



Mite



Mite goes above and beyond to help donors know exactly how their money is used. We do this to make giving better.



Scott (right) with brother, Rob (left) in India



Talmaciu, Romania
Watermelon Party
1996

The following pages were written by Scott Toal, Founder and President of Mite.

It all started with a Watermelon Party.

In 1996, 20 years before Mite started, as director of a foundation, I visited the village of Talmaciu, Romania. The purpose of the visit was to see a new dining hall built on behalf of an orphanage. It was an opportunity to see the structure first hand.

To christen the dining hall, our team decided to have a Watermelon Party. We drove down to the local market, filled a pickup truck with every last watermelon we could find, and set up a processing line in the dining hall. My job was to cut the melons, and as I did, the children came up with big, smiling faces, grabbing pieces about the size of their heads. Soon, kids were covered in sticky, sweet watermelon juice. We had a seed-spitting contest, and smiles and laughter filled every inch of that hall.

It felt like a celebration of not just a new dining hall, but of life. I remember it so vividly—that Holy Spirit moment.

I was watching all the excitement in that dining hall, and suddenly, everything went quiet. I heard the Holy Spirit say to me, "What about everybody else?"

I realized He wasn't talking about those in need but those who give. What about those who are faithfully donating, those who give to large organizations and don't know what happened with their donation? What about the young people giving \$5 or \$10 a month who never hear a word of how they helped? What happens to those guys?

Out of that question came the idea of bringing people into the field. Now, I can't take everyone into the field, but I can bring the field to everyone. That is what Mite is all about!

Every Celebration Video, every update, every story—it's all captured with one goal in mind: to serve donors and give them a glimpse into the lives they've touched. To show them exactly how their money is used so they can experience their own version of that joyous Watermelon Party.

Since 2017, we've captured stories from around the world and shared them with our giving community. It's not just something we love to do; it's the essence of our organization. So, in true Mite fashion, I would like to start this year's Mite Magazine by sharing some of our favorite stories from 2023.





"When you have many children, you need to pray a lot and be hard-working." Lord, don't I know it! After raising seven with my wife, I have never been able to relate to a man's words more than with Yohanis Sue's.

We met Yohanis and his wife, Rosalina, in East Timor during our infield visit for Projects 54 and 57. They have been married for 27 years and are parents to six children. In 2023, they celebrated being grandparents for the first time. While visiting with them, they invited us into their newly constructed home, which our Mite Giving Community helped to build along with homes for other families. In May of 2021, the Sue family's home was just one of thousands wiped away by Cyclone Seroja. It was the third deadliest tropical cyclone in the Australian region's history – destroying communities, farmlands, and road infrastructure and, most devastatingly, taking hundreds of lives.

That year, our community completed Project 32, providing immediate emergency relief of food and water to families without homes and sustenance. Then, in 2022, we kicked off our two-year development project, Homes of Love, to rebuild homes lost to the cyclone for families living in stick and branch shelters. In 2023, we went infield to capture the completion of nearly 100 rebuilt homes, and these families' responses were incredible!

We were welcomed by dancing and singing, given handwoven ikat scarves, met with hugs and eyes filled with joyful tears, and invited into so many restored homes.

Homes of Love - Indonesia
Partner: TMC Indonesia
Impacted: 19 Families

While with the Sues in their new home, Yohanis climbed his 70-foot coconut tree to give us refreshments. He told us about how he had planted the coconut trees as a young man, hoping they would provide shelter and fruit for his family one day. Now, 53 years later, standing tall after many cyclones, his coconut trees are doing exactly what he dreamed they would. He was happy to share that little miracle with us.







Empowering Women - Kenya
 Partner: Days for Girls
 Impacted: 5,250 Girls & Community Members

We experience many firsts with our projects: first-time in country, first-time partner, first-time working in project category. This year, we encountered another first. While in Mt. Elgon, Kenya, for Project 56, our partner turned to our team and said, "We've never seen that happen before." Our infield team asked three Kenyan girls if they'd be comfortable sitting down and having an open conversation about their menstrual cycles. In Kenya, as in most African countries, menstruation is a taboo topic that girls rarely, if ever, discuss with their mothers, sisters, or friends. Daisy, Sylvia, and Brenda agreed—

And for the first time in their lives, they had a conversation with another person about their periods.

