



UNITED COMMUNITY  
FAMILY SERVICES  
CHALDEAN AMERICAN LADIES OF CHARITY

*Empowering people in need*

# Annual Report

# 2023

*Thriving Together:  
Guiding Paths and Inspiring Hope*



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# A Journey Of Growth

In 1961, Chaldean American Ladies of Charity (CALC) emerged from a group of twenty dedicated women with a shared vision: to aid families and individuals facing hardships in the community. This vision was rooted in the founders' commitment to restoring families and assisting those who need it most, which laid the cornerstone for our present-day mission. We are committed to providing programs that guide, support, and empower individuals, fostering self-sufficiency with dignity and hope. In 2016, the Board adopted the expanded name of United Community Family Services (UCFS) to better deliver the message of an organization supporting the whole community, providing them with wrap-around services that will help them move toward long-term economic stability and self-sufficiency.

## **Mission Statement**

To provide programs that guide, support, and empower individuals to achieve self-sufficiency with dignity and hope.

Celebrating our roots from 62 years ago, we take pride in the transformation that has shaped us into a robust organization serving thousands every year. This evolution has been marked by the dedication of our qualified staff, the commitment of our Board members, and the devotion of our volunteers.

With a foundation built on resilience, passion, and a shared vision, we continue to thrive together.



# Thriving together with dignity and hope



**2021-2023**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS**

- Leeann Kirma – *Board Chair*
- Lillian Shallal– *Treasurer*
- Julie Garmo – *Secretary*
- Marisa Abbo
- Amanda Alkatib
- Jeana Asmaro
- Nadia Atisha
- Lisa Denha
- Vanessa Denha
- Dunia Haddad
- Christine Jonna
- Belinda Kakos
- Yara Shadda

**2021-2023**

**ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

- Candace Akash
- Karen Akouri
- Chelsea Antoon
- Dalia Atisha
- Cassidy Ayar
- Veronica Babbie
- Renee Brikho
- Karen Denha
- Rita Fournia
- Rita Gatia
- Eva Gorial
- Linette Jibiraei
- Jill Kajj
- Hanna Kirma
- Jacquelynn Kittel
- Pauline Mukhtar
- Tabitha Numan
- Janice Najor-Barringer
- Cathy Odish
- Lisa Paulus
- Hon. Yasmine Poles
- Nidhal Rassam
- Bianca Savaya
- Reem Sesi
- Janette Shallal
- Renee Shelide
- Dima Hanna
- Joanne Yaldo
- Renee Yaldo

# A Message From Leadership

Inspiring individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency has been the priority of United Community Family Services – Chaldean American Ladies of Charity (UCFS-CALC) since 1961. Along with the Board of Directors and staff, we are proud and honored to be a part of the positive impact that UCFS-CALC has had on the many individuals and families who need our services. Every day, we have a unique opportunity to build a better future alongside the families we serve, and we work hard every day to make the most of our resources to fulfill the mission the founders set forth.

We are extremely grateful for your generous support of the programs and events in 2023. With your support, we helped over 12,000 individuals - an organizational record - through our programming. During 2023, in addition to growing our successful programs such as The Sharehouse Basic Needs Center and Food Pantry, Project Achievement After-School Tutoring, and our Elderly Refugee Program, we were excited to bring back our Sustainable Steps Program and introduce the Pathway to Prosperity Program to continue to meet the ever-changing needs in the community.

Our success is the community’s success, and we thank all of you who have helped UCFS-CALC make a positive impact. We are excited for 2024 and will continue to expand our services to fit the needs of all who come to our doors while prioritizing empowerment, dignity, and hope.

We invite you to stay connected with UCFS-CALC through social media, volunteering, visiting us at our website, [www.ucfamilyservices.org](http://www.ucfamilyservices.org), and signing up for our weekly e-newsletter to learn more about programs and upcoming events.



**Kristin Olmedo**



**LeeAnn Kirma**

**Kristin Olmedo**  
President & CEO

**LeeAnn Kirma**  
Board Chair

# By The Numbers

Over 12,000 people served in 2023



**856**

families served through the food pantry



**382,510**

pounds of food distributed through the food pantry



**28%**

increase in pounds of food distributed since 2022



**54,529**

basic need items distributed from the Sharehouse



**108**

individuals became U.S. Citizens



**265**

elderly clients served through senior programs



**87** children participated in Project Achievement and Summer Youth Sports Programs



**4,739**

hours donated by volunteers

# Empowerment Spotlight

## FAMILY SEEKS REFUGE

Fleeing the conflict in Syria in 2013, Rosa, her husband, and three sons sought refuge in Jordan, where they endured a decade of waiting to enter the U.S. In January 2023, the couple, along with one of their sons, finally gained entry, while the two older sons, who had married and started families in Jordan, stayed behind.

