



PLAY • LEARN • THRIVE
2021 IMPACT REPORT

OUR TEAM

Our team consists of passionate individuals working collectively to ensure we are able to make the biggest impact possible in the lives of those we serve.

Board of Directors

co-Chairs

Alex E. Mimis, *Member since 2017*

Cargill, Assistant Vice President, Compliance

Susan M. Neisloss, *Member since 2014*

Big Bite, Inc., Founder and CEO

Treasurer

Terri Becks, *Member since 2020*

Campbell & Company, Former President & CEO

Secretary

Misha Rubin, *Member since 2014*

The Career Leap, CEO

Mandy Edmund, *Member since 2017*

Swing, Co-Founder / COO

Nathan Jerome, *Member since 2021*

McPherson Family Foundation, Managing Director

Nina M. McElroy, *Member Since 2021*

Bank of America, Managing Director and Private Client Advisor

Maya Samadani, *Member since 2021*

International Rescue Committee, Senior Director, Talent Management

Natalie Troubh, *Member since 2020*

Badger & Winters, Managing Director

Ali Wing, *Member since 2014*

Joywell Foods, CEO

Staff

Claudia Fleming, Executive Director

Kristy Aichroth, Chief Operating Officer

Melissa Middaugh, Chief Program Officer

Jill A. Pall, Chief Development & Communications Officer

Rositsa Bogalinska-Petrova, Bulgaria Country Director

Dr. Sophie Mengistu, Ethiopia Country Director

Thuy Ngo, Vietnam Country Director

Jacqueline Cadeau, Haiti Country Director

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PLAY • LEARN • THRIVE

244 Fifth Avenue, Suite K298, New York, NY 10001 (mailing address)

973.763.9961

www.org

December 31, 2021

Founder

Dr. Jane Aronson

Board co-Chairs

Alex E. Mimis

Susan M. Neisloss

Board of Directors

Terri Becks

Mandy Edmund

Nathan Jerome

Nina M. McElroy

Misha Rubin

Maya Samadani

Natalie Troubh

Ali Wing

Executive Director

Claudia Fleming

United States Headquarters

Kristy Alchroth

Chief Operations Officer

Melissa Middaugh

Chief Program Officer

Jill A. Pall

Chief Development & Communications Officer

Thuy Ngo

Country Director, Vietnam

WWO Internal Consultant

Advisory Council

Cynthia Dell Clark, Ph.D

Professor of Anthropology

Rutgers University Camden

Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Ph.D

Unidel H. Rodney Sharp Professor of Education

University of Delaware

Jill Raufman, M.P.H., M.S.

Director, Medical Student Global Health Programs

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Catherine Tamis-LeMonda, Ph.D

Professor of Applied Psychology

New York University

Dear Friends,

2021 brought another year of challenges. Yet, thanks to the determination of our local staff, the generosity of our donors, and the trust that WWO has built in the communities over these many years, we were able to meet the growing and changing needs of the children and families we serve.

In this report you will read about WWO's successes. You will hear the personal stories of the lives that we were able to shape and change for the better. Stories that illustrate the power of providing joyful, early learning to thousands of preschool children, of bringing life skills to young people who are preparing for adulthood without the guidance of a parent, of teaching children living with serious illness how to maintain their physical and emotional health, and the power of teaching marginalized parents how to nurture, engage, and bond with their children.

Unfortunately, our families have not been spared the global hardships. They continue to face resource scarcity, they are reeling from political and economic instability, they are confronted with civil unrest, and they survived natural disasters. Despite these obstacles, WWO's local staff continued to provide them with critical skills and consistent care, serving the children in community centers, schools, hospitals, and in their homes.

Over the past two years, as the needs of international children and families we serve became more critical, we understood that the needs of the children and families in the US were growing as well and that they too could benefit from our restorative programs. With that goal in mind, we looked for opportunities to forge strategic relationships at home. Late in 2021, we started consulting with the New York City Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender Based Violence working with the Family Justice Centers (FJC). These centers are safe, caring environments that provide services and support for survivors of domestic or gender-based violence and their children. We are eager to work with their dedicated staff and to be a part of this innovative service model.

