

LifePursuits

A man with a beard and glasses is wearing a blue baseball cap and a blue t-shirt with "LOYOLA CRUSADERS" printed on it. He is sitting in a chair, looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting with windows.

Spring 2022

SPECIAL EDITION:
2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

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Lifeworks

A nonprofit serving
people with disabilities



A nonprofit serving
people with disabilities

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Pictured on cover:
Brian Schroeder at Loyola
Catholic School

Pictured right, top:
Felix Vaubel

Pictured right, bottom:
Teal Paape



Dear Lifeworks Community,

I'm honored to introduce myself to you. I'm Gertrude Matemba-Mutasa, the new President and CEO of Lifeworks Services. I joined Lifeworks because I wanted to be a part of the transformational work the organization is doing. Learning about what we accomplished together in 2021 is inspiring. It also lays a strong foundation for our work ahead in which we co-create and reimagine together.

Featured in this issue of LifePursuits are components of the 2021 Lifeworks Annual Report. The information provides insight into who we are and our impact across Minnesota. With support and feedback from our community, Lifeworks continues to provide high-quality services that honor choice and break down barriers to inclusion.

As we continued to navigate challenges brought on by the pandemic, we remained steadfast in our commitment to personalized support for the people we serve. In 2021, we supported more people than ever before - serving 3,352 people with disabilities and their families across Minnesota. 935 people received career support from Lifeworks and 3,200,456 hours of direct care were provided by 2,307 fiscal employees.

In 2021, we embraced reconnecting after a long year marked by social distancing and isolation. We successfully re-opened our Day Service Centers in both Apple Valley and Brooklyn Park, focusing on community services. Our team continued to innovative the services we offer by introducing two new offerings: Resource Navigation, for people who are facing a transition in their lives; and Housing Consultation, assisting individuals with developing a plan that honors choice and finding a housing solution that works for them.

We leaned into our value of "You Lead the Way - We Listen" by reinventing our feedback process in 2021. Rather than simply asking how we are doing, we wanted to learn from the entire Lifeworks community and let you lead the way for innovation at Lifeworks. From these results, we created three action items for 2022: Increase tools for customers, Reinvent the new employee experience, and Greater assistance with navigating service options. We look forward to reporting on these action items throughout the year.

I'm excited to partner with the people we serve, our staff, Board of Directors, and community and employer partners in the coming year. Lifeworks is confident in our efforts to reinvent what's possible while delivering services that encourage a sense of belonging for all. Thank you for your continued support of Lifeworks and for investing in a more inclusive community where we live and work together.

Gertrude Matemba-Mutasa
President and CEO



We Focus on Impact

You Lead the Way – We Listen

We honor choice and pursue opportunities with community at the heart of our work.

Together, We Break Down Barriers

We seek diverse perspectives, advance accessibility, and encourage a sense of belonging for all.

We Focus on Impact

We hold ourselves to the highest standards. We share expertise and collaborate to find solutions that address the whole picture.

We Reinvent What's Possible

We take chances and welcome the unknown. We learn from the past and lean into the future.

I'm so grateful for everything Lifeworks does for my son. I would not be where I am today without this incredible support.

My son has thrived.
– Sally,
Lifeworks Customer

Our mission is to serve our community and people with disabilities as we live and work together.

We envision a community where people with disabilities are more broadly valued, hired by employers, receiving support, and participating in ordinary activities.

In 2021, Lifeworks supported more people than ever before - serving 3,352 people with disabilities and their families across Minnesota. In our annual survey, 97% of our customers said they feel like we are responsive to their needs.