In Jordan, the two elder sons provided financial support to the family. However, upon moving to the U.S. without them, the family lost that income and now faced unique challenges in a new community with a language barrier. In March 2023, feeling overwhelmed, they turned to UCFS-CALC for assistance.

UCFS-CALC stepped in to help the family by securing SNAP benefits, Medicaid, and food assistance through our Food Pantry program. Additionally, the Sharehouse Basic Needs Center provided essential items, including furniture, kitchenware, and cleaning supplies at no cost to the family. With these basic needs addressed, the family focused on saving for a vehicle, a significant step towards self-sufficiency.

Through ongoing case management, we are striving to find avenues to reunite Rosa with her two sons, who are still in Jordan. **Both the family and UCFS-CALC remain optimistic as we work towards the goal of reunification.**



## JOURNEY TO CITIZENSHIP

Sam, a senior refugee from Iraq, was worried about how he would manage when his SSI benefits stopped after residing in the U.S. for more than seven years without obtaining citizenship. UCFS-CALC supported him in applying for U.S. Citizenship in 2019, but due to COVID delays, he was unprepared for his interview two years later and did not pass. Waiting patiently for two more years and utilizing the tools that he was given at UCFS-CALC, Sam seized his second chance in September of 2023.

Our staff helped Sam apply for CASH assistance to cover basic expenses. Our dedication to Sam's success did not stop there. Our team tirelessly advocated for him, reaching out to USCIS through inquiries with the State Senator's office. The persistence paid off; thanks to the dedicated efforts and resources provided by UCFS-CALC, **Sam now stands as a proud U.S. Citizen.**



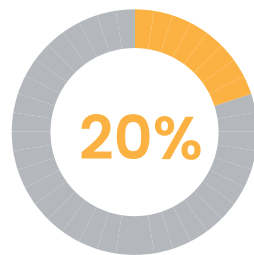
*\*Names have been changed to respect the privacy of our clients*

# 2023 Financials

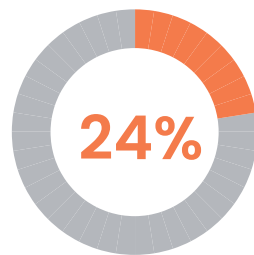
We proudly present a transparent overview of UCFS-CALC's 2023 financial performance. Our community's generous support has enabled us to make a meaningful impact in our community and supported our mission to provide programs that guide, support, and empower individuals to achieve self-sufficiency with dignity and hope.

**REVENUE: \$1,956,328**

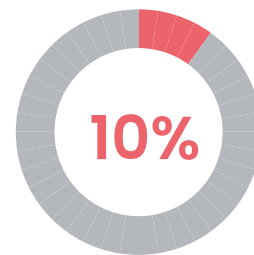
## Who supports UCFS:



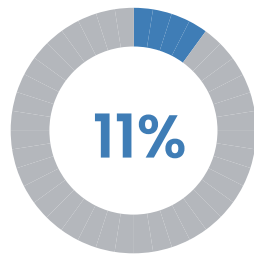
Individuals  
19.7%



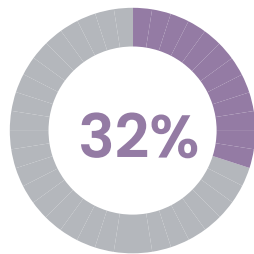
Government  
Grants  
23.9%



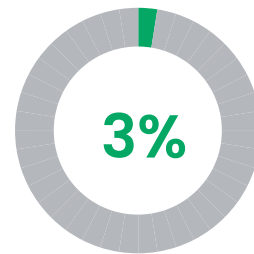
Corporations  
9.6%



Foundations  
11.3%

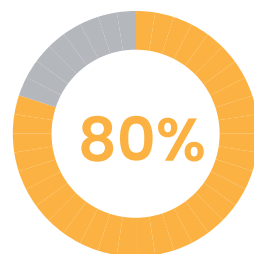


In-Kind  
32.2%

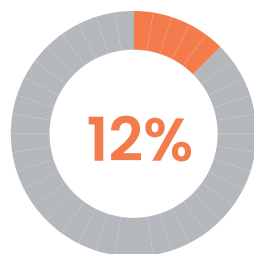


Other  
3.3%

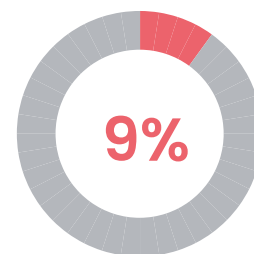
## Where does your support go:



Programs  
79.8%



Management  
11.6%

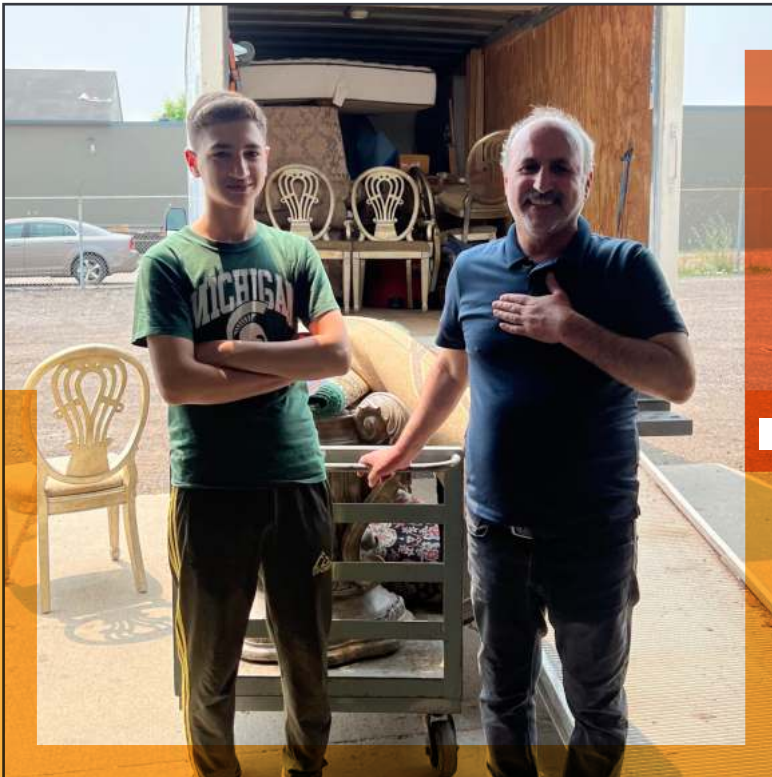


Fundraising  
8.6%

# Pathway To Self-Sufficiency

■ UCFS-CALC's Sharehouse Basic Needs Center collects and distributes new and gently-used items to families and individuals in need. These items are provided at no cost to our clients and include furniture, mattresses, kitchenware, clothing, personal care items, and much more. Items are sourced through basic need drives, donated by supporters, or purchased with grant funding. In 2023, UCFS-CALC distributed 54,529 items from our Sharehouse, and 115 families were provided with furniture.

## ■ THE SHAREHOUSE



## THRIVE PROGRAM ■

■ Provides social and emotional support to people with cognitive, developmental, and physical disabilities and their families. This program serves as a fun-filled haven for them to meet others who face similar circumstances and build a support system with one another.



■ The pantry is stocked with food from a variety of sources, including Gleaners Community Food Bank, Forgotten Harvest, donations from local retailers, and items from food drives hosted by individuals and community groups. Clients receive a healthy balance of fresh produce, dairy products, lean meats, whole grains, non-perishables, and cultural staples. In 2023, the food pantry distributed 382,510 of food to 856 households. That's almost 320,000 meals for families in need! In addition to fighting food insecurity, the food pantry is a gateway to other resources for clients and furthers integration through recipe cards, teaching our clients to incorporate new foods that are more affordable and easily accessible.

