



MNprov

Playing to learn! • Learning to play!



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

A Year of OPTIMISM and OPPORTUNITIES

A Message from our Co-Founders



2022 was a year of optimism and opportunities! We developed new school partnerships, allowing us to support the social-emotional growth of more students through our fun, engaging and supportive improv workshops.

We were privileged to work alongside dedicated and skilled educators and observe many delightful and creative students grow in their self-confidence and social interactions.

We held our first in-person Camp MNprov, updated our website, and welcomed a new teaching artist, Philip Simondet, and a new board member, Jillian Nelson.

With the generous support of Thrivent Financial-Stonebridge of Bloomington, we gathered our community for a BBQ picnic and improv show.

We are truly grateful for your support and generosity which has allowed us to implement our mission.



Our Mission

Use inclusive applied improvisation strategies to strengthen the social, emotional and communication skills of a neurodiverse group of learners by providing interactive, authentic and enjoyable educational experiences in a safe, supportive and creative environment.

Youth Workshops

11
Schools



207
Hours of Improv

185
Students



Through a partnership with NE Metro 916 Intermediate School District, we received a \$10,000 grant from the Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative, allowing us to provide 57 workshops to middle school, high school and transition age students at Quora Secondary and WELS-North Transition school.

Summer school students in Fridley enjoyed customized MNprov drama workshops, and presented their self-created show to family and friends.

In the fall, District 916 requested that we expand our services to more schools. Through NE Metro's Innovation Grant we were able to provide workshops to elementary & middle school students at Karner Blue Education Center and high school students at Metro Heights Academy and Mahtomedi Academy.

We continued to provide workshops to high school and transition age students in Minnetonka and to students at The Next Step Transition Program in North St. Paul.

We provided after-school workshops for Franklin Center, a private school serving students on the autism spectrum or with related neurodiversities. These enrichment workshops allowed students to build friendships, make connections and practice their social skills.

Minnesota Independence College & Community students participated in four specialized MNprov workshops targeting the following topics:

- Appropriate Use of Humor
- Expanding Your Comfort Zone
- Choices and Consequences
- Risks and Risk Assessment



Student Feedback

Improv to me is . . .

A place to be able to have fun and learn at the same time

People make mistakes and it's ok

Adapting

Just like you are reaching for the stars

Teaches patience and make brand new friends

A fun way to learn coping skills and move on

Puts me out of my comfort zone, it's something new each time

Creating as a group

Educator Feedback

Transition Program - Autism Specialist

For our students that struggle with flexibility, the experiences they get with MNprov give them opportunities to be flexible with more rigor than any other experience we can give them in a structured, supported setting. They are shifting their perspective, changing topics frequently and stepping outside their comfort area with ease.

I am seeing students collaborate with their peers in fun and meaningful ways that we are not able to easily replicate in this setting. They work together and "read" each other. They are also building on each other's ideas even when students typically have a more rigid mindset. They are able to think on their feet and adapt to new and changing activities and topics. There is so much encouragement that is happening among students. MNprov gives many opportunities in a short amount of time for all of this to happen.

Students are also stepping in to help their peers who may struggle more with expressive language skills and help them have the opportunity to participate in a way that they otherwise wouldn't. This benefits both students. Students with less expressive language are participating in meaningful ways and expressing more language during MNprov than we are seeing throughout the typical school day.

It is fantastic to have students see staff experiencing discomfort and/or failing in safe ways. This lends itself to teaching resiliency and building positive relationships between staff and students. We are all experiencing positive fun on an even playing field.

I really couldn't be happier with the growth in a fun, supported environment I am seeing with students here. Thank you for continuing to modify the activities for the students you are working with and allowing them to be exactly who they are.



Setting 4 Middle School & High School - Program Facilitator

We have had the pleasure of working with MNprov for both our middle and high school scholars. We have seen social/emotional growth in all of the scholars who have participated in MNprov. The biggest benefit (and maybe the most important for our scholars) is increased confidence. We have seen some of our most quiet and withdrawn scholars become more self-assured and optimistic by participating in MNprov. Another benefit we have seen is that our scholars are building new relationships with classmates and making new friends. MNprov has also provided our scholars with opportunities to simply be themselves, share their creativity, and most of all have fun.