We see 2022 as a time for growth and for seizing opportunities to do more to help vulnerable children and families internationally and at home. We are truly grateful to you for your support, and we look forward to earning your trust as we all work to help children play, learn, and thrive worldwide.

With gratitude,

Claudia Fleming
Executive Director

OUR PROGRAMS

WWO helps transform the lives of vulnerable children, families, and communities through trauma-informed, evidence-based programming.

Over the past 24 years, we have changed the lives of more than 170,000 children, families and communities, and worked in a total of nineteen countries.

In 2021, WWO served 12,173 children and adults in Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Haiti and Vietnam through our early childhood education, skills development, and camp programs.

Element of Play® and Element of Play® at Home Programs



WWO works with communities to ensure children are protected and engaged. Through our trauma informed, evidence-based Element of Play® program, children are introduced to safe and structured learning through play methodology that builds their social and executive function skills. WWO ensures children are seen, connected to the community, and therefore can be protected. When children have access to quality early learning activities and feel safe and connected, these activities have the power to mitigate the negative effects of poverty, toxic stress, and trauma on their early childhood development.

Positive Youth Development Programs



Science tells us it is never too late to help youth and young adults build up their capabilities. When they have opportunities to build the core skills needed to be productive participants in their communities, the next generation of citizens, workers, and parents will thrive. Our Positive Youth Development training sessions address self-care and daily activities, community, housing and personal budgeting, education, career orientation, and vocational training, communications and social relations, job search training, and family building.

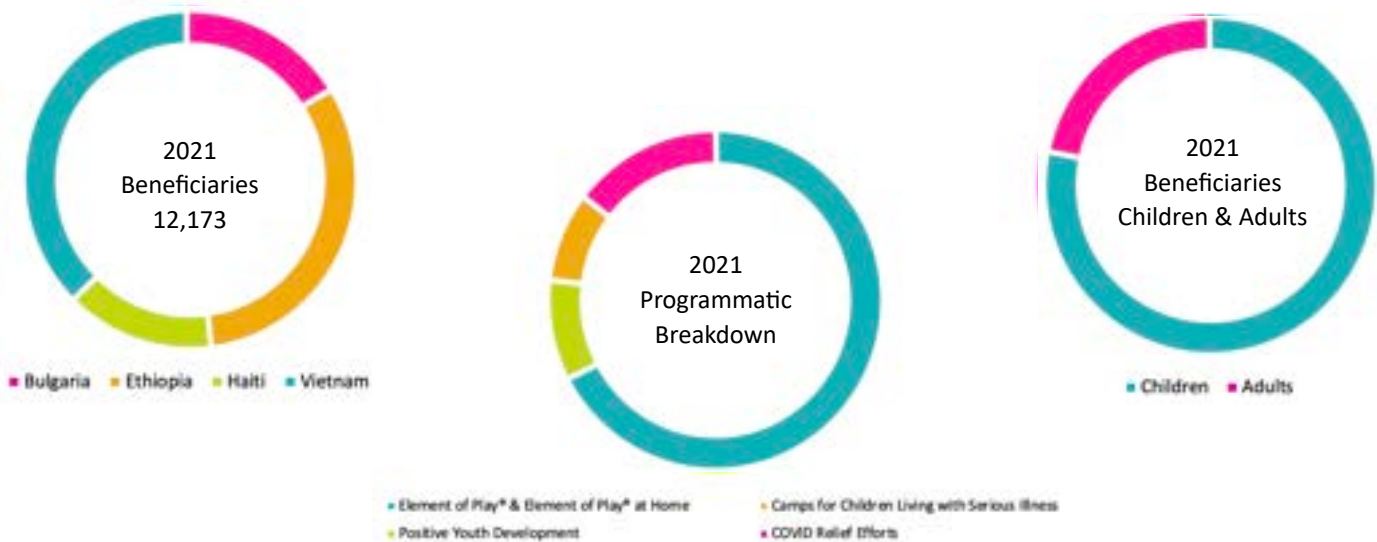
Camp Programs for Children Living with Serious Illness



