With the coming of Spring and the apparent easing of the Global Pandemic, like so many of you we were ready for a return to “normal.” Instead, we are seeing the horrors of war and a growing refugee crisis live on our TVs and on social media. At the Foundation we are redoubling our effort to not lose focus on the millions in the Developing World who continue to live without adequate health care, food, clean water, education, and secure housing. We are like the old proverb about the man throwing stranded starfish back into the ocean. We don’t have the resources to solve all the problems of the world, but we are doing what we can to help people and communities around the developing world work their way out of extreme poverty.

Sunflower a Symbol of Hope
Sunflower Global coincidentally shares the sunflower as a symbol of hope with the people of Ukraine. They work with girls growing up in the Kibera Slums of Nairobi, Kenya. Sunflower Global created an afterschool education program for the most vulnerable girls and young women in Kibera, girls who are performing below average academically. Through partnerships with local public and private informal schools, girls at risk of ending their education early are recruited by Sunflower Global. Programming includes extensive literacy training, reading and writing skills, technology skills, sports and physical activities, counseling and social emotional support (including reproductive health and rights), and academic field trips. This after-school and weekends program is designed to build self confidence and self-esteem. After participating in the program, the approximate 100 girls show universal improvement in their school performance. The list of learnings from the program also seems universal:

- Children need a variety and appropriate reading materials that ignite their imagination and motivation to read.
- Parents and schoolteachers need to be engaged to support children’s language development and reading skills.
- Reading and writing activities for children – both at school and home should be conducted in a language that is easy for children to understand.
- Children need ample opportunity to practice their literacy skills, both at school and at home.

Refugee Support

Last Spring, Qaasim Ali was awarded an AllPeopleBeHappy Fellow Grant to work as a Youth Officer with the Collateral Repair Project (CRP), a non-profit grassroots organization working to serve refugees in Amman, Jordan. Qaasim himself was a refugee; a Somali national, born in Iraq and spent most of his early childhood moving around various countries in Africa and the Middle East before his family settled in Jordan. He speaks Somali, Arabic, and English. In his position with CRP, Qaasim overseas Teen Community Service Projects, English Tutoring, Computer Lessons,
supporting CRP’s Youth and Emergency Assistance teams part-time on piloting a new, holistic family counseling program. Qaasim performed exceptionally well in his work with the program and his supervisors want him to continue supporting the program as it moves into its expansion phase. With additional funding from another donor, Qaasim will extend his time as an AllPeopleBeHappy Fellow through the end of the year.