2021 by the numbers



3,350

people served across all Lifeworks programs



935

people served through employment services



290

people served in day support services



85

youth served through employment services



681

employers, hiring people supported by Lifeworks



133

new employers



2,307

fiscal employees providing
3,200,456 hours of care



2,125

served in fiscal services



57

number of years Lifeworks has provided services

2021 FINANCIALS

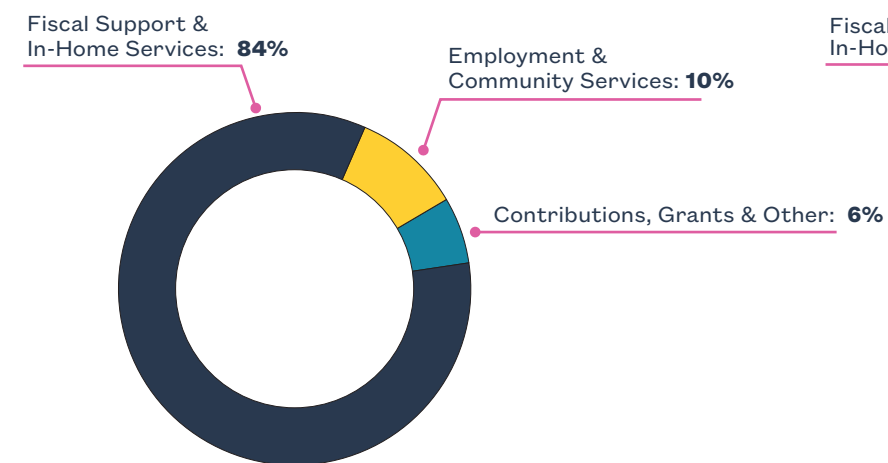
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Year Ended December 31	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Cash and Investments	31,927,250	27,701,240
Accounts Receivable and other	6,945,001	7,044,532
Property and equipment net of accumulated depreciation	3,287,392	3,293,449
Total Assets	\$42,159,643	\$38,039,221
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Debt Maturities	1,353,632	1,493,524
Accounts Payable	269,525	911,669
Accrued Salaries and related expenses	5,366,754	5,665,105
Other Accrued Expenses	161,279	600
Other Liabilities	369,557	390,116
Total Liabilities	\$7,520,747	\$8,461,014
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions		
Total Designated Net Assets	1,933,760	1,799,925
Total Board-Designated Net Assets	26,592,400	19,880,259
Total Undesignated Net Assets	6,085,436	7,892,523
Total Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$34,611,596	\$29,572,707
With Donor Restrictions	\$27,300	\$5,500
Total Net Assets	\$34,638,896	\$29,578,207
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$42,159,643	\$38,039,221

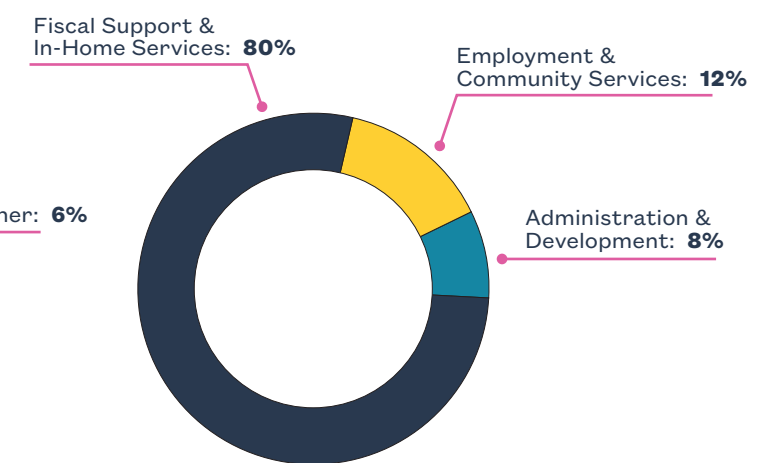
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended December 31	2021	2020
SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Fiscal Support & In-Home Services	71,496,371	65,712,956
Employment and Community-Based Services	8,209,303	7,245,530
Contributions and grants	2,078,755	3,716,081
Other	3,736,641	1,332,396
Total Support and Revenue	\$85,521,070	\$78,006,963
EXPENSES		
Fiscal Support & In-Home Services	64,187,217	59,311,182
Employment and Community-Based Services	9,684,518	10,659,001
Administration	6,223,422	5,422,972
Development	365,224	333,804
Total Expenses	\$80,460,381	\$75,726,959
Change in Net Assets	\$5,060,689	\$2,280,004
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$29,578,207	\$27,298,203
Net Assets, End of Year	\$34,638,896	\$29,578,207

REVENUE 2021



EXPENSES 2021





BRIAN AND JESSE'S EMPLOYMENT STORY

BUILDING CAREERS AND FINDING VALUE

When Brian Schroeder was enrolled in a social studies course as a student in high school, he was tasked with exploring a big question: what career do you want to have? Given the opportunity to explore potential career paths, Brian decided to talk to some of the janitors at his school. Through this process he developed an interest in becoming a janitor one day. "I got to interview a couple of the janitors and I kind of got interested in janitorial."