In partnership with SeriousFun Children's Network, WWO runs camp programs in Ethiopia, Haiti, and Vietnam for children with serious illnesses. Our local teams conduct camps in collaboration with health care providers in local hospitals. WWO's professional staff adheres to the stringent guidelines of SeriousFun. In addition to residential programs, WWO conducts regular follow-up appointments throughout the year, as well as family weekends to increase the long-term impact of the camp experience. Our virtual camp program distributes hundreds of Camp at Home program kits to youth through local hospitals, thus strengthening the relationship between healthcare providers and campers while leveraging the positive health messages from camp.

Please visit wwo.org/our-programs to learn more.

OUR IMPACT



2021 Element of Play® and Element of Play® at Home Programs Impact

96% of children showed improved developmental outcomes

98% of caregivers reported a strengthened relationship with their children

98% of both children and adults reported and demonstrated improved psychosocial wellbeing

2021 Positive Youth Development Programs Impact

85% of youth and adults re-enrolled in school or became gainfully employed

89% of beneficiaries achieved increased job skills

98% of youth demonstrated improved socio-emotional skills, including healthy peer relationships

2021 Camp Programs for Children Living with Serious Illness Impact

82% of campers demonstrated improved adherence to medication

100% of campers reported improved peer and family relationships

100% of campers demonstrated improved emotional health and wellbeing

2021 Covid Relief Efforts

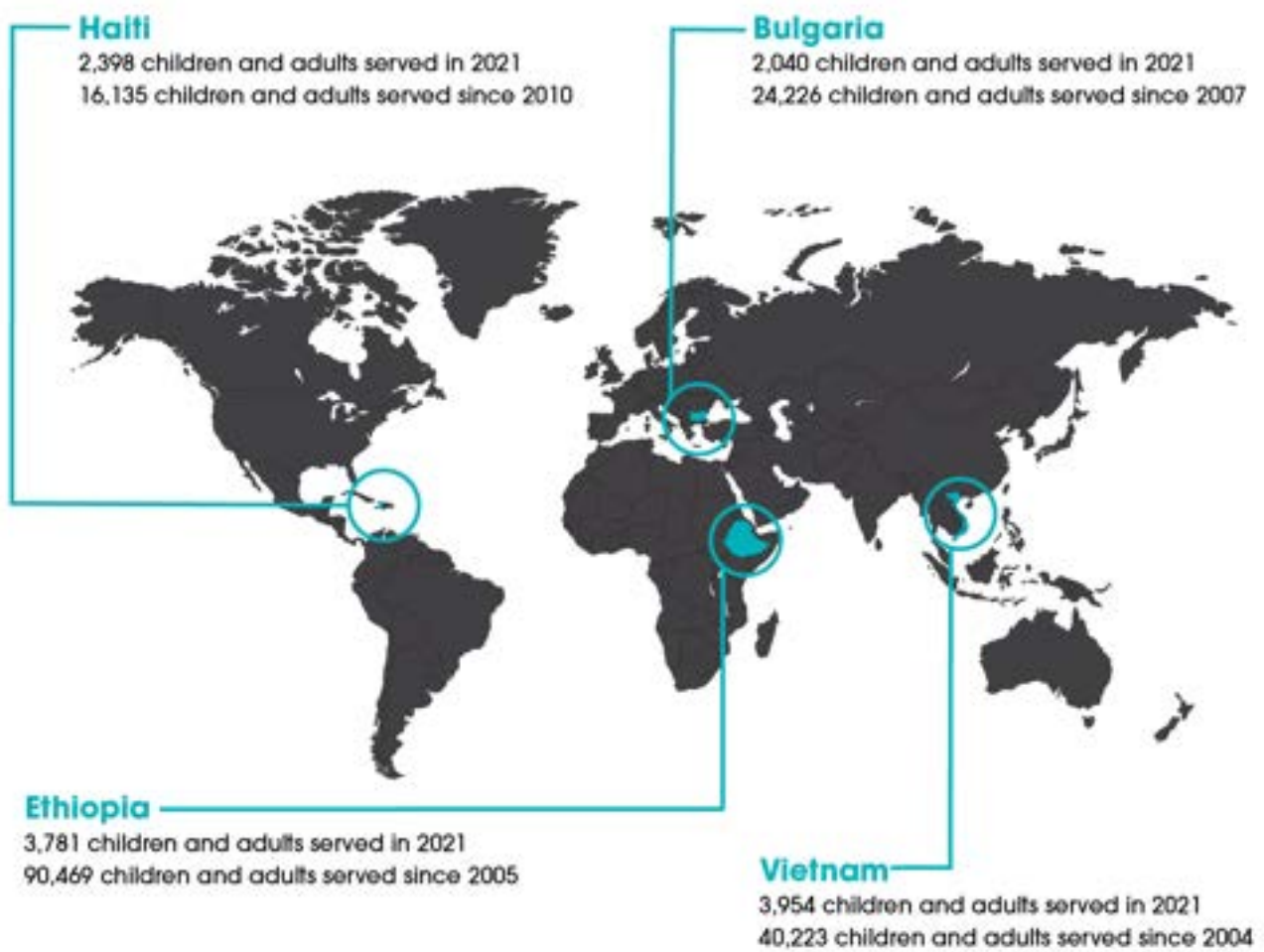
The fourth wave of COVID-19 claimed 27,000 lives in Vietnam, causing more than 3,000 children to become orphans. Due to funding from HSBC and AVPN/KKR, WWO committed to a two-year comprehensive project for 100 orphans, 800 children, 200 youth and caregivers, and many children from our Element of Play® programs. In Ethiopia, Haiti, and Bulgaria the losses due to Covid caused continued hardship, thus making the consistency of our services a much needed respite.

