

# 2019

# IRAQI AND AMERICAN RECONCILIATION PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT



# FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear friends,

As this year continues to bring us immense challenges and opportunities, we welcome the opportunity to reflect on 2019 with you in this annual impact report. Some of our most profound highlights included touring Birds Sing Differently Here, true stories of sweetness, grief and discovery shared across Minnesota by Iraqi Minnesotan storytellers; shipping a container of clothes and reading glasses to Iraq; and rallying in downtown Minneapolis in solidarity with the thousands of Iraqis protesting against corruption, unemployment and poor public services. I hope you take a moment to read some of the other highlights of 2019 included in our impact report. **We could not have done this without the support and hard work of our staff, board members, volunteers, artists, interpreters, participants, and donors.** Thank you for your generosity, time and support in making 2019 such a profound year.

As 2020 continues to unfold with on-going uncertainties, we remain steadfast in our mission and resolute in our commitment to serve our community because we have more work to do. This pandemic has taught us the importance of our human connection and need for social interaction on many levels. It is teaching us the importance of our own humanity. Therefore, we cherish our relationships, partnerships, and connections and are humbled by your support of IARP. We need your support more than ever and look forward to building and meeting the many challenges ahead.

Sincerely,  
Salam Murtada  
Board Chair 2018-2020

Dear friends,

It is my honor and privilege to serve as the new Board Chair as of October 1, 2020. For more than a decade, the IARP has been an influential advocate of peace and reconciliation between the people of Iraq and the United States. Through people to people diplomacy, mutual understanding, and intercultural communication, we continue our mission in promoting peace and reconciliation. The work we do as peacemakers is only possible because of you and your generous investment. This report illustrates what we have accomplished together. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you to serve more people both in Iraq and the local Minnesotan community. Together we can make the world a more peaceful place for everyone. Thank you for helping us achieve our mission.

Azar Maluki  
IARP Board Chair 2020

## IARP BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019



Salam Murtada  
*Board Chair*



Ethan  
Wilensky-Lanford  
*Vice-Chair*



Muntadher (Ali)  
Al-Jayashi  
*Treasurer*



Kathy Adam  
*Secretary*



Dr. Azar Maluki



Erin Hart



Rev.  
David W. Smith



Ahmed Al-Sheikhli



Adil Al-Najji



Mohammed Raef  
Al Azzawi

Kathy McKay, *Board Member Emeritus*  
Luke Wilcox, *Board Member Emeritus*  
Steve Clemens, *Board Member Emeritus*

### 2019 IARP STAFF:

Jessica Belt Saem Eldahr, *Executive Director*  
Erin Hart, *Director of Development and Communications*  
Jamal Ali, *Iraqi Voices Community Engagement Facilitator*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY,  
TIME AND SUPPORT IN MAKING 2019  
SUCH A PROFOUND YEAR.

# 2019 IMPACT

OF OUR COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA + IRAQ

## HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS FOR PEACE

MINNESOTANS SHARE THE WARMTH

**650** lbs of primarily winter clothing, shoes, and accessories

**5000** Reading glasses

This year marked a first for IARP as we responded to a request by our partner in Iraq, the Critical Needs Support Foundation (CNSF), to supply them with good quality winter clothing and shoes in preparation for the cold months. We launched Minnesotans Share the Warmth, a campaign for winter clothing for vulnerable and displaced Iraqi and Syrian families. Minnesotans sent 650 lbs of primarily winter clothing, shoes, and accessories. Thanks to the Boulder, Colorado Vets for Peace chapter we also sent 5,000 reading glasses.

### DISTRIBUTION OF 5,000 READING GLASSES BY OUR PARTNER IN IRAQ THE CRITICAL NEEDS SUPPORT FOUNDATION



# PEOPLE TO PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTS



## SOLIDARITY RALLY

On October 6th, we rallied in solidarity with the tens of thousands of Iraqi protesters and their right to assemble and freedom of expression. Large protests erupted across Iraq as they demanded their government to address high unemployment, basic services, and endemic corruption. Over 120 people gathered in front of Senator Klobuchar’s office and marched to City Hall.



## SISTER CITY CELEBRATION

Over 700 people gathered on Nicollet Island for Minneapolis Sister City Day which included a presentation of Iraqi music and dance for the first time!

## IFTAR CELEBRATION

This year’s Ramadan Iftar was a journey of learning, community, and compassion. Over 130 people, of various faiths and backgrounds, gathered to break fast with their Muslim friends and neighbors at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Bloomington.

## COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Our annual Fall Potluck and Picnic welcomed individuals and families for an afternoon of delicious food, games, and our first concert by a group of local musicians, Gilgamesh. We were honored to organize this year’s event as part of the Twin Cities Ten Days Free From Violence.

## REMEMBERING

A candlelit vigil was held in remembrance of the lives lost and still missing in the ongoing protests in Iraq. According to the Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative, as of July 2020, 690 have lost their lives, 23,000 injured, 3,000 of whom are now permanently disabled.

