



Learn Skills. Experience Life.

# ANNUAL REPORT <sup>22</sup>/<sub>23</sub>



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



CEO's Message ..... 3 <i>Leading with Purpose and Passion</i>	Community Champion - ..... 13 Jerry Mellum <i>Partners Making an Impact</i>
Board Chair Welcome ..... 4 <i>A Year in Review</i>	Year at a Glance ..... 14 <i>Key Milestones and Events</i>
About MICC ..... 5 <i>Minnesota Independence College and Community</i>	Donor Acknowledgments ..... 17 <i>Expressing Our Gratitude</i>
Financial Overview ..... 6 <i>Stewardship and Transparency</i>	Tributes and Memorials ..... 23 <i>Honoring Legacy</i>
Participant of the Year - ..... 7 Camille <i>Celebrating Excellence</i>	In-kind Supporters ..... 23 <i>Community Generosity</i>
Richfield's Nonprofit of the Year ... 8 <i>Community Recognition</i>	MICC Careers ..... 24 <i>Empowerment Through Employment</i>
A Visit to the Capitol ..... 9 <i>Advocacy in Action</i>	Visionary Leadership ..... 26 <i>Board of Directors National Advisory Board Executive Leadership Leadership Team</i>
Advancement Insights ..... 10 <i>Building Our Future</i>	Impact of Giving ..... 27 <i>Your Support Matters</i>
Hatlen Leadership Circle ..... 11 <i>Honoring Commitment</i>	Ways to Contribute ..... 27 <i>Join Our Mission</i>
Community Partnerships ..... 12 <i>Together We Thrive</i>	

# Dear Friends,

Reflecting on the 2022-2023 program year, I am filled with gratitude and excitement for this transformative journey we have embarked upon together. It has been a year of growth, collaboration, and, most importantly, a year of making a meaningful impact in the lives of neurodivergent adults.



I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to every member of the MICC community – our participants, their families, our team members, and dedicated stakeholders. Your unwavering support and commitment have been instrumental in shaping the success we're celebrating.

In this first fully post-pandemic year, MICC experienced 28 percent growth! We've served 170 participants across our programs, and our participants have led us into new relationships with employers like CVS, Good Grocer, and Fresh Thyme. Participants have launched into adult independence, with 98 percent of seniors employed by graduation. With the help of community partners, we've improved access to our programs, with 82 percent of College families receiving some form of financial assistance. Our stakeholders came together in March and made some serious waves, helping us raise \$565,000 of much-needed programming and operational support to serve MICC participants.

MICC's vision is a world where neurodivergent individuals are valued and thrive. We know that transformation begins one person at a time, so our continued focus will be on increasing accessibility to MICC programs and services. We've been working this past year to lay the groundwork for that growth, ensuring MICC can evolve to meet the needs of more neurodivergent adults and their families while maintaining what makes us unique and special.

We couldn't do what we do without our dedicated employees, board members, and partners! You have empowered us to explore new avenues, develop innovative programming, and continue creating a community that is responsive to the evolving landscape of neurodivergent support. There is so much more to come!

Thank you for being an integral part of MICC. We are excited about the future and look forward to creating even more opportunities for growth, connection, and success together!

All the best,

Amy Gudmestad  
Chief Executive Officer

**Meet Jack**  
Scan to hear Jack,  
an MICC participant,  
share his story.



# BOARD CHAIR WELCOME

## *A Year In Review*

As MICC celebrates its 27th birthday, it's inspiring to reflect on how much MICC has grown! The original Minnesota Life College opened its doors in 1996 with 13 participants and less than ten staff. Today, the need is greater than ever before, as autism diagnoses continue to rise, and MICC is making a tremendous difference for more individuals and their families than ever before. With FY23 revenue of nearly \$6M, MICC now serves more than 170 participants, and programming is managed by a highly capable staff and leadership team of 64. Generous funding support from the Minnesota legislature continues to increase. We can all be proud of this growth, which is due to the continuing work and dedication of everyone involved. All of us serve an essential role as ambassadors, supporting MICC's myriad programs and spreading the word about MICC.



One major accomplishment in the past year has been the completion and approval of the Agile strategic planning cycle, jointly developed by MICC's Board of Directors and Leadership team. Working together over a period of months, we were successful in developing an iterative planning system, synchronized with MICC's program calendar, for monitoring the impact of current programs and identifying new initiatives with the highest potential. The Agile strategic plan focuses on four priorities:

1. Provide Exceptional Programs and Services
2. Foster our Employees and Culture
3. Build a Strong Financial Future
4. Expand Our Impact

The new framework was approved by the Board at our February retreat and will be used to guide MICC's continued growth.

