

40

ANNUAL REPORT

moka 
FORTY YEARS. ONE MISSION.



MOKA'S BEGINNINGS

May it never be forgotten that MOKA was conceived and born to carry out a basic human, if not civil, rights movement. Ten years following the extreme civil unrest of 1968, visionary leaders in Michigan like late Developmental Disabilities Director, Ben Censoni, whose motto was “people are what really matter,” initiated a similar movement to end segregation. In 1978, the first residents of state institutions across the state were deliberately and thoughtfully, in spite of strong objection by local communities and specific neighbors, welcomed by MOKA into nice homes in neighborhoods across West Michigan.

Local leaders like late ARC/Muskegon Executive Director, Agnes Potuznik, paved local efforts. Her presence was critical in 1980 when a local zoning hearing, packed with angry neighbors, boiled over in objection to the opening of a MOKA home in an upscale neighborhood. In her inimitable way, she offered a closing prayer, “Lord, may you keep everyone safe on their way home this evening so that no one will end up in one of these homes,” emphatically ending the debate. Forty years later, we are indebted to these and so many other leaders who paved the way for MOKA's success.

Over the years, MOKA leapt on new and varied opportunities to end lingering discrimination and segregation. Programs like supported employment, community living support, skill building, supports coordination and applied behavior analysis all served as fruits on the tree of this larger civil rights movement.

A movement of any type depends on people committed to the cause. The unique culture at MOKA is built on so many individuals with the right heart and soul – they set aside personal aspirations and are drawn to help our fellow citizens, who happen to have a disability, succeed.

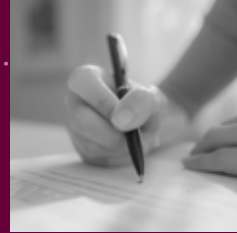
We remain inspired by the many individual stories of success through challenges conquered and resilience, just a few of which we share in this report.

Our work is not over at this reflection point, but just begun. We welcome your support for our efforts through your willingness to join our team, your financial support or simply a prayer for our continued success as we start our next forty years with **one mission**.



Thomas Zmolek
Executive Director

21,024,000 MINUTES.



1978

MOKA began as the Kent County Nonprofit Residential Services Corporation on August 21, 1978 with the first meeting of the board of directors. Approved by State of Michigan as nonprofit corporation on October 2, 1978.



Connor Races for the Win

Connor walked around MOKA's office carrying a cup of ice chips and looking out various windows on a sunny winter day. "What are they doing out there on the lake?" asks Alie Gagnon, one of his Youth Autism Specialists. "Fishing," he responds.

At another window, Alie asks the color of the building's roof across the street. "Orange," he quickly answers. Out another, she points to a structure and says "What's that green building over there we go to?" "The Farmers' Market," Connor replies.

It was an afternoon of wins as Connor switched from putting together a rainbow track to putting it away, grabbing Alie's hand and riding the elevator, something he used to adamantly refuse, to greeting nearly every person he passed.



1979

First six children moved into the Maplerow Home, a licensed Children's Home in Kent County from the Muskegon Regional Center. Plans to open additional homes in Muskegon County were underway.



1982

MOKA expanded rapidly opening or taking over operation of its fourteenth licensed home by 1982 expanding into Ottawa and Allegan Counties.

Connor did not speak until he was 4 years old, and now he is highly verbal. He has made impressive progress since starting MOKA's Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy nearly two years ago. The goal of ABA is to create socially significant behavior change that has a positive impact on the individual's quality of life. Individualized treatment plans focus on communication, academics, self-help, play, and social, gross, and fine motor skills.

Connor's parents, Nichole and Derrick, noticed he was late to crawl, walk, and talk. At first, they attributed it to him being born five weeks premature. The family eventually received a diagnosis of moderate to high-functioning autism, and that led them to MOKA's Youth Autism Program. "They really bonded with him so he really enjoys coming here," Nichole says. "We're really impressed with how much he has changed in school."

Nichole has noticed a big improvement in his writing, fine motor skills, social skills, and overall behavior. "They kept pushing him and making it unique to him," Nichole says.

