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Annual Ministry Report

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# *Unlikely* is a fascinating word.

It can indicate anything from a surprise to a miracle.

To me, unlikely often signals that God is involved. When unlikely starts happening, I sense God moving; something close to miraculous is coming.

Our world is broken and hurting, yet the stories and pictures coming across my Awana desk indicate that God is at work, reaching children and their families with His love in unlikely places and in unlikely ways.

I see their smiling faces in newsletters and reports, from the world's most challenging places: the Kibera slum in Nairobi, a Syrian refugee camp in Lebanon, the children's wing of a church in Omaha, Nebraska. Unlikely, right? But at Awana, these children are celebrated and experience two hours of safety, adult affection, love, hope, joy and friendship.

But Awana has bigger dreams for kids than just safe and happy. We are grounding 4.5 million children in God's Word, laying a discipleship foundation that will strengthen, guide, and inform them throughout their adult lives.

Our intent is to disciple a generation of children to lead the church and influence the world; to invest in life-long disciples who are so God-sensitive that even in challenging circumstances these boys and girls, men and women see where God is already present. We are dedicated to the youngest child's opportunity to know, love, and serve Jesus from their earliest lisping of Bible verses until life's end.

What a privilege and joy this is! And what a miracle! God is with us, moving into our ministry spaces in ways that fill us with awe and wonder.

Some may call that unlikely. We call it the Awana miracle, and we are living it every day. After all, He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).



*Valorie Bell*  
Awana CEO

## 2018 was an incredible year of milestones for Awana.

Over 4.5 million children are now hearing the name of Jesus each week in Awana clubs around the world!

And that's just the big picture! When we focus on individual countries, cities, neighborhoods, churches, and people, we see God creating unlikely opportunities everywhere we look.

The ministry in Africa alone is reaching more than 2 million boys and girls each week. The countries of Nigeria (Africa) and the Philippines (Southeast Asia) each have over 1,000 clubs providing ongoing discipleship to thousands of children. Awana has seen steady ministry growth in the Americas, South Asia, Africa, Pacific Rim, Europe and North Asia. Mali, the newest country to launch Awana, already has 27 churches.

In the United States, 137 Awana Ministry Conferences were held in 2018, with over 10,000 attendees! The total number of leaders trained throughout the United States in 2018 was over 21,000.

Perhaps God's most unlikely provision came in the form of a three-year grant, which enables Awana to invest in capacity building: to create technology which will make our discipleship and training materials relevant and accessible to leaders and children, and to research and strengthen our US Hispanic and MENA ministries through partnerships and leadership training.





## With God in the lead, you never know what sort of unlikely changes are around the bend.

Just ask Metti, a girl who sparked the birth of Awana in Ethiopia. Or ask Dave and Tony, brothers who had no intention of going into ministry—but now serve side by side as pastors in the same church.

In 2011, Girma and Bety left their home country of Ethiopia to attend graduate school at Wheaton College, IL. During their time in Wheaton, their eldest daughter, Metti, joined an Awana club. Girma and Bety saw the impact it had on their daughter, and the whole family fell in love with the program and curriculum. Reaching out to Awana HQ to discuss bringing the program home to Ethiopia, they were put in touch with Tom Chilton—who, in an unlikely turn of events, was Metti's Sparks leader at church.

With this surprise twist fueling their excitement, meetings were scheduled, plans were made, and the family began working on translations. Awana Ethiopia launched in 2014 with Girma serving as official awana missionary.

Today, Ethiopia has nearly 1,000 clubs reaching 200,000 children and continues to grow.

Years earlier, on the other side of the world, brothers named Tony and Dave attended Awana club in Ohio. Looking back, both boys see that these early years in Awana provided a solid

foundation, teaching the Bible and instilling habits of disciplined study that would last a lifetime. It wasn't long before their parents caught the bug and joined as well: dad as a game leader, mom as a Sparks leader. Awana became part of the family identity, a way to work together for God.

When Tony was a senior in high school, he felt God pulling him toward ministry, but didn't feel he had what it took to be a pastor. He started college as a Computer Science major, but signed up for a few Bible classes. It was in these classes that his passion was stirred. At the end of his first year of college Tony surrendered his life to God's call, agreeing to go wherever He led. Tony's first job out of college was as youth pastor for Fellowship Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio.

