

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023



INTERNATIONAL  
HOUSE  
ANN ARBOR





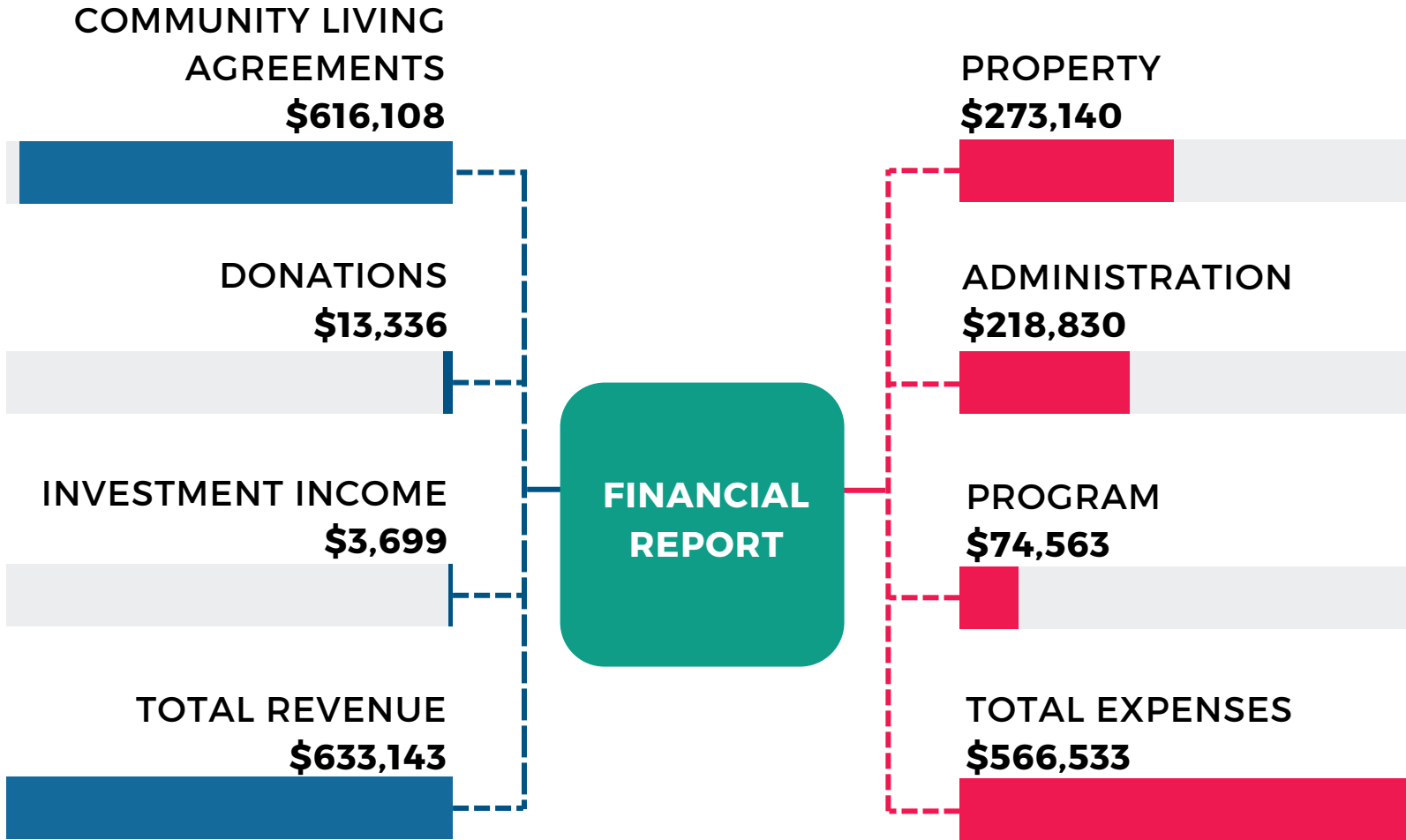
# Letter From Executive Director

Linda Kentes

I'll never forget the moment, 40 years ago, when I first learned the concept of peer-to-peer diplomacy. I was in my 'Cold War Studies' class in the University of Michigan's Residential College. My professor explained that when regular people like you and me have an opportunity to meet people from different cultural backgrounds, when we get to know them and their life stories, we can no longer see them as the 'other'.

