

Our new Hub partner!

We are excited to announce that we have secured another business partner for our Community Hub in St. Paul.

Valley Installations recently became the second business, along with PCs for People, to join us in the Hub.

They install commercial coolers and restaurant equipment, which means the general contractor builds the structure for the kitchen and Valley Installations installs everything that is stainless.

Valley Installations will work to engage MSS program participants to experience opportunities with, but not limited to: training at community-based construction sites, establishment and/or support of an MSS metals art shop, and other skills training and program support.

“We’ll be able to offer the people at MSS the opportunity to learn new skills,” said Chris Foster, owner of Valley Installations. “We are happy to be an MSS partner. It’s a way for us to provide more opportunities.”

There will usually be a couple of Valley Installations employees in the Hub, with more on site for occasional meetings. “When I first heard about the space here at MSS I thought it was just your typical warehouse space,” Chris said.

“But after I spoke with Randy (Bloom), I realized what a unique opportunity this was going to be for us.”

“We are excited to have Valley Installations as a Community Hub partner,” said Stan Thompson, MSS Operations Manager. “It will mean more opportunities for the people we support.”

The MSS newsletter is published three times a year.

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MSS adds Operations Manager

Stan Thompson was named MSS Operations Manager, to oversee the finance, transportation, maintenance, and business development functions for the agency.

The position is a new one for MSS and Stan will report to MSS CEO/President, Julie Johnson.

“I love the way our mission is lived out every day through the staff, community partners and individuals we support,” Stan said. “I’m glad to be here and I’m learning new things every day.”

Creative arts play a major role in MSS’ programming and Stan brings a wealth of knowledge in the field as he has a music degree from Concordia University in St. Paul, with an emphasis on guitar performance. His past experience includes participating in a band, but he has not completely put aside his passion for music. “I still enjoy leading music in church and I have worked as a worship music leader as a side gig.”

Stan and his wife, Bev, live in south Maplewood with their two sons: Jack (12) and Gunnar (10), and their beagle, Emmet. We are proud to have Stan as part of the leadership team at MSS.

3D possibilities.....continued from front

Presently, MSS uses the website TinkerCad.com for online creation of ideas and a Smart Board to capture both individuals’ handwriting and artwork. Once the idea has come to fruition on the computer, the file is sent to the printer, where it can take as few as 1-2 hours, upwards of 6-8 hours to print, depending on the size. When completed, the item or items soak overnight in a solvent which removes the support material used in the printing process.

“I really like using the computer to design things,” MSS artist Kelly pals said. “It lets me make whatever I want to and it’s really easy.” Kelly is currently finalizing her first individual project which is custom paintbrush earrings with a matching paint pallet necklace.

Currently St. Paul is the only MSS location that houses a 3D printer, but that won’t keep the programming to just one location. “If I can figure this out, anybody can,” Matt said. “Once we get a curriculum developed, I’d like to see other centers be able to bring individuals to St. Paul.”

Looking ahead, Matt feels the printer shouldn’t be about trinkets and knick-knacks but about art and functional items. “Right now, we’re brainstorming ideas to get the people we serve used to what 3D printing is,” Matt said. “But, we have already started the design process for items that can be functional and universally adaptive.”

MSS website gets new URL

With the official name change to MSS, we have also adjusted the URL on our organization’s website.

Our website’s new address is www.mssmn.org.

In this issue:

From Our President
Possibilities in 3D
Helping a Friend

Show Gallery Lowertown
Volunteer Opportunities
Celebrate! 2019

MSS Wins Music Grant
New MSS Board Member
Community Hub Addition

MSS Adds Ops Manager
www.mssmn.org

From Our President

Now that 2019 is in full swing, I want to take time to thank all of you for your generous support in 2018. Because of you, we were able



to purchase musical equipment, provide art and writing classes, offer more job training and employment opportunities, and attend more

community events. Our Celebrate! gala in September was an amazing success with generous supporters raising more than \$90,000 to support person-centered programs at all six centers! The spirit of giving from everyone inspires us and reminds everyone at MSS that others value what we do here each day.

