

**BUILDING BRIDGES** ONE ENCOUNTER AT A TIME  
annual report 2016



BUILDING

# BRIDGES

ONE ENCOUNTER AT A TIME

Peace Catalyst International (PCI) provides relational experiences that build bridges of peace between Christians and Muslims. These encounters are meant to move people from a perception of fear of the other towards one of love. Over 40% of the people who attended our events would say that their initial perception of Muslims was one of apprehension and fear, and yet after the event that same 40% said that their perception changed to openness and joy. It is through these personal interactions that perceptions are changed and bridges are built. These interactions happen through meals together, group discussions, and trainings. These are the hallmark of what PCI does.

“I was always afraid of Muslims; now I really want to become friends with some.”

“Peace Catalyst has had a wonderful impact on me and my family. The friendships my wife and I were able to create and enhance with our Christian friends reinforced our conviction that people who worship God, of all faiths, can make this a better world for all.”

“Before this presentation I was afraid of Muslims. I couldn't tell the 'bad' from the 'good,' but now I understand that many are just like me.”

# WHERE WE WORK LOCATIONS

Dear fellow bridge builders,

I have walked on all types of bridges around the world. Bridges in Indonesia are very different than the bridges in England. But they all serve the same function. They help us bridge a divide and get to the other side.

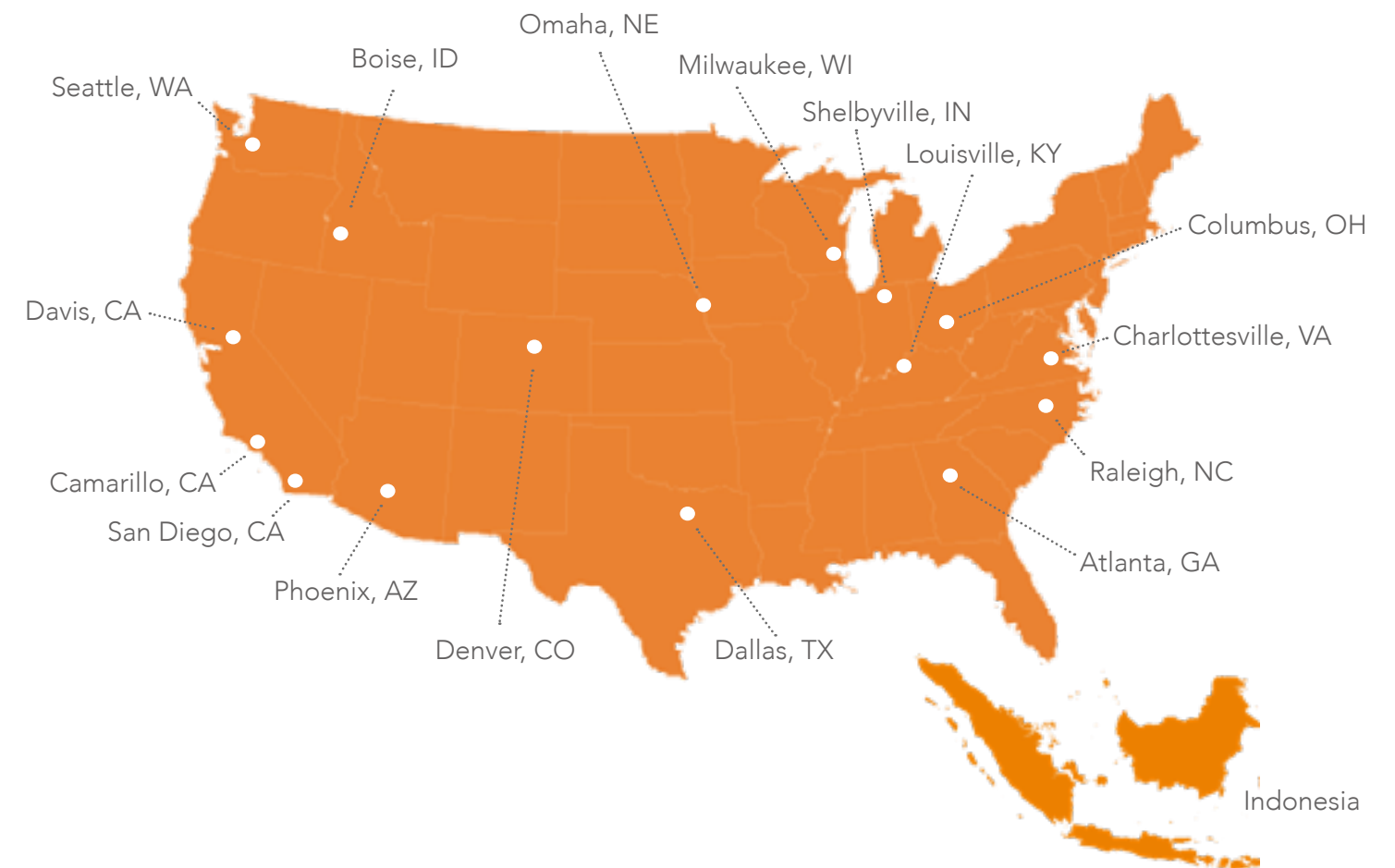
As peacemakers we bridge the divide of fear, prejudice and ignorance to demonstrate the love of Christ and build authentic relationships with Muslims. This year we hosted an average of five bridge building events a week, impacting over 5,000 people, and provided an average of two trainings a week, impacting over 9,000.

