

Possibilities.

Made possible.



moka 

Annual Report 2022-2023

Opportunities.

Made possible.



Dear Friends,

I am thrilled to share stories of success and determination by the people we are privileged to support. As we look back on the year, we reflect on how much we have learned from those we support, our partners, and our community members. Toward our vision of community inclusion for all, we believe that difficult social problems cannot be solved without rich engagement and partnerships with others. I hope you enjoy these stories!

Key to our mission, we continue to prioritize staying connected to each other and our community. The story about the rich connections people are developing on their routine visits to The Coffee Factory highlights how foundational relationships are toward experiencing joy! The story about Deb, who appreciates the choices her paycheck affords but also enjoys her supervisor and coworkers at Russ' Restaurant, emphasizes the outcomes possible through community employment.

We continue engaging in valued partnerships to support solutions to some of the complex problems that impact the people we serve. The story about the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Training Program shares the success of the collaborative work with Grand Rapids Community College and other provider organizations towards professionalizing this skilled work. The story about the women who live at MOKA's Graceland Home, benefitting from the adaptive recreational expertise of Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, emphasizes the power of bringing new perspectives and additional resources to help people access activities that some may take for granted.

We remain unwavering in our efforts to connect, promote relationships, and to celebrate all the other ways we contribute back to our community. Please know that you are deeply appreciated for all your contributions.

Thank you to the people who have chosen MOKA for service, to family members and supportive friends and advocates, to our funding partners, and to our many generous donors to the MOKA Foundation. Our work is not possible without our incredibly dedicated employees and the leadership of our board of directors.

We remain grateful and deeply humbled by your support.


Tracey Hamlet
Executive Director



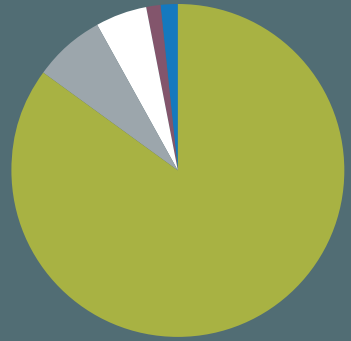
MOKA has been accredited by CARF in the following programs: Community Housing, Community Integration, Employment Services, Job Development, and Employee Development Services.

Resources.

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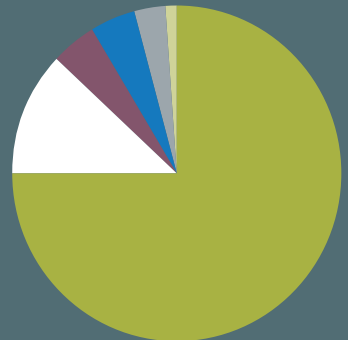
Support & Revenue

● CMH Contracts	\$20,345,566
● Client Contributions	\$1,777,329
● Donations & Other	\$1,243,579
● Rental Income	\$227,187
● Grant Revenue	\$315,166
Total	\$23,908,826



Expenses

● Wages and Fringes	\$18,183,639
● Operations	\$2,942,982
● Transportation	\$921,072
● Equipment	\$939,552
● Contractual Services	\$860,812
● Leases	\$226,071
Total	\$24,074,128



Connection.

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Sweet Treats: Building Community at The Coffee Factory

Cheers ring out as Jeffrey Pienela walks into The Coffee Factory and greets the MOKA Community Supports groups he works with twice a week.

The groups gather at the downtown Muskegon coffee shop to share a snack, conversation, and community. Spearheaded by Jeffrey last fall, the meetups have been a hit with people in the groups, employees, and customers.

As a Specialized Mentor of Community Supports, Jeffrey was looking for new collaborations and places to bring the groups. MOKA has a snack day, so he talked to The Coffee Factory owner Sarah Sass about hosting them on occasion.

“It took off like fire,” Jeffrey says. “They build relationships with people, like with Sarah.”

Nicholas and Keith like mixing the ingredients. Nicholas brings apples and eggs from his family’s farm to the owner. They all enjoy eating the sweet treats: apple crisp, cookies, and pumpkin pie.

Lisa likes the camaraderie and being treated with dignity and respect. “I like the people at MOKA,” Lisa says. “I enjoyed the Valentine’s Day cookies. They were really good.”

Sarah welcomed the idea, saying she has a bunch of new friends and customers enjoy talking with them. “For us, it was cool because my employees fell in love with everyone too,” Sarah says.

Sarah makes it interactive by having them measure out and mix the ingredients. They work together and use their creativity and imagination. Depending on the dessert, the MOKA groups come in to help prepare the ingredients and return after Sarah bakes it.



