



Annual Report

2025–2026

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





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 2025–2026 school year MindPeace supported:

School & Systems

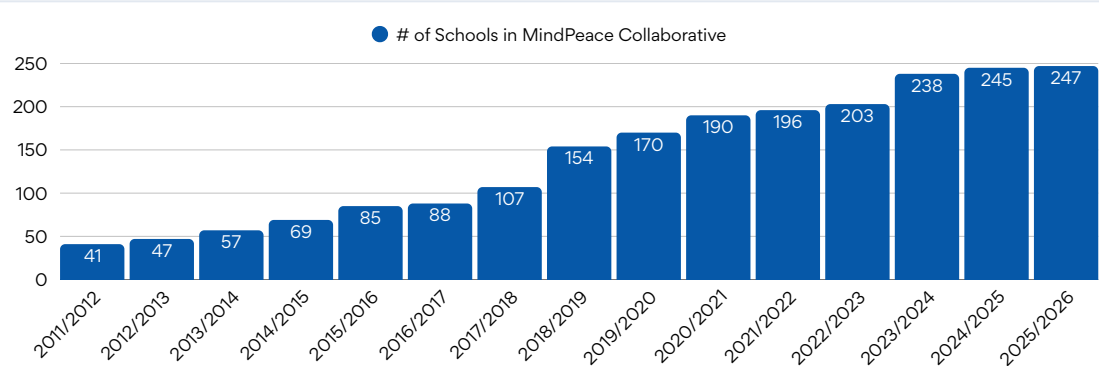
MindPeace leads the School-Based Mental Health Network, providing referral consultations, administrative support, and crisis response planning to help schools connect students and families with timely mental health services and wraparound supports.

Regional Professional Development

MindPeace delivers professional development that strengthens educators’ ability to support students with behavioral and mental health needs by promoting wellness-focused systems, enhancing crisis response skills, fostering inclusive school environments, and educating parents on child development and early signs of distress.

Regional Systems Consultation

In partnership with district and school leaders, MindPeace helps strengthen systems for addressing attendance, discipline, and mental health concerns, aligning efforts with MTSS and PBIS frameworks to support consistent, sustainable, and equitable practices across schools.



ACCESS TO CARE

76%

Access to Care

20

Average Hours
of Care

9,612

New Student
Referrals

11,231

Students
Treated



76%

Access to Care

*The MindPeace benchmark is 80% access to care!

With the help of 20 school-based mental health agencies in the MindPeace Network:

MindPeace partnered with **29** school districts across **4** counties impacting a total of **157,948** students!

As a result of our network partners, **76%** 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 **20** school-based behavioral health agencies provided these additional services:

- **9,337 total hours** of individual or group preventions services to **6,208 students**.
- **693 hours** of information dissemination.
- **10,233 total hours** of education to teachers/staff, students, or parents/guardians.
- **1,160 total hours** spent on mental health screenings and support.
- **6,196 hours** of planning services with schools.

MINDPEACE COMMUNITY REFERRALS

491 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 **69** schools to implement this referral model. As a result, **491** 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



Forums

234

Attendees

4

Offerings

Youth Voice Forum:

This Forum brought together school leaders and mental health partners to elevate youth voice. MindPeace shared insights on the Youth Voice Continuum, while a youth panel offered firsthand perspectives and practical guidance for supporting student engagement.

Forum on Intense Behavior:

To address the growing need for effective responses to intense youth behaviors, MindPeace convened a virtual forum for school and community partners. Dr. J. Stuart Ablon of Harvard University presented a research-based framework for building the cognitive, emotional, and relational skills that support youth success.



4th Annual Anxiety & Depression Family Education Day

1N5 and MindPeace, in collaboration with Cincinnati Children's, hosted their fourth annual Education Day at the Cincinnati Zoo for adolescents and young adults with depression or anxiety and their caregivers.

The event featured expert presentations and breakout sessions on mental health impacts, symptom management, treatment options and coping strategies for both youth and adults.



School Presentations

25

School Sites

The MindPeace team provided many educational sessions for school partners, mental health partners and parents. This year a 3 part mental health literacy series was provided to parents based on the Anxious Generation.