Fast forward to May of 2021 and Brian had just started a new job as a janitor in the school cafeteria at Loyola Catholic School in Mankato. After previously working in other custodial roles and having trouble finding a new job, Brian accessed Lifeworks Employment Services to search for a new job that would allow him to transfer his skills and best use his expertise. At Brian's new workplace, he is responsible for cleaning the floors, wiping down tables, and taking out the garbage.

Starting a new job brings with it all sorts of challenges. One of those challenges, as Brian reflects, is becoming comfortable with new coworkers and a new environment. Initially, he didn't feel close to many of his coworkers. Over time he found his rhythm and began creating connections with others as he got used to the job tasks. Brian's manager Sandy Bach noticed the change: "He has just really opened up and he's just blossomed all the way around."

Loyola Catholic School is in a scenic, hilltop area in northeast Mankato. Each morning Brian drives up the hill to the campus, something that he says is one of his favorite parts about going to work. "This fall, I went out and walked around most of the area and took a few pictures," he says as he pulls up some photos on his phone. On the job, he takes pride in keeping the lunchroom tidy and enjoys visiting with his coworkers.

Pictured above:
Jesse McDurmont and Amy Rademacher
at Loyola Catholic School

One such coworker is Jesse McDurmont. Jesse also found out about an open position at Loyola while exploring career options through Lifeworks Employment Services. Brian and Jesse often work closely together; helping each other with cleaning the tables and taking out the trash. Jesse also began working at Loyola in 2021 after an extended period of unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He was uncertain if he would enjoy this new role, but after getting started he noted, "Once I got good at it, I thought, 'I kind of liked this.'"

One reason Jesse was able to find success at his job is the supportive environment. "It's really friendly. This is kind of like our little family. Everyone's always looking out for each other." It didn't take long for both Jesse and Brian to become integral parts of the team. Bach notes that, "They're a very integral part of the team and having them each understand their own importance is phenomenal." Not only have they solidified themselves as hard workers, but they have both found a job that they enjoy and feel respected at. Their Lifeworks job coach, Amy Rademacher, recalls, "I get texts from them all the time. I love my job. For them, they've never had a job where they've really actually felt that value before so that's a real game changer."

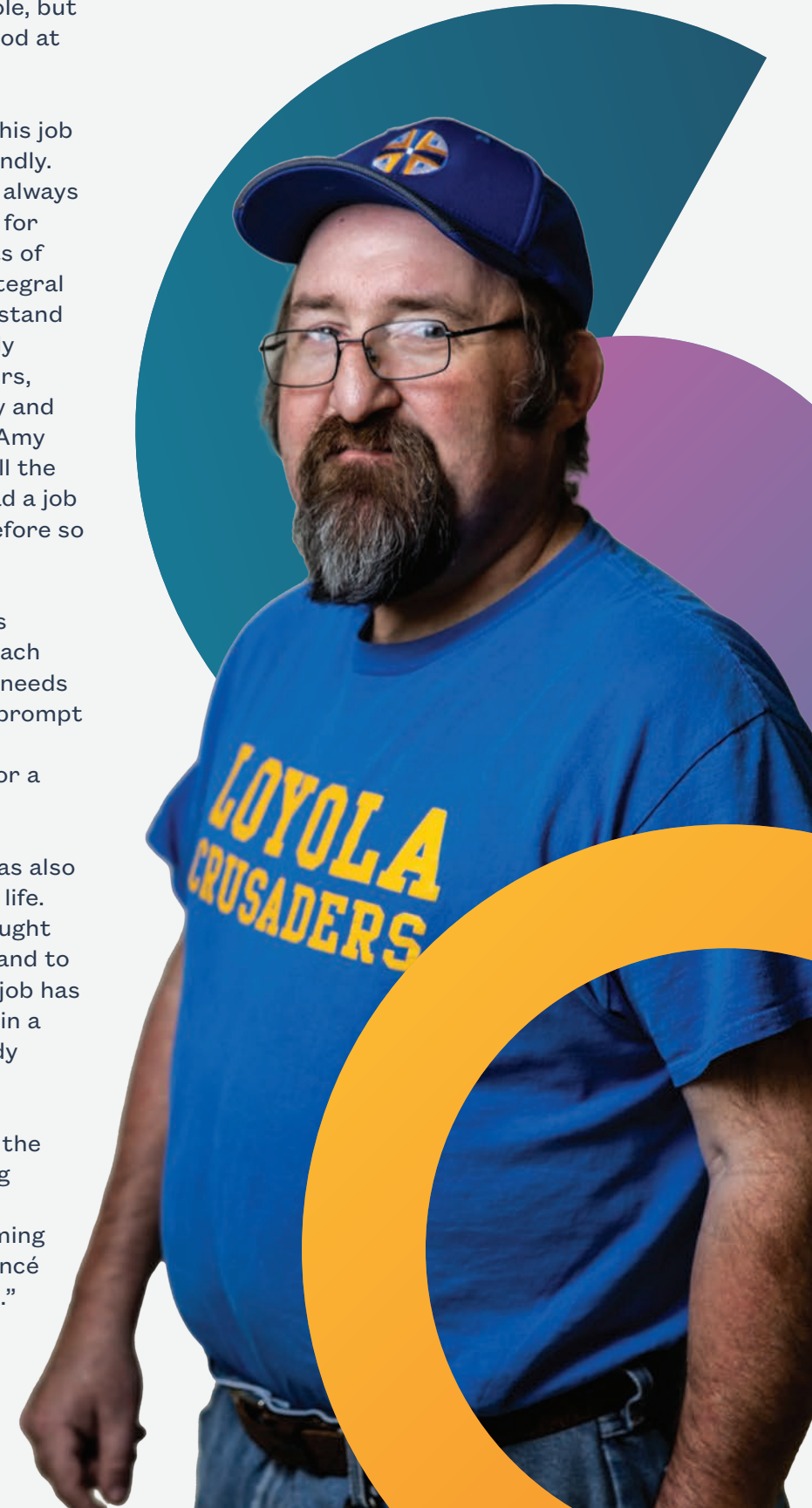
Both Jesse and Brian have been recognized as responsible and dependable staff members. Bach explains that "When they see something that needs to be done, they just do it. They don't need a prompt and it might be something they've never done before. All of a sudden, they'll just grab a rag or a mop or broom."