Our partner, Days for Girls, and the community leaders said they had never witnessed this. Through bashful giggling, these girls shared how they managed their periods before receiving their reusable menstrual pads. Brenda (13, right) described how she tore material from an old t-shirt and foam from her mattress to absorb her bleeding so she could still go to school. Daisy (12, middle) remarked that she had never thought of using mattress foam before. Before having reusable menstrual pads, Daisy would stay at home the entire week of her period because her parents didn't have enough money to buy pads.

As surprising as this information was, nothing could prepare us to learn the other impossible decisions Kenyan girls have to make to stay in school. On their daily walk to school, it is not uncommon for girls to be approached by "Boda Boda" riders (motorcycle taxis commonly found in East Africa) who offer a box of sanitary pads in exchange for sex. Young girls often accept the proposition from the Boda Boda riders in order to continue receiving an education.

Limited access to menstrual hygiene products, now known as period poverty, is a reality for 500 million women and girls around the world. Women suffering from period poverty are often forced to miss school or work every month, limiting their development.

Conversations like these are so important, and the Mite Giving Community is helping to make them possible! Over the last three years, we have taken a stand against period poverty by providing more than 11,000 girls across the globe with sustainable menstrual products and health education—ensuring that these girls never have to choose between their education and their dignity.



Woman of the Ogiek Tribe in Chepkitale, Kenya



Mountain range between Kenya and Uganda





Again, we found ourselves in the highlands of Guatemala, except this time in the town of Comalapa. This town is known as the Florence of Central America because of the artistic mural-painted walls that provide color to their streets. Nestled on a hill in this community is our partner, Long Way Home's school campus. The school's structures are made entirely through green building, a technique where builders replace traditional construction materials with waste materials. So, in place of a red brick, a plastic bottle is filled with trash and dirt until it becomes a solid "eco-brick." Instead of a window, glass bottles are artfully placed for a stained glass appearance, allowing light to flow into the room. Tires of all sizes are packed with dirt and arranged in a way to substitute the need for an unattractive cinder block retaining wall.

Amazingly, Long Way Home's school, called the Hero School, has 25,000 recycled tires in its building structure.

For Project 52, we built the very first science laboratory in the Comalapa region for the students of the Hero School campus. With this addition, students can further their knowledge in a new area of study and be inspired to pursue careers as doctors, microbiologists, or chemists. On inauguration day, our team witnessed these young minds sit down for their very first lab, look at plant cells through microscopes, and create chemical reactions. The pure joy and enthusiasm on their faces is an image we will never forget.

Science Lab for Sustainability - Guatemala
 Partner: Long Way Home
 Impacted: 400 Students







Be An Engine of Change - Tanzania
 Partner: Standing Voice
 Impacted: 10,000 People with Albinism

When we traveled infield to Tanzania, we heard many stories, but none were as heart-rending and inspiring as Paschal Merumba's testimony.

Born with albinism in the 1960s at a time when little was understood about the condition, it's safe to say that Paschal's childhood years were more brutal than any little boy should experience. His pale complexion and eyes were seen as a curse by his family and community, so he was ostracized, made to eat and sleep separated from his family at home, and not allowed to attend school. Only seeing a very dismal future in front of him, Paschal fell into a deep depression and gave up the will to live, drinking battery fluid in an attempt to take his own life. Paschal remembers surviving the incident and saying,

"Maybe it's not God's wish that I leave this world. Not yet."