Meanwhile, Tony's brother Dave was in high school. At summer camp Dave was impacted by teens passionate about serving God, and adults following God's path. Dave, too, surrendered his life to God and accepted a call to ministry. After college Dave became a youth pastor in Tennessee. A few years later, God transitioned Dave and his family to Columbus, Ohio, where they began looking for a new place to serve.

When the senior pastor of Tony's church became ill, he offered an unlikely suggestion: promote Tony to lead pastor and hire his brother Dave as youth pastor.

Tony and Dave had never imagined working together. But the senior pastor pointed out that their unlikely situation wasn't a coincidence; God had arranged for Dave to be in town, searching for his next step in ministry. The pastor believed God had been working behind the scenes to create this opportunity for the two brothers to work together, just as they had as children.

**Tony and Dave have now been working side by side for ten years.**



Tony and Dave, 1984

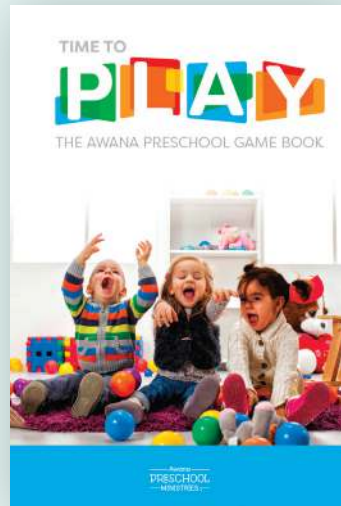
As pastors, they remain as committed to Awana as they were as children. Tony reflects, "Having Awana communicates that the church has a ministry of substance for children. We've met people who went to Awana at this church as children and came back to give their kids the same experience. They never forgot what Awana did for them."

Dave adds, "I see the generational effect that Awana has on families. Generation after generation is affected by this ministry. I look at our Sparks director: when he was a kid, his mom was an Awana leader. Now he is an Awana leader alongside his wife and mother, and his kids attend Awana. This is a ministry that affects the whole family."

What unlikely path will God open up next? Perhaps another young girl will join Awana—and plant the seed launching a thousand clubs in a new country. Or perhaps a family will find, together, a calling to last a lifetime.

**Only God knows what unlikely scenario is around the bend.**

# New Product Spotlight



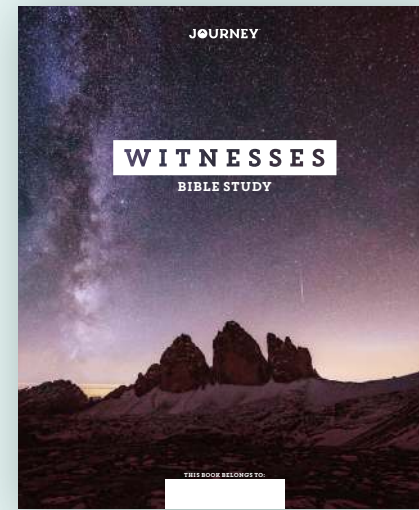
## Preschool Game Book

- Fun has always been a part of the Awana experience. Each program now offers a handbook for Game Time with the creation of the Preschool Game Book.
- The Awana Preschool game book includes 192 pages of games and activities for leaders to complete with their preschoolers.
- Designed and built for the Awana Puggles and Awana Cubbies leader.



## Sparks WingRunner Essentials

- WingRunner Essentials is the second installment in the Essential's product line for Sparks.
- Designed with our K-2nd graders in mind, the Sparks essential includes a wide variety of activities in order to help those Sparkies that need a curriculum that is more accessible than our standard curriculum handbooks.
- Designed to be highly utilitarian, the essentials books have been used in a wide variety of settings. They give many options for kids, leaders, and parents to implement highly effective ministry in their Awana clubs.



## Journey Witnesses

- Journey Witnesses is the third installment in the updated Journey curriculum series. This suite of resources challenges and trains students to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively share their faith with anyone and with everyone.
- In order to put forward the best experience possible for our students, Awana enlisted the help of several experts in the field of Evangelism and discipleship. We are thankful for the time and investment in our students from the voices of Harvey Carey, Greg Stier, Ed Stetzer, Wess Stafford, Jefferson Bethke, and Amy Williams.
- Journey Witnesses was also an opportunity to publish a program line of curriculum and include the option to go version-free. By going version-free, students will have the ability to memorize God's Word in whatever translation they prefer.



