

Project HEAL

2021

ANNUAL REPORT

CREATING A WORLD WHERE
everyone has access
TO THE RESOURCES
& OPPORTUNITIES
they need to heal

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The Mountain We're Climbing

A NOTE FROM THE CEO

Stepping into leadership at Project HEAL has been the fruition of a dream I didn't know I had. I pinch myself everyday - yes, even on hard days - that I get to do this important work alongside the most incredible people I've ever met.

As a person who was surrounded by untreated eating disorders since childhood, I didn't dare to believe that anyone ever overcame it. Then, becoming an eating disorder therapist in 2012, all of that changed. I saw firsthand that deep, meaningful *healing is possible*, and I was invigorated to help people along in that process. Over the next five years, however, I added to my ever-growing awareness just how much inequity and lack of accessibility permeates the eating disorder space, and my hope was critically injured. Against this backdrop, you can imagine how healing it has been for me to become part of an organization that is leading the charge in making eating disorder care available for everyone - despite the myriad and complex systemic, healthcare, and financial barriers that millions are facing. Project HEAL has breathed new hope into my life, and I'm humbled to be able to daily watch Project HEAL breathe new hope into the lives of hundreds of thousands of people each year.

I know the past couple of years have been trying, to say the least. I often playfully remark that it's weird to have become CEO in April 2020 - I have no personal knowledge yet of what Project HEAL could accomplish outside of a pandemic when we can all gather together in person to create the change that's so urgently needed.

Even with all the hardship that COVID-19 has imposed upon us - the losses of loved ones, of jobs, of insurance, of structure, of community - we've forged on. Eating disorder healing is already hard enough, and the pandemic has added barriers upon barriers to this daunting mountain we're climbing. But climb we do. Because real people's lives depend on us. We forge ahead on behalf of each individual human being who is ready to heal and deserves a chance to do just that - without a faceless, biased system making it harder.

We hold hope for everyone who is struggling with an eating disorder. And not some airy, mythical hope that feels like a false promise from a future we can't touch. We at Project HEAL have tangible, realistic hope that is rooted in concrete plans, a strategic vision, and measurable benchmarks.

So if hope feels too hard for you today as you're reading this - we've got you, and we'll climb this mountain together, one step at a time.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Eyre". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rebecca Eyre, MA, LMHC
Chief Executive Officer
Project HEAL

OUR MISSION

Breaking down systemic, healthcare, and financial barriers to eating disorder healing.

OUR VALUES

EQUITY
matters

ALL BODIES ARE
good bodies

WE'RE BETTER
together

HEALING IS
possible

2021: A YEAR THAT CHANGED THE MENTAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE



COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic remained the backdrop of all the work Project HEAL did in 2021. While research is still developing, many studies report an increase in eating disorder thoughts, decreased motivation for recovery, and more barriers to treatment access.



BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH

Acclaimed sports phenoms Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka courageously pulled out of tournaments to look after their own mental health, despite public opinion. They, as well as many other BIPOC leaders, inspired conversation around mental health, especially in Black communities.



THE MOVE TO TELEHEALTH

Many providers continue to use telehealth as a main form of healthcare. A study released in December 2021 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services showed a 63-fold increase in Medicare telehealth utilization since March 2020. It is likely that telehealth won't be going anywhere anytime soon.



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

In December 2021, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared a Youth Mental Health Crisis, stating, "Even before the pandemic, an alarming number of young people struggled with feelings of helplessness, depression, and thoughts of suicide — and rates have increased over the past decade."



SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen boldly leaked multiple studies, including one that found that 17% of teen girls say their eating disorders got worse after using Instagram and 32% of teen girls said that when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel worse. Facebook still does not acknowledge these studies and maintains that Instagram is "not toxic" for teen girls.

