“Remarkable”: Webster’s Dictionary tells us the word means unusual or surprising. Remarkable refers to someone or something likely to be noticed as being uncommon or extraordinary.

2015 was a remarkable year around the world. A precarious peace in Ukraine unraveled, causing tens of thousands of people to flee the country. Syria entered the fifth year of its horrific civil war. ISIS increased its brazen aggression in the Middle East and into Europe. *Unusual, uncommon*: it was a remarkable year for our world.

2015 was a remarkable year for the United States. Global events led a large segment of Americans to “discover” refugees for the first time. Elected officials took very public, sometimes controversial stands on how America should respond to the world’s 20 million refugees. The late-19th century French journalist, Anatole France, once said: “It is human nature to think wisely and act in an absurd fashion.” In 2015 a great deal of concern and compassion for refugees was voiced across the US. Some of our actions demonstrated that as a nation we were unsure how to respond wisely.

2015 was a remarkable year for World Relief Seattle. In this report you’ll find some indications of a year that was “unusual” and “extraordinary.” Alongside partners like you, we had the great privilege of providing care and support to 747 refugees arriving to Seattle. Their stories are echoes of the nightly news. As they established their first home in America, learned English, found jobs, and became accustomed to daily life in their new homeland, we witnessed extraordinary results. It was remarkable.

Partners like you are extending help and hope to those impacted by the global uncertainties that dominate our news. You play a vital role in the refugee story as it unfolds here in Western Washington. We deeply appreciate your investment in our newest neighbors and we’re excited to see the remarkable things to come.

Dan Samuelson
Executive Director
World Relief Seattle
From the time he was young, Abdulrahman idolized the American soldier as his childhood hero. As soon as he turned 18, he applied to work as an interpreter for the U.S. military. He spent the next four pivotal years of his life working alongside Americans in combat situations, learning U.S. military culture and ethics. “They taught me so many things. They helped make me who I am today.”

Following his years of service to the U.S. Abdulrahman pursued a degree in Law. Integrating his experience of American culture with his Iraqi community was difficult. Finally, on the day of his final exams to complete his degree, his family was threatened, and forced to flee to Turkey for safety.

He could not finish his Law degree after nearly four years of investment. He capitalized on an opportunity to work in a pharmacy, teaching himself medical terminology by reading the labels on pill boxes. When granted passage to the U.S. he came with the intention of pursuing education and a career in the medical field.

While Abdulrahman can jive with the best of them in American slang, medical vocabulary is a different story. And yet, immediately after his arrival he began a certification class as a CNA. Abdulrahman's undeniable intelligence and refusal to give up on making something of his life motivated him to pursue new dreams.
and less than two months later had enrolled full time as a Medical Assistant student at Everest College in Renton. He now utilizes his phone and Google translator to interpret unknown words and concepts from English to Arabic during class lectures. He spends extra time at home memorizing words and definitions in English while simultaneously learning the concept in Arabic. “Demonstrations and clinicals are easy for me,” he shares. Textbook assignments are twice the work.

Abdulrahman came with a clear vision of what he wanted to accomplish when he came to the United States. He was not naïve in thinking it would be easy. Like anyone else new to the country, he has faced definite challenges that come along with confronting a new culture and place so different from his own. As Abdulrahman says, from a lesson he learned while working with the U.S. military, “Put yourself in the hurricane and be a part of it. Stay calm and don’t freak out.” In the midst of a whole new world that is swirling around you, Abdulrahman advises all newcomers to the U.S. to have a dream. “Stay motivated! It’s not easy, but not impossible. Unforgettable moments of joy await!”

FY 2015 Financials

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<tr>
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<td>private investment</td>
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Revenue and expense breakdowns are shown in the diagrams.
We saw unprecedented interest in volunteering with refugees in 2015. While governors across the country took a stance against welcoming refugees, WRS continued to train people who wanted to open their homes and lives to newcomers—our last volunteer training of the year had a record-breaking turnout of 300 people!

**detention center ministry**

WRS staff and volunteers led eight weekly church services at the Immigration Detention Center, with an average attendance of nearly 400 detainees. We celebrated 240 baptisms of detainees from 26 countries. We also saw significant growth in the number of volunteers who befriended immigrant detainees through window visits and mail correspondence.

**employment**

More than 200 participants in our employment programs received job placements in 2015 in industries such as hospitality, customer service, and production. We see many of these folks quickly progress to positions of greater responsibility, while others have begun to study for a degree in their area of expertise.

**language training**

We worked in 2015 to identify which students tend to be unsuccessful in our traditional English classes. Through a pilot Intensive English class, we saw people with low English improve their language skills at nearly double the rate as the same students in our traditional classes. Despite these impressive strides, state funding for the Intensive English class was cut after 6 months.

**housing**

The saturation of the Seattle housing market has had a detrimental effect on refugees looking for their first home in America. With no rental history and limited income in their first months, refugees struggle to compete for limited vacancies. We’re encouraged by increased interest from the community in hosting refugees on a short-term basis.