New legislation has been introduced and we will talk with legislators about supporting an adequate competitive workforce factor, which attempts to shrink the disparity in wages between a DSP and people in similar professions in the state. These bills are House Bill HF168 and Senate Bill SF92

You can help by reaching out to your elected officials and sharing your stories and support for these bills. If you're not sure how, enter your address at www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/ to find out who represents you. If you have any questions about how to effectively speak to legislators, don't hesitate to contact me directly.

The more we share how critical funding is in the lives of people with disabilities and the staff who provide these crucial services, the greater impact we all have together.

From the President to next

Possibilities come to life in 3D

The computer lab in St. Paul has a new energy about it and it has nothing to do with fresh light bulbs.

Matt Heuer, a Service Coordinator who started with MSS last October, has breathed life into a program that will put more decision making and ownership into the hands, and minds, of the people we support.

That program is 3D-printing, and Matt is excited for where he thinks the program can go. "I really didn't have a lot of experience with (3D) printing when I started at MSS, but I thought it would be a great opportunity for additional opportunities for the people we support," he said.

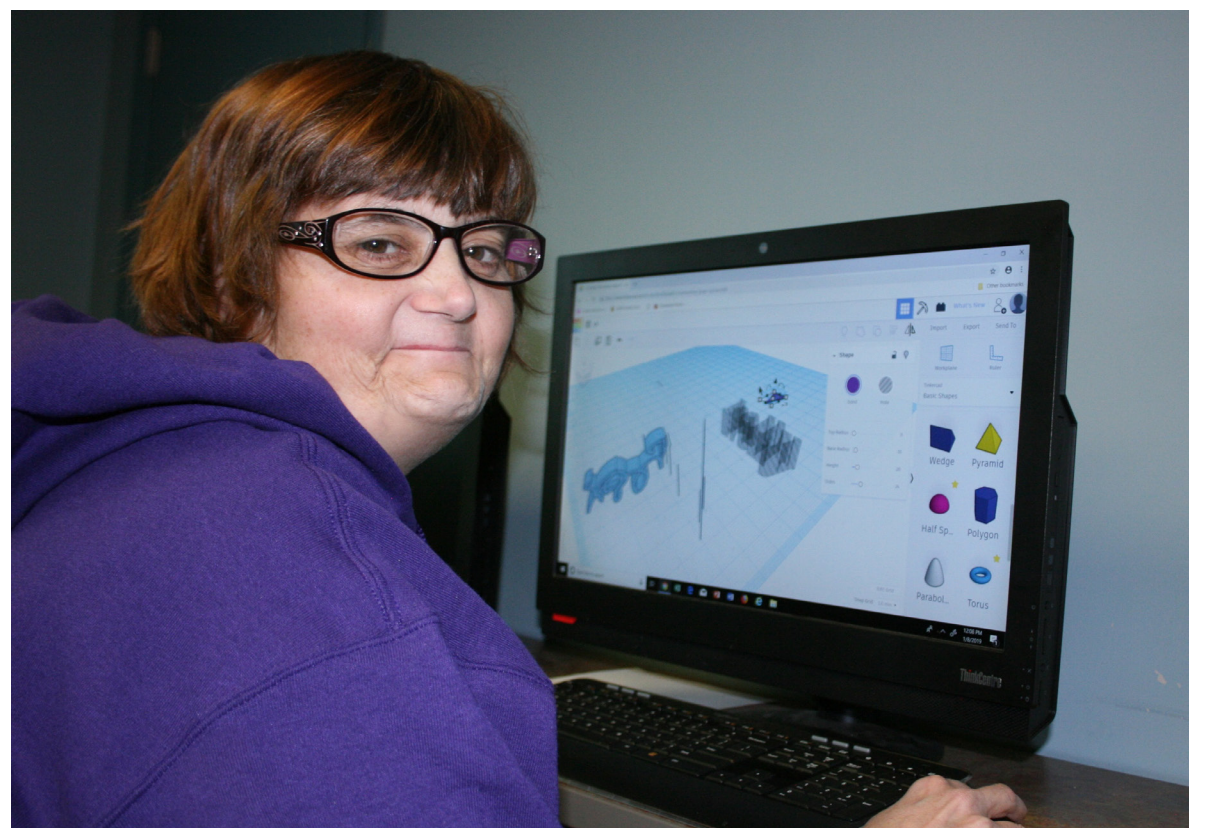
Matt said the program is in its infancy, but he can already see the possibilities.

