

Unlocking Opportunities

Lifeworks

2023 Annual Report

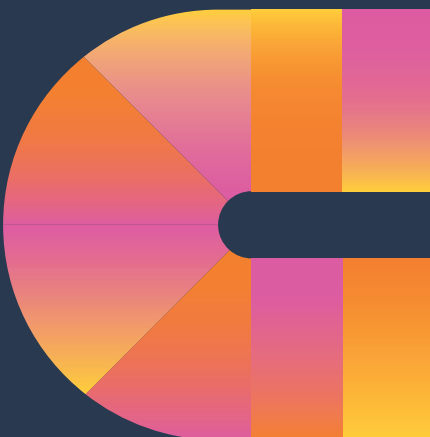
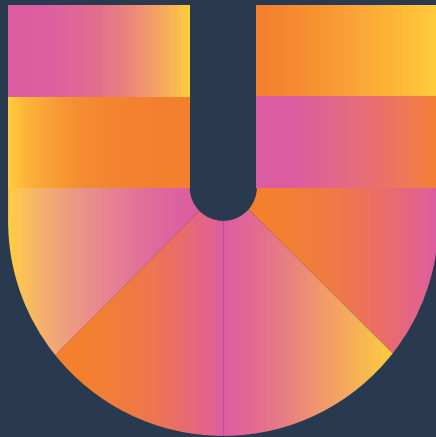


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Dear Lifeworks Community,

The 2023 Lifeworks Annual Report provides insight into who we are and our impact across Minnesota. With people with disabilities leading the way, Lifeworks continues to deliver high-quality services that honor choice and break down barriers to inclusion.

In 2023, we partnered with 3,015 people with disabilities and their families, with 838 people receiving Employment support, 187 people connecting with their communities through Day Support, and 2,192 Minnesotans self-directing their care with Lifeworks. We also partnered with 50 people with disabilities in Resource Navigation, supporting them in gaining the tools to achieve their goals.

Lifeworks launched our disability inclusion trainings in 2023, because every day we see how our communities are not welcoming to people with disabilities. Through our disability inclusion trainings, we are educating our communities so we can create actual change that results in radical inclusion for people with disabilities. In 2023, we trained more than 300 people on disability inclusion and saw their confidence in supporting a coworker with a disability increase by 58%.

We also continued our work to co-create culturally specific programs with Black, Indigenous, People of Color and rural communities. With support from our community partners, we hosted listening sessions to learn about disability perspectives in historically underserved communities and what support they need. From these sessions, we gained invaluable insight on how to partner with people with disabilities in ways that are culturally affirming.

Lifeworks is confidently moving forward into the new year with our learnings and successes from 2023. Thank you for your continued support of Lifeworks and for advancing disability inclusion alongside our community.



Gertrude Matemba-Mutasa
President and CEO



John Abbott
Board Chair





Our Values

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.

We Focus on Impact

Lifeworks is forward thinking when it comes to providing both employment and social opportunities for people with disabilities.

Lifeworks is always striving to provide services that include people in their community. Lifeworks is a creative, respectful provider.

– Responses from the 2023
Lifeworks Satisfaction Survey

In 2023, Lifeworks partnered with 3,015 people with disabilities and their families across Minnesota. In our annual survey, 96% of our partners said they feel like Lifeworks meets their needs.

2023 by the numbers



3,015
people
partnered
with across
all Lifeworks
programs



2,192
people
accessed
self-directed
services



838
people
partnered with
in employment
services



187
people
participated
in day support
services



50
people
partnered with
in resource
navigation



243
employers
hiring people
supported by
Lifeworks



34
new
employers



4,265
Self-directed
employees
providing
3,370,096
hours of care



59
years
Lifeworks has
partnered with
people with
disabilities

Self-Directed Services

In 2023, 2,192 individuals and families accessed self-directed services through Lifeworks. As an approved Financial Management Services provider through the State of Minnesota, Lifeworks processes services for people enrolled in the Consumer Directed Community Supports and Consumer Support Grant programs.

Lifeworks also serves as a PCA Choice and as an in-home licensed provider of Individualized Home Supports and Night Supervision.

