A Letter from the Executive Director

Let me document, here in this official report, what you’ve been thinking for the last three years. It’s wonderful and a bit surprising that Amizade survived the pandemic. Our traditional work — connecting diverse groups of people through volunteering globally — was illegal at times, unethical, and riddled with challenges. We overcame quarantines, shutdowns, shortages, wars, natural disasters, and inflation, and I’m honored to share that our programming, our approach, and our network is better off, more resilient, open and prepared for the next big thing the world has to throw our way. Amizade means friendship, and neither mother nature, nor global catastrophes can stop the power of learning from folks who are a bit different than you.

During the last year, the world witnessed the rise of artificial intelligence. While the power for good with AI is clear, so is the possibility of disaster. Amizade’s role has never been more important in creating those very human connections that AI cannot fulfill. The young person trying a new food for the first time, realizing that their palate hadn’t been tested yet; the community leader reflecting on their successes and failures, inspiring those around them to step into new responsibilities; and the complex, nuanced human-centered tangible projects created, that robots are decades (if ever) away from being able to navigate. Amizade creates experiences that are unique, enduring, and make the planet more joyful and just.

As Amizade looks to the future, I can assure you that epic changes are on the horizon. In 2023 we stabilized and grew our community-based global learning programs nearing pre-pandemic levels, created incredible family experiences, and scaled-up our innovative trainings and workshops for educators. In 2024, we will likely see the community development wing of Amizade expand and our ability to assist humans and the environment in vital ways. I invite you to join our movement for good, and become a champion, helping to carry our baton to build a world where all people have access to essential connections and resources to pursue their own happiness — a dream that artificial intelligence simply cannot or will not fulfill.

Many thanks for your support. Onward.
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 30,000 alums, and hundreds of thousands of others, to create a more joyful and just world.
To create a world where diverse communities connect freely, forge lasting relationships, and build a more just planet together.

Amizade is committed to offering ethical and mutually empowering programs, and our values are central to everything we do. 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.
Our Values

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### 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.

### 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.

### Reflection

The questions we face when engaged in intercultural service around the world are often difficult. 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? These are just a few examples. Amizade encourages reflective inquiry throughout experiences and afterward.

### 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.

### Community-Driven Service

Amizade has a 29-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.
Programs

57 travel programs
11 virtual programs

644 travel participants
180 virtual participants

37 education partners
20 communities visited*

*This year we ran a program or site visit in each of the 18 communities where we work for the first time since 2019! We also visited two sites for potential new programming.
What our participants are saying:

**Navajo Nation Program**
Vanessa’s Kinalda presentation was so special. She is a wonderful storyteller and imparts such wisdom and knowledge. I appreciated her willingness to involve us in an interactive activity to share her culture.

**Family Program in Ecuador**
We interacted with our hosts on so many levels during this trip - not just in listening/learning from them but also playing cards, dancing, making food and eating meals. There were many opportunities to build our confidence in speaking with our hosts, even though our Spanish wasn't great.

**Virtual Program**
My internship was a perfect match with my professional goals and interests, and I am very grateful to have been placed with them. I feel a great respect for the work that my non-profit organization does, and I learned a lot from their mission and vision and gained a lot of technical knowledge that will be very useful in my career journey.

Reflective Practice Retreat
I found the retreat in Ecuador to be one of the most valuable professional development experiences I have yet to participate in; I gained more from these 5 days in Ecuador than any conference I have attended to date! The opportunity to engage as both a participant and a practitioner was highly beneficial and really solidified for me the transformative capacity of experiential learning opportunities.

What our community partners are saying:

**Bolivia**
In 2023 we had some amazing groups. One group was so involved in the activities and made the interaction with our partners so natural, it made my work so easy and at the same time they really enjoyed themselves.

The way they embraced the local culture — they learned the Bolivian dance “Diablada” so fast it that surprised Rodrigo, the instructor!
of participants agreed or strongly agreed that due to their Amizade experience, they are more confident interacting with people different than them.

99%

of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their Amizade experience gave them a new appreciation for the challenges, assets, and possibilities present in the community they visited.

95%

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

82%

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

76%

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

89%

of participants agreed or strongly agreed that through the Amizade experience, they made friends with people they would not have otherwise befriended.
Bridging Healthcare & Culture in the Brazilian Amazon: A Perspective on the MPIE Program

Alex and Andi Weaver shared their reflections on Amizade’s Multilateral Partnership for Interprofessional Education (MPIE) program, a collaboration with West Virginia University that offers graduate students in various health programs the opportunity to serve and learn in Brazil. After a multi-year hiatus due to Covid-19, the Amizade Brazil team was thrilled to welcome the Weavers and welcome back the MPIE program!
Thank you, Jean Carla!

