



Anniversaries are great opportunities to review accomplishments and celebrate relationships. Looking to the future, however, is more difficult. Challenges we have overcome are always more pleasant to contemplate than those that lie ahead.

But as Hesperian heads towards another 50 years, secure in our commitment to promoting Health for All, we feel more optimistic than ever. Our long-term collaborators and a host of new partners have confirmed that our work matters to them and that they are with us. Our legacy materials, updated and released in new forms, are more widely used than ever. And our new resources in the pipeline are recognized as essential to meeting the challenges now confronting our world.

Our optimism may feel shocking when the current political, environmental and health outlook is the stuff of nightmares — in all honesty, it surprised me! But as described in this report, Hesperian is engaged in transforming those realities — climate change, an end to discrimination, equal access to health — inside and outside the US, alongside the most brilliant,

committed and hardworking people we know: our grassroots partners everywhere. The past 50 years have taught us to communicate better — in more languages, across borders, time zones and cultures, in-person and remotely — enhancing our common capacities to work together for change. Who or what can resist that?

Hesperian was born of the liberatory movements of the 1960s. That our mission and experience remain relevant several generations on is yet another cause for optimism. For that, we owe a debt of gratitude to you, our donors. You have grown with us, supported us as we sought to adjust and evolve, and now we are thrilled to be walking arm in arm with you toward the future.

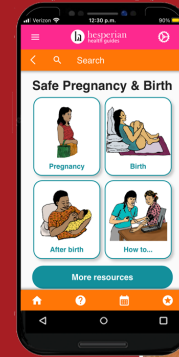
In solidarity,

Sarah Shannon  
Executive Director  
Hesperian Health Guides



# Toward 100 Years of Community Health!

A “world tour” of virtual visits culminated in our 50th Anniversary celebration with many of our long-term partners joining us to discuss how Hesperian materials have strengthened their work. Besides reaffirming our shared commitment to health, they endorsed our current priorities — developing mental health resources, more expansive reproductive health tools, and combatting climate change — which spoke directly to their work, and their excitement and anticipation of putting these new resources to use. Their energy, alongside your support, propels us into the next 50 years of providing information that supports health rights advocacy and achieving better personal, community and environmental Health for All.



## Free Goes Far

Hesperian's Gratis Books Program provides donor-funded books to community health workers and leaders. Since the program began 30 years ago, an estimated 2,700,000 people have benefited — and last year, requests increased.

For those with internet access, our free HealthWiki has provided accurate information to over 36 million people since it launched in 2011. This year, we had new visitors from some of the most remote places, upping Hesperian's reach to 231 countries and territories.

## In the News

The Returned Peace Corps Volunteers magazine, *WorldView*, honored the long history of Peace Corps members using *Where There Is No Doctor* during their service.

## Translations and Adaptations

At any given time, Hesperian supports about 150 partners and organizations involved in translating or adapting our resources. This labor-of-love work is always painstaking and never easy, so completing a project is a momentous event. We are pleased to announce that a Mongolian translation of the *Workers' Guide to Health and Safety* is at the printer in Ulaan Bataar!

Behind this achievement is Local Solutions, a Mongolia-based organization working on health, rights and environmental issues. We are grateful for Local Solutions and all our partners who find their health resource needs met in Hesperian's materials. They are essential in adapting our work to better support people's lived experience. As export factories set up shop in Mongolia, we're excited that the *Workers' Guide* will bring occupational health and safety information to health promoters in Mongolian.





# Epilepsy Materials Out for Review

Excitement is building as Hesperian's materials on epilepsy and seizures move closer to release. In September 2023, Hesperian shared several draft chapters for feedback at the International League Against Epilepsy's Annual Congress in Dublin, Ireland. Participants agreed this new resource will fill a void in education and treatment information, needed to increase access to treatment world-wide.

***"We desperately need something about seizures and epilepsy that is easy-to-understand and translatable in a local language."***

**— Thendo Gertie Makhado  
University of Venda, South Africa**

## Addressing the Mental Health Epidemic

Awareness of profound challenges around mental health grew during COVID. Now as the pandemic recedes, mental health problems continue to increase globally. Hesperian's defining belief that health is created by strengthening connection and community animates our work on the *Community Mental Health Promotion Guide*, a concise resource tailored to community organizers, health workers and everyone working to make their communities a better place. Written for diverse US settings, it will include practical mental health promotion how-to's addressing challenges from stress to trauma, substance abuse, helping people in crisis, and conducting support groups. Importantly, this book also covers how those doing this essential work in the community manage their own mental health.