## T&T Agents of Grace

- Agents of Grace is our third installment in the T&T update series. This book gives our kids the opportunity to grow deeper in their personal discipleship by building their knowledge and understanding around several important theological topics.
- This resource also includes a deeper integration around the Great Global God Story of Awana. Leaders are encouraged to share their story with Awana, and the curriculum includes several story-based touch points where kids, leaders, and parents can dive into the global discipleship impact of Awana around the world.
- Agents of Grace continues to support and equip leaders by giving them the tools that they need to do highly effective discipleship.

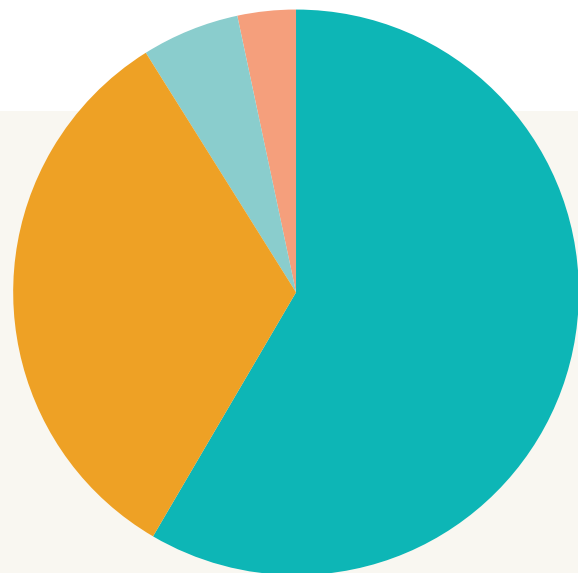
# Financials

Revenue Sources	2017	2018
Sales of Ministry Materials	\$22,461,383	\$21,056,057
Contributions	\$12,294,740	\$12,533,391
Registration and Fees	\$2,335,369	\$2,048,539
Other Income	\$998,239	\$(420,070)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$38,089,731</b>	<b>\$35,217,917</b>

Expenses	2017	2018
Program Activities	\$32,138,985	\$29,063,654
Management and General	\$4,695,901	\$4,171,206
Fundraising	\$2,369,784	\$2,518,378
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$39,204,670</b>	<b>\$35,753,238</b>

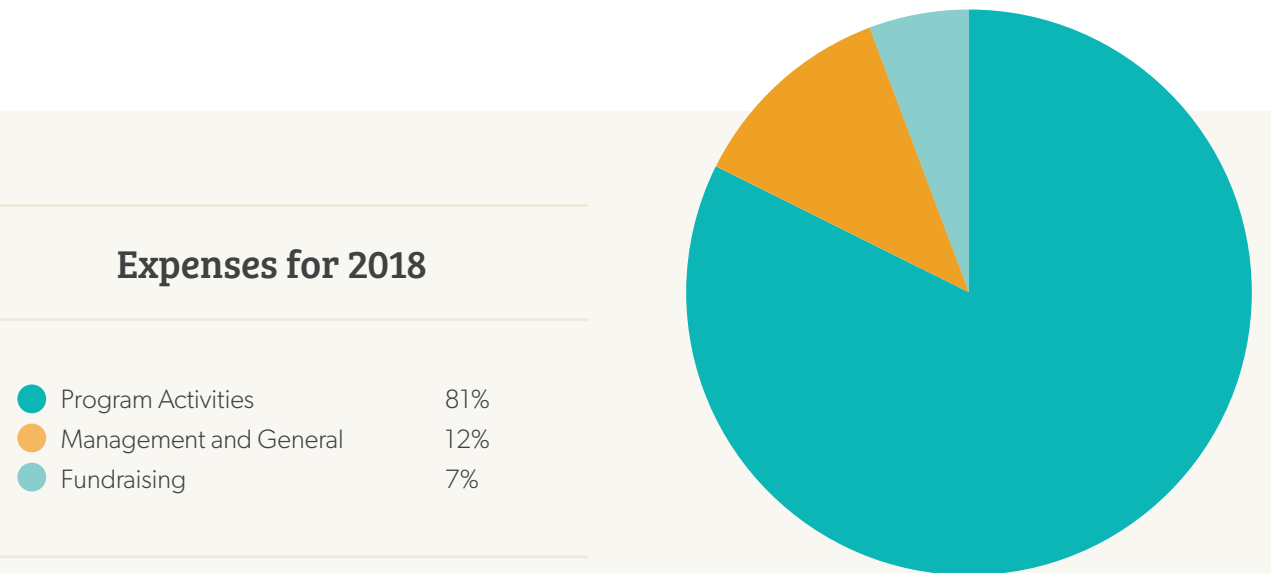
Assets	2017	2018
Cash and Investments	\$6,358,785	\$7,934,033
Inventory	\$4,207,485	\$3,683,647
Beneficial Interest in Trusts	\$981,680	\$838,669
Prepays and Other Assets	\$1,383,092	\$703,517
Land, Buildings & Equipment	\$4,967,389	\$3,721,786
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$17,898,431</b>	<b>\$16,881,652</b>

