MISSION
Project Success motivates and inspires young people to dream about the future, helps them take steps to get there and gives them the tools they need to achieve their goals.

VISION
Every child entering middle school will graduate high school with a plan for their future and have the skills and confidence that will take them through the rest of their lives.

IN THIS TIME OF CHANGE, WE ARE HERE.
In 1994, Project Success set forth with a promise – a promise of putting kids first, providing access to opportunities of excellence, to be there for students – no matter what. This school year was a year unlike any other, challenging each of us in deep and varied ways. From facing a global pandemic that changed where, when, and how our students learn, to our community mourning and uniting for racial equity and justice, it has been a year of growth, challenge, and change for all of us.

Thanks to our long-term relationships, deep partnerships, the generosity of our community, and our team’s ambition and commitment – Project Success didn’t miss a beat in being there for our students and families. Students continue to need connection, joy, and a focus on planning for their futures and we pivoted in the quickly changing environment with thoughtfulness and urgency to continue to deliver on our mission.

Our staff created new and exciting programming that is engaging, enriching, and entertaining and meets the realities of our students’ changing environments. We continue to listen to the needs of our school communities and work to build the relationships, connections, and space for dreaming and planning for students. Space that is not only valuable, but imperative in this time. We are here for students, helping them connect to their purpose and to find belonging, community, and motivation to achieve their dreams.

This annual report covers a defining moment in time, people, and stories for Project Success as we look back on the 2019-2020 school year. It reflects back to when we were in classrooms and communities in fall and winter, and looks at how we innovated to connect to students at home in the spring and summer. We are excited to share the stories of people, who like you, have a passion for supporting our mission with our students and families.

We could not have met the challenges of this year without the support of thoughtful and generous partners, families, and supporters like you. It is through our relationships that we continue to bring love, belonging, and opportunity to our students, families, and community. We are Project Success, WE ARE HERE, and we are in this together. Thank you.

Gratefully,
Adrienne and Todd
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RESULTS

- 90% of teachers report that Project Success helps students to be better problem solvers, self-aware of their strengths, more motivated to succeed, and to set goals for the future.

- 90% of students report that Project Success helps them think about their futures, set goals, and create a plan for after graduation.

- Project Success programs can result in a statistically significant increase in attendance, GPA and on-time graduation.

“If a school is looking for a partnership with an organization that really models relationships and connectedness and individuality, and identity and character development and being a part of something greater than themselves, Project Success is a partnership that listens and really thinks about the development and needs of our students.”

ELLEN SHULMAN
Project Success Partner Principal,
Anwatin Middle School
**CURRICULUM**

Our proven curriculum, delivered by our professional facilitators both in-class and as a part of other experiences, helps students dream, ignite and grow.

**ARTS**

We utilize the power of theater and the arts to inspire, build community, act as a springboard for discussion and encourage students to tell their own stories.

**EXPEDITIONS**

Local & global expeditions allow students to explore the world, or see something familiar in a new way, opening doors to new possibilities for them.

**CERTIFICATES**

Certificates in computer coding, financial literacy, performing arts and cooking ignite possibilities for students and prepare them for life after high school.
ACTIVITIES

During the 2019-20 school year, Project Success served nearly 16,000 Minneapolis Public Schools students in 26 schools. Gifts to our Annual Fund helped to sustain our current programs and commitments over and above annual support to the Dreams to Futures Program Expansion Campaign made it possible to deepen and expand our program for more students. Activities included:

CURRICULUM
• 4,538 monthly goal-setting workshops in 207 classrooms connecting 15,728 students to their purpose.

ARTS
• 80 different evening and weekend, and school day professional theater performances for 6,500 unique students and family members, thanks to generous ticket donations by our 40+ theater partners.
• Two middle school student musicals by 173 students at 2 schools.

EXPEDITIONS

College and Career Tours
• 500 students explored the future possibilities on 23 regional college and career tours in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota.
• All students gained access to 23 different virtual “admissions chats” with students and staff from colleges, universities and technical schools across the country.

Global Experiences
• 50 English Learner high school students explored future possibilities and global leadership at Boston University and Harvard.

Outdoor Adventures
• 690 students and family members experienced the outdoors in their own “backyards” on 3 adventure days focused on winter activities, sciences, and river ecosystems.
• 54 students participated in the week-long “BWCA: Minneapolis Edition” interactive virtual camp, bringing them together online, and then individually in parks around the Twin Cities, resulting in the 2020 Conservation Award from the Friends of the Boundary Waters.

CERTIFICATES
• 155 students participated in one or more of the certificate programs at the Institute, including Coding, Personal Finance, Cooking, Film, and Podcasting.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

In March, our students’ schools suddenly closed their doors and moved to Distance Learning. In conjunction with the stay-at-home order, we cancelled hundreds of in-person events and experiences by reaching out to thousands of our students and families individually. Our staff worked quickly to adapt our programs and curriculum to a high-quality 100% virtual environment.

