

# mOKa



MOKA is excited to announce its collaboration with Grand Rapids based poetry education and performance group, The Diatribe.

The Diatribe uses performing arts to empower people to share their stories, raise awareness of social issues, and create change within their communities.

Beginning this April they are expanding their program to include adults, starting with individuals served at MOKA! We are so excited about this opportunity and look forward to sharing their experiences. Follow us on social media to stay up to date on behind the scenes content, fundraising opportunities, and showcase information.

This event is sponsored by the MOKA Foundation.

## Mark Your Calendar!

April 2, 2021

**World Autism Awareness Day**

April 5-11, 2021

**National Public Health Week**

April 7, 2021

**World Health Day**

April 11, 2021

**World Parkinson's Day**

April 18-24, 2021

**National Volunteer Week**

April is  
National Autism  
Awareness Month

## Donor Spotlight

Meet Sandy Wynn-Stelt



Sandy Wynn-Stelt, a Board certified behavior specialist, limited license psychologist, and environmental activist for the Rockford Water crisis thinks back to the start of her relationship with MOKA. "It seems like forever, I think it started literally 30 years ago when I did contract work for the homes in Kent County," she said when asked how she originally became involved. "We have a very tight knit group of clinical staff and home supervisors that became not just co-workers but friends."

Her direct experience in the field and the tight friendships she made built a powerful ally out of Sandy, who has advocated for Direct Care Workers in many ways - including her heavy involvement with our Care of the Caregiver Campaign. "When I was getting my undergraduate degree, I worked full time during the days, and then on weekends in a group home. That is one of the hardest jobs ever, and very unappreciated. We expect so much of the staff that work in group homes, and it goes underappreciated," she said when asked what about the campaign spoke to her the most. With the help of Sandy and many other generous donors the Care of the Caregiver program collected over eight thousand dollars that went



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directly to support the training and ongoing program costs so deeply necessary to our caregivers' well-being.

With a passion for the community MOKA serves, Sandy found that MOKA's team approach and mutual love for the individuals made her a life long advocate and donor for our organization. When asked why she gives she responded "I like the philosophy and feel like the staff that work at MOKA have a genuine interest in the people that are in their programs. They work hard to keep administrative costs low, which means that the money that is given goes directly where you want it to go."

Thank you Sandy. We are so grateful for your support.



### **MOKA In The Media**

MOKA hit the news this March with a push for advocacy in a [Bridge Magazine article](#) by Robin Erb - featuring MOKA Supervisor Holly VanVolkinburg, resident Larry Cook, his father Dale Cook, and Executive Director Tracey Hamlet.

"They treat my son like family," said Dale Cook while speaking about the Direct Care Workers at MOKA who are providing essential support to his son, Larry. Similar to Dale's son, an estimated

100,000 Michigan residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities rely on Direct Care Workers for training, emotional support and personal care including “activities of daily living that most people take for granted — getting out of bed and bathing, brushing teeth, eating, or just communicating.”

Your advocacy is necessary in making this pivotal pay increase permanent. Click [here](#) to read Robin Erb's full article on the pay increase for Michigan's Direct Care Workers or visit [moka.org/advocacy](http://moka.org/advocacy) to find more ways to make your voice heard.

(Photo by Daytona Niles)

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