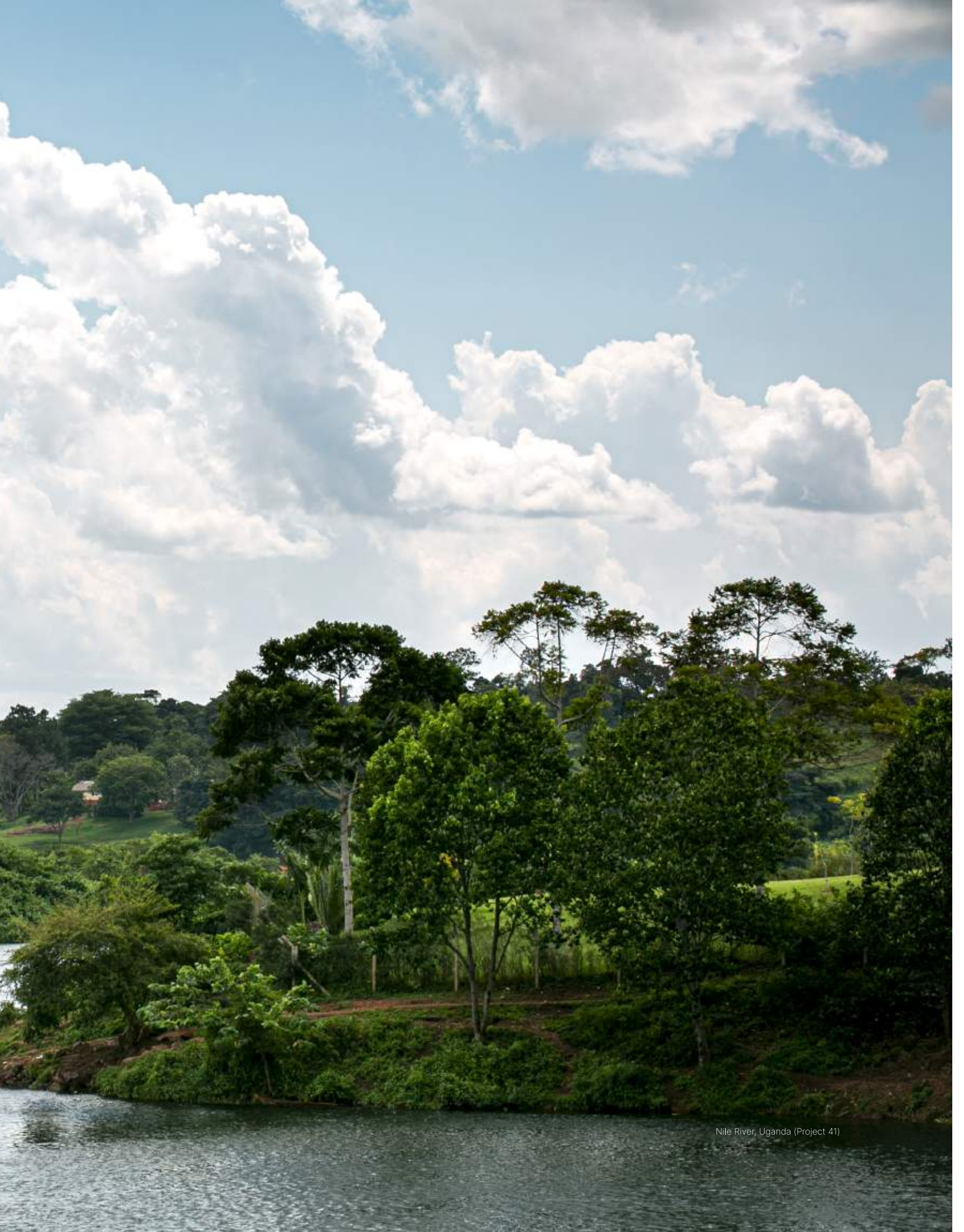
God saved Paschal from death again in 2013 when he fell victim to a hate crime. One evening, after dark, a group of men ambushed Paschal, dragging him into the bush to cut off his head to be used in a witchcraft ritual. A neighbor heard the noise and came running to fend off his attackers. Through Paschal's near-death experience, he met with an albinism advocacy organization and our partner, Standing Voice. They helped him move to a safer community, built him a house, and assisted him in finding a job. For the first time, Paschal had people worried about his physical health, which needed dire attention and healing.