By the end of the school year, hundreds of students had viewed our videos and in all, they visited our virtual programs webpages more than 6,000 times.

A Bold Vision: The Dreams to Futures Campaign’s goal is to double and deepen the impact of Project Success. Generous gifts to the campaign have enabled Project Success to make a huge impact for students and for our community. Since the campaign launched in 2016, Project Success:
• Expanded in Minneapolis from serving 11,500 students in 2015 to nearly 16,000 in 2019.
• Launched new programs, including certificates at the Project Success Institute, Global Experiences, College and Career Tours, and Outdoor Adventures.
• Built new partnerships such as the Minnesota Vikings-sponsored global experience to bring more than 50 students each year to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C.

† Watch for this symbol in the report to see more about how the Dreams to Futures Campaign has made a big difference for students. Learn more at projectsuccess.org/futures
## FY20 INNOVATION & ACTION

Through challenge and change this past year, Project Success worked to:

- Provide high quality live and pre-recorded monthly **workshops for all students**, both in-person and – after distance learning began – virtually.
- Train our workshops team on **inclusive, engaging, and socially just classroom practices** through a year-long Culturally Responsive Teaching training program for the entire workshops team.
- **Triple participation in our Institute certificate programs** in coding, financial literacy, cooking, and the arts and create ways to bring our students the technology and resources needed to participate in the certificates from their own homes.
- Pivot from our in-person Chicago college tour in April to providing high school students with **interactive college admissions sessions and student panels** accessible any time from home from a variety of colleges – including 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities, HBCUs, and tribal colleges.
- Create an **award-winning Boundary Waters Minneapolis Edition** weeklong adventure for 100 middle school students.
- Offer **thousands of students access to rich, immersive theater experiences** – both in person with their families and then online through facilitated activities and shows offered via the PS website.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### FINANCIAL POSITION

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
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<td>Fund Balance (without donor restrictions)</td>
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### SUPPORT

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<tr>
<td>Grants and Contributions</td>
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<td>In-Kind Contributions</td>
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### REVENUES

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<tr>
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<td>Program Service Fees</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>Rental Income</td>
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<td>Total Revenues</td>
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### EXPENSES

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<tr>
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<td>General Operations</td>
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<td>Total Expenses</td>
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### Fund Balance:

- Beginning of Period: $2,718,349
- End of Period: $2,574,545
- Change in Fund Balance: $(143,804)

### Revenue and Other Support

- Grants & Contributions: 47%
- In-Kind Contributions: 22%
- Interest and Rental Income: 1%
- School Fees: 9%
- Program Service Fees: 1%

### Expenses

- Program Services: 38%
- General Operations: 6%
- Fundraising: 6%
“Project Success transforms classrooms and transforms lives. In a time of uncertainty, Project Success has been unwavering and nimble in their support of Minneapolis Public Schools students, families, and staff by providing opportunities for growth and community connection, from virtual theater experiences and college tours to cooking classes, online workshops, teaching resources and more.

They grow leaders in my classroom and across our city. They are an engine of equity and social justice, and are creative in overcoming obstacles to provide access for ALL of our students.

Students believe in Project Success; their facilitators bring laughter and engaging, relevant lessons to our classrooms year after year. Project Success makes “life after high school” less uncertain for our students because they’ve been helping them be brave in taking risks while envisioning and enacting their own successes for years. As teachers, we see Project Success as a valued partner. I want to thank Project Success for helping my students connect to their purpose.”

REBECCA OBERG
Project Success Partner Teacher
Roosevelt High School

“I remember in middle school, being such an awkward time, how great it was having someone come into the classroom that was so engaged about our learning and our future. That always stuck with me, the feeling of seeing Project Success come into the classroom and knowing it was going to be a good day. Moving onto high school, you kept me focused on setting goals and not only thinking about applying to colleges and universities, but going to them as well. I remember our trip to Dunwoody and telling myself, ‘If I do well, I can make it into a place like this, the University of Minnesota, or the other colleges I was aspiring to apply to.’ And that kept me academically motivated to succeed.” Below: Tanavia and her PS facilitator, Rose.

TANAVIA
Project Success Student, Edison High ‘20
University of Minnesota ‘24

We are here - and have been.
For 26 years, Project Success has brought the community together to address serious and prevalent inequities that young people face in our schools.
Recognizing one of the largest opportunity gaps in the country, our Executive Director and Founder, Adrienne Diercks set out on a mission in 1994 to connect students to their purpose, help them plan for and realize their dreams, and build and establish connections with each student to let them know Project Success is here for them.

