

2023 COMMUNITY REPORT







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Founder's Letter

I feel safe.

These are the words I heard my 24-year-old son, Nicol, share recently when asked how he felt about Main Street. He feels safe. As a parent, I am not sure there is anything I would rather hear.

This "feeling" people get at Main Street, the feeling of a community caring for one another, like back in the ol' days, neighbors looking out for neighbors, this was something we hoped for—and not just for those who live here, but for everyone who walks through our doors.

And I think that's what has happened. People come to Main Street daily, weekly, or just when they feel the need to connect or belong—and so many tell us that when they're here, they get this feeling. Some describe it as joy. Others say it's love. Or hope. Or a sense of adulting. Some aren't quite sure how to describe it. A parent once told us she just wished she could take that Main Street feeling out into the rest of the world. One woman visited this spring for an artist workshop, and when she walked in, she looked around and said, "I feel like I'm in heaven." She spent the next few hours getting to know our members as they all worked on their art projects together, and then she asked about volunteering. She was the last one to leave that day.

Just five years ago, Main Street was a concept and a dream. Just three years ago, we were a building about to open, and our real journey began. I was excited and hopeful (and anxious and tired), and I literally had no idea what was to come.

I had no idea I would feel so connected, that Main Street would start to feel like home to me. When I'm here, I am at home with people I love and respect—whether it's David



or Faith sitting behind the front desk, our Main Street or Soulfull staff, or our friendly members who always greet me with a smile and hello (that word, "hello," is a big deal to us, as I shared in last year's annual report). I feel a sense of warmth, like this is a welcoming and safe space to be me-or to just be.

This feeling seems to be a theme, and that theme is woven throughout the pages of this annual report. As you read further, you'll hear from our new Deputy Executive Director, Sadija Smiley, along with members, volunteers and donors whose stories will help you better understand what the Main Street feeling is all about.

But you can't really understand it without being here. So please, join us for a Friday Vibes (maybe a game night or '90s throwback karaoke?) or Bake with Sharon, or stop by our Soulfull Cafe during "Food for Thought," where we talk about things like goal setting, navigating tough times, telling your story and taking care of your mind. Come meet our "Main Streeters," and feel the love of the Main Street staff. Perhaps you will make a new friend, learn something new, or even just find a safe space to be. Whatever happens, I can promise you will leave with a feeling...and it will be a good one!



Programs & Featured Events

AT MAIN STREET, WE LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.

And this year we took "play" to another level, with all kinds of programs and outings for our members and the broader community. There was the epic Staff vs. Members kickball battle, the Spring Olympics (think mini-cornhole and marshmallow towers), Canasta for a Cause, Boxing with Donte, a game at Nationals Park, bowling at Pinstripes, the Harlem Globetrotters, Give a Hoot Comedy Club, pool parties at The Met and more.

We danced, too—at Friday Vibes, Sunday Socials and Soulfull Springfest—because dancing is good for the soul. So is art, and we did plenty of that: a paper quilling workshop with featured artist Ashley Chiang; a "Make & Take" event at Creative Outlets Art Center; journal-making at Creativity Club; and, of course, our 3rd Annual Member Art Exhibit, one of our favorite Main Street traditions.

We always make wellness a priority, both for the body and mind. Positive Thinking with Isabel, Space of Belonging and Midday Mindfulness helped our members and residents center themselves and provided an opportunity to talk through life's challenges. Music City Workout, Alfa Sweat with Zaid, Zumba with Maricel and Move & Groove Yoga were great for getting our heart rates up and keeping us balanced.

We also focused on learning. This year, we added three educational programs: Telling the Story—An Introduction to Reporting and Writing; Exploring Sex and Relationships; and Get Social. Our featured and professional events were a hit. Among our favorites: The Traits that Make Us Human; Communicating for Impact and Leadership Fundamentals with Jon Garcia; and The Conversation Continues, led by Dr. Rodney Glasgow.



"There's just so much unity here. It's really like a connection and a togetherness, and everything seems to fit together. There's like a flow. I tell my friends: It really is hard to describe. You just have to experience it—you can't really put words to it. You literally see people transform before your eyes. It's like watching a flower bloom. It's so awesome."

- SADIJA A. SMILEY. DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR







MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT STATS:

0

97%

have LEARNED new things because they are a member of Main Street

0

99%
have NEW or IMI

have NEW or IMPROVED SKILLS



93%

feel more CONNECTED to others



98% feel more like they

feel more like they BELONG



90% feel their OVERALL LIFE has improved "I work every day so by Friday evening there's a small part of me that just wants to go home and sit on the couch. But then I come to Friday Vibes at Main Street and I always feel better and more energized. People can get wrapped up in their own stress, and it just feels so grounding here. When you have these real human experiences and positive interactions, it's like, oh my gosh, those things I was worrying about aren't really that important."

-DANIELLE BERSCH, VOLUNTEER AT FRIDAY VIBES





Main Street Gives Back

AS WE ARE PART OF AN INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY

that cares, Main Street continues to give back in multiple ways to support and enhance our broader community. We do this through interactive, experiential, and educational events such as our MLK Day of Service, 9/11 first responders' program, *We Feed People* screening and meal preparation, and monthly community gatherings which include other nonprofit partners. These events provide Main Street members, students and caring community members with opportunities to support one another through acts of kindness.

