



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-2025

The mission of MindPeace is to ensure that every child and adolescent has access to an effective system of mental health and wellness.

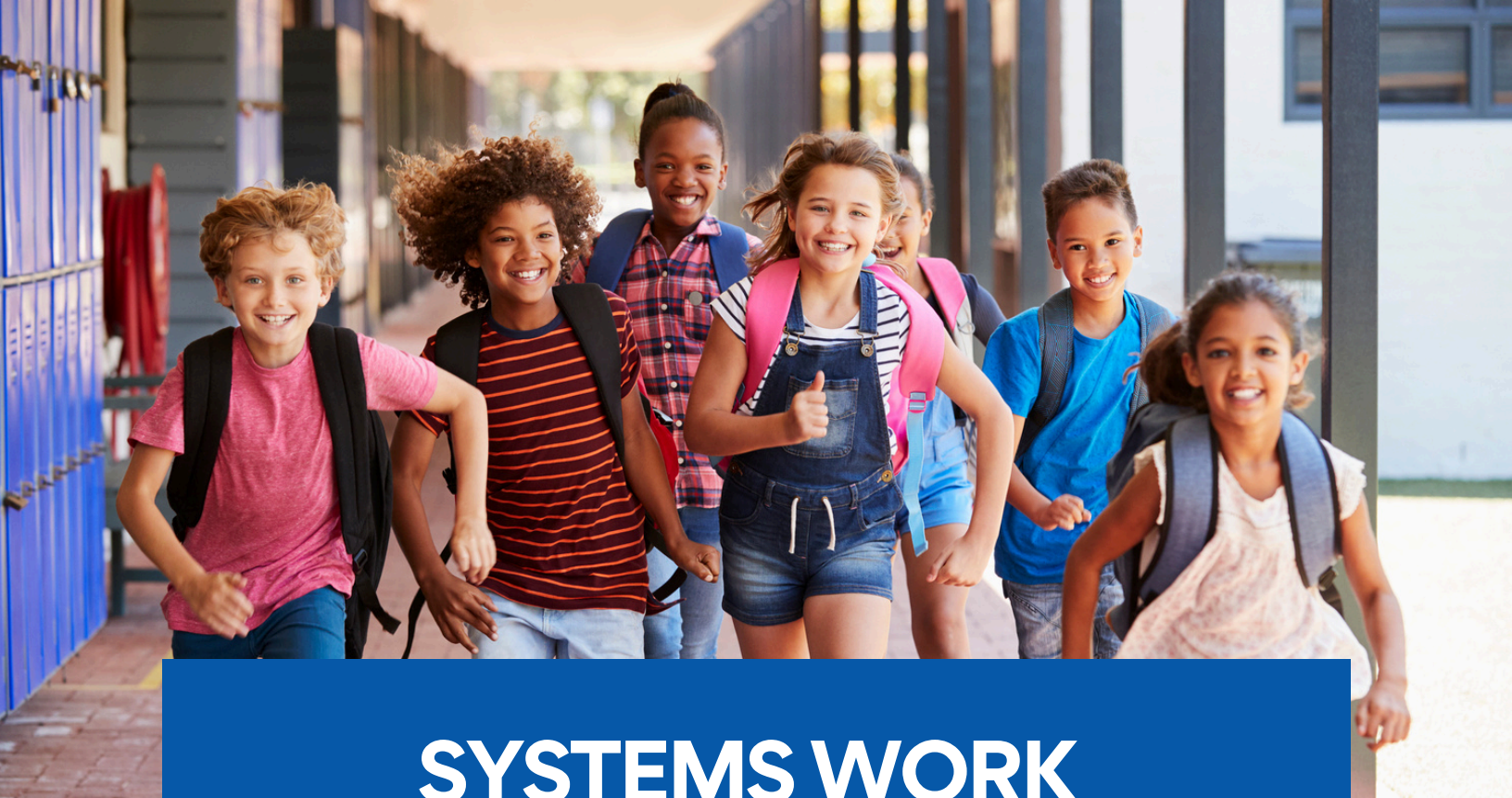


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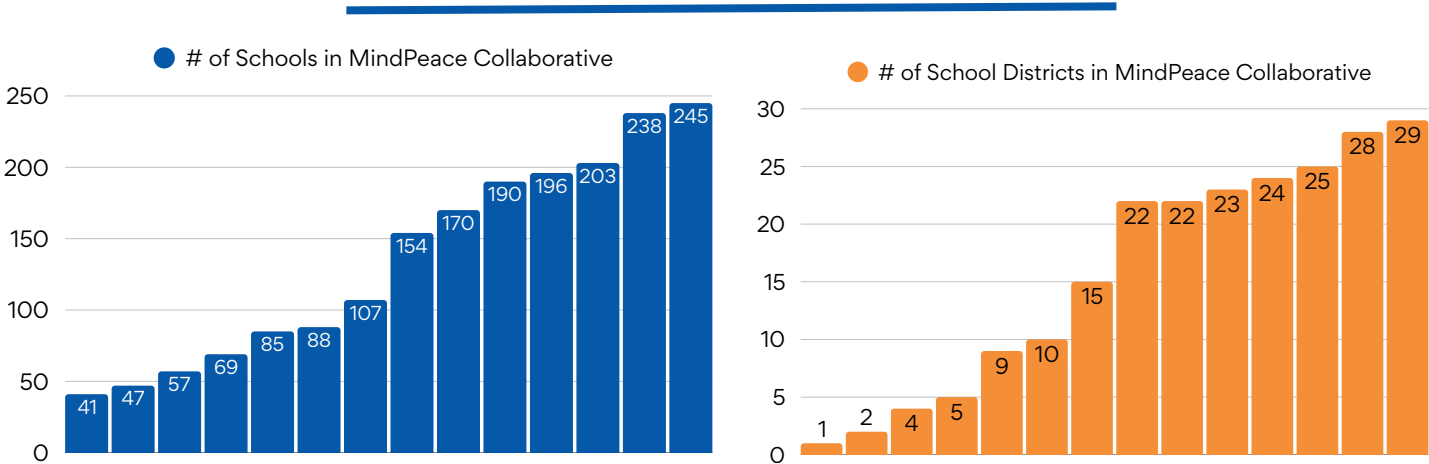


# SYSTEMS WORK

Over the past year at MindPeace, we have continued to expand our reach by working closely with school leaders and mental health partners across the region to support youth wellness within the school environment and community.

During the 2024–2025 school year, we increased the time spent providing professional learning opportunities to our partners on a variety of topics, including behavioral intensity, environmental modifications and strategies for setting classrooms up for success. These efforts are part of our broader commitment to improving access to mental health services and addressing systemic barriers that prevent equitable care and support for all youth and young adults.

In addition, we have deepened our collaboration with district leaders to review and refine discipline, attendance, and student service policies and procedures. Our goal is to ensure these systems promote a positive school culture and foster mental well-being. We have also placed intentional focus on aligning the medical and educational models, recognizing that embedding services and supports into the school day can significantly improve mental health outcomes for youth.





# ACCESS TO CARE



## 74%

Access to Care

