



open arms

2025 Annual Report

“Every child deserves a champion—an adult who will never give up on them.”
— Rita Pierson

Open Arms’ is many people and our goal is to collectively be the champion each of our kids deserve. In 2025, we drove further towards that mission. It was a year of steady growth, deeper connections, and renewed purpose. Rather than simply expanding the number of children in our programs, we focused on enriching the experiences of the children already in our care, creating opportunities that nurtured curiosity, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

Our programs grew beyond the classroom. Through the creativity and dedication of our volunteers, our children explored science through hands-on experiments, learned new skills in the kitchen, celebrated cultures from around the world, and enjoyed memorable field trips that broadened their horizons. They experienced drum circles, attended *Wicked* the musical, and imagined future careers during an inspiring visit to the Jaguar Land Rover training facility. Every activity was designed not only to practice English, but to help children discover new possibilities for themselves.

Perhaps the most rewarding measure of our impact came from the children themselves. In our year-end evaluations, they shared how much they value our programs and the volunteers who invest in them, and many spoke proudly about the confidence and growth they have experienced. Our welfare center partners echoed these observations, noting that children who attend Open Arms are increasingly confident speaking English and eagerly look forward to returning each week.

As always, our volunteers are the heart of our organization. While the children are the reason we exist, our volunteers are the foundation that makes every program possible. It has been inspiring to see not only the unwavering commitment of our long-term volunteers but also the steady stream of new community members who continue to discover our mission and choose to become part of it.

We are equally grateful for the organizations and partners who walk alongside us. Our ongoing collaborations with AWC, SIWA, student clubs

from Dwight School Seoul and Seoul Foreign School, Dulwich College Seoul, Korea Legacy Kitchen, and FurAll Dogs continue to strengthen our work and expand what is possible for the children we serve.

Community engagement also flourished throughout the year. Our two flagship fundraising events—Open Arms Talks in the spring and the Namsan Mountain Music Festival in the fall—not only raised essential funds through discussions and music, but also served as ways to strengthen understanding and celebrate the mission we work towards.

This year also marked the first full year of adventures with our mascot, HaNeul, whose playful spirit continues to bring our values to life through games, stories, and activities that delight our children.

As we looked toward 2026, we prepared for one of the most significant transitions in Open Arms' history. After eight years in Korea, our Educational Director, Katy Freeman, will be moving on to a new chapter. Katy has been instrumental in shaping the organization we are today. While her departure will undoubtedly be felt, it has also highlighted the strength and resilience of our community, as volunteers and leaders have stepped forward to carry her legacy and continue building upon the strong foundation she helped create.

Open Arms continues to grow through every season of change. Each new volunteer, partner, donor, and child who joins our community strengthens the village that makes this work possible. It is this extraordinary spirit of generosity, hope, and shared purpose that enables us to keep opening doors, creating opportunities, and believing in every child's potential. I am deeply grateful for everyone who has walked this journey with us, and I am so excited for all that lies ahead.

Yolekha Mallier, Executive Director

What's Inside

**Who
We Are**



**What We
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numbers**



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Who We Are

Open Arms provides regular play-based English programs in a caring learning environment at partner welfare homes in Seoul. In addition to the curriculum and games, the children experience positive interactions with our teachers and volunteers who make them feel valued. Our continuous and long-term program began with Toddlers and has expanded to serve Early Years, Primary and Young Teens as the children grow. We are a volunteer-run organization that welcomes the support of like-minded individuals who wish to improve the future of children living in South Korean welfare homes.

Our Mission

Guided by the belief that all children have equal value, Open Arms provides English education to children in South Korean welfare homes.

Our strong community of support empowers them to realize their self-worth and reach their potential socially, emotionally and academically. In addition to providing a personalized learning program throughout their childhood, our dedicated team of diverse volunteers also connects the children to a more global world view.

Our Vision

Our vision is a community where children are accepted, valued and unconditionally loved so they can grow into adults who will contribute positively to our society.



