

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2023**





WORK SKILLS FOUNDATION

# Annual Report

[wskillsfoundation.org](https://wskillsfoundation.org)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Board of Directors</b>	04
<b>Letter to the Community</b>	05
<b>Financials &amp; Community Impact</b>	06
<b>How You Can Help</b>	08
<b>WSC Program Support</b>	09
<b>OpportuniTEES Golf Outing</b>	12
<b>WoW 10th Anniversary</b>	14
<b>Celebrating 50 Years of Work Skills Corporation</b>	16
<b>Annual Awards</b>	18
<b>Supporters</b>	24

# Board of Directors



**Danielle Maj**  
Chairperson



**Mike Lay**  
Vice Chairperson



**Deb Oberpeul**  
Treasurer



**Brandon Krugh**  
Secretary



**Stacey Anderson**



**Kimberle Bowman**



**Rachele Evers**



**Rob Johnson**



**Travis Porta**



# Letter to the Community

“What you do for yourself dies with you when you leave this world, what you do for others lives on forever.”

- Ken Robinson

*Dear friends,*

This has been an incredible year for the Work Skills Foundation, and we have you as a community to thank. Because of your generosity and support, we have surpassed our 2023 goals, and are closer to our vision of a community that offers the opportunity for everyone with the desire to succeed. Work Skills works tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities and other employment barriers every day.

Without our dedicated staff, board members, Vision Partners, volunteers, donors and so many more, we would not have the impact that we do. We have come so far over the years, and I cannot be prouder of this Foundation and its life-changing accomplishments. I am both humbled and honored to be part of a team that opens its arms to those in need and receives such tremendous support from the community.

It is my strongest belief that everyone has a place in this world, and it is because of organizations like Work Skills that people with barriers or disabilities can find their place. It is so much more than somewhere for them to go to gain skills or create art; it is an opportunity for them to dare to dream big and do what many think is impossible. It helps them overcome challenges and obstacles and increases their confidence. It gives them the ability to provide for themselves and their families and allows them to become active members of their community. It is because of Work Skills that they too can see the world as a brighter place.

One of my fondest memories of Work Skills is learning of a participant who received his first paycheck. He was so excited to have the means to take his mom out to dinner. When asked where he was going to take her, he said, “Burger King!” Something that you and I take for granted meant the entire world to him in that moment. It’s stories like this that keep me coming back for more.

If you have not yet visited Work Skills or donated to the Foundation, I highly encourage you to do so. We are changing the lives of so many of our friends, family members and neighbors. It is my wish that you too can experience firsthand what this wonderful organization has to offer.

*With great gratitude,*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Maj".

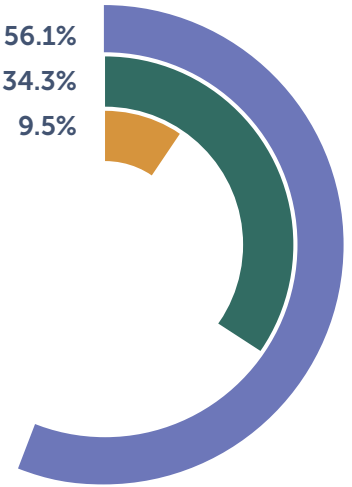
**Danielle Maj**

WORK SKILLS FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIR

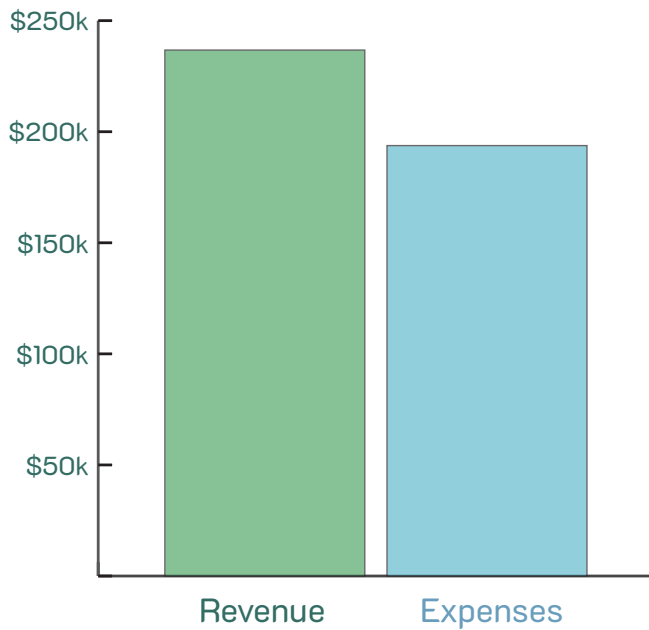
# Foundation Financials: Total Revenue & Expenses