Through informal communication and personal interaction, familiarity replaces foreignness. Barriers and borders come down and mutual understanding and empathy take their place. At that moment, I knew my purpose in life. My life goal has been to create opportunities for cultural exchange, find shared values, and build relationships with individuals from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds. Imagine my delight when, 20 years ago, I learned about the International House Ann Arbor (then called ECIR), whose mission was to employ peer-to-peer diplomacy, in the form of residential cultural immersion, to promote understanding, build trust, and create community. Thank you for sharing my passion for opening minds and creating peace through friendships and education. In the next pages of our 2023 Annual Report, you will find some updates on our activities and stories from the past year.

# Summary Financial Report





# Thank You Donors

Sincere appreciation to the 32 of donors who gave generously to IHAA during 2023! Your gifts paid for residents to travel around Michigan on field trips to Lake Michigan, Henry Ford Museum, the Lansing Capitol, Toledo Museum of Art, and many more destinations where they learned about local history, Michigan's natural splendor, and US culture. You provided monthly community meals which celebrated cultural traditions and diversity.

You supplied housewares to incoming students and scholars, helping them settle in and feel welcome. You supported our new and highly successful fall retreat where residents formed friendships and built community.







# Our Donors

Gifts noted below were received between January 1 and December 31, 2023.

## **\$5000**

Roger Vance

## **\$500-1000**

Anonymous  
Neeraja Aravamudan  
Elizabeth Eliason  
Adam Goodman  
Julie and Moses Lee  
Frances Lyman  
James Schaafsma  
John and Carolyn  
Wiseman

## **\$200-499**

Patricia Bauer  
Brandon Dimcheff  
Barbara and Thomas Dobson

Marjorie Horton  
Thomas McKarns  
Angello Pitillo  
Mark Simmonds  
Devin Streur

## **up to \$199**

Laure Bordas-Isner  
Colin Brosnan  
Church Woman United -  
Downriver  
Eric Goldberg  
Meredith Kahn  
Linda Kentes  
Lily Lee  
Barbara McMullen  
Marion Morris  
Judith Pennywell  
Lois Schlachter  
Thomas Woehrle

# Getting Involved

HAA relies on participation and donations from people like you to continue providing a safe and supportive home for international students and scholars. Your contribution makes a meaningful difference in the lives of those who come to study and live with us.

## Volunteer

- **Bridges Across Borders:** For more than 70 years, IHAA has offered an International Hospitality Program. Again this year, many local families will be hosting International Students and Scholars for a meal, activity, or outing. We are seeking new families or individuals to join this program.
- If you are interested, please contact IHAA's Program Manager Andrea Scampa at [ascampa@ihouseaa.org](mailto:ascampa@ihouseaa.org)

## Donate

- IHAA appreciates monetary contributions that help us provide our residents with an outstanding experience
- Monetary donations can be made in-person, by mail, or online. Our online giving page can be accessed by clicking [here](#).
- We are seeking donations of cordless vacuum cleaners and winter coats.





# Friend of the Year

## David Buchel

We are delighted to recognize David Buchel as our IHAA Friend of the Year for 2023.

David has been volunteering at IHAA for about two years and has been incredibly engaged and generous with his time. He offers to drive our residents on outings near and far; he attends and helps with community events - cooking, cleaning up, and any task that needs a hand;

and he provides water safety on our summer kayaking trips.

The residents appreciate David for all he contributes and he enjoys getting to know people from all over the world.

David's name has been added to our engraved plaque which recognizes so many wonderful supporters of the IHAA mission.



# Volunteer Club

The IHAA Volunteer Club is dedicated to fostering community engagement by mobilizing international students and scholars to actively participate in volunteering activities while fostering cultural exchange with the Washtenaw community.

