

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**RESTART,
RENEW,
REBUILD**

AN AMAZING START WITH ALL THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS



Cookie Cart is embarking on our 37th year of teaching life, leadership, and employment skills to younger generations. We are often their first time job, where our unique program helps to thrive and lead in our communities and beyond. At Cookie Cart we embrace the potential of every young person by believing in their innate strength, lifting their talents, and supporting their future as tomorrow's leaders.

At Cookie Cart, we are often a first workplace, where our very special program embodies accelerated learning through on-the-job lessons of social emotional learning, responsibility, 21st century skills, citizenship, and financial literacy. Our fabulous staff offers a safe place for belonging, a place of compassionate accountability, where teamwork, collaboration, and lessons come to life together. Young people gain these amazing attributes while baking delicious treats in our social enterprise bakeries in North Side Minneapolis and East Side Saint Paul.

While 2024 was a tremendous year of program success, it was also a pivotal year for Cookie Cart to internally reset with a commitment to our mission and our communities. We aligned executive leadership and balanced our internal team with mission-based priorities. We showcased 98% satisfaction for young employees in our program, while they helped us bake a half a million cookies! 100% of young people said they would refer their peers, friends, and family to Cookie Cart! 100%, which means we have a lot of work to do – our communities need us, more than ever before. Cookie Cart currently is the employer of choice for young adults, we have an operating wait list of 100 students who want to be working here and enrolled into our program. With these numbers, we know we are doing things right at Cookie Cart, and we still need your help to make it happen and help our future wait lists.

During every moment of our day-to-day success, and our hopes and dreams of tomorrow, through every second, we operate with gratitude. The tremendous honor we have at Cookie Cart, to impact young and future generations, to contribute to citizenship and community, to elevate the success of our workforce – it is not lost on me that this honor is because of your gracious and generous contributions. We thank you for believing in the amazing mission of Cookie Cart and welcome your continued partnership into the future. You are the key ingredient to making this mission shine, where we bake bright futures every day, and where we are so much more than just a cookie!

Together, we are Cookie Cart, thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacquelyn Carpenter".

Jacquelyn Carpenter, *Executive Director*

We Value

- The potential of every young person
 - Equity and opportunity
 - The power of relationships
 - Compassionate accountability
-

Cookie Cart program teaches:

- People skills
 - Communication skills
 - Financial skills (budget – savings – spending)
 - Time management
 - Connection to others
 - Relationship skills like conflict resolution and networking
 - How to prepare for the future
 - Leadership
 - Work ethic
-

We provide a fun and safe environment.

Cookie Cart helps Young Adults find a sense of belonging, create new friends and community connections, establish and embrace teamwork while creating a non-judgmental positive environment to thrive and lead.

Cookie Cart helps Young Adults escape from drama, conflicts, drugs, peer pressure, violence, stereotypes, discrimination, stress, negative influences, and financial struggles.

RESTART, RENEW, REBUILD

Get ready for 2025! We've got some truly amazing things in store, like:

Refresh

As we look into the future, our focus will continue to result in successful training for hundreds of young people. Cookie Cart is committed to refreshing our strengths with:

- *Community and collective impact partnerships with peer non-profits for growth and shared services*
- *Elevating experiential learning within the bakery to build the right habits at work offering more support and coaching so young people can apply the wonderful workforce skills they are learning*

Renew

While noting the changes of our world around us, we must adjust to market demands that contribute to young adult success in this generation and the next. We are excited to match the challenges of today's ecosystem and workforce by:

- *Implementing Teen Advocacy Council – lifting voices of teens, including them in business decisions, and expanding our collective community impact*
- *Creating workplace summer internships with the support of our employer partners. This is assisting to advance exposure and experience to the real-world of work and all aspects of business, helping teens set goals for careers or college interests.*

Rebuild

To give our best at Cookie Cart, we must always be operating at our best. Updating internal systems to monitor, track, and analyze business practices is essential to becoming a premier employer in today's marketplace. The reality is we are setting the bar high for young individuals in our trusted care, they need to see us operating at a high level as an example of an amazing workplace.

- *Technology equipment, systems, and software are critical infrastructure that need updates and enhancements for us to operate at our best. This allows our donors, board, and communities transparently see the metrics of our success.*
- *Classroom interventions will also need updated technical systems to lift our amazing curriculum and content into a best-in-class model for today's learning. Things like digital connections, hybrid and connected classrooms, as well as updated learning management systems, and even mobile interface options are all on the horizon at Cookie Cart!*



Cookie Cart Rising Star KOKO

Highlighting one of our many Rising Stars, Koko started at Cookie Cart in 2022, she comes to us from Harding High school. Her favorite cookie is the Double Chocolate Chip – yum! Koko's plans after high school include a career track in legal services or criminal justice – she has interest in attending Florida International University. Koko shared the best thing about Cookie Cart is the fun and safe place it is to work. Being able to focus on learning new skills in a positive environment with peers is amazing! Her number one lesson and advice for future Cookie Cart employees is to check your email – remember how important it is to community with staff because they are here to help you grow. Also, don't stress about being perfect, you can learn and get better every day!