I am thrilled to share with you the Peace Catalyst International annual report for 2016. I am humbled and honored to serve these amazing peace catalysts. Thank you for your support and participation in the peacemaking movement. In the following pages you will hear from Peace Catalysts of all kinds. There are many ways to work for peace - as many ways as there are people! So grab a cup of coffee or tea and enjoy this peacemaking journey.

Yours for building bridges of love for the sake of peace,

Rick Love, Ph.D.

President, Peace Catalyst International



Peace Catalyst International has **31** staff members in **17** cities.

THE EXPERIENCES  
THAT ARE  
BUILDING BRIDGES

# MEALS TOGETHER



In 2016 Peace  
Catalyst hosted

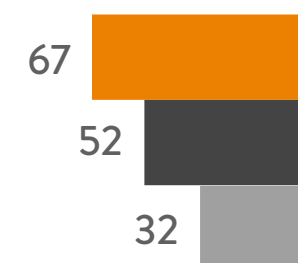
**67**

events for Muslims and  
Christians to share a table.

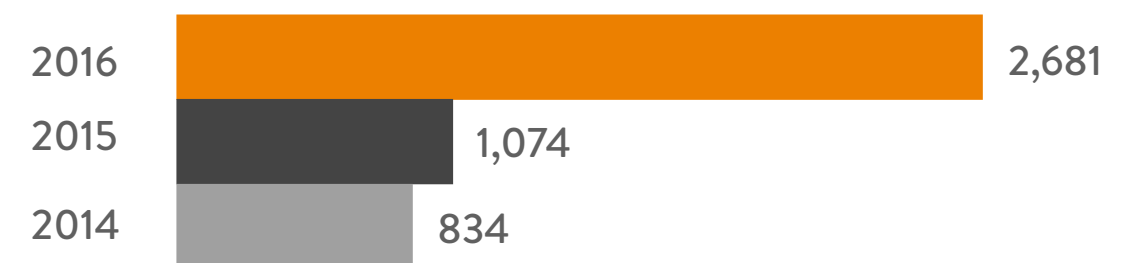
These meals involved

**2,681** people.

MEALS HOSTED



PEOPLE INVOLVED







“Thank you for helping to connect me with my new friends!”



# MEALS TOGETHER STORY

“I am worried. I'm worried for my community. I'm worried about the increase of anti-Somali, anti-Muslim and anti-refugee rhetoric that'll be used to explain the suspect's motive. I'm worried that my community will be forced to, once again, prove their humanity to this nation. I know the circumstances would be entirely different if the suspect was a lighter shade, had an easier name to pronounce and wasn't an immigrant.” -Qorsho Hassan

My heart ached as I read these words from Qorsho Hassan, a 3rd grade teacher, American of Somali descent, and member of the Somali Political Action Group. I knew that no matter what caused Abdul Razak Ali Artan to resort to violence on OSU's campus on November 28th, many of the Somali and Somali-Americans in Columbus would honestly fear reprisal in our city.

Thankfully, Qorsho and a good friend of mine were inspired by God to create a safe space to build understanding and unity. So we hosted a Somali-American Peace Feast at Hoyo's Kitchen (Mom's Kitchen in Somali).

The goal was not JUST to eat great food, bless a Somali restaurant, and have great conversations; another measure of success was the number of people who exchanged phone numbers and emails and who would pursue lasting friendships with the people they met. Thanks be to God, we ended at 9pm and by 10:30pm we still had people talking and laughing and enjoying one another! People have been saying things like, “this was the best conversation I've had with a stranger in a while,” and “I really made friends Saturday night!” Others who were not able to attend have asked for another event soon!