## IRAQI ART PROJECT BRINGING IRAQI ART AND VOICES ACROSS MINNESOTA

Following the sold out run at the Guthrie Theater in 2017, the cast and crew of *Birds Sing Differently Here* reunited for a summer tour of Rochester, St. Cloud, Duluth, and Minneapolis. One of the storytellers said of their experience, *"The feedback from the audience, their energy, connection to our stories... this is healing for us"*. Audience member Kahin Adam, a Somali refugee said he found the play healing, especially as someone who faces discrimination. For Adam, the play is important because it helps create a more truthful narrative of refugees and immigrants. *"It's important that there's a human side of the story. This is the human side of the war."*



*"WE, AS AMERICANS, COULD DO A LOT MORE TO WELCOME AND INCLUDE REFUGEES AND IRAQIS IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND HOMES."*

*"THE PERFORMANCE BRINGS HUMANITY TO WAR AND PEOPLE THAT SEEMED FAR AWAY. EXCELLENT, EMOTIONAL, RAW, WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE."*

*"SO WISH MORE WHITE PEOPLE COULD SEE THIS!!"*



IARP presented the beautiful painting "Windows" to Northeastern College Prep in Minneapolis on behalf of Iraqi artist Fatin Al Jumaily, as part of a short presentation on Iraq to the third grade class.

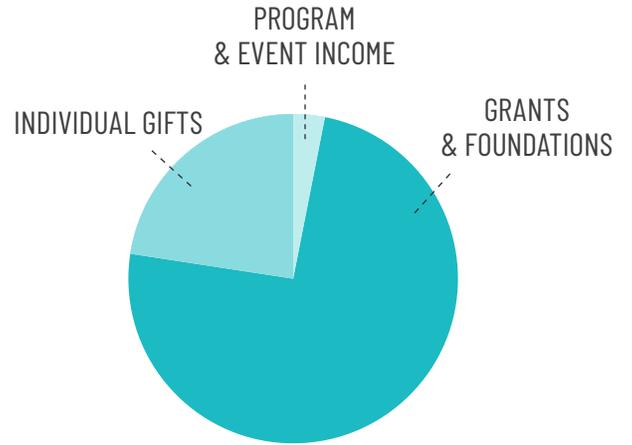
Partnering with the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, we celebrated the work of contemporary Iraqi and Iraqi-American artists: Jamal Penjweny, Jaafar Alnabi, Fatin Al-Jumaily, and Adnan Shati with the intimate exhibition *Iraq Through Our Eyes*.



# 2019 FINANCIALS

## INCOME

Individual Gifts	\$30,219.87
Grants & Foundations	\$99,499
Program & Event Income	\$4,171.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$133,890.12</b>



## EXPENSES

People to People Program	\$19,263.25
Iraqi Art Program	\$90,983.40
Humanitarian Projects for Peace	\$5,825.79
Core Mission Support	\$19,967.07
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$136,039.51</b>



# THANK YOU! SHUKRAN! شُكْرًا

At the heart of our mission, individual supporters, funders, and partners are making a difference with — and through — the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project. We recognize them here, with enormous appreciation for the change and bridge building we are achieving together.

## OUR SINCERE THANKS TO ALL OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS

WE ARE HUMBLD AND GRATEFUL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

### PARTNERS FOR PEACE - MONTHLY DONORS

Anonymous	Kathy Mckay
Susan Schirber	Daniel Leisen and Andi Kuenning
Steve and Christine Clemens	Erin Hart and Ben Langager
Lotti Matkovits	Dolores Voorhees
Luke Wilcox	Jay Broker
Lawrence Valley	

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Guthrie Theater, St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Rochester Repertory Theatre Company, Unitecloud, Arrive Ministries, Catholic Charities Department of Social Concerns of St. Cloud, Center for Victims of Torture, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, Great Theater, Zeitgeist Teatro Zuccone, Target Champlin, Project Legacy

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNER IN IRAQ **THE CRITICAL NEEDS SUPPORT FOUNDATION**  
AND THE INCREDIBLE WORK WE DO TOGETHER!

### FOUNDATIONS

Laura Jane Musser Fund  
Metropolitan Regional Arts Council  
Sisters of St. Joseph Partners in Justice Fund  
Marbrook Foundation  
Minnesota State Arts Board  
Global Awareness Fund of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation  
Morgan Family Foundation  
Rochester Area Foundation  
Headwaters Foundation

### SUSTAINING VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

Kathy McKay  
Narmin Rolston  
Jamal Ali  
Anaid Plasencia  
Kai Perkett  
Louis Gagnon  
John Stoltz  
Mathea Pielemeier



## CONGRATULATIONS TO JAMAL ALI FOR RECEIVING THE OUTSTANDING REFUGEE AWARD FOR HIS WORK ON IRAQI VOICES!



Jamal Ali received the Minnesota Department of Human Services Outstanding Refugee Award for his contributions to Minnesota through his leadership role in our Iraqi Voices art storytelling lab. The Outstanding Refugee Award is an annual recognition for individuals who have had refugee status and have demonstrated leadership to positively impact their community and the state. We are so very proud of Jamal and his incredibly hard work. Congratulations!

### A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:



#### JESSICA BELT SAEM ELDAHR

It is with both sadness and gratitude that 2019 marked the last year with Executive Director Jessy. Jessy and her family moved out of the country to be closer to family. Jessy began working with IARP in 2015, but first took on the role of Executive Director in 2018. Since then, she has helped usher in new programs, create welcoming spaces, build important strategic partnerships within the community. In addition to her many public facing accomplishments, she has also worked behind the scenes to improve and stabilize operations and organizational processes. Jessy leaves IARP poised for continued growth, and we sincerely thank her for her contribution and leadership. Thank you Jessy!



#### ERIN HART

We are grateful for Erin's years of friendship and invaluable contributions to IARP. Erin's investment and contributions to IARP have been instrumental in the success of our Books for Mosul initiative, website and communications redesign, Iraqi Voices programs, friendship groups, and so much more. Erin has served IARP and our mission in various roles for the past four years. Although she is leaving our staff, we are thankful she will continue to be involved in IARP's work as a volunteer and supporter. Thank you Erin!



**IRAQI AND AMERICAN RECONCILIATION PROJECT**

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