BARRIERS TO TREATMENT ACCESS

The Mountain We're Climbing

FINANCIAL

Average Outpatient cost: \$200/session
Average IOP cost: \$1,500/week
Average PHP cost: \$1,000/day
Average Residential cost: \$1,750/day
Average Inpatient cost: \$2,500/day

Average out-of-pocket maximum: \$6,000/year

Average treatment episode cost: \$80,000

Average length of time to recover: 2 years

AVERAGE COST OF EATING DISORDER RECOVERY: \$250,000



HEALTHCARE

- High deductibles, co-pays, and out-of-pocket maximums
- Exclusions of coverage for higher levels of care
- Many outpatient eating disorders providers are not in-network with insurance companies
- Inaccessible for uninsured folks
- Medical instability and/or low weight as a requirement for coverage for intensive care
- Unfair insurance authorization denials and premature discharges
- Lack of enforcement of and compliance with Federal Mental Health Parity Act of 2008
- Laws prohibiting government funds to pay for facilities that have 16 or more beds and that don't have 24-hour nursing

SYSTEMIC

- Stereotypes & biases among providers
- Limited research and funding
- Gender limits by facility
- Weight stigma embedded in insurance authorization protocol
- Profit-driven business models of care
- Lack of eating disorder screening in primary care settings
- Lack of disability accommodations in-facility
- Lack of weight-bearing furniture and size-inclusive medical equipment at facilities
- Weight criteria in DSM-5 diagnosis for AN and ARFID
- Lack of eating disorder training in Masters and Doctoral level education
- Lack of diversity among eating disorder providers



OUR PROGRAMS

*Recovering from an eating disorder is hard enough.
Accessing treatment shouldn't be.*

TREATMENT PLACEMENT



Project HEAL offers our beneficiaries free treatment through our HEALers Circle members. We have the largest network of facilities and providers at every level of care – including inpatient, residential, partial-hospitalization, intensive outpatient treatment centers as well as eating disorder specialized therapists, dietitians, and coaches. Through these partnerships, we are the only major nonprofit in the U.S. providing access to free treatment to individuals with eating disorders who are uninsured or underinsured.

INSURANCE NAVIGATION



The current healthcare system in the U.S. regularly and unfairly denies coverage for eating disorder treatment at the appropriate level of care that someone struggling needs to recover. Project HEAL's insurance navigation specialists and resource guides help individuals understand their often confusing insurance benefits and advocate on their behalf to get their treatment covered. Investing in insurance navigation allows us to exponentially increase the number of beneficiaries that we serve each month and utilizes the benefits that someone is entitled to by law.

CASH ASSISTANCE



Many individuals with insurance cannot access their benefits due to high deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, and copays. We offer one-time cash assistance to individuals who are able to demonstrate financial need so that they can unlock their benefits and access treatment through their insurance. We can also pay for travel costs and other tertiary expenses associated with going to treatment.

REAL PEOPLE, REAL IMPACT

nnenna's recovery story

Project HEAL really healed me. When I applied for a grant, I didn't think I would get it because I didn't look like a person that needed help. Society tells us that someone with an eating disorder is skinny and white, so when I applied, I was like, "I am not getting this grant." I applied, and a few weeks later, Rebecca emailed me and congratulated me. It was tears of joy, it was seriously tears of joy because it was like, "how am I going to pay for treatment?" Seeing a therapist is \$200 a session and a nutritionist sometimes even more. So when I got the grant, it helped cover like a year's worth of sessions for therapy and nutrition, and it really helped.

I slowly but surely started incorporating skills - it was hard, and my body changed a lot. Especially with social media, it was so much harder to recover than 19 years ago because social media was everywhere, and even people around me were talking about diets. When I was growing up, I rarely talked about diets, no one really talked about it. Now, little girls are talking about dieting and going on different diets. Sometimes I didn't even want to go to work; I didn't even want to leave my house - I was like, "Oh my god, I gained so much weight."

Then COVID hit in 2020, and I feel like that kind of backtracked my recovery because it was so much doom and gloom. People were like, "oh, the world is ending." Around this time I was living alone, and everyone was remote, and my mom was like, "You need to come home, you can't be alone." I went home, and the bingeing started again. I was leaning on food for comfort. Eventually things started to calm down. They were working on a vaccine, so I slowly started eating three meals a day plus snacks, so that helped a lot. I started using social media for good, following body positive, Fat positive, and Fat activism individuals and started blocking out those wellness folks. That really helped my self esteem.