"We're just starting to build a curriculum, but this won't be up to me, it will be up to us," Matt said. "We want to encourage as much independent lab time as we can for the people who will be using the printer."

Putting more onus on the people we support will play a big role in the program going forward. "We don't just want to see something on the internet and copy it," Matt said. "We want to be creative with what we're making, putting an emphasis on both form and function."

Persons served who want to use the printer will start by coming up with their own idea. From there, the artist creates the image by drawing, or painting before taking that idea to the computer.

3D possibilities to next



St. Paul artist Kelly Pals enjoys working with the 3D printing software because it allows her the freedom to create whatever she can think about.

Empowered to help out a friend



MSS works to create a person-centered culture for all people, allowing the people we support to be the driving force of their schedules, goals, and programs. This allows people at MSS the freedom each day to partake in things like community engagement, work crews, on-site activities, or to choose to spend their time socializing with friends. This “open door” policy provides MSS staff members an opportunity to build real, authentic relationships with people in the program.

Recently, one of those friendships helped avert a medical emergency that could have turned tragic.

MSS Communications Manager Tom Hoen was alone in his office on January 22 when he started to feel light-headed and weak. Just a few minutes later, Tom was paralyzed on his right side, and could not speak. In the middle of this episode, Bob Evans stopped by for his daily chat with his friend Tom. Bob has attended the MSS St. Paul program for 19 years, and he and Tom became friends a year ago through daily short conversations in Tom’s office.

When Bob walked into the office, he could tell something was not right. “Tom was groaning and trying to say something to me,” Bob said. “He needed help.” Bob closed the door and went to look for Tom’s office partner, Director of Arts Development, Lauren Hughes. Bob quickly found Lauren and alerted her to Tom’s situation.

By the time Lauren got back to the office, Tom was on the floor and still unable to speak. She immediately called 911 and then alerted other MSS staff members. “I have never been more scared in my life than when I was lying on that floor,” Tom said. “I was aware of everything that was going on, but I couldn’t talk, I couldn’t move the right side of my body, and I was sweating profusely.”

First Responders arrived a few minutes later. After taking Tom’s blood pressure and getting a reading on 258/180, he was taken to Regions Hospital. Two days of round-the-clock tests determined that Tom had suffered a seizure, but the elevated blood pressure had also exposed some underlying issues.

“Thankfully I should be fine,” Tom said. “I am on seizure medication as well as blood pressure medication now and with a couple of life-style adjustments, I will be better suited to manage my health going forward.”

One thing that Tom is most grateful for is the culture that MSS has developed. “I think about Bob stopping by that day just to say hello, and then I think how this could have turned out so differently if MSS didn’t empower the people it supports to live the lives they want to live and to make decisions on their own.” Tom said.



Bob Evans, left, and MSS Communications Manager, Tom Hoen, have developed a friendship over the past year. Bob’s willingness to help prevented a medical situation turning tragic.

From the President continued from front

This winter was challenging, as we had to close a number of days in order to keep people safe from the extreme weather. Other organizations did the same, and this has significantly impacted budgets across the state. Our trade association, MOHR, is working with the state to relieve some of the financial pressure this has caused.

