



COMMUNITY FOR THE PEOPLE, LED BY THE PEOPLE

SERVING NEWCOMERS AND LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

SHE WAS FEARFUL... OF EVERYTHING... EVEN OPENING HER FRONT DOOR.



"As a single mum with 3 children, I never imagined that the friendships, confidence, and skills my children gained playing soccer, would give me opportunities. More than anything, Umoja has given me friendships to last a lifetime"

- Wedad Al-Houari

A Syrian, Canadian, with years of isolation and traumatic circumstances behind her, Wedad had reason to not open the door when Jean Claude Munyezamu, founder of UMOJA, knocked. But Jean Claude knew she had three children, and had heard she needed help, so he persisted. One day, she opened the door a crack, just enough for him to invite her children to play a soccer game.

For some reason, maybe it was his kind demeanour, maybe it was his accent or the colour of his skin, Wedad dared to trust him, and allowed her children to join in. As she accompanied them to the soccer game - which soon became a weekly event - she watched her children blossom in the play, chattering with others, gaining skills, language, community.

As the people became familiar, Wedad slowly unfolded herself. It didn't take long for Jean Claude to recognize the tremendous gifts Wedad had to offer, mostly her heart and desire to belong. He invited Wedad to volunteer - first in the UMOJA after-school program and then at Soccer Camp. Later, as she grew in confidence, she ran UMOJA's group for women, and when Covid hit, helped manage the community food hamper. It's been nine years since she opened that door a crack and that fearful, lonely Wedad has transformed into a vibrant, community leader.

Today Wedad is a full-time employee serving as the Program Coordinator for UMOJA's Community Mosaic Food & Nutrition Program. Her children, who grew up in the soccer program, are 18, 16 and 14 and serve as coaches and volunteers for UMOJA's Soccer Without Boundaries. Wedad and her family are fully engaged, fully contributing members of a society that, just nine years ago, felt like it would never have a place for them.

FEAR INTO CONFIDENCE.

Wedad's experience of Canada is common for thousands of newcomers and low-income families in Calgary. In all four quadrants, there are families hurting and hungry, many are afraid and alone.

Alberta has the third largest number of newcomers and the third largest visible minority population in Canada, after Ontario and Quebec. A 2021 Census revealed that of the 1.3 million people that call Calgary home one third or 480,000 are immigrant or refugee families representing 240 different ethnic origins.

Many of these families are vulnerable.

Resettlement and personal trauma compounded with language barriers and lack of economic opportunities is exacerbated by unmet basic needs such as food, housing, and support systems. This contributes to disenfranchisement, social isolation, and a dangerously high likelihood that children growing up in these communities will engage in negative social and criminal behaviours. Black communities are disproportionately involved in, harmed from, and punished for, gangs and violence.

In 2020, the City of Calgary launched a Public Safety Task Force focusing on the prevalence of guns and gang violence in the city. A report prepared by the Poverty Institute in 2021 for Calgary, noted that individuals and families living on low incomes are disproportionately under the microscope.

There is a risk that many will be pushed to the margins of the democratic process. This is a risk not just to Canadian newcomers, but to each of us. As Wedad's story shows, it doesn't have to be this way.



With Your Help,
It Doesn't Have to Be this Way

IT ALL STARTED WITH A SOCCER BALL

Like many purpose-driven leaders, Jean Claude Munyezamu's determination to help others was born from his own painful experience. After escaping the genocide in Rwanda and years in refugee camps, Jean Claude immigrated to Canada in 1998. Sensitive to the pain and purposelessness he saw all around him in fellow immigrants, especially in the teenagers, he decided to do something.

In 2010 he took a few soccer balls to the nearby public housing park where kids routinely hung out flirting with gangs, drugs, and police run-ins. Plucky and persistent, he convinced 25 of them to join him in "the world's game". That first soccer game was loud, enthusiastic, and euphoric. When it was done, he told the kids to come back the following night after school and to bring their friends. Within two weeks, he had 75 attending. Local community groups, neighbours and faith communities offered their support and so it became; Soccer Without Boundaries (SWB).

To better reflect these new services, Soccer Without Boundaries became UMOJA Community Mosaic.

Purpose: Build community

UMOJA's goal is to break down racial and class barriers by building an organization focused on "inclusion, capacity-building & community vitality". We serve low-income, vulnerable newcomers including youth, families, and seniors.

People: Employ community

UMOJA's team now includes nine full-time staff, eight part-time staff plus 60 registered program volunteers and 20 volunteer tutors. Staff and volunteers speak over 25 languages, and most come from the neighbourhoods we serve.