People of all abilities can and want to contribute to their communities.

"Sometimes I wish the rest of the world was more like Main Street. People say hello. They check on one another. They lift each other up. Everyone matters here, and what they're going through matters, and you can feel that. And we try to share that feeling, that kindness and compassion, with others."

-CINDY RICH, STAFF MEMBER







"Individuals with disabilities are often portrayed as the recipients of service, but people of all abilities can and want to contribute to their communities. Our Main Street Gives Back events provide accessible, inclusive opportunities for residents, members and the broader community to work side by side on meaningful projects. As a parent of a young adult with a disability, I can say that these opportunities are rare."

-JULIE RYAN-SILVA, STAFF MEMBER

GIVING BACK IN 2023:

198 student service learning (SSL) hours earned at Main Street

More than 100 meals donated to those in need

educational events to spread kindness and inclusion

25 partnerships with other organizations/nonprofits supporting the community



Tiffany & Mabel's Story

MABEL GRIAR had searched and searched. Sometimes it felt like she was always trying to find something. Programs. Services. Jobs. "Parents never stop searching," she says.

Her daughter Tiffany was doing fine in Houston, where they lived—she worked at an ice cream shop and joined the Special Olympics cheerleading team—but Mabel couldn't find the right opportunities in Texas. Tiffany, now 37, had graduated high school, spent a year doing culinary arts at a community college, and completed a two-year certificate program in Chicago. "We called Tiffany 'the million-dollar baby' because we would put her in every program we could think of," Mabel says.

Then one night, Mabel saw something online that read: "Are you getting older and worried about what will happen to your adult child with disabilities?"

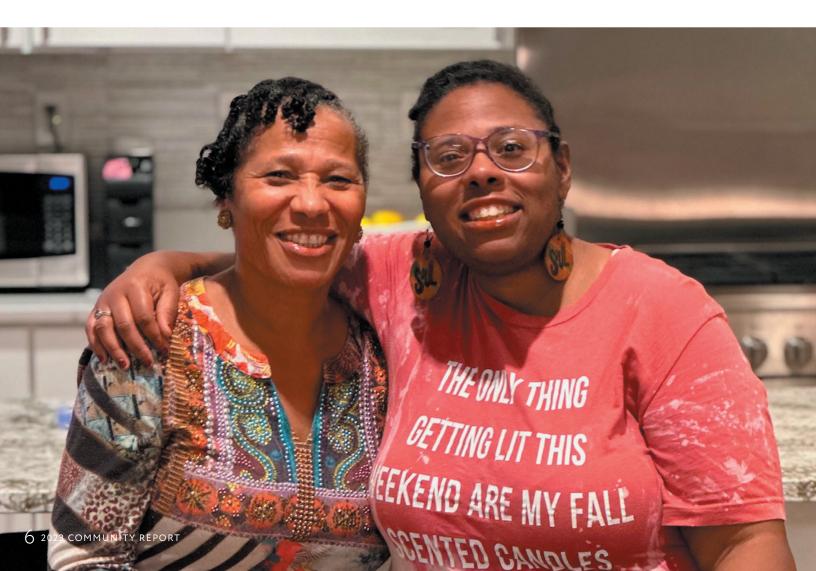
"That stopped me in my tracks," she says. Her husband of 34 years, Dwayne, had passed away in 2019. Tiffany and her dad

did everything together. He'd coached basketball for her and her younger sister, Totney. "I had memories of Dwayne telling me, 'We have to make sure Tiffany's gonna be okay, and I don't want the pressure of her care to fall on Totney."

She knew her daughter needed more independence, even if that meant moving, so she kept looking. In November 2022, she ended up on Main Street's website, where she was struck by what she saw: an inclusive community for people with and without disabilities. We have to get there, she thought. That's where Tiffany needs to be.

WITH A TOUCH OF FATE, Tiffany and Mabel found themselves on a visit to Main Street last February. When Mabel pulled onto Monroe Place and saw the sign, she slowed down. "I was like, The Soulfull Cafe—what is this?" Tiffany recalls.

They went inside, and the first thing Mabel noticed was the message on the wall: Fill your cup, celebrate inclusion,





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gather with friends...and nourish your soul. Our vision is a world where people of all abilities are included, feel connected and thrive!

Oh my gosh, she remembers thinking, this is it.

They ordered a latte, chatted with the baristas, and a welcoming Main Street staff member said hello and asked if they wanted to take a tour.

Just weeks later, Tiffany was playing *Jeopardy* at a virtual "Main Street Hang." Then she signed up for Space of Belonging, Zumba and Bake with Sharon. And Mabel started looking for a place to rent, not too far from Rockville. Even though Tiffany couldn't live at Main Street yet (there's a waiting list), she could be a part of everything.