Another factor driving the organization's development and adaptation is the ongoing renewal of the Board. In the new fiscal year, we welcome three extremely talented and enthusiastic new board members: Jeremy Estenson (government affairs expert with Taft Advisors); William Fehrenbach (who retired early from Medtronic to focus on board service); and Quang Trang (attorney with Allina Health). In addition, a warm welcome back to Mark Ziegler, who is returning as an Emeritus board member, and to Jan Wuorenma, our new Vice Chair. Hannah Horn and Lindsay Schneider will continue serving as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, for the next year. Finally, we appreciate Becca Mainz and Nikki Fetter whose service ended in June after serving for two terms. Thanks to all for your willingness to share your time and talents with MICC.

One final note: now that we've returned to more in-person interaction, it's great to gather informally and get to know our large and growing MICC community. It's always inspiring to hear everyone's stories about how MICC has made a difference in the lives of so many participants and their families. I hope we find more opportunities to connect in the next year. In whatever capacity you have served MICC – through donations, sharing your expertise, and/or your time – **THANK YOU!** There is so much more fun to come!

Sincerely,

**Katie Kemper**  
MICC Board of Directors Chair

# ABOUT MICC

## *Minnesota Independence College and Community*

For 27 years, MICC has celebrated the strengths and talents of every autistic and neurodivergent adult. Through individualized, holistic vocational and life skills training programs within a supportive, inclusive community, MICC equips and empowers each participant to live independently, thrive in meaningful employment, and enjoy lifelong autonomy. Located in Richfield, MN, MICC offers integrated learning experiences on campus, in the workplace, and within the community.

## MISSION

Every day, we work to transform the lives of autistic and neurodivergent individuals and their families.

## VISION

A world where individuals on the autism spectrum and those with learning differences thrive and are valued.

### College

College is a three-year program to build foundational skills while living on campus and relationships through activities and classes. Experiential learning is the cornerstone of our programming, and it encompasses three key areas:

- **Independent Living:** Participants live in fully furnished on-campus apartments, learning vital life skills in real-world settings and utilizing public transportation.
- **Career Certificates:** In collaboration with Century College, the Careers curriculum offers certificates in retail/hospitality, culinary, and health services tailored to meet job market demands.
- **Social Engagement:** The program emphasizes social skill development through a variety of activities and electives, ranging from science to fitness, fostering connection and friendship among participants.

### Community

Exclusively for College Program graduates, Community offers ongoing support for living independently. This program is designed around three core pillars:

- **Person-centered Support:** Tailored advisory services aid with emotional support, medical

coordination, and problem-solving. Additionally, participants receive assistance with external supports for daily living and wellness supports focusing on nutrition, fitness, and overall well-being.

- **Career Services:** Customized career services help participants find and maintain employment including job exploration, placement, and retention support. Once employed, participants can receive job coaching, transportation guidance, and continuing education.
- **Social Engagement:** Social interaction and skill development through a variety of activities with 20-25 staff-led events weekly. Participants are also encouraged to foster community by forming clubs and organizing outings.

### Summer

Introducing MICC's approach to developing lifelong independence skills, the Summer Program is two sessions of week-long day programming for teens ages 16-18 and emerging adults ages 18-24. Participants learn through individual and small-group activities including career exploration, social skills development, healthy habits, wellness routines, career exploration activities, and exploring the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro for fun social activities.

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## Stewardship and Transparency

Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2023

### Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$798,412
Accounts and pledges receivable, net	\$877,061
Other assets	\$262,058
Property and Equipment, net	\$1,349,357
Right of use asset, net	\$1,286,787
Investments	\$1,332,022
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$5,905,697</b>