Liabilities and Net Assets	2017	2018
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$814,844	\$551,853
Accrued Expenses	\$1,563,667	\$1,509,982
Deferred Revenue	\$596,708	\$510,646
Note Payable	\$1,600,000	\$1,553,819
Annuities and Trusts Payable	\$187,545	\$176,006
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	\$8,796,053	\$7,943,262
Temporarily Restricted	\$4,217,864	\$4,535,334
Permanently Restricted	\$100,750	\$100,750
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$17,898,431</b>	<b>\$16,881,652</b>



Revenue Sources for 2018

● Sales of Ministry Materials	58%
● Contributions	35%
● Registration and Event Fees	6%
● Other Income	1%



Expenses for 2018

● Program Activities	81%
● Management and General	12%
● Fundraising	7%

# Awana Around the World

## Africa

Country	Clubs	Children	Country	Clubs	Children	Country	Clubs	Children
Kenya	2,884	295,723	Liberia	608	71,176	Dem. Rep. of Congo	59	2,793
Zimbabwe	2,486	156,292	Rwanda	516	94,327	Botswana	41	1,964
Tanzania	2,030	230,365	Burkina Faso	504	47,464	Cameroon	32	1,325
Zambia	1,927	229,752	South Africa	450	26,898	Mali	27	3,852
Malawi	1,070	84,525	Mozambique	394	52,302	Togo	14	1,534
Nigeria	1,062	150,153	Sierra Leone	280	35,793	Sudan	8	895
Ethiopia	989	199,544	Burundi	183	24,287	South Sudan	4	500
Ghana	943	90,236	Swaziland	127	8,447			
Uganda	787	258,502						

## Americas

Country	Clubs	Children
United States	9,274	630,632
Canada	523	34,518
Colombia	497	30,833
Dominican Rep.	494	31,456
Paraguay	395	18,621
Honduras	336	25,107
Peru	316	13,501
Argentina	298	12,842
Venezuela	220	20,186
Guatemala	206	12,619
Haiti	201	11,442
Cuba	201	6,244
Brazil	183	10,064
Mexico	166	8,372
Bolivia	141	5,591
Panama	118	5,520
Ecuador	70	5,334
Jamaica	69	2,523
Nicaragua	64	3,664
Chile	53	1,596
Uruguay	51	2,582
Puerto Rico	51	1,015
El Salvador	46	2,873
Costa Rica	28	1,699
Antigua & Barbuda	12	776
Bahamas	10	471
Barbados	9	277
Dominica	8	207
Aruba	7	764
Neth. Antilles	6	435
U.S. Virgin Islands	2	108
Trinidad	1	150
Anguilla	1	44
Saint Kitts & Nevis	1	40



“Across the world, I have seen the eternal impacts and eternal differences being made in the lives of children in Awana. Whether it’s in Kansas or Rwanda, one thing stands true: Awana is a place for kids to belong. I believe that there is no greater ministry that’s making an eternal impact in the lives of children today than Awana.”

Tyler O’Donnell,  
Kansas Missionary

## Europe & North Asia

Country	Clubs	Children	Country	Clubs	Children	Country	Clubs	Children
Ukraine	514	23,889	Maldives	15	489	Kazakhstan	3	195
Russia	146	5,682	U.S. Military (Europe)	13	707	Austria	2	98
Mongolia	120	2,972	France	11	266	Belgium	2	87
Norway	77	5,284	United Kingdom	10	350	Italy	2	76
Romania	43	1,275	Germany	9	478	Slovakia	2	72
Belarus	23	1,417	Portugal	6	185	Netherlands	1	31
Czech Republic	19	449	Spain	5	175	Bulgaria	1	25
Albania	18	625	Ireland	4	210	Croatia	1	12
Latvia	17	505						

## MENA (Middle East and North Africa)

Country	Clubs	Children	Country	Clubs	Children
Egypt	319	33,809	Jordan	3	230
Restricted Countries	48	2,251	Israel	2	144
Lebanon	29	2,630	Oman	1	126
United Arab Emirates	10	557	Tunisia	1	40