Please visit: wwo.org/our-impact to learn more.

WHERE WE WORK

12,173 children and adults served in 2021

171,053 children and adults served since 1997



Please visit wwo.org/where-we-work to learn more.

BULGARIA

A long history of marginalization is our biggest challenge in Bulgaria, and we are fighting it with early childhood development programs, life skills programs for parents, and through strategic partnerships that provide healthcare and social services that are critical for social inclusion and dignity.

Sylvia is 25 years old. In Belentsi, a 400 person village, there is no preschool or school, so Sylvia attended school in the village of Roman.

She graduated from the seventh grade, which is a rare accomplishment, since she is from the Roma community. Soon after reaching this milestone, however, Sylvia met the love of her life, became pregnant, and was married.

Sylvia now has five children with a sixth baby on the way. The Belentsi Element of Play® Learning Space is where her children, and other children from the village, are introduced to a safe and structured learning methodology that builds their social and executive function skills. We ensure children are seen, connected to social services in their community, and are protected.

Our programs also gives Sylvia the opportunity to meet and engage with other mothers from the village providing her with a source of information and emotional support. All parents with children in or early childhood programs are invited to attend Life Skills programs, where they receive advice on family health, nutrition, childhood development, and how to become an active member of the community.



BULGARIA



Bulgaria, a country the size of Tennessee, has 22% of the population living in poverty. The majority of these families identify as Roma. Many Roma families choose to keep their young children home, not sending them to school until age six or seven for 1st grade. When children enter the classroom, they are often unfamiliar with the structure and rules and unable to understand or speak Bulgarian. As children move through the school system, the gap often widens leaving children and their families frustrated, feeling stigmatized and often withdrawing from formal learning.

Our work in Bulgaria is addressing the tragic loss of human potential due to poverty, stigma, cultural and language barriers. Through our professional development workshops, 73 field workers are now implementing Element of Play[®] for children from birth to eight years of age. This program supports a child's language development, social skills, problem solving and creates a structured routine to support the transition into the classroom, regardless of the age or grade level at which a child first enters.