Employment

Lifeworks is driven by the belief that everyone who wants to work can work and have a meaningful impact in their community. For 37 years, Lifeworks has worked to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce in Minnesota. We connect people to experiences that explore their interests, develop skills, and start or advance their careers.

In 2023, Lifeworks partnered with 838 people through our employment services. We supported 127 individuals in finding and starting new jobs – with 72% of those hired directly by the business. We also welcomed 34 new employers throughout the year who are committed to breaking down barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

Day Support

Lifeworks partnered with 187 people in Day Support Services in 2023 as they connected with their communities, engaged with their peers, and participated in volunteer activities. With the people we partner with leading the way, we offered opportunities to build self-reliance, including: creative arts, career exploration, music therapy, skill building in the community, self-advocacy development, technology labs, multi-sensory environments, and so much more.

Resource Navigation

In 2023, Lifeworks partnered with 50 people with disabilities in Resource Navigation. Utilizing a personalized approach, Resource Navigation helps people with disabilities explore possibilities, connect to resources, and understand how services work together in order to build a road map to achieving their goals.



Our mission
is to partner with people with
disabilities to drive change by
increasing opportunity and
access in the community.

We envision
accessible, equitable, and
diverse communities.

2023 Financials

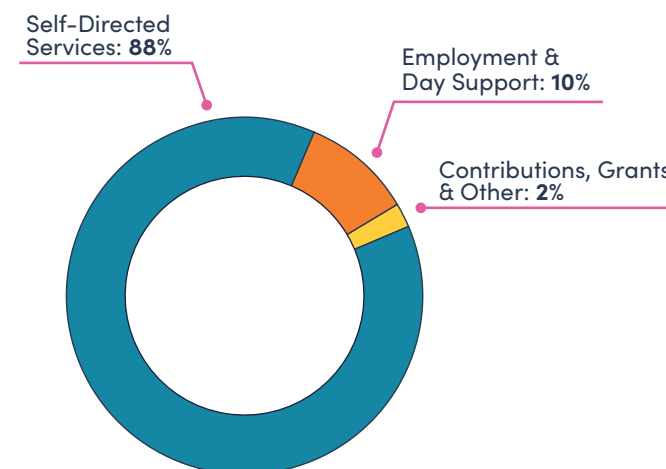
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Year Ended December 31	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Cash and Investments	31,165,785	29,282,227
Accounts Receivable and other	9,635,901	7,387,044
Property and equipment net of accumulated depreciation	4,665,490	4,681,718
Total Assets	45,467,176	41,350,989
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Debt Maturities	977,020	1,168,186
Accounts Payable	184,365	257,426
Accrued Salaries and related expenses	7,901,468	6,035,111
Other Accrued Expenses	178,223	209,092
Other Liabilities	970,067	1,023,984
Total Liabilities	10,211,143	8,693,799
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions		
Total Designated Net Assets	3,362,351	3,151,219
Total Board-Designated Net Assets	26,110,524	24,299,758
Total Undesignated Net Assets	5,783,158	5,166,213
Total Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	35,256,033	32,617,190
With Donor Restrictions	-	40,000
Total Net Assets	35,256,033	32,657,190
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	45,467,176	41,350,989

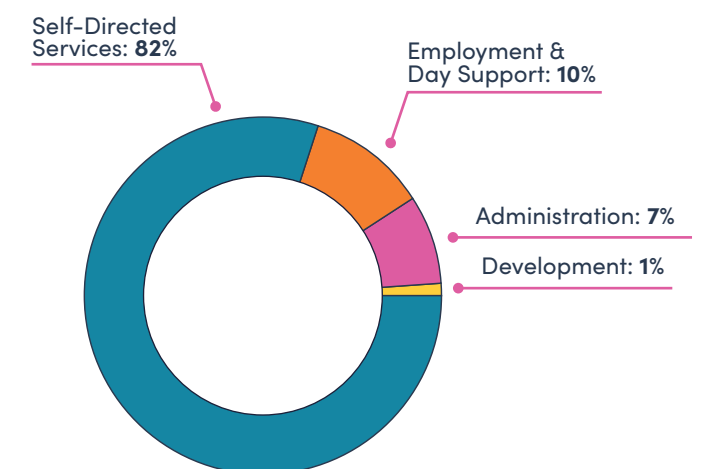
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended December 31	2023	2022
SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Self-Directed Services	84,814,859	79,078,304
Employment and Day Support Services	9,210,612	9,302,284
Contributions and Grants	1,307,368	1,679,237
Other	216,471	(679)
Total Support and Revenue	95,549,310	90,059,146
EXPENSES		
Self-Directed Services	77,756,855	71,834,360
Employment and Day Support Services	9,601,627	9,979,298
Administration	6,841,752	7,468,204
Development	561,085	499,076
Total Expenses	94,761,319	89,780,938
Net Operating Income	787,991	278,208
Change in Investments Value	1,810,854	(2,259,914)
Change in Net Assets	2,598,845	(1,981,706)