THESE DAYS, IT'S HARD for Mabel to keep up with Tiffany's schedule. Tiffany has a program (or two) every few days at Main Street, and a painting she did to honor her dad hangs on the wall of Main Street's gallery as part of the member art exhibit. "They did a good job with this place—I love it," Tiffany says. There's a real sense of community at Main Street, Mabel explains, and that's what she was looking for. Her daughter is making new friends and starting to navigate things on her own. "I said to Totney, do you know how long we have waited for this?" Mabel says. "This is an answered prayer."

"We like to say in Montgomery County that we 'live our values out loud.'
No place embodies true inclusion better than Main Street. It isn't just a beautiful place—it's an aspirational community built on love and kindness, human dignity and belonging, right here in Rockville."

-ANDREW FRIEDSON, MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER

Resident Safety Council

WE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED our new

Resident Safety Council in February, with police presentations on staying safe at Main Street and a tour of the building's safety features. Like a neighborhood watch program, the Resident Safety Council—led by our own Julie Ryan-Silva—meets four times a year for education and relationship building among residents and local first responders. In May, we learned about fire safety and held a fire drill. This fall, we talked about safety on public transportation, and a group of residents and staff walked to the Rockville Metro Station for a tour and safety discussion led by Metro Transit Police officers. Next up? Weather-related safety, including a discussion on creating emergency kits. Through the Safety Council, residents of all abilities are taking steps to enhance safety for themselves and the whole Main Street community.





Golf Outing

WHAT A DAY! Our 4th Annual Golf Outing on October 2nd at Woodmont Country Club started off with a beautiful saxophone rendition of *The Star-Spangled Banner* played by David Godoy, a Main Street member and front desk associate. Then it was time to tee off. We are so grateful to the 220 golfers, 53 volunteers and all who joined us on the golf course and at the cocktail party. We raised more than \$600,000 to support Main Street. It was a day of competition but also a time to meet new friends in our community, a day to learn and reflect and a reminder to spread inclusion and kindness. That's what we do at Main Street with all our events—and all in one golf outing! Golfers, save the date for next year's event on September 16, 2024!

Main Street gives
you a little bit
of a push—and
then the magic
happens.



"I remember the first time I came to the golf tournament to play the National Anthem. I made a connection with the other musicians and we became friends instantly. That type of connection is the type of connection that Main Street does. Main Street gives you a little bit of a push—and then the magic happens."

-DAVID GODOY, MEMBER AND FRONT DESK ASSOCIATE
(PICTURED BELOW IN ORANGE SHIRT)







2023 Donors

Words cannot begin to express our gratitude...

DONATIONS COVER THE PERIOD 11/1/2022 TO 10/31/2023

\$25,000-\$99,999

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Soulfull Cafe

THIS YEAR, MAIN STREET'S SOULFULL CAFE

played host to everything from birthday parties and "Coffee with a Cop" to community service activities and the Saturday creativity club. We learn from each other in our casual and cozy café: At monthly parent coffees, between 20 and 50 parents share resources and knowledge, and leave feeling connected, enlightened and supported. During "Food for Thought" lunches, we talk about motivation, healthy habits and strategies for change.

Soulfull is a place where people of all abilities come together, which is exactly what we hoped it would be. The amazing staff—Kimberly, Tristan, Kathryn, Nicol and Grianny—makes everyone feel at home. And the food is a hit. Chef Ricky has added several tasty new items to the menu, including the popular Philly Steak & Arugula Sandwich, and put a fancier twist on some old favorites. There's also a new smoothie called the Soulfull Sunrise. Don't you love the name?

Soulfull is a place where people of all abilities come together, which is exactly what we hoped it would be.



THE CAFE IS OPEN TUESDAY-SATURDAY.
AND WE CATER, TOO!
VISIT US AT THESOULFULLCAFE.COM





Did You Know?

One of our favorite hangouts,
Poppy Boy's Kitchen, is named
after Founder Jillian Copeland's
father, Steve Friedlander.



- Main Street's **Soulfull Cafe** is a great place to go for lunch when you have jury duty at the courthouse down the street.
- Our name comes from our belief that inclusive, affordable communities should be on every Main Street across the country.
- 4 Many community organizations rent Main Street spaces, including Interfaith Works, Manna Food Center, Cornerstone Montgomery and MoCo Pride Center. We even have a commercial kitchen, where Cookies by Drew are made!
- **You belong here too.** Please join us as a member, volunteer or donor, and help us shine a light on Main Street's movement of inclusion.

Everyone just needs to feel like they belong somewhere.

"I had a friend tell me that I light up when I'm at Main Street. It's because I feel proud. I'm proud to show the building and space to people because it's beautiful light and bright with positive energy. I feel proud because I wholeheartedly believe in the mission of Main Street and am happy to share it. And I feel proud of the connections and relationships I've made."

> -MARYANN HANLEY, STAFF MEMBER



"Everyone just needs to feel like they belong somewhere. I think if you have special needs, it's harder—it's so much harder—and to have a place where you belong, where you are welcomed for your authentic self, and you don't have to be anybody other than you are...there's no greater gift you can give a person. There just isn't."

-SUSAN KAY, COMMUNITY MEMBER AND DONOR





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