Michael is also a pleasure to work with. He is so flexible and is always willing to go with the flow based on the ever changing needs of our complex scholar population.

Impact

Student Surveys

Six groups of students completed surveys at the beginning and end of their 10-week school session. The survey questions were based on four CASEL* social and emotional competencies:

- Self-Management
- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

Also included in the 15 question survey were 3 items which make up The Mini-Social Phobia Inventory (Mini-SPIN), a self-rated screening instrument to assess social anxiety disorder.

Results from the pre and post student surveys were shared with educators to identify areas of growth and areas of challenge. Although each group had unique areas of strengths and challenges, all groups showed growth in multiple areas.

**Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning*



100%

of classroom groups increased their Self-Confidence!

83%

of classroom groups increased their willingness to try new things!

67%

of classroom groups increased

- **How well they knew each other**
- **Ability to accept & value ideas of others**
- **Comfort level when interacting socially with peers**
- **Listening to the ideas of others during group work**

Educator Surveys: Five educators completed a survey at the end of their 10-week session.

80%

of educators agreed or strongly agreed that

- They are able to help their students connect their improv experience to real life skills.
- Playing improv games with their students has contributed to a positive classroom environment.
- Playing improv games has contributed to growth in students' self-confidence, communication and collaboration.



I have enjoyed spending time with students in a creative way and doing things we don't normally do. It has also gotten me out of my comfort zone and encouraged me to practice SEL skills.



Camp MNprov

Michael and Kelly do a great job explaining how improv and games can help students with SEL. I found the entire experience fun, interesting and that it gave me tools to bring back to my organization to help my students.

Our first in-person Camp MNprov was filled with laughter and learning! We met for 3 days in August at the Eagan Community Center, for a free professional development opportunity for educators, and a free improv workshop for students ages 15 - 20.



Community

thrivent®



In August we gathered as a community to enjoy BBQ and an Improv show hosted by the Thrivent Financial Stonebridge group. Lookout Grill catered delicious food, and improv students from the Autism Society of Minnesota's Comedy Sportz class provided a delightful show. Throughout the show Kelly and Michael shared information about the many ways that MNprov supports students in their social, emotional & communication growth.



**Lutheran
Social Service**
of Minnesota

With funds provided from Thrivent Choice and a Thrivent Action Team grant, we provided 10 workshops to Metro youth being served by Rezek House, an LSS of MN two-year transitional living program located in St. Paul for youth ages 16-21 experiencing homelessness.

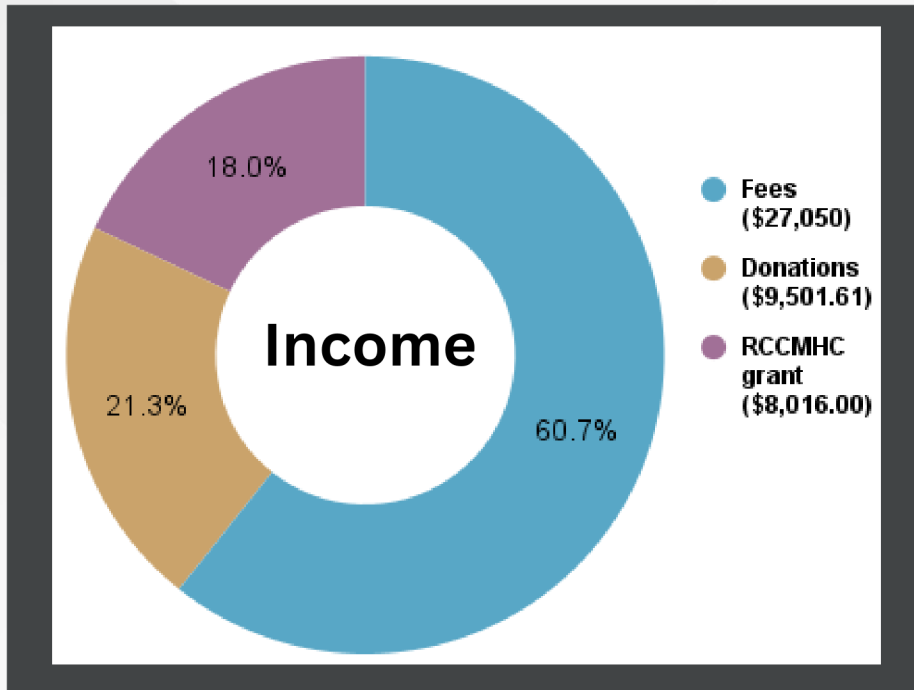
We were excited to present interactive workshops for the Mad Hatter Wellness "Heart of Relationships" conference in February, and for the Minnesota School Social Workers Association fall conference in November.