The sixteen school-based behavioral health agencies provided these additional services:

- **13,474 total hours** of individual or group preventions services to **5,426 students**.
- **750 hours** of information dissemination.
- **11,186 total hours** of education to teachers/staff, students, or parents/guardians.
- **1,522 total hours** spent on mental health screenings and support.
- **9,055 hours** of planning services with schools.

## With the help of 16 school-based mental health agencies in the MindPeace Network:

MindPeace partnered with **29** school districts across **4** counties impacting a total of **166,163** students!

As a result of our network partners, **74%** of students referred for care in schools were able to access treatment. According to the CDC (2023), only about 20% of children with mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders receive care from a specialized mental health care provider.

\*The MindPeace benchmark is 80% access to care!

## 20

Average Hours of Care

## 9,904

New Student Referrals for Therapy

## 10,851

Students Treated

## MINDPEACE COMMUNITY REFERRALS

## 581

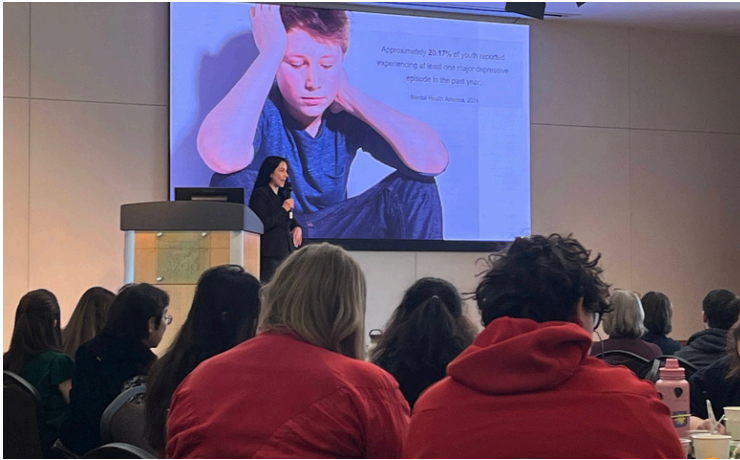
Families  
Supported

MindPeace is dedicated to breaking down barriers to mental health care by guiding families through the process of finding appropriate services. When schools encounter waitlists or other obstacles to providing on-site mental health support at the school, MindPeace helps—with caregiver consent—to connect families with community agencies that have timely availability. This ensures quicker access to care tailored to each family's needs.