## South Asia

Country	Clubs	Children
India	9,185	820,048
Nepal	3,257	85,853
Bangladesh	2,184	121,560
Pakistan	1,364	75,084
Sri Lanka	843	36,566
Bhutan	211	6,020

## Pacific Rim

Country	Clubs	Children	Country	Clubs	Children	Country	Clubs	Children
Restricted Countries	2,229	64,700	Myanmar	382	29,495	Taiwan	16	595
Philippines	1054	61,958	South Korea	340	18,134	Solomon Islands	15	405
Vietnam	684	60,005	Cambodia	196	6,343	New Zealand	8	226
Indonesia	566	38,227	Hong Kong	91	5,687	Malaysia	6	332
Papua New Guinea	519	39,305	Australia	51	1,371	Singapore	4	358
			Japan	41	1,034	Guam	3	290
			Fiji Islands	35	1,092	Macau	3	100

**123**  
countries

**56,248**  
clubs

**4,530,884**  
children reached



## Over 50 years ago, the small country of Vietnam was the center of the world.

But in 1975, the troops pulled out of Vietnam and time marched on. What was once headline news became history, and the nation of Vietnam slipped out of the spotlight. Yet, outside the view of the networks and newspapers, God was doing something truly revolutionary—and it continues to this day.

The gospel began to spread, and today this movement is taking place in schoolyards across the country. God is working through Awana in Vietnam to create leaders—but these aren't men and women leading churches. These are boys and girls, ages 12-15, leading Awana clubs in local churches. They are passionate about seeing their friends and family walk with Jesus, and they're serious about it.

These young people dedicate themselves to training and equipping. They are the embodiment of Paul's instruction to his apprentice, Timothy: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12)

Whether leading worship, sharing the Word during Large Group Time in their Awana clubs, or evangelizing to others around them, the youth of Vietnam are leading a new revolution of Christ. What's happening among these young leaders in Vietnam is a taste of what God is doing through young women and men throughout the world. These young leaders are becoming champions of the faith and leading many to know, love, and serve the Lord Jesus.



"God is doing an incredible work through Awana Europe. Churches and ministries partnered with Awana have an open-door opportunity; one might even say a critical responsibility, to reach children and youth across Europe and North Asia with the good news of the gospel."

Tom Chilton  
Area Director Europe and North Asia



"In Latin America and the Caribbean God is working through faithful disciples of Christ equipped by Awana. Children are coming to know, love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Families are transformed by the gospel and inspired to serve, children are growing in faith and eager to become leaders, pastors and church leaders."

