28th Annual Report

FY 2021-2022

In Memory of

Mr. John Mathias Brown

1941 – 2022
A Letter from the Executive Director

It’s hard to believe that a year ago Amizade was not running travel programming. We were not eating Bake & Shark in Trinidad and we were not getting our hands dirty in Puerto Rican mangroves. A year ago, global friendships were a bit tougher to forge and social action a bit more distant. But thanks to our incredible team: site directors, donors, board, and supporters like you, we restarted our motors and built some beautiful experiences together. Thank you.

At the start of 2022, we were still operating in a virtual-only landscape, connecting 230 young people through service and learning remotely. Virtual service learning (VSL) remains a powerful, environmentally friendly, and easily accessible model for good. VSL will no doubt be a tool for Amizade’s mission forever.

In the last year, we built serious momentum to inspire and unite young people through global service and learning. In just a few short months, we went from being grounded in our living rooms to engaging 360 participants in travel programs. We organized community-based global learning programs — proven to clarify career goals and build empathy — for young people from Pittsburgh’s Hill District, leaders from Northern Ireland, university students from all over North America, and many more. We spoke at conferences, sharing best practices in virtual service-learning, the ethics of equitable global education, and the power of reflection in disruptive travel experiences. We were the conduit to vital projects that brought solar power to schools in Tanzania and a summer camp for Appalachian queer youth.

We took the lessons from our heroes — like the late Mr. John Mathias Brown, who we sadly lost this year — and we spread them to thousands of people. We volunteered in food banks in Washington, DC and in schools in Bolivia. We faced off against environmental collapse in Italy, Trinidad, Puerto Rico, Ecuador, and Pine Ridge Reservation. We had moments of deep cultural learning in the Navajo Nation, Northern Ireland, Pittsburgh, and Appalachia. We looked in the mirror as an organization, and even with the weight of labor shortages, climate change, inflation, and a global pandemic, proved that Amizade is part of the solutions to the ills of our times. We simply need more Amizade.

So, What's Next?

In 2023, we will continue to bring more joy and justice to this world. We will confront our impact on the climate, we will work with more young people from more diverse backgrounds, and we will better broadcast the stories and lessons learned of our friends around the world. 2023 is gearing up to be a watershed year for Amizade’s unique approach to global education — we look forward to building momentum with you. Many thanks for your support.
About Us

Amizade is a nonprofit that organizes safe, sustainable, and collaborative global learning experiences for all people. We believe in building a more relevant, collaborative, and responsible classroom.

Amizade is the product of hundreds of service-learning pioneers who have engaged in over two decades of programmatic and academic development; it is the result of never-ending efforts by communities around the world to welcome others; and it is an ongoing global movement by over 27,000 alums, and hundreds of thousands of others, to create a more joyful and just world.

www.amizade.org
Our Vision

To create a world where diverse communities connect freely, forge lasting relationships, and build a more just planet together.

Our Mission

Amizade inspires empathy, catalyzes social action, and links diverse communities through Fair Trade Learning.

Our Values

Amizade is committed to offering ethical and mutually empowering programs, and our values are central to everything we do. We abide by our Fair Trade Learning framework and our core values in every situation, putting our relationships with our community partners and the success of our participants first. Amizade strives to find ethical approaches to every new situation that arises and to set an example for other organizations in the field of service-learning.

The following core values guide our program development and empower our facilitators and partners to create immersive, transformative experiences for participants.
**Fair Trade Learning** Modeled after our partnership in Jamaica, Fair Trade Learning recognizes that the individuals and communities that host students and volunteers are uniquely impacted by visitors and should be offered fair working conditions and compensation, hold significant voice in the orchestration of programming, and be offered proper professional development opportunities. Amizade pioneered this sector-changing approach to global service-learning, which is now being adopted by many universities and high schools around the country.

**Equity & Inclusion** We believe that everyone should have access to transformative global education, and we work to make our programs—and the positive outcomes they create—more accessible to a broader audience every year. It is our goal to ensure that everyone feels welcome and safe on our programs, regardless of background, identity, or beliefs.

**Collaboration** We believe that technology is great, but it will not save us. Humans building solidarity together is more vital in solving the great problems of our time, and we need to teach and learn how to work with diverse networks.

**Reflection** The questions we face when engaged in intercultural service around the world are often difficult. And it can be challenging to stay connected to global civic engagement after a short-term experience. But Amizade believes strongly that it is important to continue asking: What is service? How have I learned from others’ cultures? What do I understand better about my own? How can I value others around the world, even from my home? What are the ways I can be a good global citizen right here? These are just a few examples, but Amizade encourages reflective inquiry throughout experiences and afterward.

**Community-Driven Service** Amizade has a 28-year record of cooperating with communities on service that local individuals and organizations define and direct. We not only cooperate with communities on issue identification, but we also work collaboratively on project implementation, continuous evaluation, & regular improvements.
A review of Amizade’s FY21-22 programs, including the first season of travel programs since March 2020.
Testimonials

Trinidad and Tobago “My favorite learning experience was definitely with Ms. Suzan at Nature Seekers. Hearing her personal story and seeing all she has done for her community and what they have done for her in return was truly inspiring. Her motto, “the only limitations you have are the ones you set for yourself”, hit me hard, and she is truly an example of that.”

Virtual “I think my favorite part of the program was the session we had with individuals experiencing homelessness or have experienced homelessness that left Venezuela in search of a new home. This was the most powerful session and I took away the most from it - it hit close to home.”

Italy “I loved learning from the Italian students about the differences between our academic careers and learning from the community members. Everyone equally taught me the importance of rest, nature, community, and slow food.”