I started watching different Instagram Lives about Fat activism, I started following Da'Shaun Harrison (they/them) [author of *Belly of the Beast*] on Twitter, and they were talking about how fatness is rooted in systemic racism. Then I read *Fearing the Black Body* [by Dr. Sabrina Strings], and it just really opened my eyes to how systemic racism is a factor in Fatphobia, especially around people of color. **It's always like 'us versus them' and 'fat is bad' and 'being skinny or smaller body is healthy.'** Now I tell anyone, *your weight doesn't predict your health.*

Before I read Sabrina String's book, I had no clue Fatphobia was based on system racism. So it was so eye-opening, realizing that our body is seen as something disgusting and just as another way to hold us down. Even in the Black community, we harbor fatphobia; it's coming from systemic racism, and it's not recognized at all. Because in Africa, years ago, being a plus-size woman (I'm Nigerian, and we're Igbo), was revered. Now I go back to Nigeria, and it's like "you're fat, you're big." The fact is that systemic racism is everywhere - not just in the United States; it's all over the world, and it's so insidious. People don't realize they're perpetuating whiteness when they call someone Fat. It's pretty disgusting just to think about it. Just realizing it and breaking those chains and barriers really helps and opened my eyes. **Before I would strive to be thin and strive to be "fit," and now that's not my goal. It's not about losing weight, it's not about the scale, it's not about looking at my body.**

“

*I still have hard days,
but then I say to myself,
"Girl, you made it."
How many people can say
I went through this
eating disorder and
made it out alive?
I wouldn't change anything.
If I am Fat for the rest of my
life, I am not going back.
Back is darkness.
I want to go towards the light.*

”