-Delaine Thomas, Program Coordinator, Ohio



THE EXPERIENCES  
THAT ARE  
BUILDING BRIDGES

# GROUP DISCUSSIONS



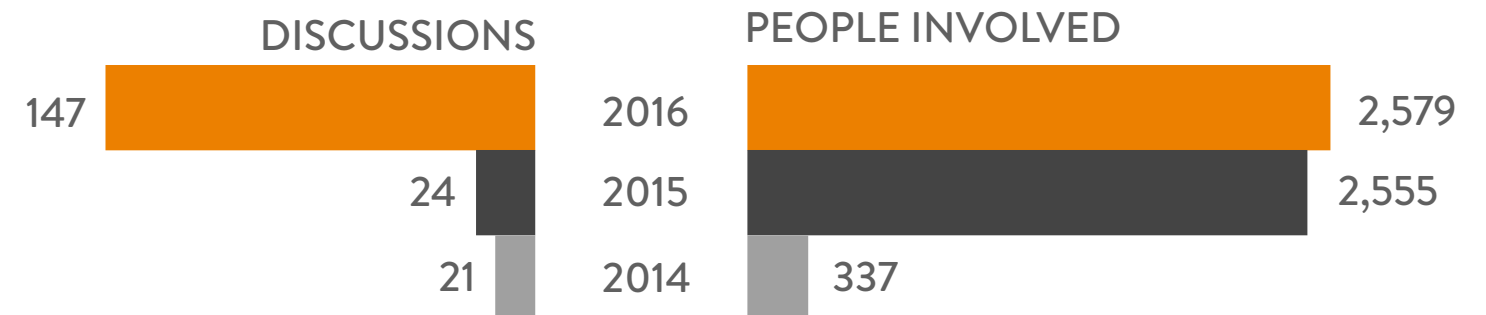
In 2016 Peace  
Catalyst hosted

**147**

events for Muslims and  
Christians to engage in  
fruitful discussions.

These discussions involved

**2,579** people.







“I have developed a few friendships with Muslim women in the last two months. I cherish them so dearly and already feel I have learned more from my new friends than I could ever teach or give them. My life is deeply enriched by these friendships.”



# GROUP DISCUSSIONS STORY

A little over two years ago, leaders of one of the Raleigh area mosques approached me and asked for my help. They didn't want Muslims in their community to isolate themselves from the mainstream of society.

Our idea was a simple one: Start with four families from the mosque and four from our church and have a monthly gathering with a meal, lots of space for informal conversation, and no other agenda. We launched in March of 2015, and our dinner club has been going strong ever since.

We meet once a month and inevitably end up laughing a lot, having some serious conversations about real issues, laughing more, and occasionally crying together over heartfelt matters. We then share a halal potluck meal. All Christians who participate commit to learning halal rules and preparing food accordingly - an act that never goes unnoticed by our Muslim friends. Occasionally, we also undertake projects together for the good of our community. One month we collected a substantial quantity of household supplies for refugee families moving into our area. We started out with just eight families, but our numbers soon skyrocketed. In February, we met at the mosque with more than 60 people.

One woman in our church said, “Thomas, it's working!” She explained that little impromptu gatherings between Muslims and Christians were happening throughout our broader community. This woman understands that the goal of our work is getting Muslims and Christians personally involved in one another's lives. We believe this is good for our souls, good for our communities, and good for the Kingdom, as real friendship leads to wonderful opportunities to talk about the things that matter most.

-Thomas Davis, Southeast Regional Director

THE EXPERIENCES  
THAT ARE  
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# TRAININGS



In 2016 Peace  
Catalyst hosted

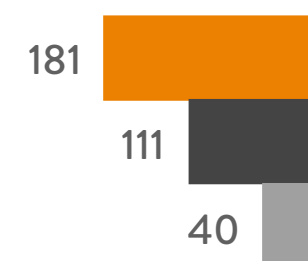
**181**

events for Muslims and  
Christians to learn the truth  
about one another and their  
respective faiths.

These trainings involved

**9,014** people.

TRAININGS



PEOPLE INVOLVED







“Thank you for helping me to see Muslims as people that God loves. This has been a challenge to the way I have viewed Muslims.”