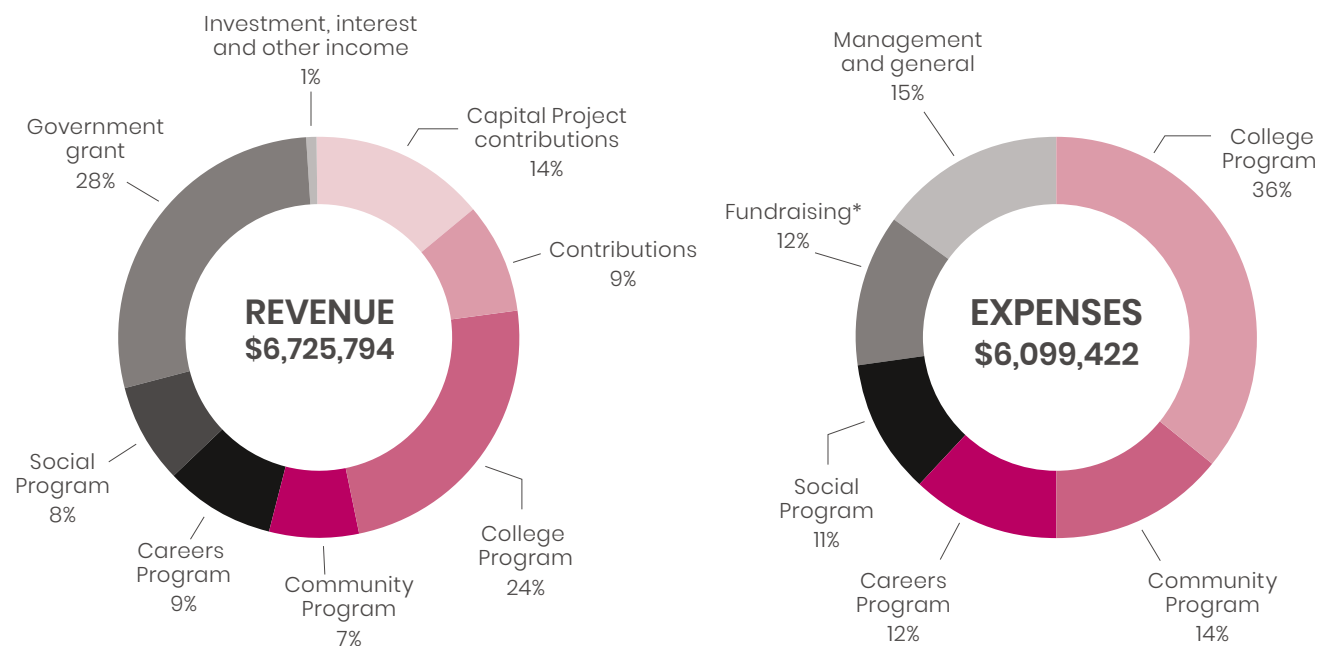
### Liabilities

Current liabilities	\$363,111
Lease liability	\$1,302,337
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,665,448</b>

### Net Assets

Without donor restriction	
Undesignated	\$2,343,379
Board designated	\$1,077,500
With donor restriction	\$819,370
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,240,249</b>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$5,905,697**



\*Of total fundraising expense, 29% is one-time consulting fees.

Audited financial reports are available upon request from Tim J. Peterson at [tpeterson@miccommunity.org](mailto:tpeterson@miccommunity.org).

# PARTICIPANT OF THE YEAR – CAMILLE

## Celebrating Excellence

At MICC, honoring individuals who embody the principles of respect, responsibility, and resilience is a cherished tradition. This year, the community celebrated Camille, a junior in the College Program, as its Participant of the Year. This recognition is a testament to MICC's vision: creating a world where individuals on the autism spectrum and with learning differences not only thrive but are deeply valued.

The journey to this accolade was one marked by perseverance and personal growth. Camille navigated numerous challenges, from health concerns to the dynamics of changing peer relationships. Yet, through these trials, Camille's unwavering positivity and remarkable ability to adapt shone brightly, embodying the essence of resilience.

Camille's exceptional journey was recognized during the Winter Formal, an annual celebration of the MICC community's achievements. The award, bestowed by the previous year's recipient, Dinah H., was not just a symbol of Camille's accomplishments but a recognition of the spirit that drives the entire MICC community.

What sets Camille apart is not just her resilience but also her commitment to responsibility, a trait evident in her practicum at Walgreens. There she demonstrated not only an exemplary work ethic and a positive attitude, but also an admirable flexibility. Her ability to accommodate and excel in her role did not go unnoticed, earning her accolades from both peers and staff. It's a testament to her dedication that throughout her time at MICC, Camille maintained a flawless record, free of any unexcused absences or tardies.

Camille's achievement as Participant of the Year is a reflection of MICC's core values and its mission to empower individuals. Her story is a beacon of inspiration, illustrating how the right environment and support can help neurodiverse individuals not just to succeed, but to lead.

As Camille humbly attributes her success to her resilience and sense of responsibility, MICC continues to celebrate and foster these qualities in all its participants. In individuals like Camille, we see the embodiment of MICC's vision – a world where every person is recognized for their unique strengths and contributions.



We are...

**RESPECTFUL**

We are kind.  
We listen.  
We are truthful.

**RESPONSIBLE**

We are punctual.  
We are prepared.  
We participate.

**RESILIENT**

We are courageous.  
We are safe and own our emotions.  
We are flexible.



# RICHFIELD'S NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR

## Community Recognition

In an afternoon filled with community spirit and recognition, MICC stood out at the Richfield Chamber of Commerce's Circle of Excellence awards ceremony. Held on March 21, 2023, this event celebrated the remarkable contributions of local organizations and businesses. MICC, with its innovative life skills and vocational programs for autistic and neurodivergent adults, was proudly named Nonprofit of the Year.

The event, sponsored by prominent local businesses, saw key members of MICC in attendance, including Amy Gudmestad, CEO, and Grant S., an MICC Student Ambassador.

MICC's journey to this accolade is one of passion, dedication, and a deep commitment to empowering neurodivergent adults. With more than 25 years of service, MICC has not only established itself as a pillar in the Richfield community but also significantly expanded its reach. Today, it proudly boasts more than 100 graduates who are not only employed but also living independently in the Richfield area.

The vocational skills training programs at MICC, certified by Century College and

accredited by CARF International, have been pivotal in preparing participants for successful careers in various industries, including health services, retail, culinary, and hospitality. This comprehensive approach to education and training reflects MICC's unwavering commitment to its mission.