An extensive amount of Consultation-based training was provided to support the integration of comprehensive wellness systems within existing student support frameworks. This work focused on strengthening schoolwide mental health infrastructure in ways that build protective factors, reduce risk-taking and addictive behaviors, and promote healthy coping and self-regulation skills for students. In addition training was provided concerning crisis response systems and the overall mental health system for our region.



MindPeace Summit

250 Attendees

Topic:
The Power of Play

This is an annual event that brings together our partners from across the Region. Through a poster session, partners highlighted quality improvement efforts that support early identification, skill-building, and consistent, developmentally appropriate responses across settings. The keynote address emphasized the role of play within both educational and therapeutic systems, illustrating how playful, relational approaches foster connection, self-regulation, and resilience—key foundations for lifelong mental wellness.

NEW Newsletter Launched

This year, MindPeace launched a new newsletter, Onward and Upward, to keep educators and community partners informed about pressing mental health needs and resources, upcoming events, and network updates.

Four issues were published, focusing on sleep health, resilience, student engagement, and navigating transitions and change. In its inaugural year, **Onward and Upward** achieved an engagement rate of about 47%, with over 93% of subscribers actively engaging with the information and resources provided.



Navigating Transitions and Change

CHANGE... What emotions does this simple word generate within your body? Are you a change-seeker or does the idea of navigating a change or transition leave you feeling overwhelmed and exhausted?

We are on the cusp of many different seasons of transition - graduations, school-to-summer, summer-to-fall, grade-level moves, and much more.

How can we best support children and teens through these transitions?

MINDPEACE SPACES OF WELLNESS



Professional services were delivered to support and strengthen the social and emotional regulation skills of staff and students across participating Cincinnati Public Schools middle schools. Schools implemented targeted, evidence-based social-emotional interventions designed to improve staff and student self-regulation, coping strategies, and behavioral outcomes.

Through the establishment and utilization of MindPeace Rooms, staff and students accessed dedicated environments and resources that reinforced self-regulation practices and social-emotional skill development. Supports included professional development for school staff, individualized consultation, and the provision of self-regulation materials and tools aligned with each school's One Plan and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.

Implementation of these strategies increased schools' capacity to address students' social-emotional needs and fostered greater student engagement in wellness supports. Participating schools also strengthened outcome measurement and data collection practices to monitor student progress, utilization of wellness spaces, and behavioral indicators. Early findings indicate positive growth in students' ability to manage emotions, utilize coping strategies, and engage successfully in the school environment, contributing to improved social and emotional regulation outcomes.



MINDPEACE ROOMS

MindPeace Rooms are welcoming, multisensory wellness spaces designed to help students build social-emotional skills, practice healthy coping strategies, and learn how to regulate their emotions in a safe, supportive environment. These spaces give students a place to pause, reset, and de-escalate when emotions become overwhelming—helping them return to learning when they are ready.

By providing students with practical tools for self-regulation and emotional wellness, MindPeace Rooms support both immediate needs and long-term skill building. Most importantly, they offer an alternative to exclusionary responses, helping students remain connected to their school community and engaged in their education.



New MindPeace Rooms Opened

6



Logged Students

716



Documented MindPeace Room Visits

2,886



Visits were Scheduled Interventions

43%



Students felt much better or somewhat better after visiting

89%

RESOURCES

 mindpeacecincinnati.com



Support at Your Fingertips

RESOURCES

The MindPeace website offers information, research, resources, and practical tools to support mental wellness. Visitors can access effective strategies and Greater Cincinnati's searchable database of mental health providers.

76,730

Website
Visitors

98,700

Website
Visits



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 brought school administrators together for an in-person forum featuring keynote speaker Dr. Eric Arzubi, focused on a critical shift: moving from responding to crises to preventing them before they begin.

The forum introduced a strategic framework for building stronger, more proactive school-based mental health systems through early identification, risk-stratified support, and cross-sector collaboration.

By equipping schools to recognize and address behavioral health needs earlier, these strategies help prevent challenges from escalating into crisis while expanding access to meaningful mental health support. Just as importantly, early intervention can reduce risk factors associated with youth substance use and addiction. Together, these efforts help schools create healthier, more resilient communities where students can get the support they need before reaching a crisis point.

DONORS



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS INDIVIDUAL AND FOUNDATION DONORS!