REVENUE 2023



EXPENSES 2023



Lifeworks In Focus



1



4



5



6



2



3

1. Dr. Verna Price speaking at our first Disability Inclusion Breakfast.
2. Micah Newbill, a Brooklyn Park client, volunteering with Lifeworks Service Facilitator LaShann Cooper, at Feed My Starving Children.
3. Board member Patricia Riley, her husband Peter, and Lifeworks client Richard Hannegraf at the Lifeworks Annual Celebration.
4. Michael Cohn, a Lifeworks client and advocate for people with disabilities.
5. Brenda Velazquez, an Apple Valley client, singing at the winter concert.
6. Lifeworks clients Tammy Trapp and Kari Hill at Securian Financial.
7. Matthew Krohn, a Lifeworks client, prepares for the 2023 Special Olympics World Summer Games.
8. President and CEO, Gertrude Matemba-Mutasa, and her husband Gift, at the Annual Celebration.
9. Vice President of Programs, Kevin Kmetz, meeting with Senator Bobby Joe Champion at Lifeworks Apple Valley.



7



8



9



Lessons in Navigating Employment: Jessica's Story

Finding the perfect job can be challenging. When Jessica started partnering with Lifeworks to explore career opportunities, she wasn't sure how to navigate her options and identify meaningful work. Now, as an online English language tutor, Jessica has the flexibility to set her schedule, while connecting with people from around the world. Jessica learned that she could start a career that she truly loves by drawing on her strengths and being resilient.

Jessica moved to southern Minnesota over 15 years ago. After living in several cities around the state of Minnesota, she was introduced to an opportunity in the town of Worthington. "Foreign language brought me to southern Minnesota," she says. "There was a need there for people to learn Laotian for the volunteer work that I do. At the time, there was more of a population of Laotian immigrants." Jessica was introduced to Laotian culture and language through her stepfather in high school, who was from Laos. Initially, Jessica didn't know where to look for work to accommodate her

lifestyle and health needs. "That's where Lifeworks really helped because we were able to focus on what I would enjoy and what my strengths and weaknesses were so that I could focus my energy."

Finally, Jessica learned about Cambly, an online platform that connects people from all over the world with native English-speaking tutors. Jessica was relieved when she learned she had been accepted to tutor online. "It has been such an upbuilding experience and confidence booster."

Jessica primarily tutors on weekends but also has the option to add more as she pleases. "I basically set my own schedule. I work when I want." This flexibility gives her more time to be a caregiver for a family member and do other things that she values, like volunteering, reading, and continuing to learn new languages.

One of the most rewarding aspects of Jessica's work is engaging with people from other countries. "I've had students from Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Brazil, and Mexico already. It's fascinating." Jessica teaches her students one-on-one and meets with a range of ages, from children in school to professionals who want to improve their English proficiency. While she is primarily teaching her students, she says she is also learning from them. "I learn as much [as I can] because a good way to learn vocabulary is asking about their job and communicating about it."

Jessica has been tutoring with Cambly for the better part of the year. Even though she found her fit, she continues to meet with her Career Navigation Counselor, Amy, to identify ways to improve in her role. Recently, Amy has partnered with Jessica to search for classes that will help her progress her skills. Jessica says that Amy "helped me [learn] how to best advocate for myself. It is difficult, and you have to bring it up." Amy noticed over their time together that Jessica became a better advocate for herself. Amy says to Jessica, "You never settled. You kept looking. You wanted to find the right fit, even if it took a few years."



