **initiatives**; with your generous support we assist our families in **accessing existing resources** and making informed decisions. Our core educational and enrichment programs - **Preschool Scholarships** and **Summer Enrichment** - continue to thrive. Read on to learn more about our newest endeavors: **Educational Liaison** support, **Emergency Food Delivery**, and **The Women's Program**.

The African saying, "If you want to go fast, go alone; but if you want to go far, go together" exemplifies our mission and the current environment. Working together, with your concern and commitment, SSEF continues to go farther, planning and "planting" for our futures. Heartfelt thanks for joining SSEF on this journey, together we will go far!

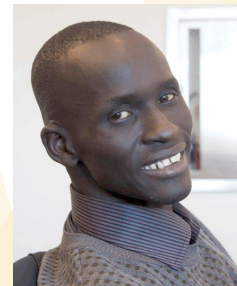
Best wishes,
Susan Winship

Letter from the Board Co-Chairs

While the uncertainty of the pandemic continues, SSEF is certain that continued, **focused support** will propel our community forward, despite the ongoing crisis. Our dedication to improving the lives of South Sudanese Americans in Massachusetts is unwavering.

As always, our annual newsletter highlights SSEF successes and gives thanks for the support provided. A wish for continued **growth**, and **gratitude** for being part of our SSEF family!

Yar Ayuel and Mangok Bol, Co-Chairs of SSEF



Growth and Change

This Fall SSEF enlisted the help of SOAR Management Consulting Group which provides pro bono management consulting services to Greater Boston nonprofits. SSEF staff, board, volunteers, program partners and donors have had many conversations with SOAR. We look forward to collaborating with them to make plans for our future. Appreciation to SOAR and all who participated. Here's to organizational growth and change!

SSEF is going Green!

We anticipate that this will be our final, mailed, hard-copy annual newsletter. Send us your email to receive our future news and updates, or let us know if you need a hard copy. And after you have digested all our news, please share this copy with a friend! southsudaneseboston@gmail.com

2021 SSEF PROGRAMS

The Preschool Scholarship Fund

Since 2018, SSEF has prioritized pre-K education by offering enrollment assistance and scholarships to families. **Early education is vital to children's success** in life, but is also cost-prohibitive. This school year, 21 children are enrolled in programs! The Preschool Scholarship Fund allows families to take advantage of this crucial **enrichment opportunity**.



Summer Programming

For years SSEF has partnered with different **camp and educational programs** to make sure children engage in essential summer learning experiences. **Summer enrichment is a necessity for all children!** Great appreciation to our generous program partners. Nine students attended **Cushing Academy** for a rigorous 3 weeks of academics, and 23 children went to sleep away camps: **Camp Calumet** and **Wyonegonic**. In addition



to the academic and outdoor residential options, we assisted families who needed day programs for their children, including **Pingree** and other local community partners. **Camp Calumet** is part of **Lutheran Services**, an organization with a long history of refugee resettlement. "Lost Boys" and "Lost Girls" attended Camp Calumet when they were new to the U.S., and now some of their children have had the same unique camp experience.



Antidotes to social isolation were offered as SSEF gathered for **community activities** throughout the summer. Families met on a warm day at Revere Beach for **food, fresh air, and exercise**. **Family bowling** on Fridays gave parents and children a chance to connect and try something new.

Thanks to Aler Deng for organizing! And, longtime SSEF supporter, Kate Dahmen, offered additional art enrichment this summer! Thank you, Kate!



Aler Deng



Kate Dahmen

Financial Literacy for Women

In 2021, we partnered with **Budget Buddies** to offer Financial Literacy for Women. Twenty-nine women participated in the 3 courses of 3 month online programming that included being paired with a "Coach" for individualized attention. The women gained a greater understanding of their finances and received a \$1,000 cash graduation gift from a generous donor. Participant Anna Majur shared, "I learned the importance of my credit score and checking my credit report. I was thankful for the opportunity to discuss budgeting and fraud."

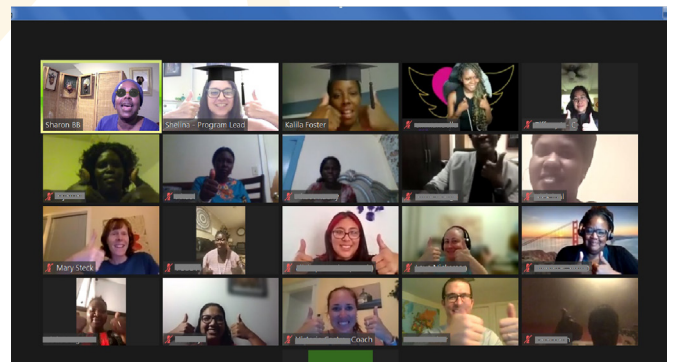


Anna Majur

"I learned the importance of my credit score and checking my credit report."