Project HEAL

BY THE NUMBERS

PEOPLE REACHED

411,168

PEOPLE SERVED

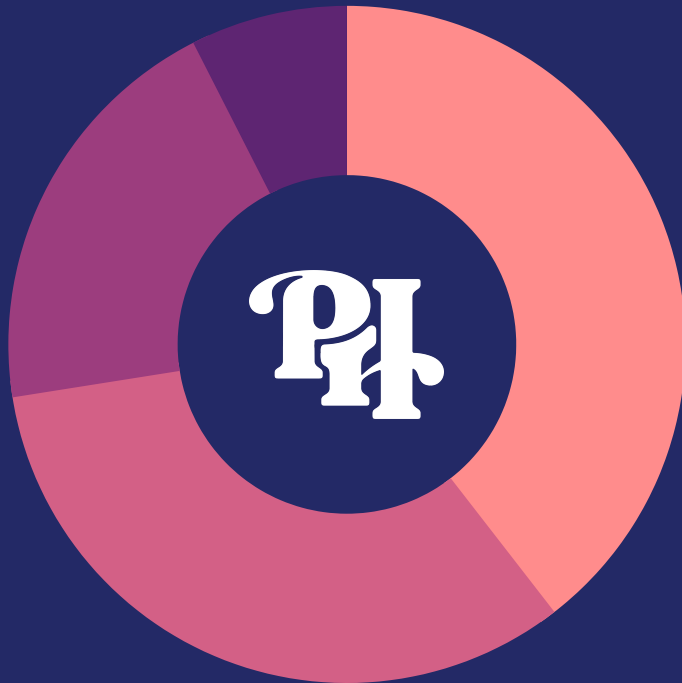
2,734

**CASH VALUE OF
SERVICES DELIVERED**

\$2,031,236

PROGRAM IMPACT REPORT

Here's how Project HEAL made a difference in 2021



79 Free Treatment Placements

66 Insurance Navigation Support Given

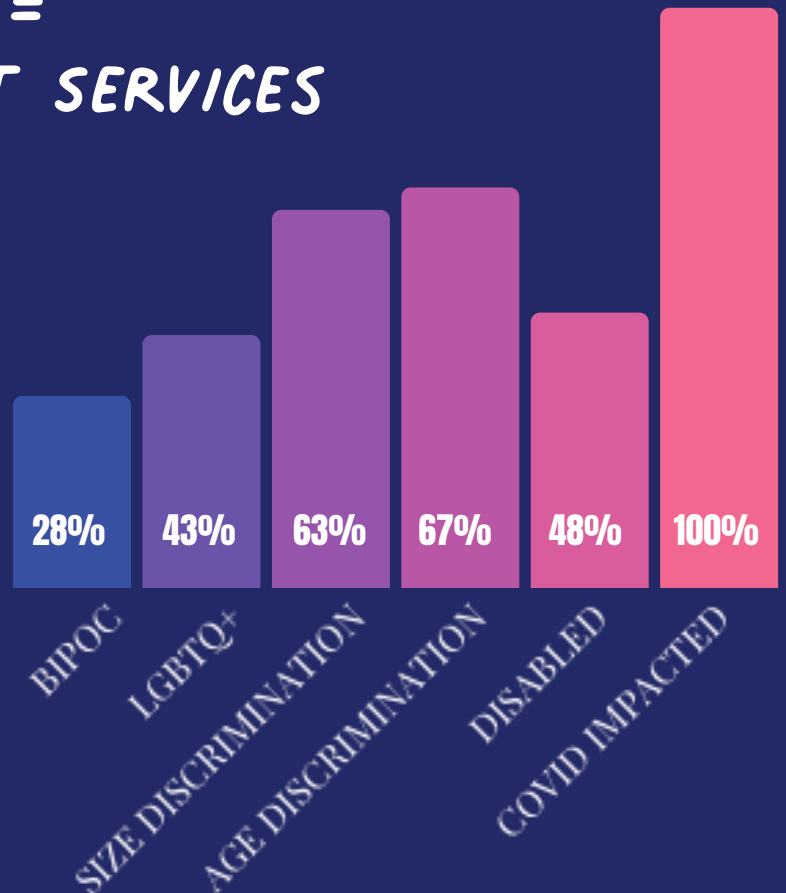
40 Cash Assistance Grants

15 Clinical Assessments Provided

170
REFERRALS PROVIDED

**181 PEOPLE =
200 DIRECT SERVICES**

2,383
INSURANCE RESOURCES PROVIDED



DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION

In 2020, Project HEAL committed to change, and we promised we were in this for the long haul.

Our 2021 Transparency Framework

1 STRENGTHEN THE BOARD WITH ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

2 INCREASE BOARD & STAFF REPRESENTATION

3 SUPPORT THE CEO'S LEARNING AROUND DEI

In 2021, Project HEAL:

- Provided **\$19,580** in direct cash assistance to BIPOC & LGBTQ+ people
- Helped **60** BIPOC and **79** LGBTQ+ folks access free treatment
- Added **9 new team members** at every level of the organization, more accurately reflecting the spectrum of people with eating disorders
- Established a **Program Committee** to audit and help improve our programs, particularly regarding their efficacy to serve those of our beneficiaries that are BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and/or otherwise marginalized
- Brought in a number of talented educators to lead our team in **unpacking complex issues** like identity, bias, intersectionality, privilege, oppression, eugenics, harm reduction, and more
- Hired the brilliant Milton Reynolds to provide ongoing **1:1 leadership & DEI mentorship** to the CEO
- Allocated a portion of our annual operating budget for **quarterly DEI trainings and workshops** for our Board, staff, and volunteers

2022: EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

MORE IMPACT, MORE COMMUNITY

Our HEALers Circle is the nation's largest network of eating disorder providers who are committed to creating equitable access to care. We have 110 partners at every level of care across the U.S., and we hope to have over 200 partners donating care to our beneficiaries in 2022.

IDENTITY AFFIRMING SCHOLARSHIPS

In order to bridge the gap between our many marginalized beneficiaries and the scarce few eating disorder providers who themselves have marginalized identities, we're launching a supplemental fund in 2022 to pay those providers for the untold benefits of identity-affirming care.

NEW PROGRAM: CLINICAL ASSESSMENT

For too long, an accurate diagnosis and unbiased treatment recommendation has been a privilege for those with good insurance and access to a specialist.

In April 2022, we will be officially launching a free clinical assessment offering to help people know where to start on their healing journey.

INSURANCE NAVIGATION PORTAL

We currently offer individual case management and free access to our Insurance Navigation Guides in both English and Spanish. In order to make our insurance expertise more accessible, we're building an interactive online portal with a chat feature to help more people learn to self-advocate.