Bolivia Site Director steps down after 25 years

In August 2023, Amizade’s beloved site director Jean Carla retired, passing the baton to her assistant of many years, Ariel Flores. As anyone who has been lucky enough to meet her would agree, Jean Carla is an all-around incredible person who will always be a cherished member of our Amizade community.
Exploring New Sites and Partnerships

Amizade programs in Atlanta and Donegal

This year saw an exploration of programs in two new sites for Amizade: Atlanta, Georgia and County Donegal, Ireland. Two programs in Atlanta focused on civil rights and LGBTQ+ activism, including a visit to the MLK Center and MLK’s birth home. In Donegal, “Ireland’s forgotten county,” Amizade students set the stage for long-term business consulting projects while learning about rural culture, education systems, politics, environment, and history of this magical land. Exciting opportunities and lots of future program potential — stay tuned for more information about each of these sites in the coming year.
Muddy Trails and Heartfelt Connections
A Family’s Experience in Ecuador

In 2023 Amizade launched our very first of a new type of experiences: family programs. Two wonderful families joined us for a one week program in Ecuador, to enjoy adventures in rivers and forests, to help in reforestation efforts, and make new friends. “The trip was everything we had hoped for and more” said one parent.
Solar energy in rural schools in Tanzania

Updates about an Ongoing Project

Implemented with the supervision of Mavuno Project with support from Amizade and the AllPeopleBeHappy Foundation, the project was introduced in 2018 with a focus on installing solar energy systems in schools in the Karagwe and Kyerwa districts of Kagera, Tanzania. Today over 110 schools have received reliable solar power. The results have been encouraging for the children, the schools, and the community at large. The project will continue to improve, expand, and bring solar power to more essential buildings like clinics in the region.
A Year of Amizade Consulting Opportunities

Virtual workshops and in-person retreats in two countries

We offer our skills and time as consultants so that our innovative ideas and expertise in community-based global learning can be shared. This was a big year for consulting, both virtual and in person. Amizade held a hugely popular Virtual Reflective Practice Workshop, and two in-person retreats: an education partner’s retreat in Jamaica and an open reflective practice retreat in Ecuador. Consulting has become an increasingly important and successful part of our work, and we expect to see continued growth in this area.
Estimated summarized statement of activities, fiscal year September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.

**Income**
- $1,650,888
- Program Fees 77%
- Fundraising 11%
- Grants 2%
- Other** 10%

**Expenses**
- $1,530,370
- Programming 84%
- Administration 16%

*These numbers are being reported on a cash basis and have not yet been audited. Please contact Amizade to see more detailed financial information.

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Environmental Sustainability

Amizade’s footprint: 814 metric tons of CO2E in 2023

This measurement combines the estimated carbon emissions of all travelers (air and ground) based on their travel itineraries, plus the staff travel associated with those programs.

Amizade's Sustainability Plan

Our 6-part environmental sustainability plan that will drive our decision making and operations moving forward. Amizade will enter a new phase of strategic planning in 2024 that will incorporate many steps towards reducing our environmental impact.

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.
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 Coordinator

Nick Grimes
Program Manager

Board

Ronnell Perry
Chair

Cody Morris
Paris, PhD

Julia Posteraro
Board

Greg Payne
Rhiannon Tomtishen
Dan Weiss, PhD
Founder

Jorge Caraballo Cordovez
Christopher Carr, Ed.D
Elizabeth Fu
Rebecca Johnson

Allie Bustin, Esq.
Ivi Kolasi
Dennis McCunney
Brandon Blache-Cohen
Ex Officio
Site Directors

Jean Carla Costas
Bolivia

Ariel Flores
Bolivia

Mauricio Ramirez
Bolivia - FSD

Ms. Eveth Clark
Jamaica

Ms. Norma Fenton
Jamaica

Jullyana Franco
Brazil

Dr. Matthias Haas
Germany & Poland

Lenin Minga
Ecuador

Denise Aleong-Thomas
Trinidad & Tobago

Our Team
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Anna Kraus
Poland

Michael Fernandez
Puerto Rico

Patricia Muñoz
Spain

Rev. Chris Nyame
Ghana

Nate Siggers
Appalachia

Keller Allen
Pine Ridge

Ashley Mountfort
New Zealand

Juri Bottura
Italy

Vanessa Brown
Navajo Nation

Lawrence Kaibetoney
Navajo Nation
Thank you for reading Amizade's 29th Annual Report.

Join the Movement

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

DONATE HERE

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volunteer@amizade.org

www.amizade.org