In the past year, MindPeace partnered with **76** schools to implement this referral model. As a result, **581** families received individualized support, connecting them to mental health providers with open appointments. This approach not only shortened wait times but also improved alignment between family needs and available services, contributing to more efficient care delivery across participating schools.

# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

## 3RD ANNUAL FAMILY EDUCATION DAY



1N5 and MindPeace partnered in collaboration with Cincinnati Children's and the University of Cincinnati to host a third annual education day at the Cincinnati Zoo for adolescents and young adults living with depression or anxiety and their caregivers.

The event featured expert presentations and breakout sessions. Topics included the societal impact of mental health, symptom management strategies, emerging treatment options and practical coping skills tailored to both youth and adult audiences.

## FORUMS

### Topics included:

- School attendance and engagement
- Responding to a school or community crisis/tragedy
- Immigration rights and challenges
- House Bill 8
- Chronic absenteeism
- School legislation updates
- Co-occurring behavioral and developmental health challenges
- Parent engagement

School and mental health agency leaders came together to discuss current mental health concerns and share potential solutions. Nearly 200 professionals were in attendance for the MindPeace Forums held throughout the year.





# MINDPEACE SPACES OF WELLNESS



MindPeace Rooms® are calming spaces in schools that help students regulate emotions, refocus and re-engage in learning. These environments promote mindfulness, movement and self-reflection through tools that soothe the nervous system. Since the inception of MindPeace Rooms® in 2017 this concept has expanded to teacher's break-rooms and now the first Juvenile Detention Center in Ohio.

In partnership with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Detention Center, MindPeace introduced Ohio's first Multi-Sensory De-escalation Room (MSDR) (photos on right)—a trauma-informed space where youth can safely express emotions, manage anger and build long-term coping skills. Research shows MSDRs reduce violence and improve safety for both residents and staff. This collaboration resulted in one large MindPeace Multi-Sensory Environment™ (MMSE) and calming corners in each of the Center's 10 pods. The Youth Center is the second in the nation to implement this model, following Sacramento, California. Trained Youth Center staff began using the MMSE in March of 2025. Through July 30, there were 77 visits to the sensory spaces, and 94% of participating residents reported an improvement in their overall well-being following their time in the MMSE.

To support educators, Staff MindPeace Rooms were developed to provide a wellness oasis grounded in nurturing the five senses. These spaces include massage chairs, exercise equipment, meditation tools, a coffee bar, collaborative seating, a teacher workspace, and a dining table to foster community. In the past three years, 11 Staff MindPeace Rooms have been completed, helping staff stay mentally healthy to better serve students.



## MINDPEACE ROOM® ACCESS



Active MindPeace Rooms

**51**



Logged Students

**954**



Documented MindPeace Room Visits

**5,060**



Visits were Scheduled Interventions

**40%**



Students felt much better or somewhat better after visiting

**87%**

# RESOURCES

## \* SUPPORT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

The MindPeace website has a wealth of information, research, tools and more. Visitors come to find information, effective strategies and search for a mental health provider that fits their specific needs in the Greater Cincinnati Community.

 [mindpeacecincinnati.com](http://mindpeacecincinnati.com)

Website Visitors **49,790**

Website Visits **121,389**



### Better systems lead to **Brighter Outcomes!**

MindPeace Liaisons provided consistent and meaningful consultation to a broad range of school partners, contributing to the development and enhancement of mental wellness systems at both the district and building levels. This work included quarterly administrative consultations and targeted projects designed to identify needs and co-create sustainable solutions to 90 school teams.

An example of this work was shown when MindPeace helped Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) develop a comprehensive Mental Health Policy, working with the Board of Education and district leaders. The adopted policy strengthens district-wide systems for supporting student mental wellness, codifies trauma-informed practices, and reflects a lasting commitment to proactive, equitable mental health support for all CPS students.

## DONORS

### \* THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS INDIVIDUAL AND FOUNDATION DONORS!

- Fifth Third
- Hamilton Community Foundation
- Hamilton County Public Health
- Individual Donors
- Interact for Health
- Millstone Fund
- Neediest Kids of All
- OneOhio
- Robert & Adele Schiff Family Foundation
- Thomas J. Emery Memorial

A special thank you to all the knowledgeable speakers who have presented throughout the year!