**As community-based organizations review the draft and share feedback, we look forward to the book's 2024 release.**



## How I Fell in Love with Hesperian

**Marian Haley Beil**

I landed in Ethiopia in 1962 as an idealistic Peace Corps Volunteer with no idea those two years would lead to a lifelong commitment to service. A piece of my heart has remained in Ethiopia ever since, leading to my role in creating the Ethiopia & Eritrea Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (EERPCV) group to keep people connected and later, the EERPCV's Legacy Program to channel our collective support to important projects.

Then I met Lee Gallery, also returned Peace Corps, who was volunteering at Hesperian. Her passion was contagious. I began donating Hesperian's health guides to communities in need and involved the EERPCV as well, work enriched with each new Hesperian guide and language edition.

In addition to helping Hesperian's books get to where they are most needed, I have been a donor for 18 years, a firm believer in Hesperian's work facilitating the transformative power of easy-to-understand health information into lasting change.

# Delivering Better Health Outcomes

Online use of Hesperian books and apps has spread alongside increasing mobile phone access and is especially valuable for anyone privately looking up health information that feels taboo. But health workers, community leaders and countless others still rely on print materials to play an essential role in prevention, treatment, education and other aspects of people taking charge of their own health.

A recipient of books via our Gratis Program, Uganda's Kinyamaseke Youth In Development (KYID), sent a letter sharing their experience with Hesperian materials.

"During our community meetings, we use the books to answer people's priority questions." They praised how the well-illustrated materials "don't leave anyone behind due to language."

They also shared how much Hesperian resources matter to people in their region:

***"The books help reduce maternal deaths amongst women and support their children in this rural area, thanks to clear and simple information of how to prevent and treat most common health problems in homes — earlier, cheaper and often better than waiting until medical attention is needed."***



Fighting stigma in Bogotá, Colombia!

## Our Amazing Apps

Collaborating with partners in Brazil and Mozambique, we released our *Safe Abortion* and *Family Planning* apps in Portuguese.

This brings the total of languages in our reproductive health apps to 11!

In Latin America and Africa, 56 partners in 16 countries use Hesperian apps to share health information, deliver services, and promote access to care. These organizations and grassroots groups educate students, train clinicians and community health workers, and perform vital outreach to vulnerable groups. Our apps help them deliver up-to-date and respectful healthcare and counseling. At the local level, our outreach team of regional activists share the apps on social media and at events. This year we showcased the apps at meetings in Panama, Rwanda, Mexico, and the US, while online we reached over 13 million adolescents and women.



A midwife explains the birthing process in a rural Uganda community.

PHOTO: KYID

After ten years of wide use, our award-winning *Safe Pregnancy and Birth* app has been redesigned from the ground up. We've incorporated partner feedback into expanded content, updated art, and new features to support maternal and newborn care even more effectively. **Download the new app today!**





# Remembering Leslie Grace

Leslie Grace was a passionate promoter of women's empowerment with a love of handcrafted textile arts. Her appreciation for the unique health challenges of women artisans inspired her to generously support Hesperian's work from 2009 until she passed in 2022. Her long-time generosity included hosting Hesperian staff in her Seattle home, co-hosting a house party and donating stock. We are grateful that Leslie made Hesperian a 10% beneficiary of her IRA — a significant legacy that will continue to provide tools for women to transform their lives.



*We invite you to consider Hesperian in your planned giving. Make a difference beyond your lifetime by empowering communities struggling for the right to health. To learn more about making a legacy gift and other ways to support Hesperian, contact Keziah Sullivan ([keziah@hesperian.org](mailto:keziah@hesperian.org)).*

## Environmental Health

As the climate crisis intensifies, mobilizing to prepare for natural disasters and protect the planet is vital to saving lives and ecosystems. With increased temperatures and flooding, cholera and mosquito-borne illnesses like dengue are worsening and spreading to new regions ill-equipped to handle them. Thanks to their tireless efforts, our translation partners have made new adaptations of *A Community Guide to Environmental Health* available in even more languages to help health workers and community leaders prevent and respond to environmental crises. This year, critical environmental health information was released on our HealthWiki for free and fast online access in Swahili, Russian, Turkmen and Indonesian.

Our *Health Effects of Fracking and Plastics* project is also part of our environmental health advocacy. Hesperian is developing a short resource to address the complex ecological and human health impacts of fracking: from the extraction stage all the way to the processes used to convert fracked ethane gas into plastic.

## VOLUNTEERS & COLLABORATORS

We gratefully acknowledge the participation of 121 volunteers and collaborators who donated 4872 hours to help ensure our materials remain accurate, up-to-date, accessible, relevant, and shared most widely.