In 2021, we brought the Skills Development Program and our early childhood education programs to over 1,200 children and their 300 parents across Bulgaria through our 24 collaborative partnerships with 39 community-based organizations, municipalities, and health centers. Over half of our partnerships (60%) are intentionally selected to ensure Roma families have access to our quality play-based programs. During the COVID-19 pandemic we reached out to 350 children and 160 families through the Element of Play[®] at Home program. More than 30 professionals have been trained to deliver our programs successfully to vulnerable communities.

Through these collaborative efforts our Element of Play[®] Learning Spaces strengthen local staff through high impact professional development courses and bring evidence-based programs into cultural community centers that are close to the homes and meeting the needs of Roma children and their families. Through focus groups held in 2021, positive feedback was received from 100% of parents. They reported an increase in their own understanding of their child's development, an improved relationship between themselves and their child, and a marked improvement in their child's language and social skills. The developmental milestones of more than 100 children have been tested and significant progress reported.

Please visit wwo.org/bulgaria-program to learn more.

ETHIOPIA

Since 2005 we have served the children of Addis; providing whole child care to youth in the community support program, conducting camps for children living with serious illness, and training nearly 100 public preschool teachers in our play-based method, reaching nearly 4,000 students. We are creating a culture change in teaching.

Mihret, after spending two years in the WWO Academy, was promoted to first grade in the public preschool. At her new school, she is a quick study, able to repeat the teacher's words, put numbers in order, and recognize letters and pictures.

She and her family live in a small neighborhood of Addis Ababa, she has eight siblings. Her father and mother earn about \$45 a month and are able to provide the family members with at least one good meal a day.

WWO's partnership with the Ethiopian government pre-schools meant that Mihret is now able to spend part of her school day learning through exploration, creative experiences, and by building her language skills through our Element of Play® program.

Her father remarked that Mihret is a wonderful role model for her younger siblings and that her initial developmental delays were eliminated due to the support of the WWO teachers. She too hopes to become a teacher one day. He went on to say, "Our daughter was so happy to see the Element of Play® Learning Space open at her new school and to see her former WWO teachers."



ETHIOPIA



Ethiopia is facing a war in the North, uncertainty, inflation, hunger and inconsistent access to education. In the midst of this reality, we launched our preschool partnership initiative with four government-run preschools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in order to tackle the underlying factors that cause a lack of learning and to ensure preschoolers develop a solid foundation for their educational trajectory.

Across the 4 schools, we worked with more than 3,500 children and 137 teachers. Each preschool classroom had access to the Element of Play® Learning Space up to 3 days a week. From data collected during this first year, we found that 68% of children entering into a preschool classroom (ages 3-4 ½ years of age) were behind in in at least one developmental domain. By the end of the school year, this dropped to only 14% of students with developmental delays. A huge success for our first year!

Learning methodologies

begins with motivated teachers who are using play-based and who have learned how to make the classroom a safer space for all children. Our team works hard to teach by modeling best practices and by walking with the teachers, providing immediate feedback and celebrating small victories.

Of the original 42 children that we received into our care in 2009 (our Community Based Youth Support program), 17 youth have been reunified with family or reintegrated into the community over the years. In 2021, 6 youth graduated out of the program with jobs after completing their high school education and between 2-4 years of college or technical training. We now have 18 youth receiving holistic care including tutoring, shelter, and medical services, with our youngest in 8th grade.

Through our camp in Addis Ababa, 78 youth living with serious illness, experienced the positive effects of virtual camp. Reconnecting with their peers, our virtual camp in 2021 reignited the joy and memories of residential camp with Camp at Home activities, games, and songs. Meeting an important goal of the camp program, 80% of campers reported they were more compliant with their medication regimen, keeping them healthier and happier through another difficult year.

Please visit www.wwo.org/ethiopia-program to learn more.