Jessica hopes other folks who partner with Lifeworks will also consider seeking non-traditional employment. She believes it offers new opportunities for those who have experienced barriers in traditional employment settings. She advises others going through the same process: "Have fun, don't settle, and do something you are passionate about. Something will work out with something you love."



Learning Every Day: The Murphy Family Story

Robert and Michelle Murphy have been married for around 20 years and have three children: DeVaughn, Roberta, and Wyatt. The Murphys have many family memories – often centered around the places they love. “We like to go on weekend trips, like to the North Shore [and] Pelican Lake in Orr, Minnesota. We like to be out on the boat and go fishing,” says Robert. The Murphys do everything they can to ensure their children have enriched lives where they can explore their interests and have the support they need.

Both Roberta and Wyatt have autism. With different support needs, Robert and Michelle did their best while working full-time to provide care for their children.

However, in recent years, finding care assistance has been difficult for the family, especially for Roberta whose care needs are more significant. “It’s next to impossible,” Robert proclaims. Even when they hear from people interested in being a personal care assistant for Roberta, they are often not able to accommodate Roberta’s needs and communication style. “As a care provider,

you really got to be able to read and know her,” says Robert.

Roberta is currently enrolled in a transition program through Focus Beyond. “[We want Roberta to] get used to going to different places,” says Michelle. “They really work with her a lot at Focus Beyond to get her out in the community,” adds Robert. In a couple of years, Roberta will transition from Focus Beyond, and Robert and Michelle hope that Roberta can attend a day program so she can still have opportunities to access the community and make connections outside of their family. “Roberta needs a break from us too!” says Robert.

Since 2017, Lifeworks has partnered with the Murphy family to enable greater efficiency of Roberta and Wyatt’s Consumer Directed Community Support (CDCS) budgets. Following a recommendation from their Ramsey County case manager, the family connected with Lifeworks and have been happy with the services ever since.

“It’s been smooth sailing!” says Robert. “They’re very good at communicating, returning calls and emails, and with any questions working with our support planners.” The extra knowledge that Lifeworks gives the Murphys has allowed them to make changes to their budget “on the fly” and purchase the things the family needs, like a bicycle for Wyatt. Wyatt is wrapping up his senior year at

the Twin Cities Academy. After he attends his last prom, which he is excited for, and walks across the stage at graduation, he will look ahead to what’s next. Like his sister, he will also enroll at Focus Beyond and will be looking for opportunities outside of school.



Over the past year, he has started participating in activities through the Highland Friendship Club. “I got to go to the Franconia Sculpture Park,” Wyatt said about a recent trip. He was also able to meet former Minnesota Twins player Joe Mauer.

Even after many years of raising their children, the Murphys admit that they don’t know everything when it comes to raising children with autism. “We’re still learning every day,” says Robert. “There is no manual. We figure it out day by day,” adds Michelle. They are thankful for the support they receive from organizations like Lifeworks so that Roberta and Wyatt can thrive: “It’s been a really good thing for us. We’ve been very lucky.”

Left: The Murphy family at their home.
Above: Wyatt and Michelle show off Wyatt’s prized collectibles.



A Piece of Magic: The Lifeworks Sensory Garden

The sensory garden at our Apple Valley center is a space for Lifeworks clients and staff to relax, connect, and interact with the five senses. On warm, sunny days, people use the space for rest, conversation, or even dance parties. A retractable awning keeps folks cool when the summer heat kicks in, and various chairs and tables create places to gather. Vegetables and flowers add a natural element to the garden, while a water feature adds a calming energy. These features are not unlike an outdoor space one might have at home, but what makes the sensory

garden special is the communal effort Lifeworks staff and clients have invested in making it what it is today.

“The sensory garden came about because we wanted the clients to experience the five senses,” says Sandy, a Service Facilitator at the center. “We planted herbs so they could rub their fingers on them and smell the different herbs, like lemon balm and rosemary.” From musical pipes that clients can play, to tomatoes grown to make salsa and art created by clients, every corner of the garden is a sensory utopia.

The art on display is centered around “Alice in Wonderland,” a theme clients decided on together. Sandy helped clients craft their visions through painting, glasswork, and more.

Jamie, a Lifeworks client, recognizes the garden’s benefits for those who spend time in it. “It’s taking pride in what we do when working as a team. Some people may have a rough day and go out there and get happy.”