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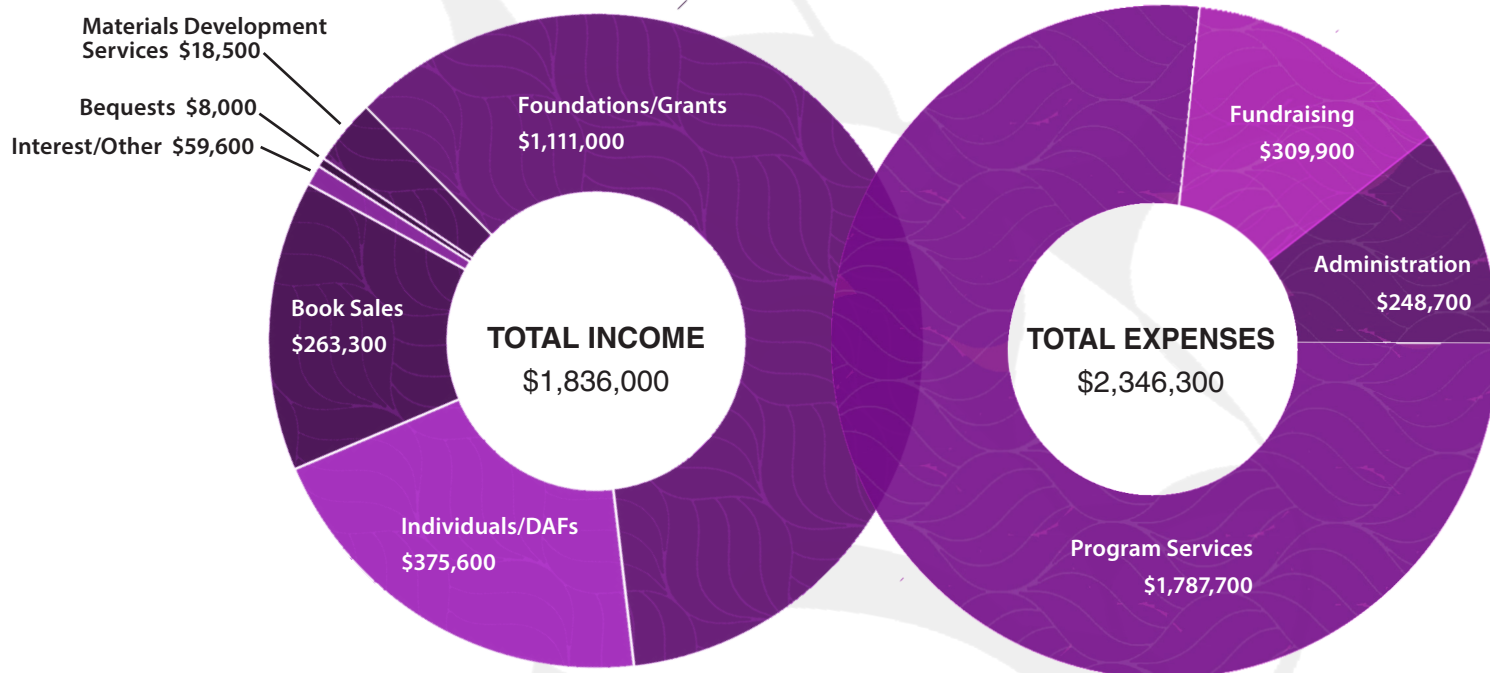
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Hesperian ended Fiscal Year 2023 with net assets of \$3,618,700. In June 2022, Hesperian used bequest-generated assets to purchase and begin improvements on a building to house Hesperian's operations, an investment totalling \$1,750,000. Net assets also include a Reserve Fund of \$400,000, book and equipment inventory, and multi-year restricted grants.



## About Hesperian

Hesperian Health Guides addresses urgent, emerging, and primary health needs, structural inequalities, and their root causes by working together with the people most directly affected. Our information and educational resources help people around the world take greater control over their health and lives. Our goal is to create a world with Health for All, Now!

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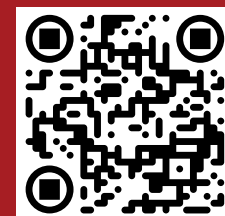
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Leigh Haynes  
Samantha Heep, Treasurer  
Sarah Jane Holcombe  
Katherine Jones Debay  
Larry Kressley  
Bill Lankford, Co-Chair  
Grace Maher  
Purnima Mane  
Oladele Ogunseitan  
Melissa Smith  
Linda Spangler  
Susan Weissert, Co-Chair  
Prentice Zinn

### BOARD MEMBERS EMERITAE

Pauline Butcher  
Ellen Vor der Bruegge

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