- Greater Cincinnati Foundation
- Individual Donors
- Interact for Health
- Millstone Fund
- The Andrew Jergens Foundation
- The BGR Foundation
- The Daniel and Susan Pfau Foundation
- The OneOhio Recovery Foundation
- Neediest Kids of All
- Robert & Adele Schiff Family Foundation
- Thomas J. Emery Memorial

Thank you also to our educational event sponsors Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Interact for Health and Nancy and John Silverman. Thanks as well to all the knowledgeable speakers who have presented throughout the year!

PARTNERS

247 SCHOOLS 31 DISTRICTS

- 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
- 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



22 MENTAL HEALTH AGENCIES

- Animal Companion Counseling
- 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
- Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services
- Lighthouse Youth and Family Services
- National Youth Advocate Program
- Necco
- NewPath
- Poppy's Therapeutic Corner
- Talbert House
- TriHealth
- UMADAOP of Cincinnati
- Wired to Bloom



SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Anxiety Center
- Charlie Health IOP
- Cincinnati Children's Eating Disorder Clinic
- Glad House
- Holding Space Collaborative
- Kids Thrive
- Springer Diagnostic Center



OUR TEAM

Welcome Nicole Pfirman as the New Executive Director

This year marks an important leadership transition for MindPeace as we honor Susan's 24 years of service and welcome Nicole as our new Executive Director.

Susan helped found MindPeace as a volunteer with the Junior League of Cincinnati and, through her visionary leadership, guided the organization's growth into a nationally recognized leader in school-based mental health, earning numerous awards and accolades along the way. We are deeply grateful for her lasting impact on children, families, schools, and the community.

As Susan passes the torch, Nicole brings a strong foundation of experience and leadership. After 19 years with Mason City Schools, Nicole joined MindPeace three years ago and most recently served as Senior Vice President, leading efforts to strengthen collaboration between education and mental health providers to support the whole child. Her expertise and passion make her exceptionally well-positioned to lead MindPeace into its next chapter.

Thank you for
24 years of
leadership
Susan Shelton!

Staff

Jennifer Walther-Worlf

Vice President

Jennifer brings nearly 20 years of experience in public education as a teacher, student support specialist, principal, and special education leader. Most recently a Special Education Supervisor, she led district-wide initiatives in MTSS, PBIS, restorative practices, and school-community partnerships. At MindPeace, Jennifer supports the advancement of integrated, aligned school-based mental health services and systems.

Dr. 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.

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.

Molly Schmidt

School-Based Partnership Consultant

Molly holds an MSW and brings experience in school-based mental health, school success and resource coordination. At MindPeace, she oversees school-based mental health partnerships and consultation.

Americorp Peer to Peer Support Staff

MindPeace believes in the value of youth voice and lived experience so Americorp Peer to Peer Support staff have been added to our team.

**Thank you to HEY! Cincinnati for making this possible and we look forward to growing this program in the coming year.*

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 and outcomes data for partners.

Breanna Lynch

Director of School-Based Partnerships

Brianna is an occupational therapist and has experience in community mental health, and schools. She specializes in creating innovative programs that expand prevention, early intervention, and access to care. Her trauma-responsive, equity-centered approach emphasizes relationships, play, and strengths-based strategies to support youth well-being.

Maria Leadon

Resource Coordinator

Maria brings valuable experience supporting families and helping them navigate systems of care. At MindPeace she helps connect families to mental wellness resources, coordinate school referral supports, and assist with our MindPeace Rooms across partner schools.

Claire Kuchenrither

School-Based Partnership and Advocacy Consultant

Claire began her journey with MindPeace as an intern in 2022. She holds a Juris Doctorate with a focus on juvenile and education law. At MindPeace, she'll help with partnership consultation and she will also play a big role in our renewed advocacy efforts.

MindPeace also hires student interns to help support the work of MindPeace, and to provide valuable experience to our budding professionals.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff Brokamp, Chairman	David Mentzel
Victoria Parlin, Secretary	Shauna Murphy
Kent Cashell, Treasurer	Orly Rumberg
Barbara Boat, PhD	Maryse Amin, PhD
Jane Portman	Suzanne Sampang, MD

BOARD LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

This year, MindPeace recognizes a meaningful board leadership transition. After serving as Chairman of the Board since MindPeace's founding, Lee Carter is stepping down from the role. We are deeply grateful for his vision, leadership, and longstanding commitment to our mission. We are pleased to welcome Jeff Brokamp as our new Board Chair and look forward to his leadership in the years ahead.