Our management team



Barbara Bai
Founder



Alicia Chung
Representative Director



Yolekha Mallier
Executive Director



Katy Freeman
Educational Director



Anne Campos
Incoming Educational
Director



Erika Lee
Finance Director



Justin Im
Fundraising Director



Amethyst Etessam
Volunteer Director



Kathrine Nielsen
Welfare Home Liaison

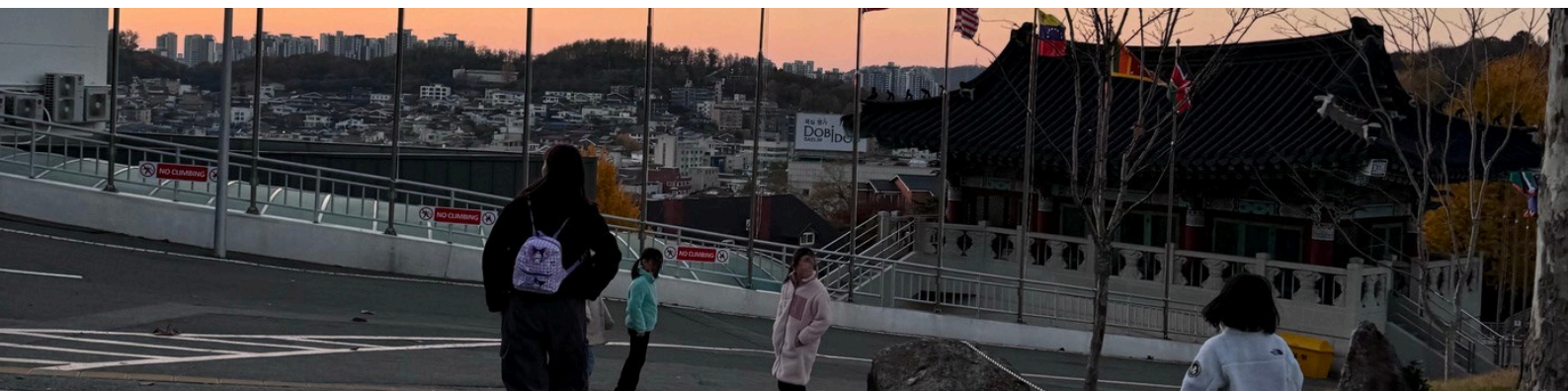


Marta Casas
Director of Administration

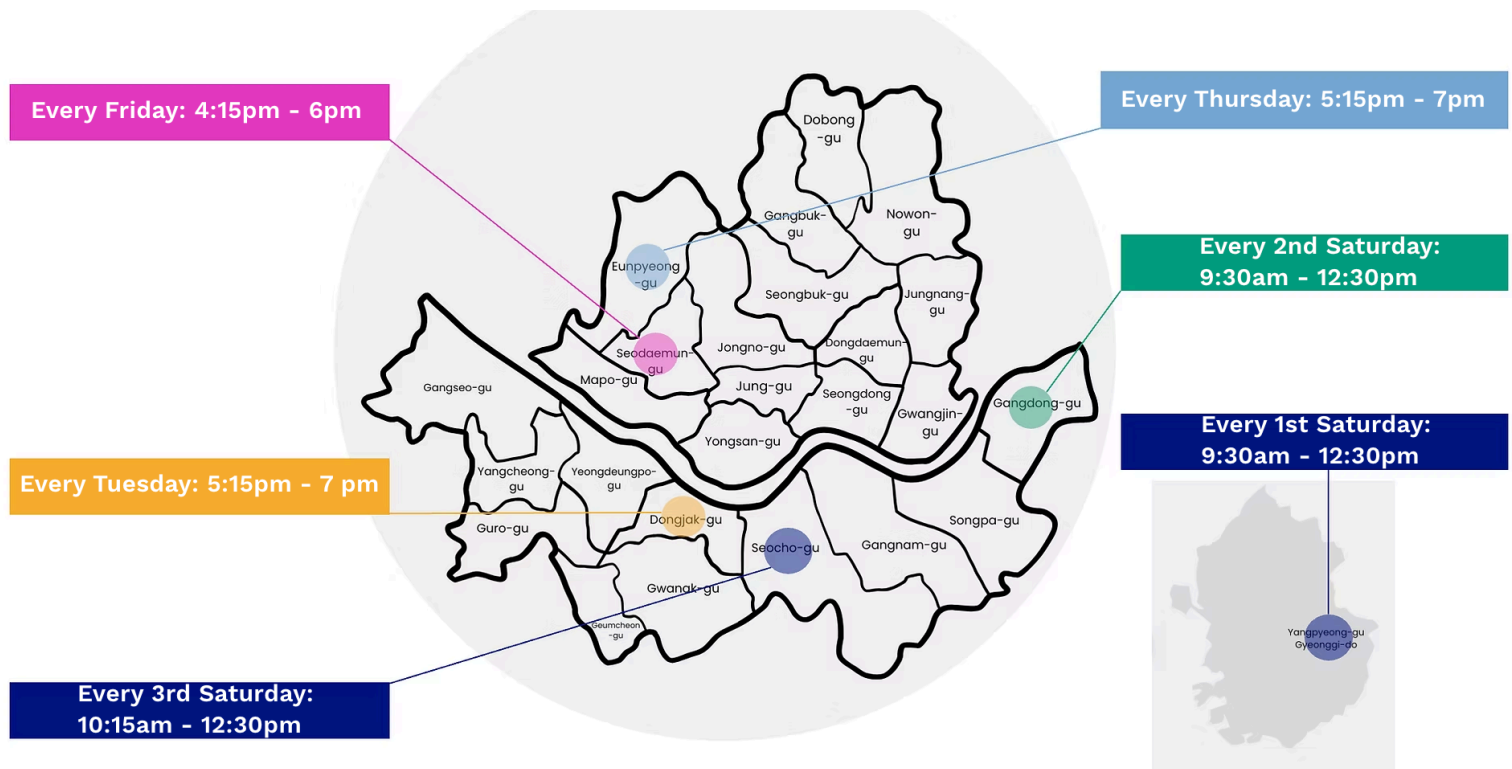
What We Achieved

Our Programs

We meet the children as toddlers because we know early childhood education gives children the best start in life. We grow with the children, through our English-based programs. The ambition is to follow the kids even as they move away from the welfare homes and into young adulthood.



In 2025/2026 we are running 6 programs around Seoul:



Inspiring partnerships

We work with inspiring partners to create beautiful memories for the children. These partnerships make it possible for the children to:

- Visit, learn and play at the big international schools in Seoul like **Seoul Foreign School**, **British School** and **Dulwich College**
- Get personal gifts for birthday and Christmas thanks to **Dulwich** school
- Get holiday gift bags thanks to **Dwight Student Clubs**
- Meet and interact with our favourite furry teachers from **Fur all Dogs**
- Give back to others with **Korea Legacy**
- Celebrate Children's Day with **SIWA**
- Empowered our girls thanks to **BCCK**
- Visited **Jaguar Landrover** facilities



Also, as part of our fundraising efforts, we have organized and received very generous donations from:

- AWC
- Friend of Dulwich
- The Executive Center
- Vineworks
- And several generous private donations

A big and heartfelt thank you to all of our partners.

Our next project: The Yearbook