A recent addition to the sensory garden is a new xylophone and a box drum. The pair of instruments were donated by Minnesota Wisconsin Playground, a family-owned company that partners with municipalities, schools, architects, and other organizations to plan, design, and build their visions from the ground up. Minnesota Wisconsin Playground focuses on ensuring playgrounds and other public spaces can be enjoyed by everyone through inclusive design.

“We are thrilled to host a yearly outing for Lifeworks clients,” Hannah, a representative of Minnesota Wisconsin Playground shared. “Last year, one of the clients visiting us saw the xylophone in our office and immediately started playing music for everyone, so our hope was that the xylophone would be a big hit!” The new instruments are a fun and immersive way for clients to engage with sound and are a popular activity in the garden.

With the inclusion of the new instruments, Sandy and the clients at Apple Valley want to incorporate music into the theme for the sensory garden next year. After deliberating, they decided to fuse existing themes and came up with “Alice meets Cat in the Hat in Music Land.” To prepare for the new personality, the clients will be getting busy on projects for the garden over the winter. Whatever new additions are ready for the garden in the coming year, Sandy’s biggest concern is ensuring clients continue to find comfort and seek creativity in the space. “We’re just trying to add a little magic and make the world a little happier.”



Left: Fataho Aden plays the xylophone.
Above: Nicola Wilson and Sayde Sanchez
enjoy the plants, flowers, and fresh air.



Disability Inclusion Training Highlight: Uponor

Uponor, an intelligent plumbing and climate solutions company in Apple Valley, MN, has been a long-time partner of Lifeworks. With our experience partnering with people with disabilities, Uponor trusted the expertise that Lifeworks could bring to their workforce.

Uponor had started making efforts to strengthen disability inclusion by evaluating their physical workspaces and their hiring practices. Aubrey Mozer, Community Relations Manager

at Uponor, knew hosting a disability inclusion training would impact her workplace. “We’ve been hearing [from staff] throughout our company, really starting at the top of our leadership, [that this topic was important].”

Kevin Kmetz, Lifeworks Vice President of Programs, led the “Inclusive Workplaces for People with Disabilities” presentation, challenging the notion that creating accessible workspaces is difficult.

Above: Participants during a breakout session at the Uponor Disability Inclusion Training.
Right: Panelists from left to right, Said Farah, Michael Cohn, John Finnerty, Jon Sillerud, and Jonda Donsare.

A panel discussion moderated by Lifeworks Vice President of Programs, Kelsey Kostohryz, followed the presentation. The panel featured three individuals with disabilities and an Uponor employee who is a parent of a child with a disability.

Kelsey asked panelists, “Why should places hire people with disabilities and focus on disability inclusion?” Said, an Autistic Somali writer, photographer, and Career Navigation Counselor at Lifeworks, responded, “Recognizing a person’s humanity – that’s the beginning and the end of the question.”

Said’s comment resonated with Aubrey: “I thought Said said it so well when he said we’re all human. It’s the humanity at the core of it. We’re all people looking to feel a sense of accomplishment and have purpose.”

Upon concluding the panel discussion, attendees joined small groups to apply what they learned and envision the next steps with their peers. Jon Sillerud, Vice President of Integrated Supply Chains at Uponor, was one of the Uponor leaders who participated in the disability inclusion training. Jon took away from the training to “make sure that we look at people as the whole, not what we may see or hear initially from somebody, but to look deeper to find people’s capabilities.”



Attendees reported their confidence in supporting a coworker with a disability increased by 76% because of the training. Erica Amévo, Vice President of HR at Uponor, shared “The Lifeworks team did an outstanding job engaging our employees. A highlight of the event was the panel discussion. Having voices of people with disabilities at the forefront of the discussion was impactful for attendees and sparked thoughtful conversations on how we can all advocate for disability inclusion in our workplaces and communities.”



Contributors

Thank you to the following businesses, foundations, community partners, and individuals who made contributions to Lifeworks in 2023. It is because of your investment that we can fund the innovative and progressive programs that Lifeworks offers in partnership with people with disabilities.

BUSINESSES, FOUNDATIONS, & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

56 Brewing
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American Legion Post 630
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