Because of the lack of melanin in their skin and eyes, people with albinism are incredibly susceptible to the sun's dangerous, cancer-causing ultraviolet rays. Paschal's skin was in terrible shape, having never worn sunscreen because he couldn't afford it. His eyelids were so burnt that he couldn't close his eyes properly for two years. Standing Voice took him to get surgery, and his eyesight and skin condition have improved. Paschal expressed his gratitude for the help he's received: "Without Standing Voice, I doubt I would be here today."

Paschal's story is one of many in Tanzania's albino community. Thankfully, Standing Voice is an excellent organization serving as their #1 advocate and helping hand.

Standing Voice came to us with a need for a 4WD vehicle. Their team was spending \$20,000 annually hiring private transportation to take them to their treatment clinics, and often, this transportation wouldn't allow them to travel to remote communities that needed their assistance. For Project 53, our giving community purchased a Toyota Land Cruiser for the Standing Voice Team so they can reach the most vulnerable people with skincare and eye treatments. It may not be the most exciting gift, but it is the most practical, and the impact will be incredible: hundreds of thousands of lives saved, just like Paschal.









School Supplies Needed - Charlotte, NC
 Partner: Classroom Central
 Impacted: 2,500 Students

For Project 58, we learned difficult things right here in our own backyard in Charlotte, NC. We sat down with Beth Cupp, Director of Philanthropy at Classroom Central, to discuss what education looks like in the low-income communities of our area.

Many schools nationwide have students who walk into their classrooms without basic supplies like paper, pencils, and book bags. These are identified as Title I schools, where 75% or more of the student body qualify for their free lunch program due to low household income. It's not uncommon for lunch to be their only consistent meal on weekdays.

So, as you can imagine, when lunch at school is often the only meal they have from Monday to Friday, buying the supplies needed to succeed in school falls by the wayside. Beth noted that the lack of essential learning equipment plays a significant role in students' learning challenges.

Charlotte faces a literacy crisis—some neighborhoods see only one in five children reading proficiently by the 4th grade.

Beth explained the importance of a 4th-grade child's reading capabilities: "Students learn to read from early childhood through 3rd grade, but after that, they read to learn. If they are not proficient in literacy in their 4th year, it can significantly negatively affect their future trajectory, from high school graduation to job success."

Because of Mite's giving community, 2,500 students received school supplies packets filled with paper, folders, colored pencils, and more. By simply providing these packets, you have given them the tools they need to reach their potential and build confidence for a brighter future through literacy.







Himalayan Hope Home - Nepal
Partner: The Small World
Impacted: 200 Girls

The foothills of the tallest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas, and more specifically, Nepal, is where our infield team ventured next. To many, Nepal is known as the country that houses Mount Everest, sherpas, and many cultural backgrounds. However, it is also known as the second most prevalent country in Asia for child marriages and one of the busiest sex trafficking routes in the world.

Every year, around 20,000 Nepalese girls are trafficked into the international sex slavery industry-42% of these girls are minors.

It is estimated that 50 girls are trafficked from Nepal to India each day for forced prostitution, a situation exacerbated by Nepal's open border. When speaking with our partner, The Small World, they told us that once a girl is brought across the border or "over the mountains," it's nearly impossible to get her back.

After learning about this issue, our Mite Giving Community set its sights on supporting the Hope Home in Kathmandu, Nepal, home to 30 young ladies at a time who came from high-risk environments of human trafficking, child marriages, and abuse.

At the home, our team met Remisha and learned her story.

At five months old, Remisha lost her father because of an illness caught too late by his doctors. Shortly after her father's passing, her mother abandoned her with no legal guardians to take over her care. Our partner found Remisha when she was three years old. She had scars covering her tiny body, her right eye was missing, and her teeth were in such bad shape that they were nearly unsavable.