This year, thanks to a generous donation from Friends of Dulwich, Open Arms is creating a memory book for every child in every one of our programs – a keepsake they can carry with them for life. The idea came directly from our advisory council of aged-out youth, who know firsthand how much it means to hold on to the moments that mattered.

Each program will have its own dedicated book, filled with photographs, special memories shared with volunteers, and blank pages where children and the people who care for them can leave personal messages. More than just a record of the year, it's a tangible reminder to every child that their story – and the people who walked alongside them – will always be theirs to keep.



OA by numbers

5

welfare homes

We work at Dream Tree, Cheonwoon, Myeongjin, Shinmangwong and Sundukwon

Open Arms children are between 2 and 14 years old

2-14

years

93

**kids are currently
enrolled in our
programs**

93 children get personalized and inspiring English Education through Open Arms. We work with a 1:1 ratio between children and volunteers creating the opportunity for every child to feel seen and cherished.

Open Arms has 90 volunteers that together represent 18 different countries, born between 1952 and 2008. Our longest serving volunteer has been with us from the very beginning - 9 years!

3010

**volunteer hours were
spent with the children**

202

**personalized
christmas presents**

Each present personally chosen and wrapped to give the kids exactly what they wished for.

Each of our kids from Cheongwoon and Dream Tree got a personalized birthday gift.

59

birthday gifts

5

trips

We took our kids to 5 different trips through out the year, such as the Namsan Tower, Wicked The Musical and Natural History Museum.

Thanks to our fundraising team and generous donors we raised money to support programs and special activities.