Amy Gudmestad, accepting the award, shared, "We are deeply honored by this recognition. It's a testament to our incredible team's hard work and dedication in empowering our participants to lead independent lives filled with purpose, careers, and meaningful relationships. This award reaffirms our belief that everyone deserves a chance to find their place in a supportive community."

Previously inducted into the Richfield Small Business Hall of Fame and named a Minnesota Top Workplace, MICC continues to garner accolades, reflecting its enduring impact. This latest recognition by the Richfield Chamber of Commerce not only celebrates MICC's past achievements but also shines a light on its ongoing efforts to create an inclusive world where neurodivergent individuals thrive.

# A VISIT TO THE CAPITOL

## Advocacy in Action

MICC's impactful day at the Minnesota State Capitol was led by three enthusiastic participants - Gemma, Jenna, and Michael, alongside Ben Lentz, MICC's Chief Advancement Officer. They ventured to make MICC's voice heard in the halls of legislative power, sharing stories and ambitions with key policymakers.

The group toured the Capitol's iconic landmarks, including the Rotunda, Senate and House Chambers, and the Minnesota Supreme Court Chamber, tallying an impressive 12,000 steps through the underground corridors.

The day's centerpiece was a series of meetings with 23 legislators, including five Senators and 18 Representatives. Gemma, Jenna, and Michael shared their personal experiences with MICC, engaging in meaningful dialogues that showcased the transformative impact of MICC's programs. Their stories resonated within the halls of power, creating a deeper understanding of the neurodiverse community's aspirations and challenges.

These conversations went beyond mere sharing; they were about forging lasting connections and updating leaders on MICC's future endeavors. This engagement was particularly poignant, marking MICC's first in-person visit to the Capitol in two years, emphasizing the continual need for advocacy and collaboration.

MICC appreciates the bipartisan support from the Minnesota House and Senate, especially the 23 legislators who took the time to listen and engage. This visit underscored the influence of personal narratives in policy discussions and the critical role of community representation in shaping an inclusive future.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the current and past legislators and committee members whose steadfast support has been vital to MICC's success. Their commitment and advocacy have been instrumental in our journey.

Thank you.



Ben Lentz, Gemma, Jenna and Michael with Rep. Jessica Hanson

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sen. Jim Abeler              | Rep. Ginny Klevorn        |
| Rep. Dave Baker              | Rep. Ron Kresha           |
| Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn       | Sen. Robert Kupec         |
| Rep. Jeff Brand              | Rep. Joe McDonald         |
| Rep. Ethan Cha               | Sen. Zaynab Mohamed       |
| Sen. Bobby Joe Champion      | Sen. Erin Murphy          |
| Rep. Nathan Coulter          | Rep. Danny Nadeau         |
| Rep. Brian Daniels           | Rep. Nathan Nelson        |
| Rep. Greg Davids             | Sen. Carla Nelson         |
| Sen. Rich Draheim            | Rep. Anne Neu Brindley    |
| Sen. Zach Duckworth          | Rep. Mohamud Noor         |
| Sen. Robert Farnsworth       | Sen. Clare Oumou Verbeten |
| Sen. Omar Fateh              | Rep. Gene Pelowski        |
| Rep. Marj Fogelman           | Sen. Eric Pratt           |
| Rep. Mary Franson            | Sen. Aric Putnam          |
| Rep. Cedrick Frazier         | Rep. Marion Rarick        |
| Sen. Heather Gustafson       | Sen. Jason Rarick         |
| Rep. Jessica Hanson          | Rep. Liz Reyer            |
| Rep. Bobbie Harder           | Rep. Kristin Robbins      |
| Rep. Hodan Hassan            | Rep. Joe Schomacker       |
| Sen. Fong Hawj               | Rep. Peggy Scott          |
| Rep. Amanda Hemmingsen-Jager | Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura |
| Rep. Kim Hicks               | Rep. Samantha Vang        |
| Sen. John Hoffman            | Rep. Kaohly Vang Her      |
| Sen. Karin Housley           | Rep. Mark Wiens           |
| Rep. Michael Howard          | Rep. Jeff Witte           |
| Rep. John Huot               | Rep. Dan Wolgamott        |
| Rep. Debra Kiel              | Rep. Jay Xiong            |
|                              | Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar   |



# ADVANCEMENT INSIGHTS

## Building Our Future

With sincere gratitude, I extend a heartfelt thanks for your unwavering support of MICC this past year. The generosity of our community has fueled transformative strides, empowering our participants to flourish in education, independence, and community engagement. Through your benevolence, MICC expanded opportunities, enhanced programs, and fostered an inclusive environment, enabling each participant to realize their potential and contribute meaningfully to society.



On behalf of the MICC leadership, staff, and participants, it is truly an honor to share our collective thanks to all the benefactors who have so generously invested in MICC.