Connor regularly greets MOKA staff by name, asks them questions, and tells them about his day. "His language has just exploded," says Katrina Wouters, ABA program supervisor. "It's so natural. It's conversational like you and I would talk and that's the goal."

Making huge strides toward greater independence and making new friends, Connor continues to blossom into a talkative, inquisitive, and active child. His progress is above the norm and he is expected to succeed in a regular classroom. "Connor is really full of joy. He is such a good kid," Katrina says. "He wants to communicate. He is very motivated to share his thoughts with you."

350,632.8 HOURS.



1988

Began Supported Employment initiative with Michigan Rehabilitation Services providing job development and job coaching. MOKA went on to support hundreds of individuals to land jobs with local employers.



Exercise Leads to Inclusion

Astacia loves singing and dancing. So much so, she stopped in her tracks while walking the track at the Mary Free Bed YMCA and peered through the glass into a room with women dancing. “She looked in there and said ‘I can do that,’ and she even showed me,” says Wobit Teshome, a Specialized Mentor for Crossroads, one of MOKA’s Community Supports programs in Kent County. “She saw it and never looked back.”

Astacia and another Crossroads participant, Nikki, are now regulars in the Wednesday Fitness for Life class. Even with 30 participants, the instructor finds ways to keep Astacia and Nikki motivated and moving. The class caters to older adults and combines dancing, cardio, and strength exercises.

“It’s fun,” says Astacia, “I have a good time.”



1991

MOKA awarded funding by the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council to fund a grant called "A Home of My Own," supporting nine (9) individuals with disabilities to locate and purchase their own home.



1992

MOKA started providing Community Living Supports in Muskegon County to support individuals desire to live more independently in their own apartments. Later expanded this service to all four counties.

Crossroads helps integrate individuals with disabilities who have higher-level personal needs into the community. This results in two significant outcomes. On the one hand, it builds familiarity for the individual with the resources available to everyone in the community. A second, less obvious outcome is that it helps build camaraderie with members of the public, resulting in a greater community understanding of disability and a change in attitudes. Inclusion often works one person at a time.

Two Crossroads groups visit the YMCA on a weekly basis and spread out doing different activities. Some play basketball while others walk the track or swim. Wobit joins Astacia and Nikki in exercise class. "They get really into it," Wobit says. "Everyone is very welcoming. They see Nikki and Astacia having a lot of fun."

Astacia often stands up front with the instructor, Debbie, and does the moves alongside her. Astacia helps count and put the equipment away after class. Nikki decided to give it a try and got hooked too.

Astacia is always one to take the stairs and stays active. Sometimes she plays basketball and uses the exercise machines, but her favorite workout is the class. She says she feels better and has even lost weight.

Wobit has noticed they always seem energized after class and it helps their focus. Outside of going to the YMCA, the group enjoys activities such as bowling, shopping, nature walks, picnics and visiting the park near Gerald R. Ford International Airport during the warmer months.

"We try to be out in the community as much as possible," Wobit says.



INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Number of Individuals Served by Program/Service