## 2023 REVENUE

Fundraising	56.1%
Donations	34.3%
Investments	9.5%



## REVENUE vs EXPENSE



### WSC Community Impact:

## Over Half a Century Pioneering Innovative Vocational Support



**50,000+**  
Total Participants Served  
Since 1973



**\$116,636**  
Artisan Corner Artists  
Commission



**\$25,277,012**  
in Participant Worker  
Wages



# A Year of Impact and Gratitude

The Work Skills Foundation was created in 2005 to provide strategic financial resources and sustainability that allow the Corporation to add and enhance services that change the lives of the people we serve. Each year, the WSC Executive Team determines where there is the most need. The Speech & Language Program and Artisan Corner were selected to receive support in 2023. Donations from individuals and businesses who understand the importance of the work we do ensure that WSC participants receive the support they need to live richer, more successful lives.

The Foundation vision is **a community that offers opportunity for everyone with the desire to succeed**, and our Development Committee worked throughout the year to share their passion for the organization. Stacey Anderson, Chair, and members Kate Braciszewski, Maria Dockins, Rachele Evers, Lisa Follmer-Gagnon, Marcia Gebarowski, Rob Johnson, Danielle Maj and Meg Novacek devoted countless hours to the Foundation. In addition to meeting regularly, they made dozens of thank you calls, introduced new people to WSC, held a surprise fundraiser, wrote notes, hosted a Halloween Breakfast & Tour and a Giving Tuesday Block Party, and volunteered at our events.

We've celebrated several milestones this year: our 15th golf outing, ten years of WoW and the 50th Anniversary of Work Skills Corporation. Our reach continues to expand. More than 100 people visited WSC, met participants and staff, and gained a better understanding of why we're here. We also launched a podcast series with Wayne Media Group. Check it out on YouTube: [@WorkSkillsFoundation](#).

The Foundation had its best year to date, exceeding fundraising goals in all areas. None of this would have been possible without the generosity of the communities in which we serve, and we are truly grateful.



*How can you help?*  
**CONNECT \* VOLUNTEER \* GIVE**



Become an annual  
**VISION PARTNER**



Learn & share  
**OUR STORY**



Become a  
**WoW MEMBER**



Be an Artisan Corner  
**VOLUNTEER**



Make a monthly  
**CONTRIBUTION**



**“ IT IS SO AWESOME TO SEE THEM AT WORK WITH SMILING HAPPY FACES!**

I chose Work Skills Foundation as one of my primary organizations deserving of my donation because of their mission. They give individuals purpose, fulfillment and offer opportunities to be contributing members of the community.

The individuals they help might not otherwise get these opportunities. And it is so awesome to see them at work with smiling happy faces!

***Peggy Anthony***

**WOW MEMBER**  
Since 2021







WSC PROGRAM SUPPORT

*Clinical Services*

#### PROGRAM FUNDING

## Unlocking the Power of Communication

When Emily initially joined our Speech and Language Program, her communication abilities were limited to just a handful of functional words, and maintaining her attention on a single task for more than a minute or two was a challenge.

To address these difficulties, an individualized and rigorous speech therapy regimen was established; Emily attended sessions four times a week.

The transformation has been nothing short of outstanding. Emily's vocabulary has expanded rapidly, enabling her to mimic new words as well as utilize them effectively and appropriately in various contexts.