Their team isn't clear on exactly what happened to Remisha before she came to live at the Hope Home, but for the past eight years, she has been in a nurturing environment that has allowed her to heal inside and out. Remisha now lives with friends she loves, receives monthly health checkups, and has been given the education she would have never received before.

We've all heard the age-old saying, "Education is key." At the Hope Home, they believe education is not just a path to success for their girls but their lifeline. It is an undeniable fact that girls who are denied access to education face a higher risk of falling prey to exploitation. Through the support of our giving community, Remisha and her friends live in a loving home and receive an education that gives them hope and a future full of opportunities.



Mite Team infield in Guatemala



In 1982, David Ogilvy, often hailed as the Father of Advertising, drafted a memo for his management team titled 'How to Write.' Of the ten tips he mentioned, number seven stood out the most for our team in 2023:

"Never send a letter or a memo on the day you write it. Read it aloud the next morning—and then edit it."

In 2023, we took this piece of wisdom to heart as we refined our mission. This process didn't take a day or a week; it took months of focus group discussions and surveying our donors and partners to understand what they believe we are known for.

Through this process, we discovered that, above all, our community thinks of Mite as transparent—going the extra mile to show them how their money is used.

While Mite does a lot of things, we believe it's important that our mission and vision are easily understood by all. I'm excited to present our mission and vision statements:

Our Mission: Mite goes above and beyond to help donors know exactly how their money is used.

Our Vision: Make giving better.



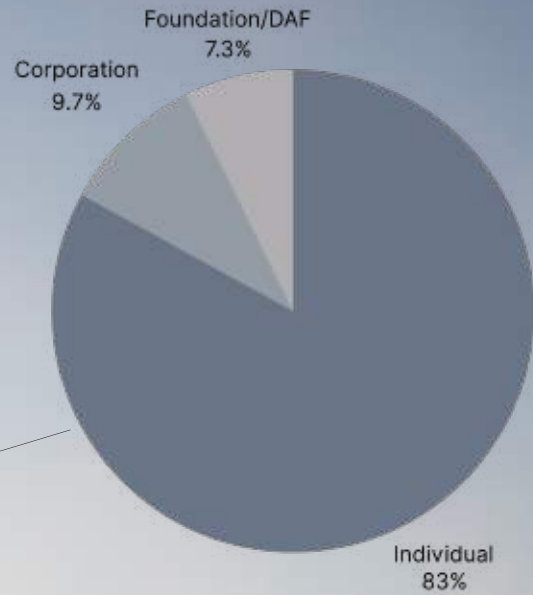
THE GOOD STUFF

18,442 immediate lives impacted

29% new donor growth

80.7% donor retention rate

GIVER TYPE



TOTAL DONATIONS

\$322.7K

\$212.7K raised for projects

\$110K raised for Mighty Fund

Our pledge is 100% of project donations are used on projects alone. To support operational costs, we created the Mighty Fund, which supports our team & keeps the lights on.

In 2023, the Mighty Fund overflow also helped support the Projects.