For Jesse, learning valuable skills on the job has also translated to lessons he can apply to his daily life. He mentions how his role at the school has taught him how to stay busy, take things day by day, and to have initiative. He also acknowledges that his job has taught him patience, especially when working in a busy school cafeteria filled with students ready for lunch.

Outside of work, Jesse enjoys walking around the mall, running, and lifting weights, and spending time with his fiancé at home. Jesse is getting married next year and is excited for his upcoming wedding. When asked about the impact his fiancé has had on him, he said "She's changed my life."

Pictured right:
Brian Schroeder at Loyola Catholic School

Having careers at Loyola has been a positive change for both Brian and Jesse. It has given them a strong sense of responsibility, provides a steady income, and is a place where they both feel valued and supported. Jesse offers this piece of advice for others looking for employment: "Make sure you're reliable. Be a little early. And just be really hardworking."



Lifeworks Connects:

AN EVENT SERIES FOSTERING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DISABILITY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

On March 16, Lifeworks debuted Lifeworks Connects, an event series designed to bring people together around topics of interest to the disability community. Our first Lifeworks Connects event was a web panel titled *“Listen and Support: Understanding Guardianship and Supported Decision Making”*.

The panel featured attorney Joe Kukla, of Thiel, Anderson, Kukla & Gunderson, PLLP (a Lifeworks sponsor), who brought both professional and personal experience to the topic of making the best decisions about care for yourself and your loved ones, and Jonda Dansare, a Lifeworks Award winner working at Ecolab, who shared her own experience as a person with a disability who does not have a guardian. The session was moderated by Lifeworks Business Development Assistant, Alli Strong-Martin.

Nearly 100 people took part in the webinar, asking questions and sharing resources in the chat. Lifeworks Connects is an opportunity for us to introduce new people to Lifeworks and the people we serve - of those who registered for our first event, 43% were not affiliated with Lifeworks.

“[I enjoyed] hearing the experiences Jonda has had, and her being able to make her own decisions with support. And hearing the perspective of a lawyer [who has a] family member who needs support with decision making was good perspective.”

– Lifeworks Connects Attendee

Lifeworks is committed to continuing these learning and discussion opportunities, and future Lifeworks Connects events may be held online or in person. If you have an idea for a Lifeworks Connects topic, please email our Advancement Team at giving@lifeworks.org



Farewell and Thank You, Jeff Brown!