Even nominal school fees prove more than most families can pay in Haiti. WWO provides free, quality, early childhood programming to children without access to preschool and our youth interns receive life and job skills as they deliver our programs to eager young students.

Sterlain Massillon was just 13 years-old when he lost his father and his life was turned upside down. His uncle, though he too struggled financially, agreed to care for him. Living with his uncle was difficult, with little food and limited ability to provide clothing or pay his school fees.

Sterlain connected with the programs of WWO at a very critical point in his life. He participated in our Positive Youth Development program where he met friends his age and started learning how to use computers. He took sewing classes and built critical decision-making skills.

Sterlain was then accepted into our internship program and completed the Element of Play® training program, gained job skills, and earned a stipend to work with children in the

community. He invested the money he earned, using it to pay school fees and soon he completed his own education.

In a country where only three out of five children complete the sixth grade, Sterlain, graduated from high school. Sterlain said, "I have learned so much and I feel more responsible. I have developed strong friendships and good values. I have reached my first goal of finishing high school and now I hope to go on to University."



HAITI



Haiti has faced many crises in 2021, including: growing political instability, civil unrest and gang related insecurity, another earthquake and rising food insecurity. In the face of these challenges, we have remained committed to over 1,800 children and their families and have relied on our flexibility and creativity to ensure programs continue and the safety of everyone is considered.

With the majority of families living on less than \$2 a day, the cost of a child's education remains out of reach for most parents. According to UNICEF data, only 22% of children from the poorest wealth quintile will complete primary school (6th grade). This drops to just 1% of these children able to finish high school.

Through WWO's Element of Play[®] programs, we are focused on increasing the number of children with access to a quality preschool education and during the precious years of early childhood we are building the skills children will need to excel in higher grade levels (listening, language, social and emotional skills). Our Learning Spaces give children the opportunity to be a "child" free for a moment from discrimination and hunger, able to laugh and socialize.

According to teacher reports, 91% of our children excel in their language, listening skills, expression of emotions and the vocabulary needed for educational success. The impact is so palpable that when they move on into higher grades at school, their abilities exceed expectations. In a country where yearly school fees are between \$200 to \$500 and a family's income may only be about \$400, a child's ability to complete each grade level, without dropping out or repeating grades, is a financial incentive and reason to invest in their child's education.

Our programs in Haiti are so successful because of the 73 youth in the community who invest their time and energy into every young child that enters the program. Through monthly trainings and trusting relationships, these young interns are able to develop their own life and work skills while also becoming a mentor and superhero to younger children.

This year we also took the best of what summer camps brings to children and reinvented a way to keep everyone safe and still build the memories, camaraderie and positive health and social impact. In fact, 400 families and children received food and camp kits; and 125 families and their children received regular telephone trainings. Through reports from hospital staff and parents, 93% of youth have increased their adherence to the medication regimen and been more regular in their hospital appointments. This means that their health has significantly improved, even through one of the hardest years of fear and isolation.

Please visit wwo.org/haiti-program to learn more.

For the children that we help in Vietnam, the staples of family, food, and shelter are not certainties. Providing life skills for these children, who are being raised in orphanages and in government institutions, is essential. They must learn to provide for themselves by the age of 16 when they will no longer be housed and fed by the government.

Anh doesn't remember much about the first years of her life. However, in 2008, when she was only seven years old, she was found abandoned in the hills of rural Vietnam. She was in critical condition suffering from severe malnutrition and the ravages of tuberculosis. She weighed only 16 pounds and was 24 inches tall when she was admitted to the orphanage of Ba Vi, a district of Hanoi.

In an effort to restore Anh to good health, Dr. Oanh, WWO Medical Advisor and Pediatrician, traveled to Ba Vi along with doctors from Columbia University Hospital, to work with the Ba Vi staff. WWO began capacity building with the staff of Ba Vi in 2006, implementing programs to support the health and well-being of all of the children. As Anh and her Ba Vi "siblings" created a new stable life, they received comprehensive care, and life skills, from WWO.