Ben Lentz  
Chief Advancement Officer

# HATLEN LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

## Honoring Commitment



Roe, Erik and Beverly Hatlen (L to R)

The Hatlen Leadership Circle (HLC) is named in honor of MICC’s founders, Roe and Beverly Hatlen. Their vision and leadership launched MICC and their stewardship ensured our future. Like our founders, our donors in the HLC have demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to preserve and enhance our vision – a world where individuals on the autism spectrum and those with learning differences thrive and are valued.

According to the MN Department of Education, **AUTISM** is one of the **FASTEST-GROWING DIAGNOSES** within the educational system.

**↑138%** BETWEEN 2009-2020

## The MICC Difference

**57** College new and returning **STUDENTS IN FALL 2023** with **92%** of **FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS** from MN representing **11 MN COUNTIES**

**170** **PARTICIPANTS SERVED** across programs in 22-23

MICC has experienced **28%** **GROWTH POST-PANDEMIC**

- \$1,000,000+ Learn Skills. Experience Life.**  
Beverly and Roe Hatlen Family  
Phillip and Jill Lighty
- \$500,000 - \$999,999 Achieving Personal Success**  
Jerry and Jean Marie Foss and Family
- \$250,000 - \$499,999 Strength and Determination**
- \$100,000 - \$249,999 Partnerships for Independence**  
Blake and Nancy Barnes  
Dale E. and Jolita D. Benson  
Amy and Kai Gudmestad  
Paul and Julie Gulstrand  
John Lavander and Nan Owen
- Geoff Barnard and Diane Vosick  
Ginny and Michael Walters  
Susi and David Thompson  
Mark and Mary Ziegler
- \$50,000 - \$99,999 Transforming Lives**  
Kathie Constantine and Mike Bono  
Kay Constantine  
Doug and Julie Craven  
Rick and Kate Hartfiel  
Clifford Hoffman  
John and Shirley Horn  
Glenn and Dr. Susan Isensee  
Greg and Gail Kenton  
Craig and Carrie MacLeod\*  
Mark Milberger  
Kurt and Ann Owen  
Steven and Pamela Schupbach
- Howard and Marlies Terprning  
Jeff and Susan Thayer
- \$25,000 - \$49,999 Learning by Doing**  
Evan and Sarabeth Ackerman  
Judy Alyea  
Raymond Barton\*  
Pat and Trina Bryant  
Joseph and Adrienne Carrica  
John and Peggy Collins  
Teri and Robert Crosby  
Diana Eidem  
Jim and Mary Frey  
Jeffrey and Judy Gauvin  
Michael Guyette\*  
Steve Hargarten and Janis Cohn  
Dr. Robert and Tracy Hibbard  
Marygrace and Michael Horner
- Deborah and Bill Johnston  
Gary and Marianne Josephson  
Charles and Mary Jungmann  
Katie Kemper and Scott DeLaney  
Glen and Sally Klemp  
Arthur and Christine Monzingo  
Darcy and Curt Riess  
Thomas and Linda Rundle  
Anne and Scott Saveraid\*  
Kirk Sorensen and Peggy Herum  
James J. and Ann Ryan, Ph.D  
Jim Schagh and Nancy Kipp  
Ray and Nancy Seeger  
John Thompson and Jane Bartell  
J. W. Vosick  
Chaim and Evelyn Teitelbaum

\*denotes moving into a new giving level

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

*Together We Thrive*

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- |   |                                   |   |   |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Adaptive Recreation and Learning Exchange | Els for Autism                    | Marathon Petroleum                          | Secondhand Hounds                           |
| Arc Value Village                         | Feline Rescue                     | Minneapolis Institute of Art                | Southdale YMCA                              |
| Asia Mall                                 | Fraser                            | Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Medical Center | Special Olympics MN                         |
| Ax-Man Surplus Stores                     | Friendship Village of Bloomington | Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport  | St. Paul Opportunity Center (SPOC)          |
| Barnes & Noble                            | Good Grocer                       | Mission Animal Hospital                     | Target Corporation                          |
| Best Buy                                  | Great Wolf Lodge                  | MNimprov                                    | True Friends                                |
| Breck Schools                             | Hennepin County Group             | Opportunity Partners                        | Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP) |
| Bridging                                  | Highland Management Group         | Petco                                       | Walgreens                                   |
| Bridging Hearts                           | History Theatre                   | PetSmart                                    | Warrior Dog Rescue                          |
| Disability Hub MN                         | Kairos Alive!                     | Restaurant Depot                            | XSCAPE Arcade                               |
| Donaldson Company                         | Lutheran Social Services          | Rise Up Nutrition                           | YouthLink                                   |

## CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION PARTNERS

- |                              |                                    |  |                            |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Autism Advocacy & Law Center | Caliber Foundation                 | KAT Consulting, LLC                                | Oak Foundation             |
| Autism Speaks, Inc.          | Colony Apartment Homes             | Littler Mendelson, PC                              | Pajor Family Foundation    |
| Best Buy                     | Ebenezer Society Foundation        | Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health | RSP Architects             |
| The Brands at Rabbit Creek   | Franklin Center                    | Minnesota Council of Nonprofits                    | Sundance Family Foundation |
| Brave North Technology       | Groves Learning Organization (GLO) | Minnesota State Arts Board                         | Toro Company               |
| Bumpy Lane                   |                                    |  | Walser Foundation          |

# COMMUNITY CHAMPION - JERRY MELLUM

*Partners Making an Impact*

At the heart of MICC's annual Champion's Breakfast lies a tradition steeped in unity, recognition, and hope. This event is more than a ceremony; it's a celebration of individuals, nonprofits, and corporations who embody the spirit of MICC, dedicating themselves to enhancing the lives of neurodiverse adults. The 2022 Community Champion - Individual award, honored Jerry Mellum, a Senior Planning Analyst with Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department, for his extraordinary advocacy and support of MICC.

profoundly impacting the MICC community.



"Jerry's work in making state services accessible has been a cornerstone of our mission," Jena notes. "His unwavering advocacy for MICC has made him one of our strongest allies."

Jerry's partnership with MICC is pivotal in a realm often daunting for many: navigating county and state waivers. His expertise and relentless advocacy in unraveling the intricacies of CDCS funding and state services are invaluable. Jena Kulenkamp, MICC's Transition and Resource Manager, attests to this, stating, "Jerry's commitment to helping our participants and their families understand and access Minnesota waiver programs has been a game changer. He's always ready to support MICC at every turn."

The award presented to Jerry is a testament to the significant impact an individual can have. His dedication and expertise have not only aided in navigating complex systems but have also contributed to building a community where neurodiverse individuals are thriving.

MICC extends profound gratitude to Jerry Mellum. His dedication and advocacy illuminate the path toward a more inclusive, empowered future, inspiring others to make a lasting difference in the community.

More than just a consultant, Jerry has been instrumental in bridging connections between MICC and counties throughout Minnesota. His initiatives have vastly improved the organization's outreach, making state services more accessible and comprehensible for participants and their families.

During the Champion's Breakfast, Jena expressed her deep admiration for Jerry's dedication, "His timely, clear responses to any inquiries we have and his ability to guide us through the complex waiver process in Minnesota have been critical!"

In the 2022-2023 period, Jerry's influence was palpable, with 38 College Program and 42 Community Program participants at MICC utilizing CDCS funding through MA-waiver programs. His voluntary consulting efforts have offered invaluable support to families and staff,



**PARTICIPANTS USING MN CDCS AS A THIRD-PARTY FUNDING SOURCE**

**61%** of COLLEGE PARTICIPANTS

**46%** of COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

# YEAR AT A GLANCE

Key Milestones and Events



### CONGRATS, MATT!

First Participant of the Month of the 22-23 year

**NEW FISCAL YEAR**



### SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

University of Minnesota Bee Lab



### V-O-T-E

MICC hosted voting education thanks to a grant from Minnesota Council of Nonprofits



### SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

Bridging Hearts partner event with board games and ice cream



### 20TH ANNUAL GALA "MAKING WAVES"

Hosted 599 attendees  
Raised \$565K



### EVERYBODY'S WORKING FOR COLLEGE RETREAT DAY!

Base Camp high ropes course  
Great Wolf Lodge  
Science Museum  
Water Coloring  
Campus Activities



### ENJOY A SPRING FLING

Caricature artist, activities, Superlative Awards



### GRADUATION

Congratulations, Class of 2023 College graduates!

## JUL    AUG    SEP    OCT    NOV    DEC    JAN    FEB    MAR    APR    MAY    JUN



### 22-23 COLLEGE SESSION

57 new and returning College participants move-in



### WE GOT SPIRIT! YES, WE DO!

### HOMECOMING WEEKEND

Participants defeat families/staff in kickball rivalry

Coffee House talent show gives the spotlight to MICC's most talented

Champion's Breakfast honors exceptional partnerships



### SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

Snake Rattle & Roll



### GETTIN' SNAZZY AT OUR WINTER FORMAL

Celebrate Camille, Participant of the Year! (see page 7)

### SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

Snow day all the way!



### AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

New blog series, *Mentone Mentors* by Madeline Mentone

Autism Society of Minnesota's Annual Conference



### CELEBRATE SUMMER PROGRAM

2 sessions  
1 week each  
30 participants





# DONOR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Expressing Our Gratitude*

## Donors July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

### \$1,000,000-\$5,000,000

State of Minnesota

### \$500,000-\$999,999

Phillip and Jill Lighty<sup>†</sup>

### \$100,000-\$499,999

Blake and Nancy Barnes<sup>†</sup>

Greg and Gail Kenton<sup>†</sup>

Susi and David  
Thompson<sup>†</sup>

Mark and Mary Ziegler<sup>†</sup>

### \$50,000-\$99,999

Pat and Trina Bryant<sup>†</sup>

Jerry and Jean Foss

### \$25,000-\$49,999

Raymond Barton<sup>†</sup>

Best Buy

Beverly and Roe Hatlen

Sundance Family  
Foundation

Chaim and Evelyn  
Teitelbaum<sup>†</sup>

### \$10,000-\$24,999

Jim and Michele Frome

Amy and Kai  
Gudmestad

Michael Guyette

Dr. Steve Hargarten and  
Janis Cohn

Rick and Kate Hartfiel<sup>†</sup>

Craig and Carrie  
MacLeod

Minnesota State Arts  
Board

Mary and Don Newton

Laura and Kurt Nisi<sup>†</sup>

Oak Foundation

Brigid O'Malley and  
Mike Mazur

Thomas and Linda  
Rundle<sup>†</sup>

Randy and Katherine  
Schneewind Family  
Foundation

Walser Foundation

### \$5,000-\$9,999

Autism Speaks, Inc.

Caliber Foundation

Adrienne and Joseph  
Carrica

Kathie Constantine  
and Mike Bono

Doug and Julie Craven

Kyle and Suzanne  
Crowe

Ashley and Reed  
Daniels

Engelsma Family  
Foundation

Debrah Glennen and  
Donald Miller

William and Helen  
Hartfiel

Peter and Tracy  
Kootsikak

Becca Meinz

Minnesota Council Of  
Nonprofits, Inc.

Kurt and Ann Owen

Pajor Family Foundation

Dave and Marian  
Peterson

Pam and Forrest Sartell

Scott and Anne  
Saveraid

Susan Stuart Seiler  
Family Foundation

Jeff Thayer

Frank and Valerie  
Warner

### \$2,500-\$4,999

Dale and Jolita Benson

Efrain and Vanessa  
Cardenas

Brian and Dawn  
Erdman

Derek Gorney

Sheree Hemming and  
Lisa Lavin

Clifford Hoffman

Lauren and James Jopp

Katie Kemper and  
Scott DeLaney

Dan and Erin Larsen

John Lavander and  
Nan Owen

Alexandra Lee

Robert and Cheryl  
McLean

Marie Meglen

Arthur and Christine  
Monzingo

Jennifer Nasifoglu

Dave Norback

Mark and Karin Otness

Suzanne and William  
Payne

Phillip and Suzy Simon

Douglas and Gayle  
Willey

Michael Zalk

### \$1,000-\$2,499

Steve and Jillian Adkins

Rebecca and Jason  
Altman

Amerect, Inc.

The Austin Memorial  
Foundation

Geoff Barnard and  
Diane Vosick

Brad and Gwen Beard

Jon Berlin and Julie  
Edell-Berlin

Sterling Black

Stacy and Matt Bogart

Rochelle Brandl

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# MICC CAREERS

## Empowerment Through Employment

At MICC, our Careers Program is a key part of what we do, because attaining and keeping a fulfilling job is essential for independence and self-sufficiency. This program incorporates the building of both practical vocational skills and the vital soft skills necessary to land and succeed in a job, complete with personalized support and resources.

Thanks to our partnership with Century College, we offer an accredited certificate program where participants get hands-on experience in their chosen fields through classes and workplace practicums. This practical approach is fantastic for giving them an advantage in the job market during their senior year. The wonderful achievements of participants and partners truly highlight the success of our Careers program!

**Thalia**  
Barista,  
Richfield Starbucks



Thalia is one of Starbucks' shining stars and a proud MICC participant. She whips up delicious pumpkin spice lattes with the skill and finesse of someone who's been doing it all her life. Her manager, Karen, recognizes her dedication and growth. Thalia finds joy and fulfillment in her role at Starbucks!

**Karen**  
Manager,  
Richfield Starbucks



MICC is grateful to partners like Karen! She understands the importance of building genuine connections and believes passion is the key to success. "When you truly love what you do, not only do you excel, but your entire team thrives, and customers can feel that too. It's what makes our Starbucks stand out and how our family keeps growing!"

**Von**  
Director of Retail,  
Attractions and Kids  
Experiences,  
Great Wolf Lodge



Von became familiar with MICC through some of his Pack members, and when he learned more about MICC's mission and programming, he knew that this partnership could enhance lives. Von ensured Great Wolf Lodge and MICC would have an impactful partnership! "As a lodge, we are all one Pack, and everything we do, we strive to do as a team."

**Tyler**  
Customer Service Assistant,  
Walgreens



Tyler has worked for Walgreens since February 2021. He stocks food and drinks and cashiers. He shared, "My coworkers at Walgreens are very nice and supportive. They take the time to help me solve problems. I am also able to speak with management whenever I have an issue. I am motivated to work because I enjoy meeting and helping customers."