# PARTNERS

## 245 SCHOOLS

- Cincinnati Country Day School
- Cincinnati Public Schools
- Clermont Northeastern Local School District
- Deer Park Community City School District
- Finneytown Local School District
- Forest Hills School District
- Great Oaks Career Campuses



- Hamilton City Schools
- Indian Hill Exempted Village School District
- Kings Local School District
- Lakota Local Schools
- Lebanon City Schools
- Lockland School District
- Loveland City School District
- Madeira City Schools
- Mariemont City Schools
- Mason City Schools
- Mercy Montessori School
- Milford Exempted Village Schools
- Northwest Local School District
- Oak Hills School District
- Princeton City Schools

## 29 DISTRICTS

- Reading Community City School District
- Ross Local School District
- Southwest Local School District
- St. Bernard-Elmwood Place City Schools
- St. Xavier High School
- Sycamore Community Schools
- The Seven Hills School
- Three Rivers Local School District
- Ursuline Academy
- Wayne Local School District
- West Clermont School District
- Winton Woods City Schools
- Wyoming City Schools

## 21 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AGENCIES



- Beech Acres Parenting Center\*
- Best Point Behavioral Health\*
- Butterfly Support Services\*
- Camelot Community Care
- Catalyst Counseling, LLC.\*
- Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio
- Central Clinic\*
- Child Focus, Inc.\*
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center\*
- Community First Solutions\*
- The Counseling Source

## \*16 SCHOOL-BASED PROVIDERS

- eXclusive Services
- Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services\*
- Lighthouse Youth and Family Services\*
- Necco\*
- NewPath
- Poppy's Therapeutic Corner\*
- Talbert House\*
- TriHealth\*
- UMADAOP of Cincinnati\*
- Wired to Bloom\*

# OUR TEAM



## Susan Shelton, Executive Director

Susan was a founder of MindPeace as a volunteer of the Junior League of Cincinnati (JLC) and under Susan's leadership, MindPeace has earned numerous awards and national recognition.



## Nicole Pfirman, Senior Vice President

Nicole previously served Mason City Schools for 19 years. As the Sr. Vice President at MindPeace, Nicole is responsible for facilitating the interdisciplinary collaboration between the clinical and educational sectors in designing a system of care that addresses the needs of the whole child.



## Tina Russo, Director of School-Based Partnerships

Tina is retired from Cincinnati Public Schools where she served as a principal and leadership coach. She started her journey with MindPeace as a Board Member before moving into her current position where she helps improve and develop school-based partnerships.



## Elana Carnevale, Director of Quality Improvement

Elana has spent her career working in the non-profit industry working in the healthcare field. At MindPeace, Elana helps to implement quality improvement efforts in areas of access to care, transitions in care, trauma-sensitive learning, MindPeace Rooms, and technological advancements. Elana also manages communications, events and outcomes data for partners.



## Christy Berning, Director of Business Development and Community Education

Previously Christy has held leadership roles within the fields of communications, education, and non-profit management. At MindPeace, Christy helps with research and grant writing. She also plans community education events like the MindPeace Forums and Summit.



## Erin Owens, Director of School-Based System Consultation

Dr. Erin Owens has dedicated nearly 30 years to public education. Passionate about supporting English Language Learners and immigrant families, she helped schools celebrate cultural identity and foster inclusive learning. Known for building strong school-community partnerships, Erin now focuses on expanding access to quality mental health care in schools.



## Carissa Parker, Access Coordinator

Carissa began at MindPeace in 2022 as an intern before her current position of providing direct therapy referrals and mental health resources to families in their community while also assisting with the implementation of MindPeace Rooms™.



## Molly Schmidt, School-Based Partnership Consultant

Molly holds an MSW and has worked in school-based mental health therapy, as a school success liaison and resource coordinator, and most recently served as the Mental Wellness Coordinator at Mason High School for 3 years. She brings her experience in these roles to MindPeace where she is responsible for school-based mental health partnerships and consultation.



## Claire Kuchenrither, School-Based Partnership and Advocacy Consultant

Claire began her journey with MindPeace as an intern in 2022. She now holds a Juris Doctorate with a focus on juvenile and education law. At MindPeace, she'll help to identify students in need, develop prevention and intervention strategies, and support mentally healthy school environments.

MindPeace also hires 2-3 interns tri-annually to help support the work of MindPeace, and to provide valuable experience to our budding professionals.

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