IMPACTING THE FIELD WITH NEW RESEARCH

In 2021, EAT Lab and Project HEAL began the first-ever study to quantify barriers to eating disorder treatment in the U.S. We will be concluding that study in Spring 2022 and publishing our results, which will be the basis for reform efforts for years to come.

EATING DISORDER EQUITY TASK FORCE

Building on our Barriers to Treatment Access Study and to-be-published report, Project HEAL will be building a motivated coalition of stakeholders across the eating disorder field to begin tackling the larger systemic barriers at the private & state policy level.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ERIKKA DZIRASA
Board Chair

"It's been an honor and a privilege to join Project HEAL's mission to expand access to eating disorder resources for those the system has often neglected and forgotten. As its Chair, I am so proud to serve alongside such a passionate, diverse, and committed Board of Directors who are all in alignment with supporting and meeting the needs of individuals with eating disorders - regardless of body type, gender, race, or ethnicity."

- Dr. Erika Dzirasa



BRIAN BEITLER



AMANDA CREW



CAROLYN COSTIN



SHASHI DEB



M. REIM IFRACH



**BONITA JACKSON
TURNER**



CRAIG KRAMER



PARAAG MARATHE



BEN O'KEEFE



KRISTIN PATRICK



KRISTINA SAFFRAN



JOAN ZHANG

OUR TEAM

STAFF

REBECCA EYRE
Chief Executive Officer

PATRICIA GEESAMAN
Operations Director

DAVID SCHULTE
Finance Manager

SERENA NANGIA
MarCom Manager

ASHLEE KNIGHT
Sr. Program Director

FYNN RORRIS-CROW
Development Director

EUNICE FENG
Program Manager

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

MARIA ANTONIA ARANGO

AYANNA BATES

HELEN COOPER

ALEXA GRAYSON

CAM HERRERA

MEGAN MURRAY

MADELEINE OLDENBURG

REBEKAH PASTER

COLLEEN WERNER

ALEXANDRA XU



I'M PROUD TO WORK FOR AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS DIRECTLY IMPACTING THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR THE BETTER. AS A SMALL TEAM, EACH PERSON'S BODY OF WORK HAS AN IMPACT ON THE WHOLE. I RESPECT MY TEAMMATES BECAUSE THEY ARE THE MOST DIGNIFIED, HONEST, SALT OF THE EARTH PEOPLE AROUND. WE ALL HOLD OURSELVES TO A HIGH STANDARD BECAUSE WE ARE ALL TRULY INVESTED IN THE MISSION.



723 GLOBAL AMBASSADORS

"My parents were so supportive in my recovery, both emotionally and financially, but I know so many people are not as fortunate.

I joined Project HEAL because nobody should ever be denied their right to live their fullest and happiest life because of financial and systemic barriers to eating disorder recovery."

Adelene, Project HEAL Ambassador

HEALERS CIRCLE

A huge shout out to each of these incredible eating disorder treatment providers! All of these treatment centers and clinicians have generously donated their services to Project HEAL's beneficiaries and made healing possible for those who otherwise could not access care.

Leaders in HEALing



Partners in HEALing

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>AP Counseling & Yoga
Big Picture Nutrition
Courtney Levy Daniel
Danielle Maryott
Debra Spector
East Texas Eating Disorder Specialists
Eathority
Elizabeth Rathbun
Elyse Metelka Nutrition
Embodied Journeys Psychotherapy
Emily Adams Recovery Coaching
Empower Counseling
Esther Tambe Nutrition</p> | <p>Fit Food Coach
Food Freedom, LLC
Free State Nutrition
Gaia Center for Embodied Healing
Grounded Acupuncture
Hayden Kapalka
Kaitlyn Milstead
Katherine Myers
Katie Yant
Katy Gaston
Marcella Cox
UC San Diego Eating Disorders Center</p> | <p>Maureen O'Brien
Memphis Nutrition Nutrition Group
MerriFit
Metanoia Nutrition, LLC
Mind Refined
Mindful Eats Nutrition
Murray Nutrition
Nutrition Rewritten
Pando Wellness
Recover You, LLC
Recovered & Restored
Rock Recovery
Wholly Health & Nutrition</p> | <p>Sara Battista Psychotherapy
Sari Meltzer
Shelov Psychology Group
Side by Side Nutrition
Sollus Nutrition Group
Sterling Nutrition
Sunrise Nutrition Consulting
The Tasty Balance
Tiffany Phillips
Whitney McMullan Therapy
Lisa Becker Coaching
Lisa Jimenez
Not Your Average Nutritionist</p> |
|--|---|---|---|