What our community partners are saying:

Appalachia “One of the best working groups we have had in a while. Community garden has a better head start into the growing season than we ever had.

The amount of community members that came out for their last evening was amazing. So many from the high rise across from the community garden came to eat with us, speak to the student and plant while we were there.”

Appalachia "The conversation with the Williamson Health Center was very impactful, and it was neat to have a few of their participants join us in conversation for the rest of the week. It further broke down the stereotype of what an addict is and does and really made them a human, which was powerful for me and the other students"
Travel Programs

93% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that due to their Amizade experience, they are more confident interacting with people different than them.

97% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their Amizade experience increased their feelings of empathy for the well-being of others.

81% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their Amizade experience has changed their definition of what it means to be a global citizen.

86% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their Amizade experience increased their intention to take action to improve their home community.

Virtual Programs (VSL)

78% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that due to their Amizade experience, they are more confident interacting with people different than them.

81% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the Amizade experience increased their feelings of empathy for the well-being of others.

75% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the Amizade experience has changed their definition of what it means to be a global citizen.

66% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their Amizade experience increased their intention to take action to improve their home community.
Amizade Resumes Travel Programs

In February 2022, for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic began, Amizade resumed travel programs for an overall successful program season.

Between February and August 2022, we traveled with 27 education partner organizations and brought participants to 13 different communities.
Remembering Mr. Brown

In January 2022, our organization’s superhero, Mr. John Mathias Brown, passed away. Mr. Brown spent his 80 years creating memories with tens of thousands of people from Tunisia to Israel, Cuba to the United States, and every patch of Westmoreland Parish, Jamaica. We are forever grateful to have gotten to learn, to struggle, to laugh, and to create stronger communities together.
From Dream to Reality: The Making of a Fair Trade Learning Scholarship

In August 2021, Amizade celebrated an exciting milestone: Nybert Samuels from Petersfield, Jamaica arrived at Pittsburgh International Airport to finally begin attending Slippery Rock University on campus, in person, as the first ever recipient of a Fair Trade Learning Scholarship.
The Opportunity to Do:
Reflections from a visit to the Navajo Nation

An Agnes Scott College student reflects deeply on many topics, including her own upbringing, US cultural norms, and the harm of otherizing. She eloquently describes moments from her time in the Navajo Nation while addressing important questions — this is a must read!

READ MORE
Foundation partners with Amizade to fund VSL programs

The AllPeopleBeHappy Foundation, a long-time partner of Amizade, helped us kickstart our global virtual youth programs in 2021. Thanks to this partnership, two distinct groups of youth, one from Jamaica and the other one from Brazil participated in two distinct programs designed for them.
Estimated summarized statement of activities, fiscal year September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022.

Income: $1,006,177.32
- Fundraising: 15%
- Grants: 1%
- Other: 1%

Expenses: $1,228,554.43
- Programming: 81%
- Administration: 19%

*These numbers are being reported on a cash basis. Anticipated audited financials are expected to reflect a smaller net loss on an accrual basis.*
Environmental Sustainability

2019: 1200 metric tons of CO2E
2021: 1 metric ton of CO2E
2022: 287 metric tons of CO2E

Amizade's 2023 Sustainability Plan

While our carbon footprint is currently much smaller than it was pre-pandemic, we recognize that it will continue to grow as we resume travel programming. In response, we have created a 6 part environmental sustainability plan that will drive our decision making and operations moving forward:

CONFRONT
We acknowledge the impact of Amizade programs on the environment.

MEASURE
We will measure our carbon footprint year over year to understand our impact.

REPORT
We will report our findings and plans as part of our annual report.

INSPIRE
We will share our knowledge & best practices with our volunteers and others in the sector.

CHANGE
We will adjust our operations to reduce our carbon footprint and waste.

PREPARE
We will include steps towards reducing our environmental impact in our strategic plan.
Our Team

Staff

Brandon Blache-Cohen
Executive Director

Katie Baucco
Director of Operations

Bibi Al-Ebrahim
Education Director

Melissa Nix
Director of Development & Outreach

Torey Siebart
Outreach Assistant

Nick Grimes
Program Manager

Daniel Alexander
Marketing Coordinator

Board

Ronnell Perry
Chair

Cody Morris, PhD

Julia Posteraro
Our Team

Greg Payne  
Rhiannon Tomtishen  
Dan Weiss, PhD  
Jorge Caraballo Cordovez  
Christopher Carr, Ed.D  
Elizabeth Fu  
Rebecca Johnson  
Michelle Zhu  
Mike Sandy  
Brandon Blache-Cohen  
Ex Officio
Our Team

Site Directors

Jean Carla Costas
Bolivia

Ms. Eveth Clark
Jamaica

Ms. Norma Fenton
Jamaica

Jullyana Franco
Brazil

Dr. Matthias Haas
Germany & Poland

Lenin Minga
Ecuador

Denise Aleong-Thomas
Trinidad & Tobago

Anna Kraus
Poland

Michael Fernandez
Puerto Rico

Rev. Chris Nyame
Ghana

Nate Siggers
Appalachia
Our Team

Keller Allen
Pine Ridge

Juri Bottura
Italy

Patricia Muñoz
Spain

Lawrence Kaibetoney
Navajo Nation

Vanessa Brown
Navajo Nation

Mauricio Ramirez
Bolivia - FSD

Ashley Mountfort
New Zealand
Thank you for reading Amizade's 28th Annual Report.

Join the Movement

Join us and help support our work by making a donation to Amizade.

DONATE HERE

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