She can now construct two-to-three-word phrases, allowing her to express her thoughts, make requests, and engage in conversations. Beyond her language development, Emily's play skills have made significant progress. She can now independently and cooperatively participate in structured play activities with her peers.

Emily's journey exemplifies the profound impact of our Speech and Language Program and demonstrates that focused and intensive interventions can revolutionize someone's ability to communicate and interact socially. How empowering!

The Foundation was pleased to provide financial support to the re-launch of this program in 2023.



WSC PROGRAM SUPPORT

*Artisan Corner*

### PROGRAM FUNDING

## WSC's Award-Winning Creative Haven

The other WSC program selected to receive funding from the Foundation in 2023 was Artisan Corner.

Artisan Corner began over 13 years ago as a modest internal program and has grown into a robust platform for training, development, and retail. A creative haven for individuals with disabilities, it provides opportunities for them to make, market and earn income from their original art pieces. It also gives them a sense of community. Artisans participate in person or virtually.

Each artist is given the freedom to explore various mediums and discover what resonates with them. This has led to a wide range of beautiful creations, including paintings, fiber arts, ceramics, jewelry, and more. We are incredibly proud of them, and it is very rewarding to watch their confidence and skills grow.

More than 150 WSC clients have participated in the Artisan Corner program – 58 this year alone! To accommodate the growth, a new art center was created at WSC in the fall. They now have twice the space and lots of storage. We look forward to seeing all the wonderful new things that come out of “the corner” now that they have more room!

Our artisans have pushed creative boundaries, inspired and delighted new audiences, and received well-deserved accolades and recognition for their talents. Several original pieces were featured on tour this year; Zach's Starry Night Crossover traveled through four states. Other works were on display at Hartland's ArtWalk, the Cultura Celebration in Howell and at Source America in Anaheim California.

Finished Artisan Corner pieces are available at the boutique, which is located inside our corporate offices in Brighton. You'll also find a huge assortment of things with beautiful artisan images sublimated on them. Items are also available online in our Etsy shop: [@ArtisanCornerWSC](#)

Again this year, we hosted PopUp shops at various businesses and events. Artisans earn income when something they made is sold, and we are happy to help them get bigger paychecks.

If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, let us know! No artistic talent is required.





ARTISAN



CORNER







## *You Are Changing Lives!*

We've had a lot of fun over the years and were thrilled to celebrate our 15th annual golf outing in June. It was another sold-out event, and the beautiful weather was a bonus. Huge thanks to all who sponsored, golfed, volunteered, donated, and supported us in any way! WSC participants are the ones who benefit from your generosity.



SAVE THE DATE

## 2024 OPPORTUNI**TEES** GOLF OUTING

Make plans to join us at Oak Pointe Country Club on **Monday, May 20, 2024**. This is the Foundation's biggest annual fundraising event, and it's called *Opportuni**TEES*** for good reason. Funds raised at the outing allow us to provide even more **opportunities** for success to those we serve.



2019 - 2023 Premier Presenting Partner



**PATRICK FINANCIAL GROUP, L.L.C.**  
A REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISORY FIRM



# Women of Work Skills Foundation



# Wow

Women of  
Work Skills Foundation



## “ IT IS SO REWARDING TO WORK WITH THE ARTISTS!

I decided to volunteer at Artisan Corner upon retirement because of my love of art and new-found enjoyment working with the disabled adult population. It is so rewarding to work with the artists! Watching their incredible talent come to life, their pride in their creations and receiving paychecks for their work, as well as their friendships with each other, staff, and volunteers is so heartwarming. In a chaotic world, this is a place of great joy and peace.

I give to support the tremendous work being done to break down barriers for diverse populations and provide dignity to each individual so they can grow and thrive in their life.

### **Julie Amman**

**ARTISAN CORNER VOLUNTEER**

Since August 2022

**WOW MEMBER**

Since January 2023



## “ HER ENTIRE WORLD REVOLVES AROUND THIS PROGRAM, WHICH FUELS HER WELL-BEING WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE THAT SO MANY STRUGGLE TO FIND.