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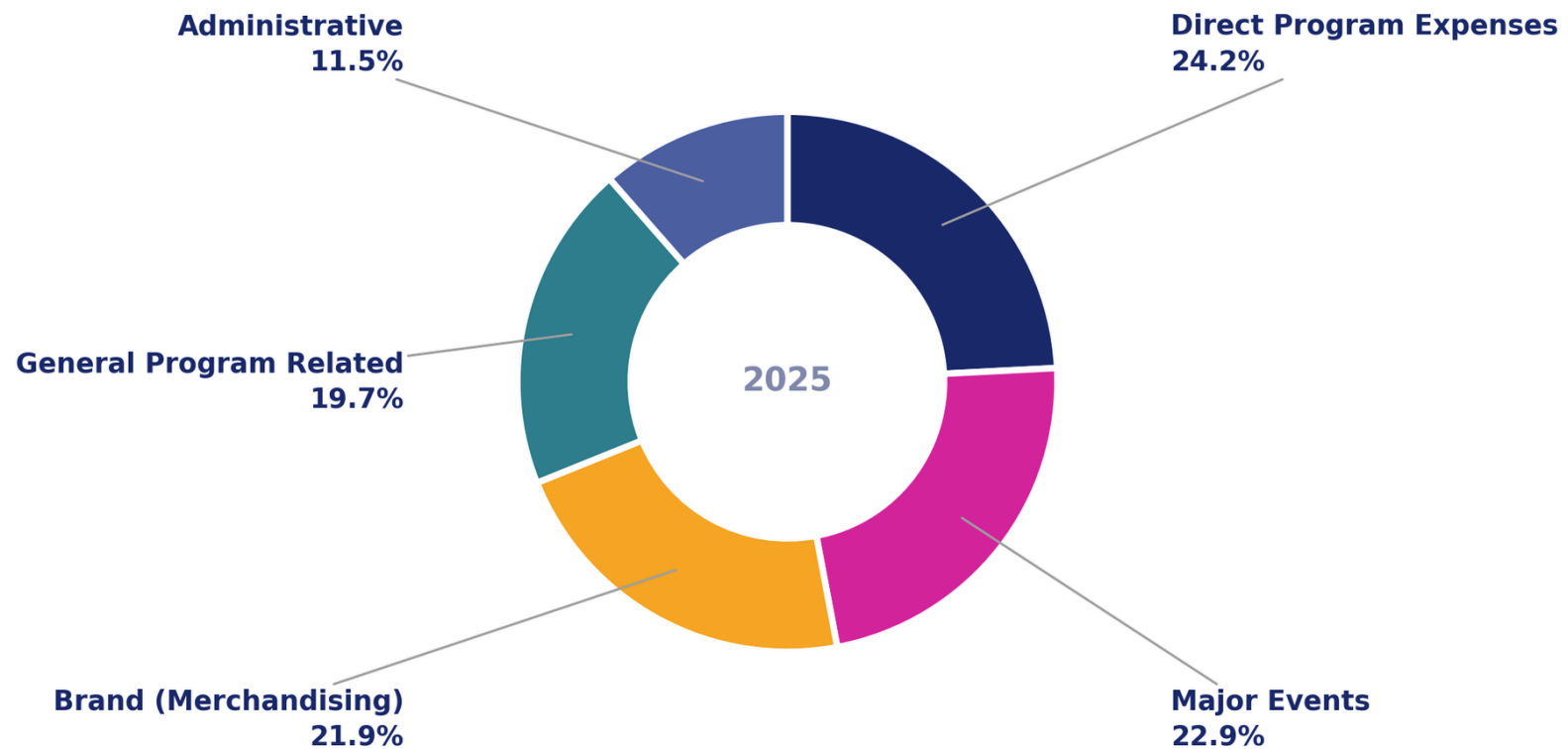
KRW

2025 was a strong and healthy year for Open Arms financially. Thanks to the generosity of our **donors** and the success of **key fundraising events** — including our Music Festival and OA Talks — we closed the year on solid footing, giving us a stable foundation to continue growing our impact.

Our community also grew alongside our finances. We welcomed a significant number of new volunteers, and we expanded our reach to more children across our programs. We were also proud to consolidate a new program, the SFS English Club, extending our educational offering to more kids in our community.