An act of kindness and care, when multiplied by many can help change not only lives, but whole communities. By reading this, you are a part of Project Success, empowering the next generation of community change-makers and leaders from sixth grade to high school graduation and beyond.

We could not have done this work without friends and supporters like you and when we say, “WE ARE HERE,” we want to share exactly the people we are speaking about.

United for nearly three decades, we have provided more than 100,000 Minneapolis and St. Paul students with caring support, innovative curriculum and expansive programming that motivates and empowers young people to know who they are, where they want to go in this world, and how they are going to get there.
While reaching more than 16,000 students and their families each year, we know there is so much more work to not only meet the needs of students, but to reach those that need us.
We will continue to listen to the community and find ways to connect more students to their purpose, - and we know the best way to do that is through our people and our relationships — these are just a few of them.

WE ARE HERE and these are our stories.
Meet Kristi Erickson.

Rooted in the belief that when one of us succeeds, we all succeed is what drives Project Success volunteer Kristi Erickson to do more for her community.

“Originally, I wanted to be an architect when I was growing up,” explains Kristi. “Learning the thought process behind how something is built the way it is built to work always kept my interest and made me want to learn more.”

Being involved and proactive in school and her education is what got Kristi started in volunteering.

First introduced to Project Success through an invitation to volunteer at a fundraising event from longtime supporter and current board member Elise Linehan, Kristi quickly became invested in our mission.

“When I first heard about the volunteering opportunity from Elise I did not get the full scope of what Project Success did,” she notes. “Then I looked at your website and I saw that you were providing so many opportunities and ways to support students, and I became fully invested.”

Her volunteer time with Project Success has been primarily spent providing rides for students to and from the Project Success Institute, and serving on our organization’s Engagement and Outreach committee, which advises our development and communications staff team and reaches out to the community for organizational support and awareness.

However, Kristi says her favorite time with Project Success has been with the students. “Before the pandemic, some of my best memories are just simply talking to the students when I drove them home,” Kristi says. “Sometimes it takes a while for some of them to open up to me, but that is why consistency is so important in volunteering. Asking them how school was, what they learned, how their day was, and just making conversation – those are the moments that are really special to me.”

Although she cannot be in-person with them right now, she does know that it is important to do what we can for students during the pandemic. She states, “Education and learning are such a fundamental part of young people’s lives. Students are at an age where they are discovering who they are, what possibilities are out there, and what their dreams are. They need people to root for and believe in them, and that’s why I volunteer with Project Success.”

Meet the Kabeya family.

You could say Project Success is a family tradition for the Kabeyas.

They’ve participated in workshops, Boundary Waters trips, college tours and more, but it’s the Marcy Musical that stands out the most.

Parents Sylvie and Mike’s four sons – Bobby, Djinn, Cristal and Sundy – all had roles in the PS musical at Marcy Open School. That means for nine consecutive years, at least one Kabeya played a role in the annual production.

In their professional and personal lives, Sylvie and Mike prioritized performance, art, and journalism, and it’s important to them that their children have the same opportunities to express themselves. Project Success has been an avenue for them to do just that, while simultaneously planning for their futures.

The family immigrated from Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2006. “Growing up in Africa, our parents used to choose for us what to do,” says Mike. “They sometimes force you on a path that’s not yours. I want my kids to use their full potential.”

And, without a doubt, they are. The boys each have a unique perspective on the ways the musical, and Project Success overall, have given them opportunities to thrive. “I’ve made a lot of new friends,” says Sundy. “It’s a safe and secure place to get to know people better,” says Cristal, “and they taught me to be committed and organized, which carried on when I got to high school.” For Djinn, it’s all about “a passion for acting, and building a strong foundation.”

While the three youngest Kabeyas are still in school, their brother, Bobby, studies at MCTC and is pursuing a successful music career with his band Mileo.

As for the musical experience, Mike adds, “It’s more than a musical. They learned, there’s no me without you,” says Mike, “When you’re putting your energies together, you know everyone involved is a piece of the puzzle. They know to depend on each other, and I think that’s a great picture of how society actually has to work.”

“Going to school and learning math and science is one thing, but learning about life is quite a different thing,” says Mike. “Project Success teaches kids about life.”
Meet Julia Mann.

Entering sixth grade at Anwatin Middle School, then 12-year old Julia Mann didn’t know what to expect. Exploring her ambitions and future planning certainly was not on her radar — until she met Project Success and her first facilitator, Jason.

In-class workshops with Jason were Julia’s strongest memories of Project Success. Not only because they were monthly, but because she was learning and applying the content right away to her life and education.

“Jason really helped me think more about myself, and what I was interested in at such a young age,” she says.