She is coming back from Florida to go to work after Disney. She didn't want to stay extra because she didn't want to miss "too much" work. This is how much she loves it. Her entire world revolves around this program, which fuels her well-being with a sense of purpose that so many struggle to find. She was definitely one who struggled immensely before finding WSC and Artisan Corner. It has changed her life.

She went from not leaving the house to living semi-independently in her own apartment! It is truly amazing and life changing for all of us. This year she wants to add being on the production floor too so we will see where that takes her. I am forever grateful and people need to know how this program changes lives!! Shout it from the rooftop!

### **Lori Kinjorski**

**WOW MEMBER**

Since 2018

*& Gabby's Mom*



# 10 Year Anniversary

*10 years ago* a group of stakeholders met to discuss how to generate more funds for the Foundation. The golf outing had been growing strong for several years, and we wanted to add something new that would appeal to a broader audience.

The result was the Women of Work Skills Foundation, also known as WoW. This is the perfect acronym for the group, as membership funds have allowed WSC to change so many lives.

Our first WoW meeting was held in September of 2013, with ten charter members. We're excited to share that we celebrated our tenth anniversary in October with **52 members!** Watching the relationships that have developed over the years is truly heart-warming.



**WoW brings together women of all ages who have a heart for people with disabilities.**

Fun and interactive meetings are held twice a year. Everyone's favorite part is when a WSC participant shares his or her personal story. What better way to see your gift at work than to meet someone who has benefitted from your generosity? Members also receive WSC updates and spend time getting to know our participant speaker and each other.

We are looking forward to the next decade of WoW supporting our efforts to enhance and expand WSC services. Perhaps you'd like to join us.







## Celebrating 50 Years

It was 1973 when a group of parents came together to form Work Skills Corporation (WSC), driven by concern for the limited vocational support available to their children with diverse needs and abilities.

Upon completing high school, these young people faced a daunting void with no avenues for job training or employment.

Five years later, Rod Jones joined the organization and spent the next 41 years transforming the small enterprise into a thriving venture. Jones was determined to make WSC self-sustaining, channeling his inventive spirit and unwavering energy into achieving that goal. The grassroots collective of concerned parents gradually evolved into a full-fledged business operation, a testament to Jones' indomitable spirit and resourcefulness.

Over half a century since its inception, WSC has grown, reflecting the vision of the founders and the commitment of those who have nurtured its mission through the years. The organization has expanded to address unmet community needs and now has eight divisions under its umbrella of services, providing programs that support learning, working, and living.

The mission has always been to pioneer innovative opportunities for participants to engage in meaningful work, paving the way for them to secure competitive employment in the community.

As we celebrate five decades of unwavering dedication, it's clear that WSC's impact extends far beyond its original vision of providing employment and training services to people with disabilities. This remarkable journey stands as a testament to creating a more inclusive and equitable society, to the benefit of the underserved and the community.





# Work Skills Corporation Celebrates 50 Years of Community Impact

At our open house in May, WSC was honored with a Congressional Award and a Special Tribute from the State of Michigan. The Congressional award, presented by a representative from the office of Representative Elissa Slotkin in Livingston County, recognizes WSC's exceptional contributions in transforming lives through innovative vocational programs that empower participants to acquire valuable skills and earn competitive wages.

Additionally, WSC received a special tribute from Michigan Senator Lana Theis, recognizing the organization's substantial community impact and dedication to enhancing lives throughout the state, one opportunity at a time.



A 50th Anniversary Open House was held in May, and we look forward to many more years of making a difference in the lives of individuals with diverse abilities.





**VOLUNTEER  
OF THE YEAR**



**JULIE AMMAN**

**WOMEN OF WORK SKILLS MEMBER / VOLUNTEER**





## *Julie's Journey*

Julie has been volunteering in Artisan Corner for well over a year. She immediately connected with our participants when she came for a tour. Julie retired from Livingston County Catholic Charities, home to Special Ministries, so this made total sense – so many familiar faces here at WSC.