AUTISM SERVICES

58



RESIDENTIAL IMPACT

162



SUPPORTS COORDINATION

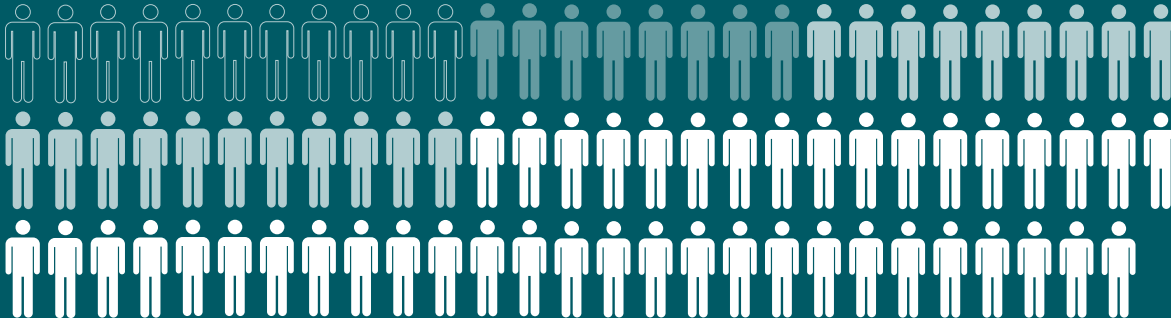
273



COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

495

Number of Individuals Served by Disability



○ Autism | 109 ● Mental Illness | 79 ● Undisclosed | 196 ● Intellectual / Developmental Disability (I/DD) | 445

14,609.7 DAYS.



1995

Between 1992 and 1995, MOKA participated in the successful transition of contracts from the State of Michigan to local Community Mental Health agencies.



He Deserves Every Bit of It

It can be difficult to see your child leave home to live independently, but for Eddie's mother, Kathie, it was something for which she had always planned.

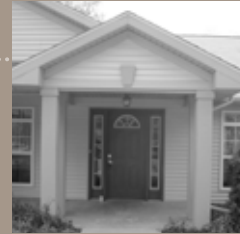
Kathie's journey with Eddie began when he was six years old and a student in her class at Lincoln School. When asked to take him in one weekend, she did not hesitate and quickly welcomed him in to her home. What was supposed to be temporary turned permanent almost immediately as Kathie and her husband, Bud, chose to foster Eddie for the next four years.

In 1977, they adopted him, expanding their family as their daughter Sarah had recently been born. Kathie felt "he made us a family, he fulfilled us and he deserved to be loved and cared for."



1996

MOKA began providing Supports Coordination services in Kent County to individuals residing in group homes and later, to individuals living at home or on their own, reaching nearly 300 individuals.



1999

After realizing its first accreditation in 1992 by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), MOKA achieved accreditation in the top 3% internationally in 1999 (and again in 2014) with no recommendations.

One year later, with the help of Kathie and Bud, MOKA got its start. Bud was asked to be on the MOKA Board of Directors and later became its president, a role he played until his untimely death in August 2017. The original MOKA board meetings were held around Kathie and Bud's kitchen table.

When Eddie graduated from school in 1995, he made the transition from home to living at one of MOKA's residential homes and began participating in a day program. Kathie describes the first two years of the transition as the most challenging.

With Kathie's strong advocacy, he overcame these challenges and eventually Eddie moved to another MOKA home that allowed him to live more independently. Kathie credits the staff with "taking every step they could possibly take to make the transition work."

After another successful transition, Eddie now resides at MOKA's Indian Trails home. He attends church every week, loves to spend time swimming, biking and bowling and attends a music class every other week. His favorite part of all is getting to interact with others, and that is more than evident by the smile that spreads across his face as he excitedly greets guests entering his home.

Eddie's successful journey started on that fateful day when Kathie and her husband agreed to take him in. His story, like so many others, illustrates the joys and sorrows along the road to finding acceptance and inclusion in our communities.

Eddie is thriving and for Kathie, that is more than enough. "I just want him to be happy and loved and cared for, that's my goal for him, he deserves every bit of it."

2,087.1 WEEKS.



2002

MOKA Foundation creation approved by Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry offering opportunities for the public to support the mission financially.



From Downhill to Uphill

Self-proclaimed “cowgirls,” 18-year-old Kayetlyn and her Community Supports mentor, Cynthia Foote, have formed a tight bond over the last six years. The pair met when Kayetlyn was in the sixth grade and struggling to control her emotions and get along with others at home and school.

Through simple activities such as chores, watching the TV show Heartland, and taking care of horses, Kayetlyn learned responsibility, how to regulate her emotions, and build relationships with others. “It went from negative to positive, from downhill to uphill,” Kayetlyn says of her life before meeting Cynthia.

Prior to participating with MOKA, Kayetlyn was fairly isolated. Other than attending school, she wasn’t connecting with the community and struggled interacting with others in a positive manner, particularly her siblings.