Hands-on Experience

- The Bakery provides a creative, engaged teaching approach to equip teens with fundamental job skills.
- Bakeries are classrooms where youth practice skills in real-time.
- Supervisors are teachers and mistakes are treated as learning opportunities.





2024 AT BAT FOR IMPACT CELEBRATION

with the Minnesota Twins and Thrivent

Twins and Thrivent hosted 'At Bat For Impact' honoring several local non-profits for their tremendous efforts of collective communities. It was a generous and uplifting moment to expand awareness and support for several non-profits.

They continued their generosity by hosting all of the non-profit leaders at Target Field to celebrate our collective impact, strengthen connections between these like-minded organizations, and inspire discussions around serving young people in our community.

The session included breakout discussions about youth development, networking opportunities, a guest speaker about methods to work together to serve and empower young people. Our partnership with the Minnesota Twins continued to strengthen with their sponsorship support. We are excited to engage with the Minnesota Twin for onsite tours, career exploration, employer panels, and continued events throughout the coming year!



"The Minnesota Twins are proud to support Cookie Cart and the teens they serve. We want every young person to see and achieve their full potential, and we love working with partners like Cookie Cart who share our commitment to fostering belonging and developing the next generation of great leaders!"

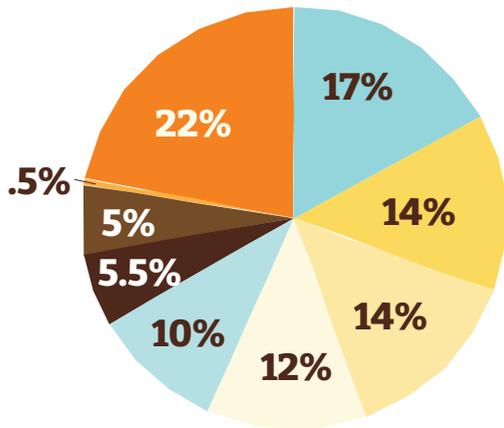
— Hannah Bremer
Manager, Community Impact
Minnesota Twins Baseball Club

Creating Connections with our Community



- Volunteers help in the bakery, mentor youth on career choices, assist with interview practice, support resume writing, and teach networking and communication skills.
- Workplace visits provide youth with the opportunity to explore new careers.
- Volunteers provided hours of support to Cookie Cart youth and staff.

2024 FINANCIALS



- Bakery Sales: **\$597,949**
- Individual Gifts: **\$465,936**
- Grants: **\$379,000**
- Foundations: **\$377,500**
- Organization/Corporate Gifts: **\$338,783**
- Government Grants: **\$278,794**
- Events: **\$151,970**
- In Kind Gifts: **\$146,051**
- Other Earned Revenue: **\$13,550**

Total: **\$2,749,533**

"I am more responsible with money than I thought I would be, I am very grateful for the things I have, I am more respectful of adults in stressful situations."

— Youth Employee

"Cookie Cart has impacted my life because it helped me be part of community by being a teenager, by being myself. Telling me that I, a 16-year-old, could change and do something within my community because I have a voice and an idea."

— Ashaar, Youth Employee

OUR NUMBERS

Gender

1% did not identify

63% female

36% male

Location of Residence

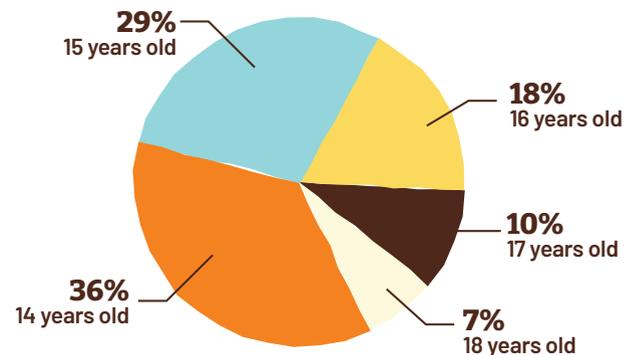
55% Hennepin County

40% Ramsey County

5% Other, 7-County Metro

80% of young adults in Cookie Cart programming are eligible for free-lunch/snap support.

Age



Each year, we **bake half a million cookies** using: 9,500 pounds of butter, 17,000 pounds of flour and over 3,300 pounds of chocolate.

Supporting Cookie Cart **helps address the critical gap**, where nearly 75% of teens aged 15 to 24 lack essential skills needed for employment and workforce preparation.

Over **85% of Young Adults** at Cookie Cart will achieve social emotional learning, financial literacy success, and 21st century skill achievement



Sweet Success '24

BAKING A BETTER TOMORROW

I was able to bring several friends to the Cookie Cart Sweet Success fundraiser, and they were truly inspired by the organization's mission. They were also impressed by the staff and the incredible youth involved. On top of that, the event itself was a lot of fun with some great food!

- Willie Harber, Board Chair



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Saint Paul
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cookiecart.org   

MISISON

Cookie Cart teaches **life, leadership, and employment skills to teens of color.** Through **on-the-job** and **classroom experiences** in nonprofit bakeries.

We envision **equitable communities** where Cookie Cart alumni **thrive and lead.**