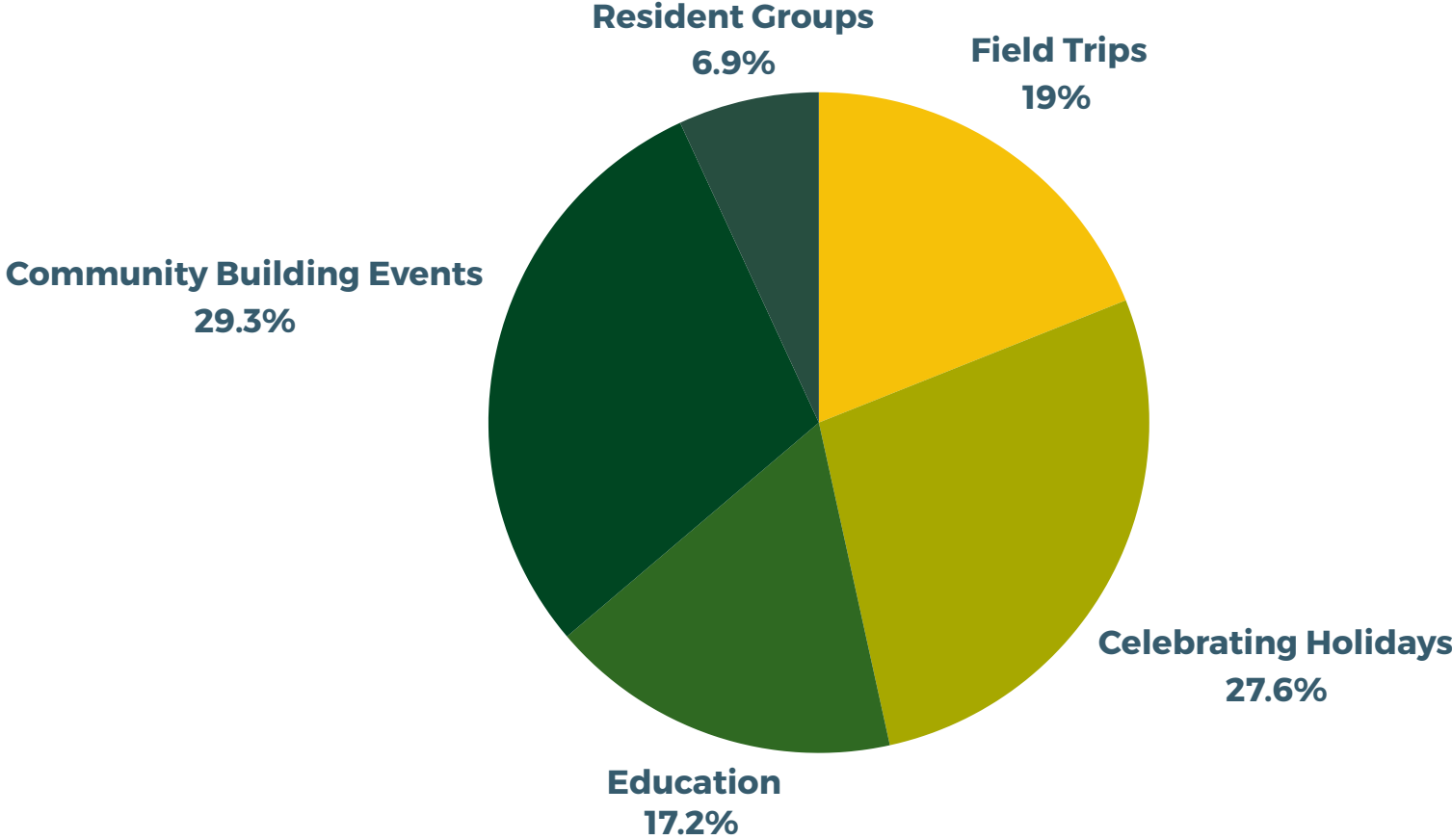
This academic year IHAA's volunteer club participated in numerous activities throughout Ann Arbor. The group members went to Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum for conservation efforts, participated in a Food Gatherers event, gathered funds and crafted school supplies for a local grade school, and some of them went to Honduras to work on a construction project for Honduras Child Alliance.





# Residential Programming

IHAA’s cultural immersion program teaches students and scholars from around the world to care for each other, to grow their understanding of other cultures and their own, and to embrace and respect differences.