Despite these challenges, we have many exciting things to look forward to. We have hired a volunteer coordinator to spread the word about the amazing people we work with and the limitless opportunities to get involved. We have been selected as one of six organizations to participate in a capacity building project (MN Tap) with the MN Institute on Community Integration and the Massachusetts Institute on Community Inclusion. The year-long

project will focus on increasing competitive, integrated employment options for people interested in working. We are looking forward to seeing how the bees fared this winter and expanding our learning about this incredible part of nature. We will continue to increase our community engagement opportunities with the help of our program facilitators and volunteers. And as always, our dynamic artists will be showcasing their work at a number of art fairs and festivals, as well as a full calendar of collaborative and solo exhibitions at our partnership gallery, The Show Gallery Lowertown.

So, while we know there is much work to be done, we are confident that with your help and support, we will continue to provide high-quality, fun, and innovative services.



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St. Paul Art Crawl set for April 26-28

- MSS artists will have their work for sale as part of the St. Paul Art Crawl, taking place from April 26-28. During the three-day event, The Show Gallery Lowertown will have a group exhibition in the main gallery and other exhibits.
- On May 31, from 7-9 pm, we will be hosting a *Hartz for Joy* celebration, honoring the legacy of former MSS President, Lyth Hartz, and Joy, the woman who inspired Lyth to serve more than 37 years at MSS. Lyth’s leadership paved the way for innovative programs for individuals with disabilities, including the creation of The Show Gallery Lowertown. There will be light appetizers and a wine and beer cash bar for the evening. All proceeds raised will support The Show Gallery Lowertown. Please RSVP for the event to Bobbi at bbade@mssmn.org or 651-793-4126.

Many ways you can get involved with MSS

Volunteers play a vital role in the success of MSS to provide opportunities for the people we support.

To help expand those opportunities, Jodi Meerovich has been hired as MSS' dedicated Volunteer Coordinator.

"There are a lot of different things people can do with us at MSS," Jodi said. "We have specific needs that need attention but if somebody has a passion they wish to share, we'd welcome that too."

MSS is willing and able to work with volunteers to customize their experience to include their particular area of interest.

For information about volunteer opportunities at MSS, please contact Jodi at 651-793-4199, or, jmeerovich@mssmn.org.

Some Volunteer Opportunities at MSS

Sports: dance, yoga, teach an adaptive sport

Community access: outings, load/unload vehicles

Teach a Class: gardening, history, jewelry making



There are many different ways you can help make a difference in the lives of the people we support. Volunteers help us provide a wide variety of programming and there are a number of opportunities currently available.

Art/Music: pottery, screen printing, textiles

Games: bingo, facilitate a book club/coffee club

Other Passion: customize your own talent/interest

Celebrate! 2019: Save the date

Be sure to mark your calendar to join us for our 6th Annual Celebrate! gala on **Saturday, September 21** in the Anderson Student Center on the University of St. Thomas campus on Summit Avenue in St. Paul.

The evening will be a celebration of the successes at MSS that you help to create with your generous support. There will be great food, entertainment and much more!

For this year's event, we currently have sponsorship opportunities.

If you are interested in being a sponsor for Celebrate! 2019, please contact MSS Director of Development, Shannon Brumbaugh at 651-793-4126 or sbrumbaugh@mssmn.org.



Grant will expand our music programming

MSS has won a \$25,000 grant from the MacPhail Center for Music. This grant will allow us to provide music therapy in all six of our locations.

We will collaborate with the MacPhail Center for Music to teach new

methods for self-expression where the people we support will be able to demonstrate their learning through audio and video recording.

The new programming is expected to run during the summer and fall of this year.

Dr. Robert Sicoli welcomed to MSS Board

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Robert Sicoli has been added to the MSS Board of Directors. Dr. Sicoli is a parent of an individual in our Oakdale program and he is currently the Medical Director of Emergency Medicine at the Children's Hospital in St. Paul.

He has held his medical license in both Minnesota and Wisconsin for the past three decades and is an active community volunteer. We look forward to having Dr. Sicoli on the board to help move our agency forward.