Today, it is miraculous to watch Anh interact as a Leader in Training in our camp program, to hear her discuss her plans for the future, and to see her happily engaging with her peers. This year, she participated in our puppy care project; learning leadership skills, while experiencing the therapeutic connection that comes from caring for a pet.





1160 children improved their developmental progress and daily living skills through their play-based sessions at the WWO Element of Play® Learning Spaces. This project provides Play-based Early Childhood Development curriculum for children behind in their developmental milestones or living with disability. Community therapists and schools also provided children with need-based Physical, Occupational, or Speech Language therapy. Parents, volunteers and partners were trained to facilitate their children's physical, social and emotional growth through play. The Puppy Care project by Emma Ervin transitioned to Ba Vi proved to be an inspirational concept for remote service learning.

The Future Skills project, a WWO signature model of Positive Youth Development, helped 993 youth bring out the best potential for full integration and decent employment.

Besides Job Skills training, participants acquired Future Skills for independent living and workplace aptitude. For sustainability, 60 college teachers received hands-on training to support their students. Youths also received WWO psychological support for resilience and future planning.

The care leavers continued to receive follow up support from WWO. Two Integration Day Camps were conducted to roll out the second batch of the project. WWO and our partners provided emergency support to youth infected with or heavily impacted by the pandemic. Despite their own adversity, many youths joined the Crisis Reaction Team to Pay It Forward.

254 Camp experiences were provided to 87 children from Ba Vi and Mai Tam shelters, who are long-standing partners of the SeriousFun-WWO Camp Colors of Love. The first Weekend Camps were successfully conducted on the shelters' premises, back-to-back with a Training of Trainers for the shelters' staff. The theme "A Safe Home for Us in the Times of COVID" inspired all to put the key values of Camp: Safety, Love and Respect in the New Normal concept.

The fourth wave of COVID-19 claimed 27,000 lives, causing more than 3,000 children to become orphans. With the two grants from HSBC and KKR/AVPN, WWO is committed to a two-year comprehensive project for 100 orphans, 800 children, 200 youth and caregivers, many from our Element of Play® programs.

Please visit wwo.org/vietnam-program to learn more.

DEDICATION TO OUR DONORS

We couldn't bring our life changing work to underserved communities without the compassion, commitment and generosity of our donors. Thank you for choosing WWO. Together, we are transforming lives.

Highlighted below are the Ervins who have been inspired to make a long-term investment in our mission, ensuring we are able to confidently plan for the future.

Lili & Wilson Ervin



“About 20 years ago, we had the opportunity to visit an orphanage abroad. The visit was uplifting because the kids were fun and the staff truly cared about them. But it was also gut-wrenching when we understood the challenges facing these kids. We also learned about the many children - both inside and outside orphanages - who were in far worse circumstances.

As new parents, that was an emotional moment. We had to do something to help these kids, kids who had never done anything to deserve their situation.

We eventually learned about WWO, an organization devoted to helping kids just like this. It's an entrepreneurial organization that helps literally thousands of disadvantaged children around the world.

WWO helps to educate, nurture and support children in all kinds of situations. They give these kids a better chance for a decent life, and they stretch their resources to help as many as they can. We've been deeply involved, dedicated supporters ever since.”

Please visit wwo.org/make-a-gift to learn more.

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

We are fully committed to and thoroughly embrace the values of accountability and transparency as a matter of ethical leadership, as well as legal compliance.

We know that financial transparency helps to preserve the very important trust our constituents place in us.

Our Audited Financial Statements for 2021 will be completed in November of 2022. Therefore, the most accurate depiction of our financial position can be viewed on Charity Navigator for 2018, 2019, and 2020. Please see the link below.



Please visit wwo.org/transparency to view our policies, IRS Form 990s and audited financials.



PLAY • LEARN • THRIVE

Mailing Address:
244 Fifth Avenue, Suite K298
New York, NY 10001
973-763-9961



facebook.com/wworphans



twitter.com/wworphans



linkedin.com/company/wworphans



instagram.com/wworphans

www.wo.org