From that one field, SWB has grown to encompass 17 staff and 80 volunteers offering year-round soccer in four quadrants of Calgary and five neighbourhoods including Glenbrook, Edgemont, Deer Run, McEwan and Marlborough.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, it became clear that the network and trust SWB had generated could empower so much more than soccer. Within 48 hours of lockdown, SWB had set up a food program, support for women and seniors, as well as tutoring for kids stuck at home, many of whom did not have access to technology



“Umoja” is the Swahili word for “unity” and “belonging”.

Vision: Drive a thriving community

We envision caring communities across Calgary where all children and families have the supports, they need to belong, contribute, and thrive.

Mission:

By building programs and processes led and managed by community members, UMOJA creatively fosters solutions for underserved people to build social capital that consistently facilitates a sense of belonging.

HOW WE DO IT - OUR PROGRAMS

1. Soccer Without Boundaries

Soccer Without Boundaries (SWB) was our starting point and continues to be the hub of Umoja. We began with 25 kids. Today we serve over 500 youth from 40 countries, 90% of whom are racialized and at risk, aged 5 - 21. We run weekly indoor and outdoor soccer programs and summer camps for those who can't afford club fees or have geographic limitations. We also help integrate children into existing soccer clubs. This indoor season we helped place and support 111 children, ranging in age from 6 -20.

Soccer is a simple opening for a relationship. It builds trust with entire families. Through soccer, UMOJA gets to know people and their needs beyond the pitch. We can step in when a family doesn't have enough to eat, when they are struggling with language and settlement, or when a child needs tutoring. It enables us to mentor at-risk youth and give them opportunities to learn leadership skills.



Speaking the languages and mirroring the experiences of those we serve, UMOJA works to remove barriers and provide opportunities.

"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than the government in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all kinds of discrimination."

- Nelson Mandela, 25th May 2000

"I always believed soccer could be a way in to impact kids and their sense of self. If a ball can have the power to engage many kids, then we're honored to help further its reach."

- Jean Claude

KICK ON – 5 Fundamentals

Recognizing that sport is a great motivator for youth to learn and build personal and leadership skills, Kick On was established as a one-week program to arm 15–21 year olds at a critical time in their development with practical tools for personal, social, and mental health as well as open pathways for community engagement, volunteering, and employment.

Impact:

With the explosive growth in our soccer program over the past several years, we are building metrics to measure impact. Outcomes to date include:

- 90% of volunteers come from low-income homes, mostly former and current participants in UMOJA programs.
- 100% of participants have gone on to graduate from high school.
- 3 participants from our SWB program have received scholarships to colleges or universities.
- 6 players are currently on highly competitive teams that are a pathway to professional teams
- 8 former participants now serve as junior volunteers
- 21 teens were hired as camp counsellors and an additional 40 volunteered. All received in-depth training.
- In 2010 Glenbrook Neighbourhood SW, the birthplace of our programs was designated by Calgary Police Service as a “community of concern”. Today this is no longer the case.



Visionary Goals for 2023

We aim to recruit a Sports Inclusion Manager to ensure community-wide participation and train 6-8 coaches to enable us to increase our reach into two or three more neighbourhoods. Our goal is to increase capacity to serve 800 children and youth. In addition, we aim to deliver summer camps for 350 kids, served by 40 camp counsellors who are UMOJA soccer alumni and 40 volunteers.

We also plan to expand our basketball program from the current 25 at-risk youth to 100; pilot a Girls Only SWB program for 20 girls; and increase participation in Kick on Youth Leadership training from 40 to 60 youth while providing additional mental wellness support.

DONOR PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

TEAM BEHIND THE TEAM STAFF - “DRIVERS TO COACH”	\$500,000
EQUIPMENT & STORAGE	\$45,500
COMPETITIVE TOURNAMENTS	\$21,000
GYM & FIELD RENTALS	\$42,200
CAMP SUPPLIES	\$12,500
OPERATIONAL BUDGET	\$28,800
PROGRAM COSTS	\$650,000

2. Mosaic Food and Nutrition Program

*"Once excluded, an individual is not only poor, but he is also removed from access to the means of improving his lot in life."
- Economist and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen*

In March 2020, as the pandemic hit Calgary, many of UMOJA's community members who hold precarious, minimum-wage jobs, were laid off without warning and began experiencing food insecurity. At the same time, the Calgary Food Bank stopped operations due to fear of virus transmission. Thanks to UMOJA's decade of developing a network of connections within the refugee and newcomer communities, we responded immediately with emergency food hampers.

It quickly became clear there was a systemic gap in food security in Calgary. Culturally appropriate food services for newcomer groups had never been considered. Soon after, our emergency food hamper gave birth to the "Mosaic Food and Nutrition" program. Demand has been so high that this has now become a core activity: 20.3 percent of households in Alberta experienced food insecurity in 2020/21, the highest in Canada.

UMOJA provides one hamper bi-weekly - 2 full bags of healthy staples + cultural foods - which is delivered or picked up at our public housing hub. We have 800 families* registered in the Program. 70% of these are single-parent families.