## ■ FOOD PANTRY

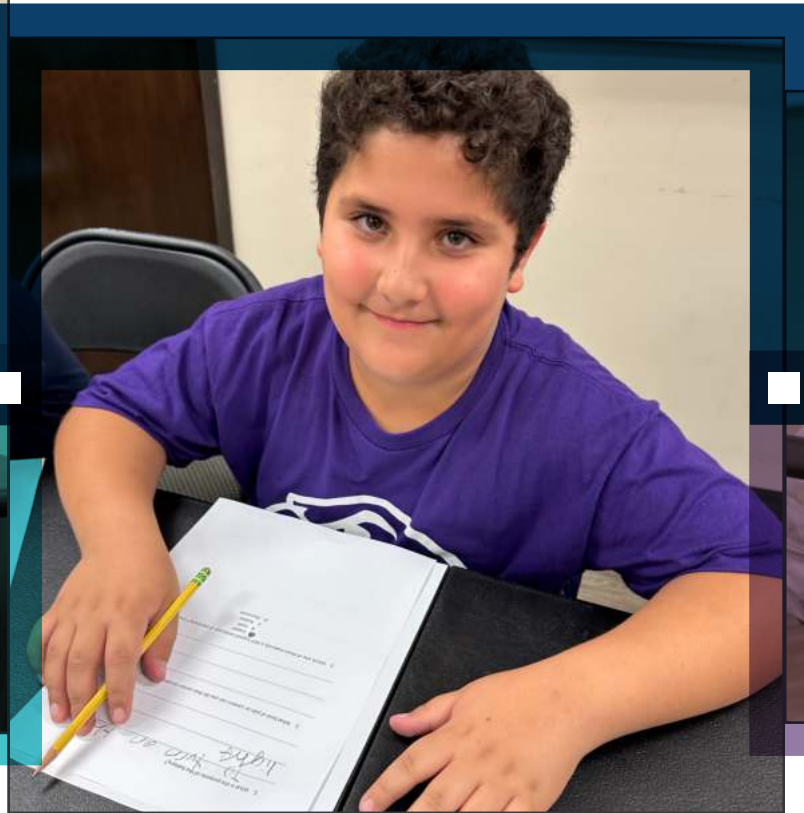


## ■ ELDERLY REFUGEE PROGRAM

■ A collaborative effort between UCFS-CALC, and the Area Agency on Aging-1B (now AgeWays) to combat social isolation, increase integration, and promote overall health and wellness for refugees ages 60 years and older. UCFS-CALC hosts monthly recreational and educational activities and puts elderly refugees on the path to U.S. Citizenship. In 2023, we have been able to support over 260 seniors, giving them a greater sense of community.

■ Designed to navigate lawful permanent residents of the U.S. through integration, and ultimately, naturalization. To assist clients with obtaining citizenship, we offer free ESL (English as a Second Language) courses, citizenship instruction, mock interview practice and preparation, and legal assistance in applying for naturalization. These supportive services chart the road map to integration and give our clients a chance at the security that comes with being a U.S. Citizen.

## ■ CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM

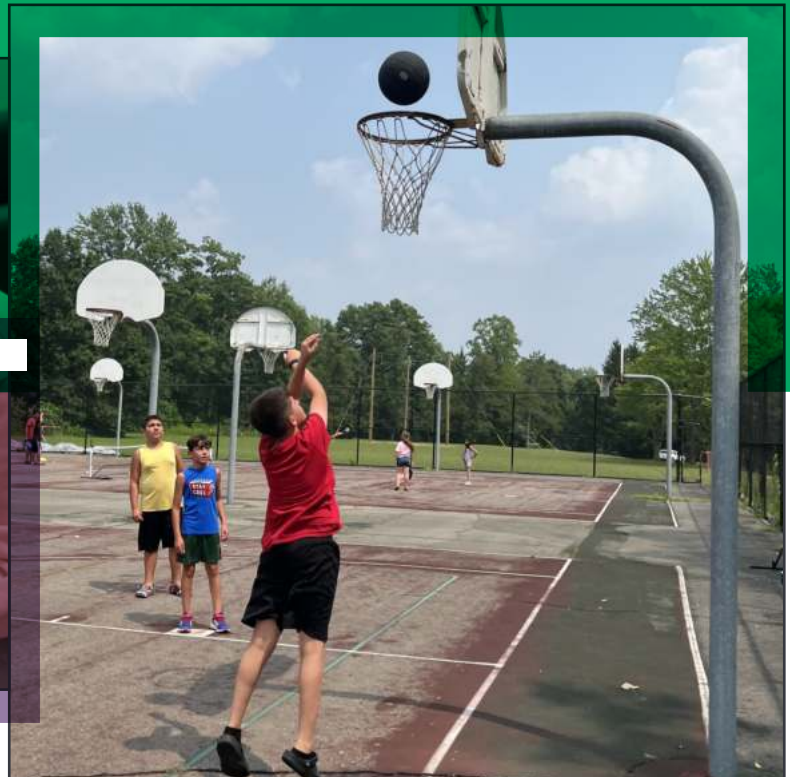


## PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT ■

■ A tutoring program for children from ALICE and low-income households. Each week, students receive help with homework, work with a specialist to improve their reading skills and participate in a hands-on STEAM activity. This program not only enriches their academic experiences but also improves social skills and confidence.