The chart above reflects how these resources were invested back into our mission. **Direct Program Expenses** (24.2%) remain our single largest area of investment — the direct cost of running our programs for children — and in 2025 we introduced a new reimbursement form that allows us to track this spending with greater accuracy and transparency going forward. Major Events (22.9%) covers milestone moments such as our Annual General Meeting, our Christmas party, the launch of our new mascot with the children, and the Music Festival — events that strengthen our community and visibility alike. Brand (21.9%) reflects investment in HaNeul merchandising, helping us build a stronger, more recognizable identity. General Program Related (19.7%) includes essential learning tools such as iPads for our programs, and Administrative (11.5%) covers the subscriptions and systems that keep our operations running smoothly day to day.

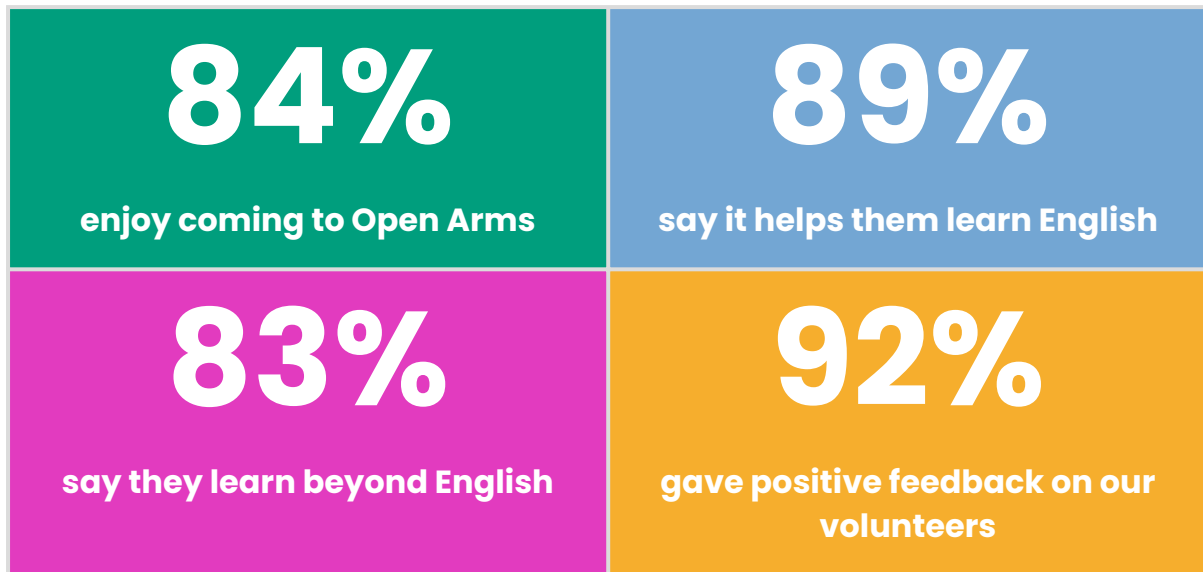
Alongside these results, we maintain an Operational Reserve, ensuring Open Arms can continue serving children without interruption, even in the face of unforeseen circumstances. Together, these figures reflect an organization that is not only financially sound today, but structured for sustainable growth — and well positioned for new partnerships and collaborations moving forward.



What our kids say

Since 2025, we have carried out regular evaluations of our programs to ensure we are truly meeting the needs of the children we serve. As part of this process, we ask the children themselves what they think of Open Arms — what they enjoy, what they're learning, and what they'd like to see more of. Their voices guide how we continue to shape and improve our

programs. Below is a snapshot of what they told us in 2025.



Beyond English, the children are developing a wide range of skills through our programs: cooking and life skills, sports and new activities, knowledge of different cultures and countries, arts and creativity, and teamwork and problem-solving.

The impact of Open Arms is best reflected in the voices of those closest to it – the children themselves, and the welfare home directors who partner with us every day.

“Activities and teachers are fun! Volunteers make me smile”
— Open Arms Student

“Children experience Open Arms as fun, engaging and supportive space where they actively learn and grow”
— Welfare Home Director



Contact Us

For further information, please reach out to us at info@theopenarms.org.

Website: www.theopenarms.org

Instagram: [@openarms_kr](https://www.instagram.com/openarms_kr)

LinkedIn: [Open Arms Korea](https://www.linkedin.com/company/open-arms-korea)