Miguel E Pérez Figuera,  
VP of Awana Latin America

# Awana

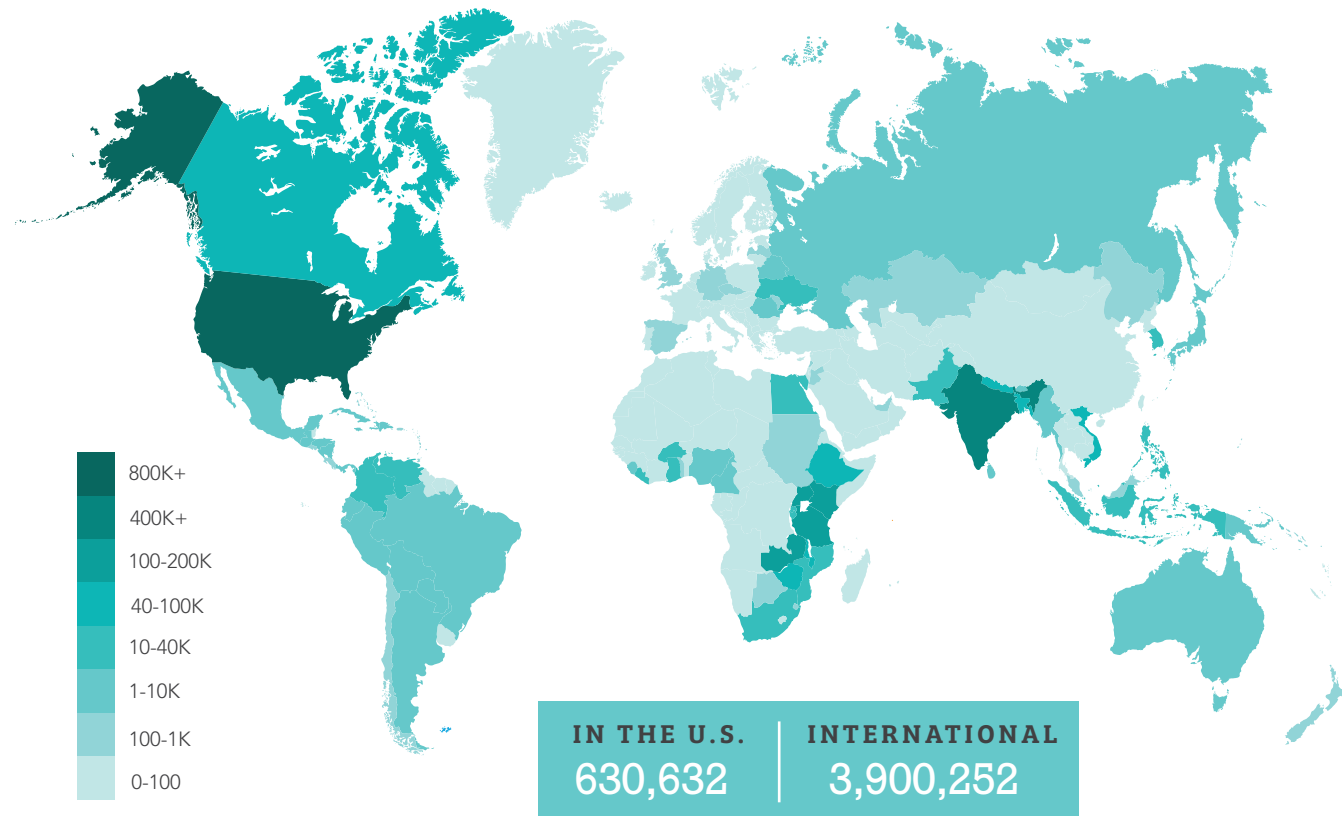
## By The Numbers

God is using the ministry of Awana to equip leaders to reach kids with the gospel and engage them in lifelong discipleship.

### KIDS REACHED GLOBALLY IN 2018

# 4,530,884

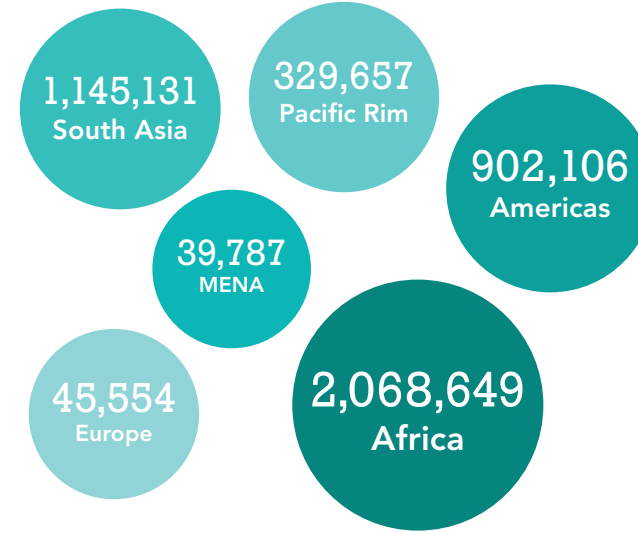
4,051,908 kids reached in 2017



### TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTRIES



### CHILDREN BY REGION



### CHURCHES SERVED



### TOTAL LEADERS EQUIPPED



### NEW INTERNATIONAL LEADERS TRAINED

# 11,402

This Year



## Board of Directors

**David Branton**  
Chairman of the Board

**Chris Williams**  
Vice Chairman

**Dave Swanson**  
Secretary (not pictured)

**Shawn Thornton**  
Vice Secretary

**Brian Hartsell**  
Treasurer

**Vicki Gillis**

**Peter Kasirivu**

**Carolyn Meyers**

**Pam Pugh**

**Wess Stafford**

**Gary Thomas**

## Executive Leadership

**Valerie Bell**  
CEO

**Matt Markins**  
President & COO

**Cindy Craig**  
VP of HR

**Michael Handler**  
VP Brand & Messaging

**Lisa Kralina**  
CFO

**Chris Marchand**  
VP of Partner Solutions

**Brian Rhodes**  
VP of Global Field

**Kevin White**  
VP of Partner Relationships

# Thank You!

Your prayers and support over the last year have been vital for continuing to reach more kids for Christ. As we head into 2018, would you continue to remember the Awana ministry, leaders, and children in your prayers?

**Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel!**