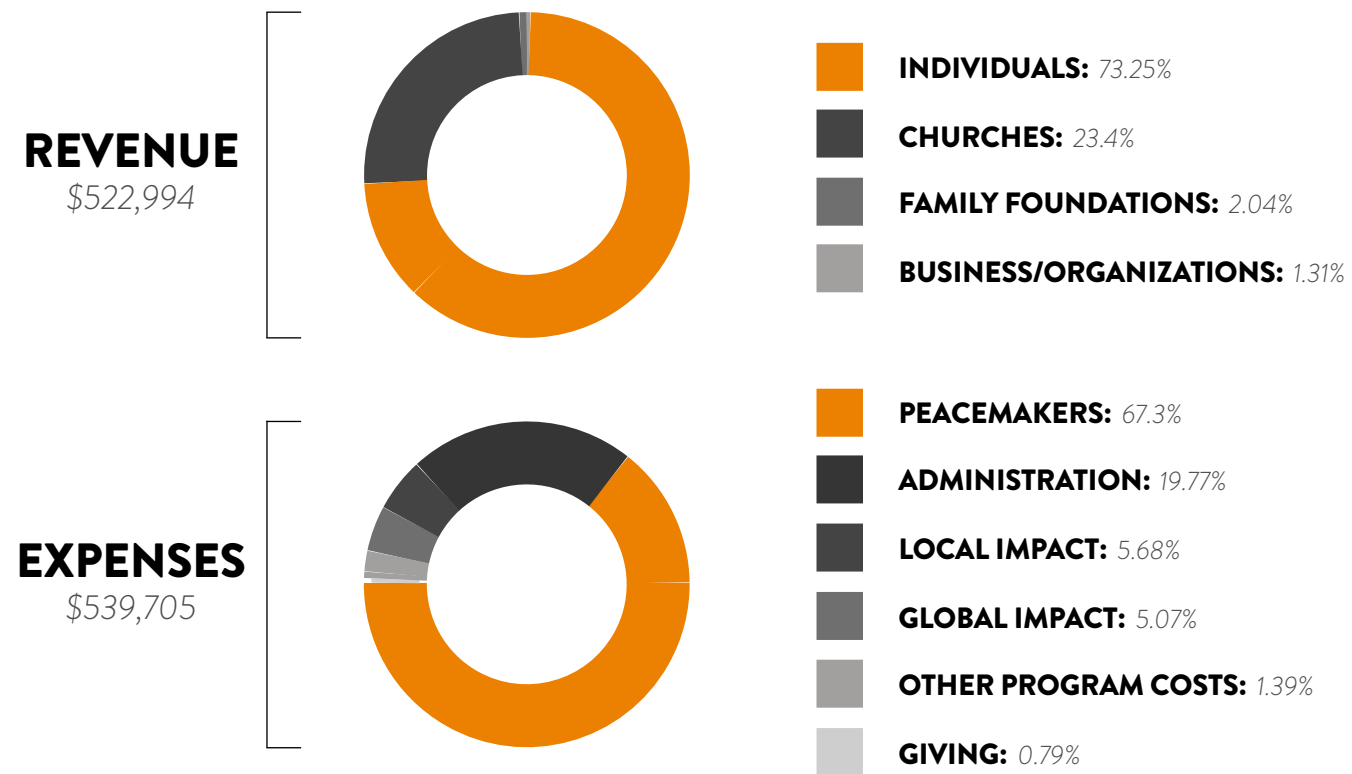
# TRAININGS STORY

The greatest walls that divide people are made of bricks of prejudice, false assumptions, fear, and single-sided stories. Because we cannot see what’s on the other side of the wall, we ‘otherize’ and demonize but dare not tear down the wall. Our “Loving Your Muslim Neighbors” seminar in Boise includes a time of looking at what has divided humanity, and it helps us to see that the people on the other side of the wall are people who love their children, are people made in God’s image, and are people whom God dearly loves. Oftentimes, the key to discovering this is simply to meet each other. To share a meal and a story and discover we are not so different after all. It’s not rocket science. It’s simple and hard, and even though there is a plethora of books and articles on the subject, tearing down the wall of division requires we meet each other with the hopeful possibility of laughing at each other’s jokes or at least at ourselves.

During the first week of April the Islamic Center of Boise moved to their new place of worship across town. “Across town” happened to be one block from our home church. So on April 29th thirty followers of Jesus walked together, with four huge platters of baklava in hand, to welcome our new neighbors. With 30 followers of Jesus and 170 members of the Mosque in attendance, we heard words of welcome and gratitude and enjoyed an amazing feast with food from at least ten different countries! Church members discovered firsthand that actually meeting their Muslim neighbor was the beginning of being able to love their Muslim neighbor.

-Nick and Laura Armstrong, Program Coordinators, Idaho

# FINANCES



**YOU** CAN BE A BRIDGE BUILDER

## FINANCIAL BRIDGE BUILDER

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Peace Catalyst International  
C/O CLA Billing Services  
8390 East Crescent Parkway,  
Suite 500  
Greenwood Village, CO, 80111

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Join our mailing list or connect  
with us on social media.

## PRACTICAL BRIDGE BUILDER

Attend a Peace Catalyst event,  
contact us to host your own  
event, or take one of our online  
courses, Peacemaking 101 or  
Loving Muslims & Sharing Jesus.