2005

Began offering alternative, community-based day programs offering skill building and volunteer opportunities "all day, every day" leveraging community resources. Initial work in Muskegon and Ottawa Counties later expanded to Kent and Allegan.



2010

Opened two new homes specifically for the last remaining residents from Muskegon County residing at the state institution at Mount Pleasant which later closed. Embraced a culture of gentleness.

Two years ago, Kayetlyn started volunteering at a barrel and racehorse farm in Allegan County and Cynthia is right there beside her. They do everything from walking the horses, to wrapping their legs to treat wounds or repairing broken fences. It's a common pastime they share every Thursday. "I get to pet them and brush them and feed them and give them treats," Kayetlyn says. "We get to see the horses and we both love horses. We're both cowgirls, country girls."

Cynthia introduced Kayetlyn to the show, *Heartland*, and has her watch the facial expressions and reactions of characters to gain insight into herself and others. "Cynthia teaches her how to read the people's faces, whether they are sad or mad," says Kayetlyn's mom, Beverly. "They work on how to make compromises."

"She's gone from a very angry child to being a happy teenager," Beverly says.

At home, Cynthia motivates Kayetlyn to do homework and start and finish chores. She serves as a mediator, mentor and friend. It's also helped Beverly learn that Kayetlyn needs to have freedom to do things on her own. "When she would start doing the housework, I would go and do it myself," Beverly says. "I figured she wasn't capable. I got proved wrong. There is a lot of things Katie is capable of doing." Kayetlyn's progress illustrates the critical importance of stability and long term relationships like the one she maintains with Cynthia.

Cynthia's presence in Kayetlyn's life has helped her blossom into a young woman with more confidence, self-esteem, and self-awareness. Beverly says Kayetlyn would be heartbroken without Cynthia around – a sentiment that goes both ways.

480 MONTHS.



2012

Began providing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) treatment to children and youth with autism in collaboration with HealthWest in Muskegon County. Later expanded service to Kent County.



Advancement Efforts

In this year's annual report, we reflect on the difference MOKA has made in the lives of individuals with disabilities over the past 40 years – none of which would have been possible without your support. MOKA started 40 years ago with just one residential home serving six individuals. Since then, MOKA has opened an additional 33 residential homes and expanded into four other programs, now serving over 800 individuals annually. The expansion and growth of MOKA would not have been possible without the support of our local Community Mental Health agencies, parents and guardians, local businesses, the individuals we serve, our staff, and donors. MOKA is stronger because of you, and from the bottom of our hearts we thank you.

We are so grateful to you for supporting our role as navigators and change agents, helping our communities



2015

Grants and support from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis (FHLBI) in collaboration with Community Shores Bank resulted in the opening of the first of six beautiful residences replacing original homes.



2018

MOKA received a grant from the Wege Foundation supporting an innovative approach to job development, working with local employers to create customized jobs based on unique skills and desires of individual job seekers.

become more inviting and accepting to individuals with disabilities. We appreciate your encouragement to help individuals gain skills, develop relationships, make choices, and give back to the communities in which they live. You've been right beside us, supporting MOKA and cheering us on, making everything possible.

I ask you to consider donating a \$40 gift in honor of the amazing success of individuals supported by MOKA in the past 40 years, and also to help support our mission at MOKA as we look forward to the next 40 years. You can donate online at MOKA.org/donate or by calling 800-644-2434 ext. 670.

This report highlights only a few of the many lives that have been positively impacted. But the achievements over the past 40 years are much bigger than the few stories contained in this report. The lives impacted over the past four decades are far more than the individuals served.

It extends into the communities we live in and the change of attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. New homes for individuals are now welcomed by neighbors and individuals exploring our communities are met with smiles. MOKA is proud to have played a part in this positive movement of inclusion and acceptance. So much has been accomplished over the last 40 years, but there is still more work to be done.

We are grateful for your continued financial support and encouragement. Special thanks to the **Wege Foundation** for a grant to MOKA to start a JOBS Program in Kent County. The program started in June 2018.

Thank you for your support!