“One of the things I noticed is how much they genuinely like each other, and they very much support each other and work together,” Sarah says. “They all like to be a part of a team.”

The treats change depending on the season. They celebrate birthdays and major holidays with cookie decorating and other festivities. Energy bites, peanut butter balls, apple crisp, and fruit wraps are other goodies they have made.

Sometimes they do craft activities or color the coffee sleeves. Other days, they sit on the couch or talk to customers and share stories and laughs. Jeffrey likes the visibility it brings to the people served by MOKA, as well as fostering a sense of community.

“I think it breaks down barriers by getting them out in the community,” Jeffrey says. “They make a family here, and friends, and build up their little circle that they have.”

Community Supports fosters MOKA’s mission of inclusivity by getting groups out into the community “to create a world bigger than just ourselves, our household, or our group,” says Jamie Romanosky, a Community Supports Supervisor.

“Jeffrey has done a fabulous job of fostering this bigger relationship to expand their social circle and their world overall,” Jamie says. The Coffee Factory is proud to be a local business that welcomes everyone and supports diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

“Everybody here is a person in my community, and it’s our job to support the community,” Sarah says. “And the best part for me was that I ended up with a bunch of new best friends.”

G Collaboration.

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New Training Program Professionalizes DSP Role

Despite being busy working professionals, several MOKA employees signed up for the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Training Program to gain new skills and help professionalize the role.

“I feel like a lot of people don’t understand how important this job is,” says Amanda Jordan, Administrative Assistant and Residential Support Staff at East Main. “We’re taking care of people’s children, their brothers, their sisters, and they’re leaving it all in our hands.”

DSPs support people with physical, intellectual, or developmental disabilities in realizing their full potential. They assist people served in becoming integrated and engaged in their community. And they ensure safety and encourage independence in residential home settings and community supports groups.

In an effort to professionalize the position, MOKA helped develop the Direct Support Professional Training Program in collaboration with Grand Rapids Community College, Harbor House Ministries, Heritage Homes, Inc., and Benjamin’s Hope.

MOKA received a Going Pro Talent Fund award from Michigan Works! to cover the cost for employees to attend. The award can be used to assist employers in training, developing, and retaining staff.

“It’s very important that we’re educated in this role so that we can do our best job for persons served and for MOKA and continue to support MOKA’s mission,” Amanda says.

“I was excited to learn something new and something that, as a supervisor, I could bring to my staff and help them learn and grow as well,” says Desiree Whittaker, Home Supervisor of Harbor Pines in Norton Shores.



DSPs have a lot of responsibility, but the starting pay is fairly low. High turnover and vacancy rates have always been a challenge. During COVID, the need for DSPs reached a crisis point.

Various disability advocates and residential home providers started meeting regularly to address the staffing shortage. The goal was to professionalize the sector and ultimately boost the hourly pay.

“It is a professional position,” says Lynne Doyle, former Executive Director at Ottawa Community Mental Health. “It requires training, skill, and expertise.”

Grand Rapids Community College, along with input from MOKA and the other providers, developed the curriculum. GRCC offered a lab for hands-on training at the GRCC Lakeshore Campus in Holland.

Three MOKA employees completed the pilot training program, and another group participated in the class offered in the winter. The training program was organized like a college class and included weekly assignments, quizzes, and in-person lab time.

“If you love what you do or want to continue to grow, I think that it’s a great opportunity and chance to expand your knowledge and learn even more,” says Lana Leek, Assistant Supervisor of Community Supports.

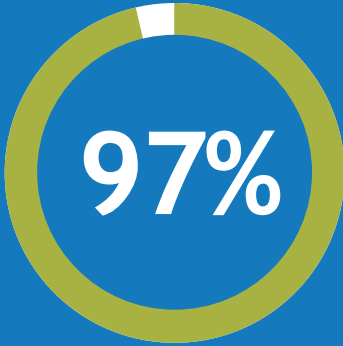
They all enjoyed the camaraderie among the group and meeting people from MOKA and other organizations. Their instructors were flexible and knowledgeable. The course content covered a variety of topics and issues relevant to the role, both for new employees and experienced DSPs.

“I loved the open dialogue that we had,” says Desiree. “I thought it was cool to bounce things off of each other. I thought it was an awesome learning experience.”

Impact.

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Volunteerism



of people served by MOKA
in community-based programs

**were engaged in
volunteer work.**

This exceeds the National Core Indicators
that show 37% of people with I/DD in
Michigan are engaged in volunteer work.