In April, Jeff Brown retired as the President and CEO of Lifeworks Services. Jeff joined Lifeworks in 2017, and led the organization through five years of growth, challenges, and innovation. Jeff’s strategic vision, humble leadership, and business savvy solidified Lifeworks as an industry leader. Above all, Jeff’s passion for the Lifeworks mission and people we serve will be his legacy.

“I want to thank you all for the pleasure of working with you for the last five years. Thank you for welcoming me from day one and for inspiring and teaching me every day since then. You have made this the best job I’ve ever had.”
– Jeff Brown

Jeff plans to spend his retirement woodworking, fishing, and enjoying time at his cabin. He plans to stay involved with the disability community through volunteer opportunities.

Thank you, Jeff, for your service and dedication to Lifeworks, the people we serve, and our community. We wish you all the best in your retirement!



We’re Hiring!

**Make a meaningful impact in your community.
JOIN OUR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL TEAM.**

- Lifeworks offers competitive pay and extensive benefits, including:**
- 18 days of PTO earned your first year and 10 paid holidays
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READY TO START OR ADVANCE YOUR CAREER?
For more information and to see our current openings, visit: lifeworks.org/careers

Lifeworks is an equal opportunity employer.
We are committed to providing culturally responsive services and understand the value of a diverse workforce. Lifeworks strongly encourages women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans to apply.





MY EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY WITH LOW VISION

AN ARTICLE BY GUEST WRITER, PETER FROEHLICH.

For many people, going to college is a smooth experience without many obstacles. For me, it was a different experience. I am legally blind with some vision. During my college career, I advocated for myself and received accommodations. My post-secondary pursuits included attending two colleges: Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) and Augsburg University.

In September 2012, I started my journey at MCTC. I took a variety of classes, including communications, history, science, health, and even logic. Since I am legally blind, I needed a few accommodations so I worked with the college's disability office. With

their help, we came up with a few accommodations that would help me succeed in my classes. Some of the accommodations that I had during my classes were being seated in the front row, using a laptop, receiving large print documents, taking exams in a separate room, and having access to E-text. Without these accommodations, it would have been harder for me to succeed.

One of my favorite (but most challenging classes) was astronomy. With having basically no vision at night, this class would have been difficult. I was able to succeed in this class by speaking up for myself and letting people know when I needed help.

I worked on building my self-advocacy skills a lot. Fortunately, I had help from my parents, a friend, and my professor. The professor took the time to help me to the best of his ability, sending me educational documents, PowerPoints, and other useful materials. He even took us to a planetarium and a park to look at the stars. I enjoyed learning about the solar system. Without help from the professor and others, I would not have passed the class.

Since I could not drive to MCTC, I got there in two different ways. The first way was by city bus. I could do this because it was one bus to and from MCTC with no transfers and it dropped me off in front of the main buildings. The second way that I got to MCTC was my parents driving me. This option mostly happened during the months when it was too icy or too cold for me to ride the city bus. In 2015, as I was finishing up my associates of arts degree, I started thinking of the next steps. I quickly decided I wanted to transfer to a four-year college. I applied at both Hamline University and Augsburg University. I was lucky enough to get accepted into both, but I chose Augsburg University because of the community, disability office, and the location. That fall, I had one more class to take at MCTC, so I decided to start my education at Augsburg University in January of 2016.

January 2016 came fast, and I was eager to start at Augsburg University. I was lucky enough to take two courses with my best friend that semester. I took a lot of interesting courses at Augsburg University on topics such as social media, public relations, history of Minnesota, argumentation, and more.

Like MCTC, I worked with the disability office prior to starting my courses. Because of my past experience and building my self-advocacy skills, I was more vocal in what I needed to succeed in my courses.

I felt like Augsburg was very hands on, adding more accommodations than I had previously experienced. While at Augsburg University, one major, helpful learning accommodation was that State Services for the Blind (SSB) recorded my textbooks. Every time I had a textbook, I brought it to SSB and they had someone

read it and recorded it for me. I could then listen to it, which was very helpful.

Additionally, I was given a notetaker as well as extra time and a writer/reader for exams. I also kept the accommodations that I had at MCTC like sitting in the front row and using of my laptop in class. Since Augsburg University was a farther commute, I got rides from mainly my parents, friends, Personal Care Attendant (PCA), and Uber.