Jenna VandeKamp
Development Director

40 YEARS. 1 MISSION.

Within our primary mission of facilitating and advocating for the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in our society, we hold a great desire to impact the life of each child or adult we support and serve. Michigan is the only state in the nation to codify “person-centered planning” into state law.

This strong and progressive approach assists each individual to develop personal goals and sustains our steady work toward helping these individuals build new relationships, develop skills and share experiences in the community.

The present infographics demonstrate our broad impact on children and adults. Our current investment in a new electronic clinical record, as well as consultation work with Dr. Salvatore Alaimo to systematically evaluate our programs, will further strengthen our ability to measure our impact on each child and adult. Ultimately, these initiatives will also allow MOKA to assess its influence on community problems as a whole.

Year in Review

10%

1 out of 10 individuals at MOKA have a job

55%

Of individuals are engaged in volunteer work

97%

Overall satisfaction rating

97%

Stakeholders would recommend MOKA services to others

94%

Stakeholders feel the services provided meet expectations

MOKA DONORS

DONORS

Aaron Miller	Christopher Eakin	Giving Assistant	Katherine Collier	Nicole Knowles	Sherri Bodbyl
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Alicia Cusack	Dale T. Ertzinger	Graphics House Printing	Kenton Carter	Perrin Brewing Co	Sunny Kantha
Alicia Rowland	Darlene Hershberger	Great Lakes Physical	Kerkstra Portable Restroom Service, INC.	Pigeon Hill	TBD Solutions, LLC
Alternative Lawn Care	Daudi M. Mbuta	Heather Buxton	Kerkstra Septic Tank Cleaning	Pioneer Resources	The Cheese Lady
Amanda M. Minzey	Dave Hildenbrand	Heather Hutchison	Knights of Columbus	Ralph F Marva J Carlson LV	The Great Escape Room
Amazon Smile	Debra Allen-Burns	Helen Roberts	Langlois Furniture	TRT Marva J Carlson TTEE	Thelma Commissaris
Angel Reese	Debra J. Golliver	Hobo's Tavern	Lara Parent	Randy Hoffmeyer	Tom A. Stranz
Anonymous	Deedee Hill	Holiday Inn	Larry Andrus	Reliant Professional Cleaning	Tony Maniscalco
Applebee's Muskegon	Denise Balk	Hoogerhyde Safe and Lock	Lee Ann Shedleski-Holmden	Richard Cornell	Tracey A. Hamlet
Arean Miller	Denise Krbez	Huntington Bank	Life Change Church	Rita Little	Unruly Brewing Co.
Arlene Hines	Denise R. Anderson	Hunt's Hardware	Lighthouse Insurance Group	Robert J. Lascko	Van's Car Wash
BAM	Dennis Bell	Ice Box Brand	Lisa Hammond	Robert L. Ferencsik	Veneranda V. Mukantaganda
Barb Porter	Devon Bell	Integrity Business Solutions LLC	Local Epicurean	Ron Cron	Vicki Manning
Barbara Park	Donna J. Holmberg	Janet Krosschell	Locked 460 Escape Room	Ron Zok	Walker Ambucs
Barry Ziebarth	Doreen Oom	Janice A. Rerecich	Mary Beaune	Ronald Interbitzen	Walmart
Barry's Flower Shop	Dorothy M. Bowne	Jenna VandeKamp	Mary Brooks	Ross Spoelma	Wasserman's Flowers and Gifts
Beacon Recycling	Dorothy Wolters	Jennifer Householder	Mary L. Graham	Russ' Restaurant	West Michigan Symphony
Bergman Lock & Security	Doug Kuipers	Jenny Harrell	Mary Rich	Ruth Boven	Your Plate or Mine
Beth A. Hoffer	Downtown Tire And Auto	Jerilyn Bell	McDonald's of Whitehall	Safelight	
Bill Walker	Edward C. Crans	Joan Gawkowski	Megan Kralej	Sam's Club	
Brann's - Muskegon	Eileen Shedleski	JoAnn Michael	Meijer	Sanborns	
Breakaway Bicycles	Emmanuel Bailor	John D. Crans	Melvin L. Northup	Sandra M. Morales	
Catch Air	Enterprise Holdings Foundation	John G. Anderson	Metropolitan Appliance	Sandra McCune	
Chad Drooger	Family Video	Joni McCollum	Michael VanderPloeg	Sarah V. Bulthuis	
Chadwick Busk	Fellowship Reformed Church	Judith Geyer	Michelle Kelly	Scheid Plumbing	
Charles Zamara	Frank Jagniecki	Judy Holt	Microsoft	Schulz Reality, INC	
Charlie Fish	Garland Reed	Julia Brennan	MOLINA Healthcare of MI	Scott Lake Golf and Practice Center	
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	Georgia Pacific		Network For Good	Shawna A. Martin	