Great appreciation to the SSEF friends and staff who served as coaches:

Ababa Abiem, Pamela Arsenault, Yar Ayuel, Kate Dahmen, Elizabeth Ferry, Nancy Goldberg, Ellen Matathia, Bev Reed and Janet Wheeler.



GOING FORWARD

Women's Program

With the 2021 Financial Literacy for Women program as a foundation, the SSEF Women's Program will launch in 2022 to provide more in-depth support and funds for education -ESL, Driver's Ed, vocational training, citizenship classes, and tuition reimbursement- with the end goal being more **empowered women**.



Educational and Social Impact Study



Pandemic learning has been a **major setback for children of color**: academically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically. SSEF's Educational and Social Impact Study was initiated by

Brown University graduate student, Annette Lee, and led by former SSEF Social Worker, Pamela Arsenaault. Additional help came from Elizabeth Ferry, Brandeis University professor, William Maluil, a South Sudanese community member, along with Gabe Sherman, and Sebastian Wood, two dedicated volunteers. The report confirmed **learning loss and isolation**. Parents requested more support communicating with schools and assisting their children academically.

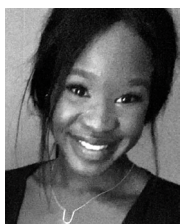
Please read the full report on our website: [SSEFBoston.org](https://www.ssefboston.org/covid-impact-on-learning)
<https://www.ssefboston.org/covid-impact-on-learning>

New SSEF Educational Liaison

In response to the need highlighted in the COVID study, Mary Caskins, SSEF community member, mother of Ruehl and Makeny, and wife of "Lost Boy" Daniel Nhial, has joined SSEF as our Educational Liaison. She will advocate for children and assist families as they navigate the educational system. Welcome Mary!



Mary Caskins



Anna Wargo

Emergency Food Delivery

Lost wages and **food scarcity** are still impacting many people. SSEF community member, Anna Wargo, will coordinate the weekly food delivery of donations from Food Link, a nonprofit **food rescue resource** in Arlington, MA.

Education Scholarship Program

In this pandemic economy, many adults need assistance to improve their employment options. The expense of continuing education is substantial on limited incomes. The Education Scholarship Program enables adults to **pursue better educational and vocational options**: GEDs, certification and degree programs. Currently we have two students at Northeastern University and one student at Labouré College, in the nursing education program

The Getting Ahead Program

Hard-working and determined families have completed one year of goal setting and mentoring with focused financial assistance. SSEF staff will continue to work with them to assess needs and priorities, and plan next steps for **moving forward**. It truly takes a village; together we will go far. Thank you to **Trudi Veldman** and **Bob Kamen** for launching this project!





South Sudanese Enrichment for Families

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Resilience Celebration of the Lost Boys and Girls: 20 years in America!

Last Spring our Gala was held online since the pandemic cancelled our planned March 2019 Brandeis University event. We safely celebrated the “Lost Boys and Girls” and their **20 years** of living in Massachusetts. (Now 21 years!) Resilience was the theme: journalists **Ellen Barry** and **Tom Brokaw** generously gave inspirational messages.



A big thank you to **Jon Sachs** who did all of the creative video and editing. Thanks to **Yar Ayuel, Akur Bior, Majur Anthieng, Taban Manjok, and Mangok Bol** for sharing their stories about life in America. Appreciation to **Sasha Forester** and Board Member, **David Coughlin**, for spearheading the silent auction. Many thanks to Board Member, **Nancy Goldberg**, for organizing the whole event!

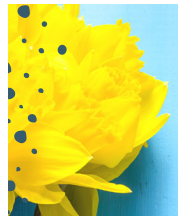


South Sudanese American Resilience Celebration speakers: Mangok Bol, Yar Ayuel, Akur Bior, Taban Manyok, and Majur Anthieng.

Daffodil Bulb Sale

Our Daffodil Bulb Preschool Scholarship Fundraiser was a success! Appreciation to all who purchased bulbs **in support of a bright future for our Massachusetts South Sudanese American children!** Huge thanks to those who helped with this effort:

Carina Hosford, John Manyiel, Manyiel Maraial, Cameron Chase, Zoe Power, Adi Yadhav, Liz Elfman, Irene Gruenfeld, Tamerat Broglio, Caroline Dale, Jennifer Glass, Anna Wargo, Mangok Bol, Cathal Stephens, Deng Nyuon, Tim and David Christenfeld.



We depend on generous donors like you!

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!