One of Project Success’ first partner schools, Anwatin, was where the Project Success musical program began in 2000. Through the musical, Julia discovered a new passion for theater. Julia found a home on the stage and newfound friendships with fellow performers. She immersed herself in the experience, participating in every musical at Anwatin, until she moved onto South High School, continuing with Project Success.

After graduation from South, Julia chose to pursue her post-secondary education at Luther College in Iowa. There, she developed a one-woman show exploring her mixed-race identity entitled Mixed Reality.

“Powerful. That’s how I would describe every Project Success experience I had,” she says. “Starting from the workshops to the live professional theater performances, the musicals, and the field trips where I got to experience new places and spaces for my education and my future. Each experience gave me exposure to new opportunities and different ways of thinking.”

“Each person on my journey helped me build a strong foundation of self-expression, Project Success was a big part of that.”

Today, she is still performing and finding ways to infuse the arts into her life while juggling a career at Target corporate.

Empowered and ambitious, Julia’s advice for current students is to “give back, explore the arts, get to know different types of people, and work hard in school. You are capable of anything and Project Success is there to cheer you on and support you in your journey. It is a real community and they will welcome you for a lifetime.”

Meet Ryan Weldon.

For the past four years, Ryan has gone into the classroom with a purpose — and that is to put students first.

With ambition rooted in theater and arts, he transferred his passion for the stage into the classroom and his new audience is the future of our community.

“What I originally wanted to do was be a performer and an actor,” says Ryan. “I was out in New York and Los Angeles for years pursuing an education and a career in the arts. Eventually that does have a drain on you and I decided to move back to Minnesota.”

After a short break, he found Project Success on an audition board and took a chance to apply. “First reading what Project Success was doing in the arts, I became interested, especially getting to work with young people,” he recalls. “Then learning everything that is done by Project Success as a whole, I knew it was a right fit and what I wanted to do.”

Bellowing with energy and enthusiasm, Ryan is much more than facilitator—he is a caretaker, a friend, and a role model to each student he encounters. Described as ‘innovative, thoughtful, and creative’ by his colleagues, Ryan’s unique flair makes him a very special and important part of the Project Success team.

Ryan describes the work he does in the classroom as very personal — it’s about making connections. “One thing I have learned about entering the classroom these past few years with our students is that I cannot go in and not be ‘fully myself,’” he expresses. “In order to get them to answer the questions and participate in activities that are about their real lives, I need to be fully authentic with them in the environment as well.”

He does agree that there is a change in our learning environments since the pandemic, but one thing remains the same for him. “We are here because it is important to create communities of support for our students. Giving them a break from what’s happening now and letting them think about what is in store for their future. To keep dreaming.”

Ryan always begins his classroom workshops by asking, “Who is Project Success about?” His answer to his students is simply, “It is and will always be about you.” In a time of uncertainty, there is one thing that is certain - that the students of Sanford, Marcy and Folwell Middle Schools know that they have Ryan, and all of Project Success, in their corner.
Recently, making a significant commitment in support of the Dreams to Futures Campaign to expand and deepen programs for students, Sam and Steve continue to renew and deepen their support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I cannot imagine going through what students are going through right now,” exclaims Sam. “Without hesitation we know when we give to Project Success, our gifts are going to work not only right away, but in the right way to help students and their families. That is very important to us right now.”

Tracking results and seeing the direct impact that Project Success has made on the Minneapolis community through events has also been a highlight of their time as friends of the organization.

Rooted in passion for students, their families, and our community – we want to thank Sam and Steve for partnering with us and their shared dedication to connecting students to their purpose and their dreams.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS.
Project Success is deeply grateful to everyone who made a contribution. You are the driving force that makes our work possible. Together, we are transforming our community for generations to come.

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July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
Minnesota Vikings
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Trillium Family Foundation
Willis Towers Watson

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Bassford Remele
Big Lots
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Julie Cotty
Misty Durant and Sam Hanson
Richard Fleder
Chris Keane and Harlan Limpert
Kathy and Al Lenzmeier

WE ARE SUPPORTERS.
Meet Susan (Sam) Boren King and her husband Steve King.

Connected to Project Success by their friend and Project Success Board Member, Karla Ekdahl, Sam and Steve have spent over a decade as friends of our organization, helping build the future of our community through our students.

Supporting the organization since 2008, they both agree that equity and access to opportunity is more important than ever for our students and their families. When asked what she wants the future of our community to look like, Sam swiftly replies, “One of equity. Every young person in our community deserves the same opportunities. Until that happens, we can’t sit back. Steve and I believe we can help through our support of Project Success.”

“When I think about the students, my mind instantly goes to their future,” explains Steve. “When I sold my business, I made the decision that I would give back as much as I could to create opportunity for young people. They truly are our future.”