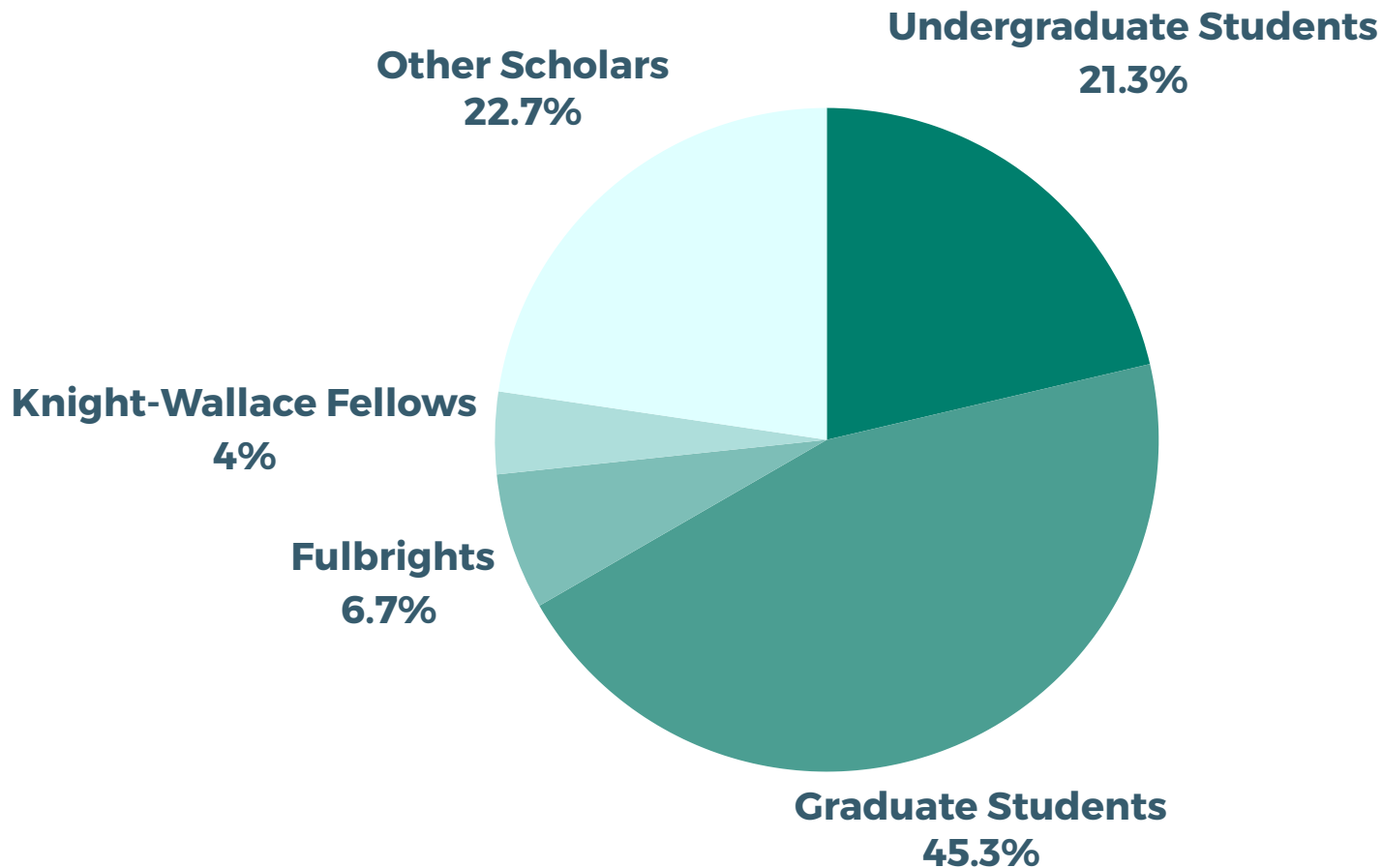






# IHAA RESIDENTS

by University Status



# IHAA Residents' Home Countries

Afghanistan

Argentina

Australia

Austria

Bangladesh

Brazil

Canada

China

France

Germany

Ghana

Hong Kong

India

Indonesia

Iran

Ivory Coast

Israel

Italy

Japan

Kashmir

Malaysia

Mongolia

Nigeria

New Zealand

Pakistan

Palestine

Philippines

Poland

Puerto Rico

Romania

Saudi Arabia

South Korea

Sudan

Switzerland

Taiwan

Thailand

Turkey

Ukraine

USA

Vietnam





# Resident Spotlight

Katerina Sirinyok-Dolgaryova, Ukraine

It's been my second academic year in U Of M and living in IHAA. My two sons Yaroslav, 12, Danylo, 8 and I arrived to Ann Arbor in August 2022.