The high cost of food, transport and limited access to culturally appropriate and healthy foods means UMOJA has continual referrals from social service agencies, schools, immigrant serving agencies, housing shelters and government bodies. Connection with families through our food program will enable us to refer and register people into other wraparound UMOJA programs.

* As of October 2022

"Food purchased at stores increased at a pace of 11.4 percent. That's the fastest pace of increase in grocery bills since August 1981".

- Globe & Mail October 20, 2022



Visionary Goals for 2023

It is a priority for UMOJA to increase the capacity of this program to serve at least 800 families per month. This will require increasing our current staff from 2 to 3 members. We are also looking to expand our vendor network of grocers to not only increase efficiency but to positively impact the SME ethnic grocery sector in Calgary. The big dream is to secure a warehouse/office and storage space to serve this and other UMOJA initiatives.

DONOR PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

PROGRAM TEAM	\$140,400
VOLUNTEER INITIATIVES	\$7,200
FOOD HAMPER SUPPLIES	\$505,000
OPERATIONAL BUDGET	\$47,400
PROGRAM COSTS	\$700,000

3. Thrive Education Programs

Imagine a world in which every young person can succeed, A safe place where activism, inclusivity, and social mobility meet. Where educational and leadership development opportunities are fostered. That's the world Umoja is creating.
– Jean Claude

Our After-school Program, Homework Club and Tutor Assistance Programs emerged out of our soccer program. As we built relationships with youth and families we recognized newcomer, racialized or low-income youth were facing specific challenges such as learning a new language, cultural connections, social skills, identity, discrimination, and a lack of belonging. In response, we developed the Thrive Education Program.

Students in this program can participate online, in person, or in group homework clubs in any of the four neighbourhoods we serve. The program provides social, educational, cultural, and sometimes physical activities in safe, engaging, positive environments. Thrive has also offered weeklong STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) camps in three locations during school breaks to introduce coding and science skills to youth who would not otherwise have this exposure.



In partnership with Calgary Housing and the Calgary School Districts, Thrive has been made available to hundreds of children connected to UMOJA through soccer or the Mosaic Food Program. Assessments are made either by staff or school referrals. Matches are based on need, age, gender, and language with children meeting in partnering schools, churches, and community centres. Progress is monitored, and we continue to broaden networks of support.

Visionary Goals for 2023

We have a goal to expand our outreach into two more locations to ensure we are serving all five communities where SWB is being offered, growing our number of tutors to 30 and impacting an additional 100 children. We also plan to grow our network of experts in the arts/music/stem to expand programs usually out of reach to low-income families.

DONOR PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

EDUCATION TEAM & TUTORS	\$124,351
EQUIPMENT	\$37,900
PROGRAM SUPPLIES	\$23,100
OPERATIONAL BUDGET	\$34,649
PROGRAM COSTS	\$220,000

4. Mosaic Wellness

In Calgary, Black communities are disproportionately affected by gangs and violence and a disturbingly high number of homicide victims are from the South Sudanese, Somali, or Ethiopian communities. These families primarily live in UMOJA’s hub areas.



UMOJA responded by establishing an Anti-Racist Volunteer Engagement Program. Our aim is to cultivate a culture emphasizing the resilience and power of our communities rather than their perceived deficiencies. This program brings people from all walks of life together to address shared issues across many differences. In 2022 we hired a community Support Counsellor and two part-time prevention/early intervention therapists (African, Arabic) to provide free, relationship-based, culturally sensitive, counselling, and mental health support services to families. Families are referred by schools, neighbourhood services or Calgary Police Service. We are intentionally and positively engaged with both the Police Services and Calgary’s antiracism initiatives and are proud to be at the forefront of Alberta’s body of experts in this domain.

Visionary Goals for 2023

Our vision is to have 4 full-time counsellors with specialized expertise and language capabilities who can provide one-on-one counselling and workshops to a minimum of 50 individuals. Knowing wellness often comes through being connected in the community, we also aim to have 5 ongoing informal Conversation Circles on a regular basis.

DONOR PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

WELLNESS TEAM	\$252,000
PROGRAM SUPPLIES	\$11,000
OPERATIONAL BUDGET	\$17,000
PROGRAM COSTS	\$280,000

5. Community Connections Program

Sometimes what people need most is the hardest to find. A safe space to interact and build relationships with others outside the home is just that. If we can create nurturing community spaces, the outcome will be social cohesion and social capital.

We help build cohesion through our Community Connections Program, arranging activities such as coffee mornings, workshops, and community events. We look for community champions who can discern the issues individuals and families are experiencing. It could be a school problem, or it might be a health or food security issue. The champion helps connect people in need with the appropriate service or resource.