FRIENDS IN HEALing

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Bianca Sandoval
Chaya Faigie Bar Coaching
Chloe Cerino Nutrition
Christina Frangione Nutrition Therapy
Emma Moody
Mikaela Yeager
Fowler Nutrition</p> | <p>Fully Nourished Nutrition
Janelle Shepard
Kelly Elise Ulmer
Kim Wyman
Laurie Dunham Nutrition
Merrit Elizabeth Coaching
Michelle Chapman Counseling and Consulting</p> | <p>Moxie Mind
Pancake Counseling
Rivers Wellness
The Body Positive Dietician
Eating Disorder and OCD Therapy
Vickery Wellness Nutrition Counseling</p> |
|--|---|--|

2021 FINANCIALS

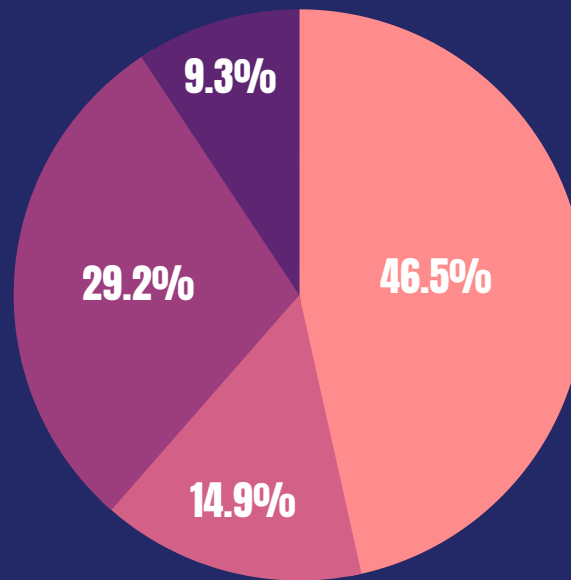
Important Numbers to Know

Total Revenue: \$750,565.64
Total Expenses: \$578,921.59

Revenue ↑ 25% from 2020

Given/raised by BOD: 30%

Number of Donors: 1,952
New Donors: 1,794 (91%)



REVENUE BY TYPE

Individuals

\$349,473.94

Foundations

\$219,750.00

Corporations

\$70,109.13

Peer-to-Peer

\$112,161.87

Corporate Partners

UNDONE
BEAUTY

EQUIP

PJT

GI PARTNERS

Amazon Smile

CAF America

Cox Farms Virginia, Inc

Mental Health Awareness

Kendra Scott

Little Words Project

Foundation Partners

The **Upswing** Fund
for Adolescent
Mental Health

**NAMES
FAMILY
FOUNDATION**

NEDA
Feeding hope.

O. PAUL DECKER
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Red Empress
FOUNDATION

Zelnick Belzberg Charitable Trust
David E. De Silva Family Foundation

Norman & Sadie Lee Foundation

Madmone, Inc.

SunCloud Health

Mussafer Family Foundation

Coulter Family Foundation

The University of Connecticut

Seattle Foundation

Matching Corporations & Foundations

Bank Of America Charitable Foundation

Bristol-Myers Squibb

City Market

Forty-Niners Football Company, LLC

Frederic W. Cook & Co.

Johnson & Johnson

Target Corporation

Goldman Sachs Matching Fund

The Elsevier Foundation

THANK YOU

**TO EVERYONE WHO HAS
SUPPORTED US
IN OUR MISSION.**

**WE COULD NOT DO THIS
WITHOUT YOU!**

**Project
HEAL**

WWW.THEPROJECTHEAL.ORG