■ Reaching over 500 pregnant women and new mothers since 2016, this program provides the tools and knowledge they need to improve their health and the health of their families. Programming includes interactive educational workshops on topics such as pre-and post-partum health and nutrition, labor and delivery prep and planning, breastfeeding and lactation, sleep training, early childhood development and milestones, and even CPR and Lamaze classes. In 2023, we were able to empower 40 mothers to improve their families' health.

## ■ MATERNAL HEALTH EDUCATION



## SUMMER YOUTH SPORTS ■

■ Participants are exposed to organized sports and free play, which improves leadership, social-and problem-solving skills, physical activity, and academic achievement. This program, partially funded by United Way of Southeast Michigan, seeks to support the development of the whole child and assist them in developing a healthy lifestyle early on.

# Inspiring Volunteers

Throughout the year, we have achieved the unimaginable thanks to the dedication of our volunteers at UCFS-CALC. In our organization, volunteers transcend their role and become an integral part of our family. In 2023, our volunteers collectively contributed 4,739 hours to various initiatives. The Independent Sector has valued a volunteer hour at \$31.80 for 2023, meaning our volunteers have added an estimated value of \$150,700.20 to the community. We are immensely grateful for the dedication and generosity of our volunteers, as their commitment goes beyond any measurable value.



## VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL

*In the last few years, I was reaching my goals; however, something in me just wasn't fulfilled. I felt the urge to give back in some way. I reached out to UCFS-CALC this past October to see what I can do to help. They shared with me that there was an opportunity to help at the Food Pantry. I then reached out to my friends, family, and coworkers to get more people to help with the Thanksgiving Food distribution. It was the most heartwarming experience that I've ever had. **Every car that pulled up gave me goosebumps.** I was in tears! Knowing that we were able to help feed over 600 families during the holidays was absolutely amazing and gave me the urge to do more, help more, and be more. I am excited to have developed a relationship with the organization and plan to continue volunteering and donating. Thank you, UCFS-CALC, for creating opportunities for thousands of families and a place for people like me to help others.*



**Renee Jadan | UCFS-CALC Volunteer**

## VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL

*Volunteering at UCFS-CALC has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I felt driven to volunteer because of the organization's commitment to supporting and uplifting the community. Through my time there, I have witnessed the direct impact the organization has had on the community, whether it's through providing essential services, organizing events, or creating a support network. **Seeing the tangible difference our efforts make in people's lives has been truly inspiring,** and it reinforces my dedication to volunteering and supporting UCFS-CALC's vital work.*

**Amy Hamama | UCFS-CALC Volunteer**



# Paving Pathways

## *Parking Lot Transformation*

The transformation of the UCFS-CALC parking lot has been a pivotal achievement in 2023, addressing long-standing issues that significantly impacted our community services. For years, the parking lot faced serious disrepair, resulting in frequent flooding during rainstorms. This created substantial challenges, particularly as the parking lot serves as a hub for various programs, including the drive-thru food pantry, Sharehouse Basic Needs Center, and client events like Trunk-or-Treat.

This project was a major undertaking, but the collective support of generous funders and donors made this much-needed transformation possible. The repairs were financed by The Carls Foundation's contribution of \$45k, along with Forgotten Harvest's \$20k capacity building grant, and the generosity of our donors at our 2022 Timeless Hope Gala, where over \$20k was raised specifically for this project. Encore Development providing at-cost services exemplified the community's commitment to our mission.

This collaborative effort has restored the parking lot and has revitalized the functionality and purpose of this space. The upgraded UCFS-CALC parking lot now serves as a safe and efficient location for our drive-thru food pantry. Clients are no longer burdened by concerns about the condition of their vehicles or the weather and can now access the Sharehouse without hindrance. With the support of our donors, funders, and partners, we have fortified the foundation upon which our essential services stand.