In December 2018, I completed my final semester at Augsburg University. I fully completed my Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies and even made the honor society. That following May, I participated in commencement. Without help from parents, friends, PCA, professors, and school counselors as well as my own self-advocacy, I would not have succeeded as easily. Without this educational experience, I would not be as confident as I am today.





CAREERS AT LIFEWORKS: LINDSEY'S STORY

Lifeworks prides itself in having staff who live up to our values as an organization and work every day to uphold our commitment to develop innovative opportunities that enhance everyday lives. Just as we support those we serve, we also support our staff in their journeys to progress their careers and encourage them to develop and try out new ideas which improve our programs and services.

We sat down with one of our career placement counselors, Lindsey Schmitt, to learn more about her career journey with Lifeworks. Lindsey has been with the organization for over four years and has found herself in many different roles. Lindsey embodies the mission and values of Lifeworks and is a prime example of what you can achieve as a member of our team.

Before joining Lifeworks, Lindsey was working as a group home manager. Through a connection to a program manager at Lifeworks, Lindsey decided to interview for a service specialist position in Mankato. Service specialists

work with those we serve who choose to use our services in day programs, one to one community services, and virtual services. In her starting position, she worked with a crew of employees at the Centennial Student Union at Mankato State University who were using Employment Services.

Lindsey has found herself working in many roles since joining the organization in 2017. After starting out as a service specialist, she moved into several different roles as a service facilitator for the Community Skill Building program, then as a follow-along service facilitator, and now as a career placement counselor. Lindsey felt that Lifeworks was the right fit for her career as soon as she got started. Lindsey mentioned throughout her time at Lifeworks, she has felt strongly for the mission and the work we do to serve our community. Each step she took along the way, she made her mark by strengthening the quality of support we provide and developing new methods of person-centered services. Lindsey was pivotal in the formation of Lifework's Community Skill Building program, a service she helped pilot while she was a service facilitator.

Lindsey knew that those supported on the university crew were going to be without work during the summer and started to brainstorm ideas with them on what they'd like to do. In talking to her supervisor, Laura Koble, Laura stated that her ideas fit the new service called Community Skill Building. After identifying the need for a person-centered space to further explore interests and develop new skills, Lindsey and her coworker, Jody Decker, worked together to develop a day-to-day schedule that would best serve the individuals under that program. Lindsey and Jody presented information to our Board of Directors, our Executive Leadership Team, and other service facilitators who worked in similar programs throughout the Twin Cities metro area. When talking about the program's development, she claimed "community skill building was my pride and joy."



Throughout Lindsey's time at Lifeworks, she has always felt that her contributions have been supported and appreciated. "It's a company that is 100% dedicated to the people we serve. I've never been told no. We figure out how to make it work and talk over logistics. My creativity for the people we serve has always been encouraged," answered Lindsey when asked about why she loves working at Lifeworks. She further reflects on why she enjoys the work she does: "I love seeing the success stories, both for the businesses and for the individuals I'm supporting." Early this year Lindsey was invited to join the local chapter of Business Networking International (BNI). With a focus on professional networking and referrals, Lindsey hopes to foster relationships with area business leaders in order to connect people served by Lifeworks with careers.

She offers this piece of advice for those who are interested in working at Lifeworks: "If you're willing to work hard, we're a great company for it. If you're creative and if you don't want to think inside of a box, this is a perfect company." Lindsey recognizes that there is an equal level of achievement available for both the people we serve and for our staff. "There's a constant desire for growth. I'm a prime example of it."

Lindsey continues to give back to the organization by offering up her expertise in training new staff members. She says, "I also take a lot of pride in the staff training I do. Creating the next level of great staff is going to help the people we support so that's been something I've been extremely passionate about." In closing our interview with Lindsey, she reinforced her pride for working at Lifeworks: "I'm endlessly passionate about the job we do at Lifeworks and the people that we support."

Interested in joining the Lifeworks team?
Are you passionate about working for a mission-driven organization which offers competitive pay and extensive benefits?
Check out our current openings to learn more:
lifeworks.org/careers

Over \$460,000 Raised at the 2022 Lifeworks Annual Celebration!

On Thursday, April 14th we hosted the 2022 Lifeworks Annual Celebration both in person at the Depot in Minneapolis and online. After hosting a completely virtual event last year, we were excited to offer people the option to attend our celebration in a way that worked best for them.

