


# Impact Report

YEAR ONE

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

This has been a whirlwind of a year. While launching a social equity nonprofit in the middle of some of the worst polarization our nation has seen in our lifetime has been challenging, there have been so many joys, connections and "seeds of inclusion" planted in this short time. It has been the honor to serve our communities in ways they deserve.

## A YEAR OF BUILDING

Board of Directors

"Bones" of a nonprofit

Funding and finances

Community engagement

## IMPACT SNAPSHOT

500+

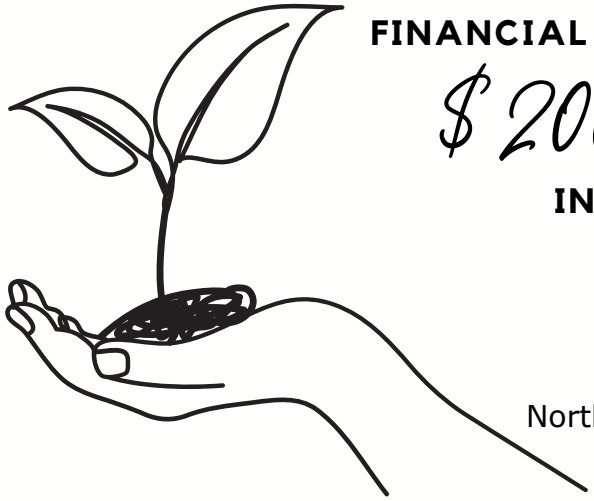
Social Media Followers

429

JEDI Workbench Newsletter Reach

750+

People engaged in the mission of The Sowing Room



## FINANCIAL REPORT

**$ 206,500.00**
**INCOME**

**$ 173,200.00**
**EXPENSES**

Thanks to our funding partners:
Five Wings Arts Council, Bush Foundation, Initiative Foundation, Sourcewell, Region Five Development Commission, Northwest Area Foundation, Acquire Mental Health, and the First Congregational UCC.

| SEEDS | SOWERS | SPROUTS |
|---|---|---|
| Community Events: Seed Circles & Summit | Project Optimist, Central Lakes College Human Services, Truespace Consulting, WeARE, Indigenous Education Brainerd | • Belonging<br>• Queerly Social<br>• Navigating Polarizing Conflict<br>• Waves of Change<br>• Cultivating Communities |
| Rural Safety Initiative | Nonviolent Peaceforce | • Safety Trainings<br>• Who's at your Table Conversations<br>• Safe Together: A Quest for Rural Community Safety Guide |
| Community Collaborations | Lakes Area Justice Table<br>CLC Human Services Advisory Board<br>Radically Rural | • Indigenous People's Celebration<br>• Internship/Fieldwork student host<br>• Regional Citizen Tables<br>• Virtual Screening |
| Story Sharing | CWC Social Workers<br>CWC DFL<br>JEDI Newsletters<br>Facebook<br>LinkedIn<br>Relationship Safety Alliance<br>Crow Wing Energized<br>Kiwanis of Brainerd | • Spreading the word on the work of The Sowing Room |

# Community Events

## About

Sitting together, sharing space, and connecting through stories and food is a pathway to authentic relationships and stronger community ties.
Seed circles and the Summit brings folks together to talk about belonging and sense of safety, how to have constructive conversations, slowing down and connecting to nature, and taking time to listen to others.



## By the Numbers

| Total Community Members Engaged: | Number of stories shared: | Impacts: |
|---|---|---|
| 375 | Women, college students, LGBTQIA+, Parents, Seniors, BIPOC, | Increased sense of belonging<br>Understanding and empathy |

# Outcomes

### Belonging Seed Circle

- In partnership with Project Optimist and Central Lakes College Human Services Students
- Engaged in story circles around belonging with 40 community members

### Queerly Social Seed Circle

- Listening sessions in September 2024 with the queer community indicated the need for social opportunities.
- Hosting monthly gatherings for the LGBTQIA+ community
- Over 40 individuals have participated

### Cultivating Communities Summit

- This two-day summit brought together nearly 150 individuals to engage around social cohesion with focus on inclusive economies and workforce, equity in education, and environmental justice through presentations, interactive community opportunities, and moments of artistic expression.

### Navigating Polarized Conflict Seed Circle

- In partnership with Truespace Consulting, 20 participants were engaged in a three hour training that explored how conflict shows up in our selves and how to navigate those triggers when they arise.
- Training was followed by a 4-week Polarization Detox challenge with weekly check ins.

# Rural Safety Initiative

## Background

In partnership with the Nonviolent Peaceforce, this initiative supported community members in articulating what comprehensive safety can look and feel like and building networks and practices to achieve it. Working to build a structure for security that is guided and created by rural communities, serving as a model for other communities going through similar challenges.



## By the Numbers

| Workshops and Trainings | Safety conversations held | Community Members Involved | Stories told |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | 150+ | More than 100 |

# Components

### Community Sensing and Story Circles

- Conducted one-on-one interviews and surveys with over 100 individuals to assess overall sense of physical and psychological safety in the Brainerd area
- Story circles offered an opportunity for folks to hear stories directly from others with different lived experiences.

### Workshops and Trainings

- Hosted four workshops that covered de-escalation practices, resulting in a better awareness of ability to protect, understand, and ultimately enhance sense of community and personal safety.

### Who's At Your Table Conversations

- Intimate small group gatherings, sharing a meal and reflecting on how we can individually and collectively impact sense of physical and psychological safety. Deep discussions around our responsibilities to others with regards to feelings of safety.

### Safe Together: A Quest For Rural Safety

- Created by the project's evaluative storytellers, Ash Hanson (Department of Public Transformation) and Anna Claussen (Voices for Rural Resilience), this choose-your-own-adventure-style report blends storytelling, community wisdom, and hands-on tools to spark your own local community safety journey.

## "More Peace, Less Force" Training with the Nonviolent Peaceforce

# Community Collaborations

## Sowers and Growers

The Sowing Room partnered with a variety of local organizations during this first year, further impacting the mission of planting seeds of inclusion.




## By the Numbers

| Social Media Followers | Newsletter Subscribers | Public Presentations |
|---|---|---|
| 500 | 429 | 5 |

# Sharing the Story

### Social Media

- Facebook | 403 followers
- LinkedIn | 175 followers
- Instagram | 50 followers

### JEDI Workbench Newsletter

- 5 newsletters sent to over 450 subscribers
- over 50 new subscribers

### Community Presentations

- Relationship Safety Alliance
- CLC Human Services Courses
- Crow Wing Energized
- Kiwanis of Brainerd
- Lakes Area Justice Table

### At the table

- CLC Human Services
- Relationship Safety Alliance
- Lakes Area Justice Table
- WeARE
- Friends in the Field
- Indigenous Education Brainerd



# We couldn't have done it without your generous *support.*

# Thank you

to all our sowers
and growers.

THE SOWING ROOM
Planting the Seeds of Inclusive Communities

director@sowingroom.org
www.sowingroom.org
Baxter, MN