Our experience in Glenbrook SW has shown that when we have a high level of engagement with families, an unexpected side effect has been that they have reached out and provided mutual support to their neighbours. This kind of connection on repeat is what will build a strong Calgary and a strong Canada.



Our commitment is to give every person an opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential as individuals and citizens while building a stronger community.

- Barlin Mohamed, Community Inclusion Worker

Visionary Goals for 2023

We will establish or expand community hubs in each of the five communities we are working in and recruit 5 inclusion workers to be the community champions in each of these communities. Our goal is to engage a minimum of 10% of public housing families and establish at least two added partnerships with cultural organizations that best represent the demographic of those neighbourhoods.



DONOR PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TEAM	\$252,000
PROGRAM SUPPLIES	\$23,000
OPERATIONAL BUDGET	\$35,000
PROGRAM COSTS	\$380,000

6. Pilot Project: Ejo Youth Alliance Society

Having provided so much support for struggling newcomers and low-income households in Canada, Jean Claude's drive to help others has come full circle. He is taking UMOJA home.



In the next two years, UMOJA will begin a pilot project bringing soccer, education, tutoring, vocational training, entrepreneurship training and food security to adults and youth living in poverty in Rwanda.

The Ejo Project (Rwandan for "tomorrow") will be undertaken in collaboration with charitable organizations already working in Rwanda. Connections with stakeholders in government, education, faith, and community development have been established and plans are underway.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive", and we believe this project will be an important opportunity

for our community in Calgary to find the joy of working together for others less fortunate than themselves.

IF NOT UMOJA COMMUNITY MOSAIC, WHO? IF NOT NOW, WHEN? IF NOT YOU, WHO?

Creating a world in which every young person from any background can succeed and reach their full potential – this is the Calgary UMOJA is creating.

For the hundreds of children that have grown up in UMOJA, there is hope for the future. For the women and men that have volunteered, there is a sense of meaningful purpose.

For staff, there is a passion to creating lasting relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual aid.



With a recent commitment made by our Canadian government to open the opportunity for even more people to immigrate to Canada, it is reassuring to know that UMOJA Community Mosaic is ready to welcome and support newcomers to Calgary.

UMOJA Community Mosaic’s increasing capacity & services vision has a price tag, and it is \$3 million for 2023.

VISIONARY PROGRAM FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Soccer without Boundaries Program	\$650,000
Food & Nutrition Program	\$700,000
Thrive Afterschool & Tutoring Program	\$220,000
Counselling & Wellness Program	\$280,000
Community Connections Program	\$385,000
Rwanda Ejo Outreach Program	\$350,000
Ongoing General Operational Costs	\$415,000
2023 Campaign Goal	\$3,000,000

UMOJA's work will continue to break ground and bring positive social impact but the vision will not be possible without partnerships from every level of society including:

- **donations of all kinds** – gifts in kind, fundraising drives, 3rd party events – we welcome you to use your creativity and help us help others
- **private donations** – we need major influencers in the philanthropic community to invest their dollars with us – what better social return on investment can you ask for
- **corporate partnerships** – what better way to have a social purpose and employee engagement in your company than by partnering with us
- **foundations** – private and public foundations established for the good of the people, we are that charity that serves all people regardless of ethnicity, faith, gender, cultural, gender background – we are a fit for you
- **local, provincial, and federal** – we are a community agency that warrants public funding – if you can advocate or represent funding at this level, we would love to talk to you

A proposal complete with an itemized budget is available for each of the 2023 Campaign Programs.

Thank you for considering how YOU can partner in the inspiring vision of welcoming and helping to create a safe space and place for everyone to belong.



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SEND JEAN CLAUDE AN EMAIL



SEND NURISHAH AN EMAIL

INVESTING IN DIVERSITY.

"One of the things I love about working with UMOJA is that it feels like a start-up. It's small, fast paced, and you can make a big difference quickly. But we're not trying to build a company."

*We're aiming to make the world better.
One goal at a time"*



Jean Claude Munyезamu

Jean Claude Munyезamu has been recognized for leadership and innovation with feature articles in Canadian Geographic Magazine, Reader's Digest and in the travel memoir, Road Trip Rwanda, by Giller winning author Will Ferguson. He was also featured in the Canada 150 Anthology, What's Your Story: 2017 Yearbook.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 2012 The queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal
- 2018 Calgary Stampede's Western Legacy Award for Innovation
- 2018 Calgary Herald's One of Twenty Compelling Calgarians
- 2020 Glenbrook Community Association Partnership Award
- 2021 Government of Alberta Community Justice Award for Leadership
- 2021 Lieutenant Governor's Group Spirit of Community Leadership Award
- 2021 Calgary Black Achievement Award for Community Service
- 2022 John Buckler Award CUSA
- 2022 Volkswagen FC Game Changer Award
- 2022 Immigrants of Distinction Award for Community Development Through Sport
- 2022 Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal

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