The event focused on how our evolution as an employment services provider has positively impacted those we serve. By centering our approach on those with lived experience, people with disabilities are progressing in their careers. We learned just how important it is for businesses to join us in listening to the people we serve. When we all listen, we begin to recognize barriers both in the workplace and in the communities where we all live and work. Challenging our beliefs and continuously learning from people with disabilities will ensure that Minnesota becomes a more inclusive place for all people. The stories we heard at the celebration should serve as a primer for the Lifeworks community to continue removing barriers and reframing our mindset.

Along with some incredible stories, we heard from our new President and CEO Gertrude Matemba-Mutasa, welcomed our four new Board Members Caryn Addante, Nimo Ahmed, Bukata Hayes, and Mark Traynor, and gave a warm send off to former President and CEO Jeff Brown, who retired after five years of service with Lifeworks. Guests had the opportunity to bid on exciting live auction experiences, and on one-of-a-kind artwork created by people with disabilities in our silent art auction.

The program was co-hosted by Raquel Sidie-Wagner, Regional Manager for Employment and Day Support Services, and Josh Mathiowetz, Program Liaison. The livestreamed, virtual event was accompanied by a lively chat hosted by Dylan Croeker, Resource Navigation Coordinator.

This year, we raised funds to support our employment services in order to help those we serve explore their interests, develop new skills, and start or progress their careers. Our personalized employment services put the individual in the driver's seat in their career journey. We have leaned into our value of "You Lead the Way - We Listen" to ensure we are honoring choice and allowing those we serve to make decisions that work best for them.

Through our employment services, Lifeworks aims to support 225 new jobs this year (in addition to serving over 600 people overall). These new jobs are for people who are starting out their careers or making a career change. We know that when businesses hire more people with disabilities, we all benefit from the more inclusive workplaces and communities that are created.

We are proud to announce that with over 600 attending online and in person the event raised over \$460,000 total! Thank you to everyone who invested in Lifeworks and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Lifeworks is appreciative of each of our supporters for their dedication to our mission and to the community we serve. We want to thank everyone who donated so we can continue to support innovative services.



We are especially grateful to:



- Our fantastic **sponsors** whose commitment to our community helps us remove barriers and increase access to employment opportunities for those we serve.
- Auction donors **Peter and Lynda Michielutti**, **Atomic Data**, and **Ecolab** for donating the enticing auction items.
- Our incredible production experts: **The Show Syndicate**, **Captionmax**, and a special thanks to **Vern Hanson** from Custom Visual Services who has helped bring the magic to our events for many years and will be retiring this year.
- Principal partner and auctioneer, **Glen Fladeboe**, and his team at Fladeboe Advancement for their guidance, expertise, and many years of passionate support of Lifeworks.
- The extraordinary **volunteers** who helped us all find our way at The Depot, assisted in the auction and fund-a-need, moved things along at registration and check-out, and made the event a seamless experience.
- Our onstage ASL interpreter, **Patty Gordon**, for helping us make this event more accessible.
- Every member of the **Lifeworks Board**, whose enthusiastic support and leadership is paving the way for this organization's future.
- The wonderful **staff of The Depot**, including an amazing catering team who helped us all enjoy the celebration safely and comfortably.
- And finally, **each of you**. However you participated, and whether or not you made a gift, we appreciate that you joined us, heard our stories, and made a connection.

We can't wait to see you all again April 20, 2023. If you couldn't attend the event or want to look back at one of your favorite moments from this year's celebration, you can watch the video of the evening and the three videos we featured at the celebration on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/LifeworksMN

Thank You!

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Since 1965, Lifeworks Services Inc. has been a champion for inclusion. Lifeworks was founded by families who recognized the importance of advocacy and breaking down barriers for people with disabilities to be part of the community.

Mission: to serve our community and people with disabilities as we live and work together.

Lifeworks is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and an Equal Opportunity Employer.

This information can be made available in an alternate format upon request.

LIFEWORKS' NEW MAIN OFFICE COMING LATE SUMMER 2022

We're moving our Main Office to Richfield!
As of July 1, 2022 our new primary
address will be **6636 Cedar Ave S, Suite 250**
Richfield, MN 55423.

**Stay tuned for an invitation to an
open house event and learn more at
lifeworks.org/newoffice**