It was challenging time since we fled the war that started after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. IHAA community has been supportive and helpful for me and the kids to adjust at the new place and start peaceful life in the US.

We love participating in the IHAA's events: community breakfasts and birthday celebrations, different holidays' parties, trips. The kids particularly loved the Corn Maze trips - so much fun!

I appreciate the exposure to learning new cultures IHAA gives to its residents. I have previous experience studying in the US as an exchange student and later as a visiting scholar. I like that now my children live in such diverse environment. This is the best way to learn how to respect others and still keep your own culture and grow as a person. IHAA is truly an international family. We have a little Ukrainian community here with other WCEE scholars and their families that is great because we can share our country's story with other people. I met so many friends in IHAA so far!

# Resident Spotlight

## Soumik Das



Hi there !! I'm Soumik and I'm from Kolkata, the former British Capital of India. I'm currently a third year Ph.D. student in the Chemistry Department here at UofM. I finished my undergraduate degree back in India and moved to Michigan for Ph.D. in the fall of 2021.

Needless to say, I do stay busy with my own (fancy chemistry) research most of the time; but in my free time, I sometimes like to play guitar (only know the basics, not a professional :)) or engage in sports like cricket or table-tennis. This semester, I'm trying out soccer for the first time and excited to see how that one turns out to be.

I've lived in IHAA the entire time I've been in the States, and it has been a fabulous experience for me so far. I've met so many people from so many different places around the world in the past two years, and I believe getting to know such a diverse group of people and sharing life experiences with them have helped me personally grow a lot to be kinder and more compassionate. I definitely look forward to living through another such enriching year with you all !!

# Our Promotional Video

IHAA is a magical place -  
watch as our residents share their experiences.





# Afterword by Board President

## Julie Lee



Thank you for taking a moment to reconnect with IHAA's mission and community through this Annual Report.

In 2023, the IHAA Staff, with the Board's oversight, embarked on the task of developing a 5-year vision for IHAA. The Board strongly believed that the Staff, who are at IHAA daily and know the ins-and-outs of the house and our residents' lives, were best equipped to envision what IHAA could look like in 5 years. They did NOT disappoint! With Linda's leadership, the Staff developed an inspiring vision that dreams about future opportunities while

remaining committed to our mission. Some highlights are: a need-based scholarship program, a Resident Retreat/Orientation at the start of the year, a Global Food Fair, and green initiatives to conserve energy and costs.

The Staff already launched several of the initiatives from the vision, such as a Resident Retreat/Orientation in Fall 2023, and a Global Potluck Dinner. This year, the Board of Directors has assembled an Ad Hoc Committee to explore how a scholarship program could be built. We hope to launch need-based scholarships for residents in the near future.

We know that IHAA is strong today because of friends, alumni, donors and volunteers who have supported our mission. We hope you will continue to stay engaged as we build toward our exciting future!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you!

# Our Board

Thanking Outgoing Board Members for their Service:

**Susan King**  
**James Schaafsma**  
**Devin Streur**

Welcoming New Members:

**Brandon Bond**  
**Melissa Burns**  
**Dusty Francis**

Appreciating the Work of our Continuing Members:

<b>Neeraja Aravamudan</b>	<b>Lily Lee</b>
<b>Laure Bordas-Isner</b>	<b>Judith Pennywell</b>
<b>Barbara Dobson</b>	<b>Angelo Pitillo</b>
<b>Marjorie Horton</b>	<b>Mark Simmonds</b>
<b>Meredith Kahn</b>	
<b>Julie Lee</b>	

# Our Team

IHAA's staff brings kindness, compassion, expertise, and generosity to work every day, working hard to create a warm, welcoming, and educational experience.

**Linda Kentes**, Executive Director  
**Andrea Scampa**, Program Manager  
**Stoney Griffin**, Property Manager  
**Asia Wierzbicka**, Administrative Coortinator

**Leif Phillips**, Social Work Intern  
**Nicole Kuchta**, Office Assistant  
**Dawn Meyer**, Account



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WWW.IHOUSEAA.ORG

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<https://www.instagram.com/ihouseaa>