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Autism Program Fund
Community Foundation for
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**IN HONOR OF
BENJAMIN BOEREMA**
Shar Boerema

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Terry D. Hendricks

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MARY ZMOLEK**
Thomas & Mary Zmolek

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SALLY NEVILLE**
Thomas & Mary Zmolek

**IN MEMORY OF
LEON STEDMAN**
Ella Emmert
Jerry Smith
Thomas & Mary Zmolek

**IN MEMORY OF
MELISSA SUE JACKSON**
Thomas & Mary Zmolek

**IN MEMORY OF
ROBERT LEWIS**
Daphne M. Lewis

VOLUNTEER SITES

Adopt-a-Beach Alliance for
the Great Lakes
Anchor Points
Calvary Church
Calvin CRC Church
Celebration Community
Church
City on a Hill
Community Food Club GR
Comprenew
Crittter Barn
David D. Hunting YMCA
“Equest Center for
Therapeutic Riding”
Family Futures
“Family Promise
of Grand Rapids”
Feeding America
First Baptist Church
Gilda’s Club
God’s Kitchen
Goodwill Industries
Gospel Outreach Ministries
Great Lakes Naval
Memorial and Museum
Habitat for Humanity
Holland Rescue Mission
Hope Reformed Church
Hope’s Outlet Ministries Inc.
Howard Christensen
Nature Center
Humane Society of
West Michigan
Intersection Ministries
Kent County Parks
Kids Food Basket
Kuyper College
Laurels of Hudsonville
Meals on Wheels

MediLodge
Mel Trotter
Michigan Nature
Association
Noah Project
Reach 4 Stars
Childcare Center
Refugee Education Center
Ronald McDonald House
Sacred Suds
Salvation Army Kroc Corps
Community Center
Samaritas
The Local Church
The Pantry
United Church
Outreach Ministry
West Shore Lutheran School
Women at Risk International
Wolf Lake Park

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

MOKA CORPORATION BOARD MEMBERS 2017 - 2018

Dale Rietberg, President
Charles Zamara,
VP, Sec., Treas.
Daniel Holtrop
David Den Herder
Judi Kuiper
Mittie Den Herder
Patricia Draper
Richard Cornell Jr.

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Mittie Den Herder
Patricia Draper
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Hope Network
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Services
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YWCA West Central
Michigan*

*Lead Agency in Project
Wege Foundation

MEMBER RECOGNITION

Looking back over 40 years of MOKA history causes us to reflect with gratitude on those who have made our mission possible. We would be remiss therefore not to mention the significant contributions of several individuals. A key leader in MOKA's success was Charles Zamara who played a critical role as Placement Director of the Muskegon Regional Center.

He was instrumental in organizing several nonprofits, including MOKA, to manage the massive effort of assisting individuals to transition from the state institution into community-based homes throughout western Michigan. He recruited family members and other community members to serve on board of directors, facilitated the filing of organizational documents and negotiated the initial leases with landlords.

He was steadfast in the face of initial opposition to placement of group homes in nice neighborhoods. Supported by a great team of professionals, Charles' contributions cannot be understated.



FORTY YEARS. ONE MISSION.

715 Terrace St. Suite 201,
Muskegon, MI 49440

(800) 644-2434 | info@moka.org

www.MOKA.org