# The MICC Difference

For the last three years,

**96%**

**OF SENIORS ARE EMPLOYED BY GRADUATION**

Participant job retention averages

**4.65**

**YEARS**

Average wage of

**\$14.35**

**PER HOUR**

**Jon**  
Fan Captain,  
Dairy Queen



Jon has worked at Dairy Queen since he graduated from MICC in 2017. He has blossomed, growing from the front register to food preparation to Fan Captain. Jon's supervisor, Toni, is grateful to have him as an employee. "Jon's careful attention to customers' needs has made him a familiar and trusted face at Dairy Queen."

**Casey**  
Manager,  
World Market



"MICC is a resource to ensure we're all (employee and employer) successful and have our needs met. Because of the support MICC provides and what their participants learn through their program, MICC graduates are often more reliable and communicative than our neurotypical employees. Reese, Jeffrey, and all our MICC team members are a delight!"

**Cole and Gent**  
Panera



**Cole**

Cole and Gent find supportive roles and opportunities for growth at our long-standing employment partner, Panera. Cole, who expanded his skills from dishwashing to prep cooking, shares, "I was happy that my boss helped give me the chance to do new tasks." Gent adds, "Panera is neat and organized, and my managers and co-workers are really nice," highlighting the positive and nurturing work environment at Panera.



**Gent**

**Good Grocer**



Good Grocer has been a valuable practicum site for MICC's second-year College students, offering hands-on experience in retail roles like cashiering and stocking. This partnership allows students to engage in meaningful work, like managing perishable items for the store's discount outlet aimed at easing food insecurity. Dinah, a junior, reflects on her experience: "It feels good to help out the community. I might want to run my own grocery store someday."

According to Drexel University, young adults on the **AUTISM SPECTRUM** have the **LOWEST EMPLOYMENT RATE** across disabilities.

# VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

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◊new board member

# IMPACT OF GIVING

## Your Support Matters

### Improve Access

We aim to meet up to 50 percent of a family's identified financial need through MICC Financial Assistance. For many families, this assistance is the only way to alleviate the financial barriers that would otherwise restrict access to our programs.

### Continually Grow and Improve

In Minnesota, 1 in 42 children are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder or a learning difference. Your investment in MICC allows us to grow our facilities and programming to accommodate more individuals who need these critical resources.

### Innovate Our Programming

MICC is a true pioneer in community integration and independence for autistic and neurodivergent adults. Innovation, experimentation and exploration are necessary for MICC to deliver successful programming.

# WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE

## Join Our Mission

### Phone

To donate over the phone, please call our development department at 612.876.9418; we can process donations made with American Express, MasterCard, and Visa cards.

### Mail

Please make checks payable to "Minnesota Independence College and Community" and send to:

MICC  
7501 Logan Avenue S, Suite 2A  
Richfield, MN 55423

### Online

[www.miccommunity.org/donate](http://www.miccommunity.org/donate)

### Stocks, Bonds or Other Appreciated Property

If you'd like to make a stock gift, please download our stock gift form at [www.miccommunity.org/donate](http://www.miccommunity.org/donate). Contact our Advancement Department or consult your tax advisor to learn more about the benefits of donating securities.

### Planned Giving

Estate gifts allow you to contribute funds or property to MICC in your will or estate plan. By making plans now, you can increase income, avoid taxes and make a generous gift in the future. You can create a legacy gift by naming MICC on the beneficiary form of a savings, checking or pension account, remembering MICC in a will or living trust, or using a more complex instrument such as a charitable life-income trust. Legacy gifts are powerful and demonstrate your commitment to MICC's work and mission.

**Contact our Advancement Department at 612.876.9405 with any questions.**

### Volunteer

Volunteers play a pivotal role in the mission of MICC. Our dedicated volunteers support a wide range of activities, from events and programming to serving on the board of directors. Their unwavering commitment and selfless dedication have a positive impact on MICC participants, families, and staff.

Learn more about volunteer opportunities:  
[miccommunity.org/volunteer](http://miccommunity.org/volunteer)



**Minnesota Independence College and Community**

7501 Logan Avenue South / Suite 2A  
Richfield, MN 55423

Phone: 612.869.4008

Fax: 612.869.0443

miccommunity.org

**BE PART OF  
SOMETHING  
EXTRAORDINARY**

# JOIN US IN 2024 . . .

**MARCH**

**21ST ANNUAL  
GALA**  
Uniquely  
Minnesota:  
Celebrating  
MICC's Northern  
Stars

**March 9, 2024**

**APRIL**

**AUTISM  
ACCEPTANCE  
MONTH**

**MAY**

**GRADUATION**  
College Class  
of 2024

**May 9, 2024**

**JUNE**

**SUMMER  
PROGRAM**

Session I:  
Ages 18-24  
**June 10-14, 2024**

Session II:  
Ages 16-18  
**June 24-28, 2024**

**JULY**

**NEW CAREERS  
SPECIALIZED  
EMPLOYMENT  
SERVICES (SES)  
PROGRAM**

**July session  
starts**