(INCI, 2020-21 Michigan In-Person Survey (IPS) State Report)

People supported by
MOKA contributed over

14,000

volunteer hours back
to the community.



Empowerment

20 PEOPLE

served by MOKA
received grants through
MOKA Foundation's

Empowerment Fund

to support health, communication,
and community integration.



24% 

of people participating in the **Diabetes** Management Program **reduced at least one risk factor** of type II diabetes. This exceeds our goal of 20%.



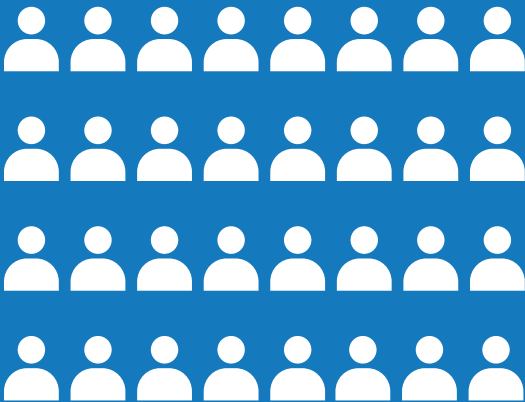
69%

of people participating in the **My25 nutrition program** are moving towards a **healthier Body Mass Index (BMI)**.



were **lost**

Employment



32 people achieved their goal of **employment** in MOKA's Employment Services Program. This is an increase of **10%** from 2022.

Achievement.

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Employment Services: Deb finds Success at Russ'

Searching for a job can be hard. Securing a job is even harder.

MOKA's Employment Services supports people through the process by building self-confidence and resilience, nurturing relationships, and opening doors to opportunity.

Meet Deb. She enjoys washing dishes at Russ' Restaurant in Grand Rapids. She was recognized as Employee of the Month earlier this year and celebrated her one-year anniversary in April.

Deb has years of restaurant experience. Russ' was her top pick of employers. Deb likes eating at Russ' and enjoys perks like 50 percent off her meals.

She wanted to earn her own money, keep busy, and gain independence. She lives in an adult foster care home and pays a portion of her rent.

Deb also uses some money to do the things she enjoys such as cross-stitch projects, buying books, going out to eat, and enjoying sweet treats from local stores. "It gives me something to do," Deb says. "I go out to eat every Saturday at Russ', then I go shopping."

Russ' has been a great employment partner and fosters a safe and inclusive work environment. Her manager Jim is supportive and protective of Deb. "He's a nice man," Deb says.

Deb enjoys the job and her coworkers. "The people are nice," Deb says. "They help me with the dishes when I get behind."



The job search took a while, but Deb is happy to be employed. She also worked with a job coach and job developer on her resume, interview skills, and job readiness.

They spent a lot of time preparing for the interview – watching videos on etiquette, researching the company, discussing interview questions, and practicing appropriate answers. Other supports included interview-ready clothing, phone etiquette, and boundaries with her employer.

Deb had frequent coaching in her first few weeks at Russ'. Deb works quickly but needs support with coping skills to prevent getting frustrated and overwhelmed. She learned a pace that works for her, how to ask for help, and how to calm herself down when she starts to feel overwhelmed.

MOKA's Employment Services team assessed Deb's skills, limits, and optimal pace, which allowed her job developer to find her a position that would support her needs and strengths. Sometimes, it is helpful to observe persons served on the job to help ensure their success.

If Deb does get backed up, the team steps in to help. The teamwork and socialization have been good for her. Deb's job developer or another job coach has a monthly meeting with her manager at Russ' to talk about how she is doing and where she needs extra support.

Her supports coordinator at Network180 connected her with MOKA's Employment Services program. MOKA provides comprehensive support to help job seekers not only find a job but stay employed.

"They all love her there," says Jessamine Sutherlin, MOKA Job Developer. "I think just having that support with her team, like they all really, really enjoy her."

Accessibility.

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Growing Independence: The Impact of Assistive Technology

Assistive technology aims to support people in all aspects of their lives, including everyday activities like self-care, cooking, communicating with friends and family, and participating in hobbies.

In collaboration with the Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP) through the Michigan Disabilities Rights Coalition (MDRC), MOKA began to explore and implement assistive technology options for the people living in MOKA's Graceland Home in the spring of 2023.

Graceland Home employees and staff at MATP discussed the needs and hobbies of those living in the home to get ideas and suggestions on which assistive technology might work best. Staff from MATP arranged a visit to the home where they engaged people living in the home and those who support them in a day of outdoor gardening, crafting, and cooking.