# Members Making Moves

## A YEAR OF COMMITMENT AND COMPASSION

In 2023, our UCFS-CALC Members left an indelible mark on our organization. With an impressive 336 committed Members, we raised an astounding \$59,100.00 in Memberships alone. Being a UCFS-CALC Member is a dedication to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

## MEMBERSHIP VALUES IN ACTION

Our Members play a vital role in shaping our impact, channeling their support towards programs that resonate with their values. Whether it is providing essentials for mothers in our Maternal Health Education Program, ensuring a week of provisions for our food pantry, or contributing to the success of our annual client events, their contribution is felt directly in the heart of our community.

## WITNESSING DIRECT SUPPORT

Being a UCFS-CALC Member means taking the initiative and witnessing the tangible outcomes of their support. It is about understanding the immediate and lasting effects their contributions have on the lives of individuals and families within our community. Through their commitment, our Members are integral partners in driving positive change.

## ENGAGING IN ANNUAL FUNDRAISERS

UCFS-CALC Members enjoy exclusive opportunities to participate in our signature annual fundraisers. Events like the Eggsceptional Easter Party and Christmas in Whoville not only provide memorable experiences but also contribute directly to the fulfillment of our mission. By actively engaging in these events, our Members create a ripple effect of support throughout the community.

Reflecting on the impact of our valued UCFS-CALC Members in 2023, we express our appreciation for their commitment, going beyond financial contributions, and making a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve. Thank you to our Members for being the heartbeat of our mission.



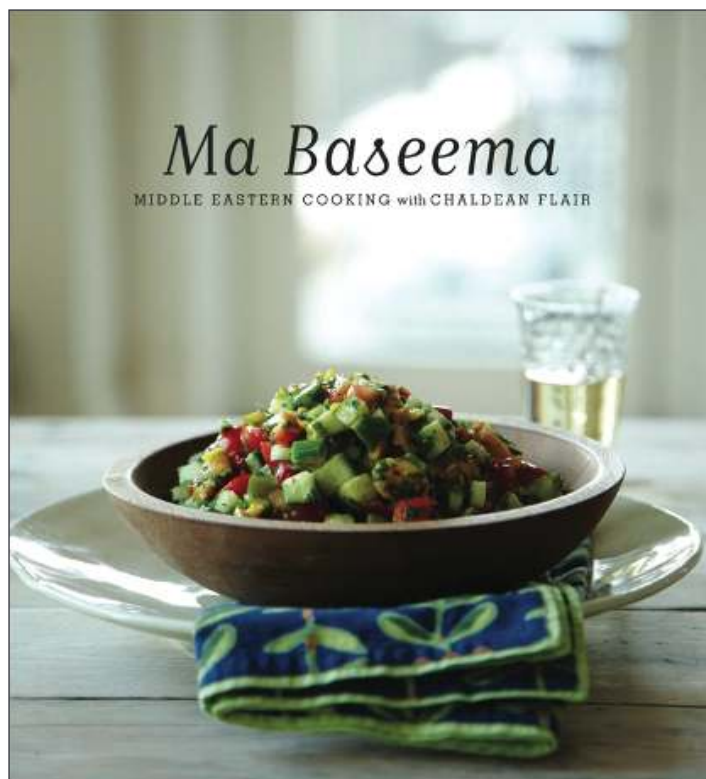
# Thriving Together in 2023 and Beyond

The support of our community has been significant in realizing our mission, whether through volunteering at events or lending a hand at our food pantry. Every act of kindness and dedication has created a lasting impact, shaping a community that thrives together.

As we move into the future, we invite you to stay involved and continue making a difference. Consider volunteering for upcoming fundraisers where your passion can fuel our collective impact or joining a committee to actively contribute to the strategic vision that guides our organization.

Foster a sense of community through attending our annual fundraisers or through monetary donations that directly contribute to the success of our mission-driven initiatives. For those looking to make an immediate, tangible difference, consider donating clothing, household items, or furniture.

Your involvement, in any form, is evidence of the strength of our collective commitment. Become a part of our family and help our clients move from a state of **surviving to thriving**. Thank you for being an essential part of our journey in 2023 and beyond.



## Purchase a Ma Baseema Cookbook!

*Cookbooks can be purchased  
from Amazon or directly from  
the UCFS-CALC office.*

# Stay Connected

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