Julie loves to provide one on one support to the artisans, and they love working with her. She gently encourages and helps them on challenging projects. She also plays a vital role on our team by organizing supplies and projects, cleaning, and bringing her own kind of sunshine every Thursday afternoon.

Artisan Corner moved into a new twice-the-size space in October 2023 and Julie graciously stepped up to help us make it a smooth transition. Julie has given us more than the gift of her time; she joined WoW (Women of Work Skills Foundation) in January. Support from WoW members ensures that WSC programs and services will continue to be available for years to come.

Thank you, Julie, for the many ways you support us. We appreciate you and are so pleased to honor you with this award.





***PARTICIPANT  
OF THE YEAR***



**MIA BROWN**

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT





## *Mia's Journey*

Mia embarked on a journey in November 2022 with a clear goal in mind: to graduate high school and equip herself with the tools necessary to navigate the world confidently.

She recognized the importance of skills like advocating for herself, understanding others' perspectives, honing her problem-solving abilities, setting boundaries, and identifying negative influences. She did not shy away from the hard work needed to develop these skills, and her unwavering dedication and resilience led her to success.

Work Skills played a crucial role in assisting Mia on her journey, helping her develop skills, set and maintain boundaries and gain the confidence needed to thrive in her personal and professional life.

Mia graduated high school and took on the dual responsibilities of working and going to school, a testament to her exceptional work ethic and determination. She is now pursuing her passion for cosmetology, a career that allows her creativity to shine. Mia is a vibrant and resilient young woman, a shining example of strength, growth, and success. We are very proud of all that she has accomplished and look forward to partnering with - and celebrating - the next steps of her remarkable journey.



**COLLABORATOR  
OF THE YEAR**



**W.A.V.E.S.**

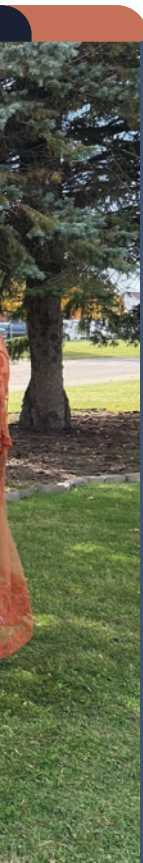
**WALLED LAKE ADULT TRANSITIONS PROGRAM**





Since its inception in 2019, the collaboration between Walled Lake Consolidated Schools' W.A.V.E.S program and Work Skills Corporation has delivered outstanding results. Through our united efforts we have provided students with structured learning experiences, and in the previous year alone, 53 students gained invaluable vocational exposure, both within the school premises and in the broader community, thanks to our various business host sites. These curated experiences are specifically designed to equip these students with a diverse set of transferable skills, which are essential for their success in both postsecondary education and the professional world.

At the heart of this alliance is our shared belief in the power of collaboration, especially when it comes to delivering top-tier secondary transition services for young adults with disabilities. Time and again, research has underlined the profound impact of such collaborative efforts on enhancing the postsecondary outcomes for these young individuals.





## A MESSAGE TO OUR VISION PARTNERS

# Thank You!

*Our vision is a community that offers opportunity for everyone with the desire to succeed.*

The Annual Vision Partner Program builds strong and sustainable partnerships for the life-changing services that Work Skills provides on a daily basis.

Vision Partners ensure that future opportunities are available for individuals of *all* abilities, allowing them to live empowered and independent lives!

## Want to learn more?

Contact Julie Smith, Development Director at 517.304.8003 or [julies@wskillsfoundation.org](mailto:julies@wskillsfoundation.org) to discuss how to make this partnership best fit your needs.



2023

# VISION PARTNERS



THE POWER IN ALL OF US



**PATRICK FINANCIAL GROUP, L.L.C.**  
A REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISORY FIRM

[www.PatrickFinancialGroup.com](http://www.PatrickFinancialGroup.com)

J & M CONSTRUCTION



**WAYNE**  
MEDIA GROUP



*Changing Lives*

# Generosity

Thank you to all who have created a brighter future for WSC participants in 2023!