HEART OF RELATIONSHIPS:
Piecing it All Together

A CONFERENCE BY MAD HATTER WELLNESS

Financials



Donations

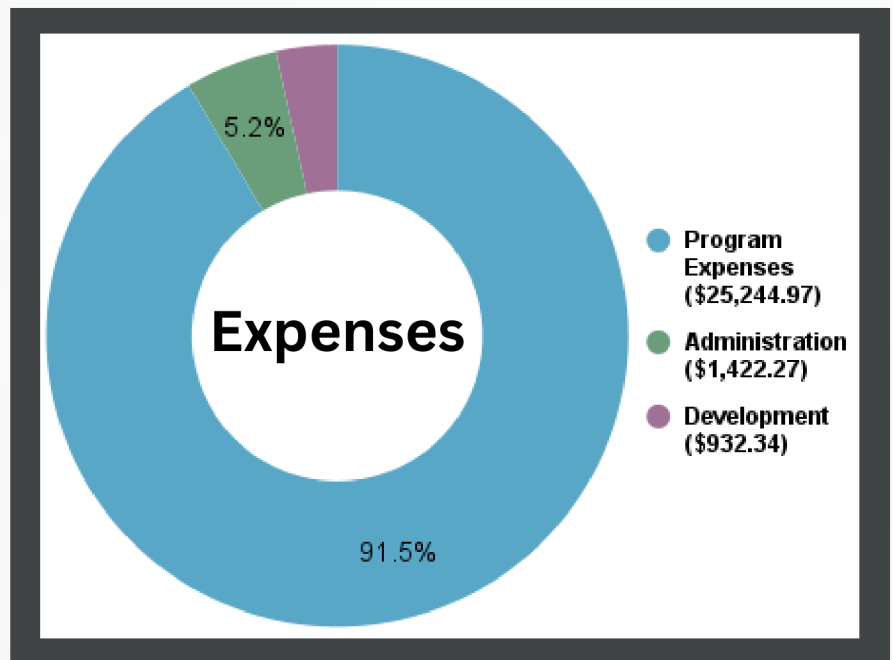
In 2022, MNprov received donations through Give to the Max day (\$2,498.62), Thrivent Choice designations (\$1,895), a Thrivent Action grant (\$250), and individual donations & matching grants (\$4,857.99).

Total Income for 2022
\$44,569

Total Income for 2022 including in kind support
\$70,889

Total Expenses for 2022
\$27,600

Total Expenses for 2022 including in kind expenses
\$53,919



There were two significant factors which allowed our income to exceed our expenses in 2022.

- First, the program coordinator and executive director responsibilities were provided at no cost by a volunteer. These will transition to paid positions in 2023.*
- Second, we did not develop the partnerships with under-resourced schools to provide no cost workshops as we had hoped. Our goal in 2023 will be to provide no cost MNprov sessions to six under-resourced schools.*

Looking Forward



Goals for 2023

- Hire part time program coordinator (10 hours/week).
- Hire part time executive director (10 hours/week).
- Provide 6 sessions for under-resourced schools.
- Add classes for adults.
- Qualify to receive state waivers for services.



MNprov's Board of Directors

- Linda Peterson (president)
- Lindy Fischer (treasurer)
- Shane Barton (secretary)
- Ann Marie Wilson
- John MacCormick
- Jillian Nelson
- Kelly Kautz
- Michael Bruckmueller