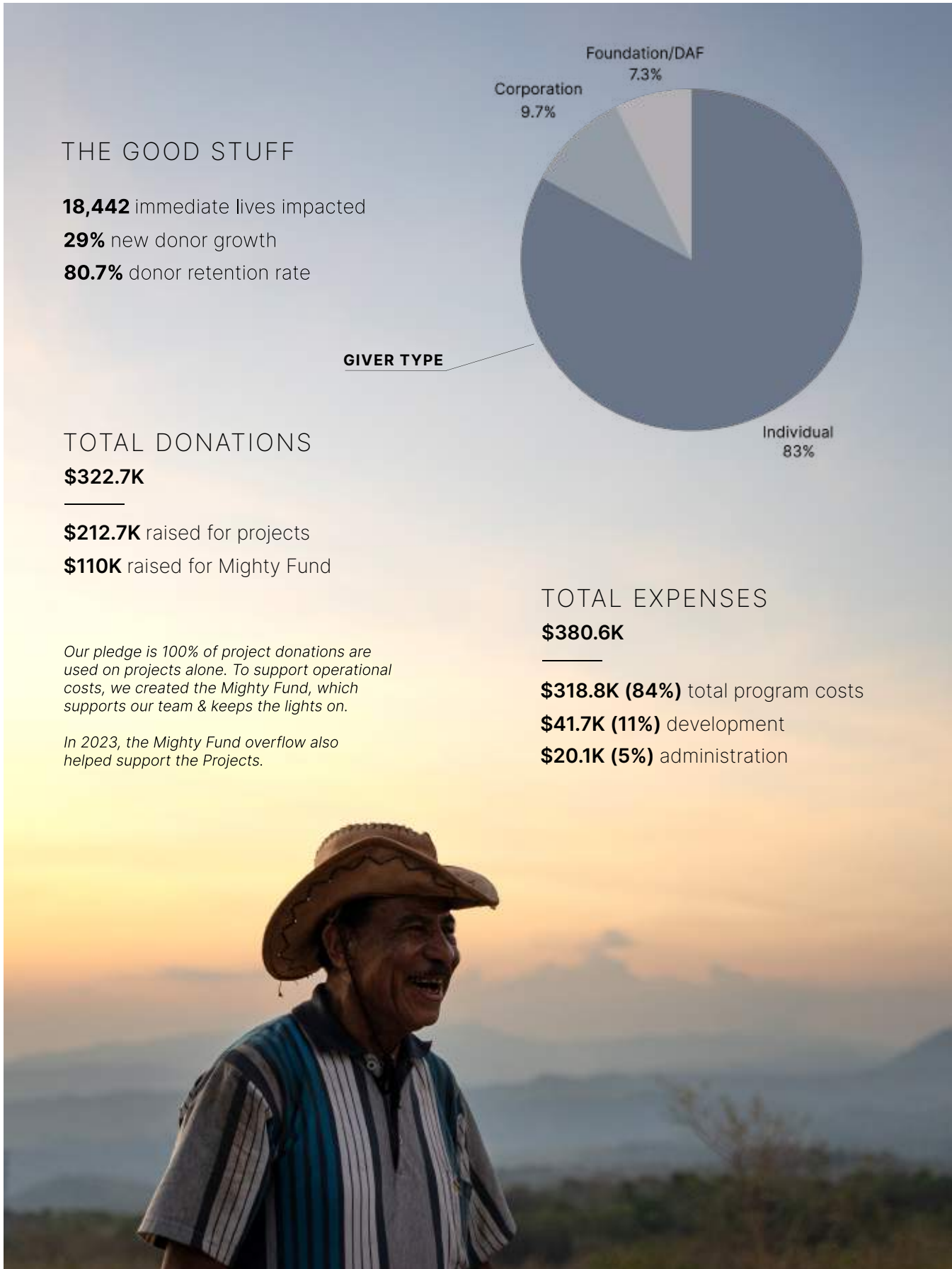
TOTAL EXPENSES

\$380.6K

\$318.8K (84%) total program costs

\$41.7K (11%) development

\$20.1K (5%) administration





Reflecting on our 2023 Mite program year, I'm reminded that God is gracious and good, and sometimes He has us hitting roadblock after roadblock so that we remember that we are not the source, nor are we alone.

Midway through last year, it was clear that we would need a massive Q4 raise to stay out of the negatives and be healthy coming into 2024's program year.

The financial numbers did not look good, so we went to our Governing and Advisory Boards for their advice and assistance. Boy, did they rise to the occasion! Our fabulous boards jumped into action, and by God's grace, their combined efforts, and our giving community's generosity, Mite realized the most successful matching fund campaign in our history!

Thank you for a very bountiful end of year. As we look toward a new year, let us continue to make giving better, one project, one life, and one Celebration Video at a time.

Here's to more Watermelon Parties in 2024!

For the Giver,

Scott Toal
Founder & President of Mite