## OUR SUPPORTERS

AAA Service Network	Chem Trend	Heidi Ford
Michelle Acevedo	Chestnut Development	Jeffrey Friedrich
Advance Metal Alloys	David Christensen	Tracey Furtak
Affinity Wealth Solutions	Mariah Christie	John & Jim Galleher
Kelly Albert	Classic Carpet & Floor Covering	Garden Gate Montessori
Maureen Alterman	Cooper & Riesterer	Anita Gibson
Julie Amman	Mary Cook	Audrey Goetz
Phil & Stacey Anderson	Ed & Katherine Lawrence Copp	Goyette Mechanical
Jim & Peggy Anthony	Corrigan Oil	Kevin Gramlich
Appraisal Works	Bonnie Corrigan	Bonny Graber
Asahi Kasei	Denise Couling	Patty Gronow
Bader Acres	Tish Deaton	Diane Hall
Bank of Ann Arbor	June DeLong	Hartland Insurance Agency
Kathleen Barden	Delta Dental of Michigan	Judy Herzog
Angela Beaugard	DisplayMax	Deborah Higgins
Beth Benson	Maria Dockins	Peggy Hodgson
Edilia Bernal	Catherine Dyer	Tianna Hoppe-Rooney
Blair & Kimberle Bowman	Donna England	Howell Area Chamber of Commerce
Terry & Kate Braciszewski	Tammie Evans	Darcy Hoyes
Brighton Ford	Rachele Evers	Tina Hubbard
Sherilyn Butler	Executive Wealth Management	HUB International
Elizabeth Carpenter	Fantastic Sams	Julie Hultgren
Carter Carpenter	Amy Federico	Karen Humphrey
Linda Carey	Amber Felkins	Bruce & Betsy Hundley
CGC Water/Kinetico	Carl & Jane Follmer	Mike Hunt
Chelsea State Bank	Lisa Follmer Gagnon	J & M Construction



*How can you help?*  
**CONNECT \* VOLUNTEER \* GIVE**

J2IT Group	Debra Mannisto	Brandy Roberts
Mark & Tina Jackson	Mary Manson	Nickie Rowsey
Rob Johnson	Pam McConeghy	Linda Rudowski
Rod & Maggie Jones	Dianna McGrath Zanlungo	Mary Schaefer Scofield
Jonna's Market	Jeannie McMillan	Carla Schindler
Jacquie Keefer	McMillan & Associates	Lisa Sergott
Maureen Kiefer	Heather McWee	Servpro
Kimberly McCarthy	Michigan State Fair LLC	Kristen Shollack
Char King	Kimberly Minnis	Julie Smith
Lori Kinjorski	Mike & Penny Murphy	Martin Smith
Cheryl Krist	Suzanne Murphy	Ronald Steele
Krol Communications	James Muzzall	Kara Stuewe
Krugh Insurance and Financial Services	Margaret Novacek	Suburban Collection Showplace
Steve & Rene LaFave	John & Debra Oberpeul	Patrice Sutton
Andrea LaFave	Carla O'Malley	Ternes Packaging
Chris LaFave	OneHope	Thai Summit America Corporation
LaFontaine Automotive Group	Patrick Financial Group	Toyoda Gosei Fluid Systems
Lake Trust Credit Union	Paycor	James Vanderlaan
Tom & Eileen Landry	Pfeffer, Hanniford & Palka	Vogelheim Insurance
Paul Landry	Laura Pinozzi	Betty Walworth
Erin Larson	Laura Placzek	David & Barbara Walker
Kate Lawrence	Laurie Popp	Amy Warder
Michael Lay	Travis & Jeni Porta	Wayne Media Group
Livington County United Way	Prima Creative	Christa White
Steve & Kate Lowry	Refrigeration Research	Wilson Marine
Chris & Danielle Maj	Rendall's Sci-Clean	Work Skills Staff
Maj's Services	Kathleen Rentz	Kathleen Zaenger
		Eli Zemper