They experimented with assistive technology devices like ergonomic crayons, extendable gardening tools, and sensory-friendly hammock chairs to enhance the accessibility and enjoyment of these activities.

Among the initial additions to the home was the installation of the sensory-friendly hammock chair. Sarah, a person living in the home, has embraced the soothing sway of the hammock. During moments of unease, she seeks solace on the porch, finding comfort in the hammock's gentle rocking motion.

MATP and Graceland employees also introduced assistive technology for gardening in the backyard. This included the installation of raised garden beds, vertical gardens, and ergonomic tools, all aimed at enhancing accessibility.



While the devices are not electronic, they expand access to hobbies that people living in the home may not have had before.

Lori, a person living at the Graceland Home, took a keen interest in gardening and embraced the opportunity to connect with nature and her peers. Alongside Gwen Waller, MOKA Residential Support Staff, she has dedicated numerous hours to cultivating the garden.

While not all people living in the home actively participate in gardening, it does foster social bonding within the home. They relish congregating around the kitchen table to experiment with new recipes incorporating fresh vegetables from the garden.

“It’s something that brings the people in the home together, and the more things you have that people can enjoy doing together is better for everyone,” says Abby Squires, Assistive Technology Specialist for Gaming and Crafting at MATP.

Once the outdoor gardening season ends, Lori uses the AeroGarden indoors allowing her to continue growing vegetables, herbs, and her favorite, yellow flowers. Gwen notes that Lori’s independence has increased as a result of the AeroGarden. Previously, she relied upon employees in the home to remind her to water and fertilize the plants. Now she intuitively responds to the AeroGarden’s flashing lights, which signal the plants’ needs.

Graceland Home Supervisor Christine Grant credits her team with the successful implementation of assistive technology in the home, sharing, “They stepped up and they believed that it was okay to try new things.”

To enhance support for the people using assistive technology, employees actively engage in learning alongside them.

Gwen and other employees in the home are excited to see where technology can take them. “It has given us new ideas as to how we can use it to make activities more accessible so people in the home can live a life where they continue to grow.”

MOKA.

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The care our donors have for the people in our MOKA family is astounding. This annual report gives you a glimpse of the bravery, resilience, and passion of the people we serve; the people our donors continue to rally around. Your support is truly life changing and directly affects how the people we serve access the community around them.

Thank you for your generosity and your commitment to *See the Individual in Everyone.*

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We want to offer a huge thank you for your generous support this year! We are so grateful for the gifts you give and the compassion you have for the community we serve.

This includes a special thanks to:

Grand Rapids Community College Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

MOKA is proud to continue our collaboration with Grand Rapids Community College's Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) program for a second year. This innovative partnership allows students to apply their expertise in environmental assessments to MOKA's residential homes, providing valuable recommendations for improving accessibility, functionality, and reducing stress for both the people living in the home and employees. We are grateful to the Grand Rapids Community College COTA program for their support in ensuring continuous improvement and a positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

Grand Valley State University Master of Occupational Therapy Program

MOKA is collaborating with Grand Valley State University's Master of Occupational Therapy program to explore innovative technology use in our residential homes. This initiative aims to expand access to technology for the people MOKA serves, increasing their independence and promoting a more effective use of direct support professional hours. The program includes student-led evaluation studies that will serve to expand the limited research in this area.

Volunteer Sites

Kent

Beer City Dog Biscuits
Blandford Nature Center
Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding
Feeding America
Howard Christensen Nature Center
Kent County Parks Volunteer Services
Kids Food Basket
Meals on Wheels - Grandville
Michigan Ballet Academy
Palmer & Millennium Park
Special Olympics (SOMI)
Thornapple Community Church

Muskegon

Anchor Points
Calvin Christian Reformed Church

Celebration Community Church
Faithful 2 Felines
First Baptist Church
Great Lakes Naval Memorial and Museum
Kids Food Basket
Meals on Wheels - AgeWell Services

Ottawa

City on a Hill
Community Action House
Critter Barn
Fellinlove Farm
Gateway Mission Store
Harvest Stand Ministries
Meals on Wheels - North Ottawa Council on Aging

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Grand Rapids Community College
Harbor House Ministries
Heritage Homes
GRCC Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant Program
GVSU School of Occupational Therapy
IMPART Alliance
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition
Special Olympics
WEAVE Project Partners
Hope Network
Spectrum Community Services
Thresholds
YWCA West Central Michigan*

*Lead agency in project



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