People Incorporated is excited to announce an important expansion of our partnership with St. Paul Police Department to bring more mental health professionals to mental health crisis calls.

People Incorporated has worked closely with St. Paul Police Department’s Community Outreach and Stabilization Unit (COAST) for the past two years. This partnership that brings licensed clinical social workers alongside police to respond to the rising number of mental health calls our law enforcement receives each year. By embedding one of our social workers with law enforcement, People Incorporated is able to quickly connect individuals with resources, and follow up to ensure they were able to get the help they need.

We’re excited to announce that Melissa Reich, one of our experienced Homeless Outreach workers, has accepted a new role with People Incorporated, where she will be embedded with the COAST team to provide chemical health assessments and support to people facing challenges with addiction. She will be the first Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) to be embedded with SPPD.

"When someone is facing an addiction crisis, there’s often a very brief moment where people are ready to seek help. It can be very difficult to get someone help in that moment, as there are very few places people can go to get a chemical health assessment, which most treatment centers require ahead of time for admission."

I’ll be able to provide that assessment as soon as they say they’re ready, walk them through the process of getting help, refer them to People Incorporated and other agencies.
Did you know that you can name an organization as a beneficiary to your 401K, IRA, brokerage account, bank account, or life insurance policy? By naming an organization, instead of an individual, you might save your individual beneficiaries additional tax and paperwork burden, as well as make it easier for your charities of choice to be notified and receive your generous gift. For more information on this or other ways to make an impact through your estate, contact a gift officer at give@peopleincorporated.org.

Estate Giving Made Easy

The COAST team is part of the solution. Partnering police officers with mental health workers ensures that the person experiencing crisis is getting all the services they need, not only in that moment, but later as well. By having someone trained in de-escalation there with them, we can bring a softer side to care. Instead of ‘You need to go to the hospital’ and then never seeing them again, the COAST team provides follow up care after someone has experienced a mental health crisis or an overdose. We are working with our community to hopefully avoid future crisis situations and gain access to services needed.” says Melissa.

There are a lot of overlapping areas between Melissa’s previous work with our Homelessness Outreach team and the work she’ll be doing as a part of the COAST team. She’ll continue to work closely with the Outreach team to incorporate harm-reduction techniques, provide assessments and remove barriers to treatment access.

When asked what she wanted the community to know about people struggling with addiction, Melissa said, "They’re all just people. They’re trying to make sense of the world around them – it’s so important that we don’t forget that. They need to be met with compassion.”

PAIRING MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WITH POLICE TRAINED IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS CONTINUED
The White-McGhee-Sims and Ron & Nancy Reed Scholarships are generous, endowed scholarships that allow People Incorporated to support Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color enrolled in a Master’s level program to support families, such as social work, psychology, marriage and family, etc.

This year, People Incorporated will support three individuals with monthly stipends while they pursue their degrees.

**Parastoo Semsarilar**  
*St. Mary’s University, Master’s in Counseling and Psychological Services*

Parastoo’s goal is to be a licensed clinical counselor. She likes working with individuals struggling with depression, anxiety and PTSD and plans to pursue licensure after graduation. She moved from Iran to the United States five years ago with a degree in psychology.

“I have always had the passion to be a psychologist or counselor to help people in their tough times. When I moved to the U.S., I gave up pursuing my passion because I thought it wasn’t going to work for me considering coming from a different culture with a different language, so I took a semester off from Saint Mary’s to be able to look for other programs that are not really culture related. I realized if I do that, I would never be able to be who I really want and be satisfied, so I went back to the counseling program at Saint Mary’s to complete my Master’s. I decided to complete the program slower than other students and work at the same time to get to know more about western culture and also improve my English skills. I am still struggling but I could never be happier than today because I am in the right path and I am going for what has always been my passion – being a helper! I consider this big decision my biggest achievement.”

**Farhia Aden**  
*St. Mary’s University, Master’s in Counseling and Psychological Services*

Over the next five years, Farhia wants to gain a deeper understanding of clinical psychology and build a list of clients. She eventually wants to start her own clinical company back in Somalia, in hopes of helping people. First, she wants to gain experience as a therapist and supervisor. She plans on gaining additional skills by taking related classes and continuing her involvement with a variety of professional associations.

Farhia was born and raised in Somalia and moved to America in middle school. She is the oldest and the first to go to college.

“There are lots of responsibilities on my shoulders as I had to show my siblings not to give up on college education. I have graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and doing my Master’s in Counseling and Psychological Services. I am applying for a PsyD program in the next couple of months and plan to go back to my country in hopes of opening a clinic to help people with mental health problems.”

**Aleshia Collins**  
*Capella University, Master’s in Clinical Social Work*

Aleshia’s long-term goal is to create social change and dismantle systemic barriers through education and service. She would like to be a medical social worker, social scientist, or a professor in education. She plans to achieve this by obtaining her MSW and licensure.

As an African American woman, Aleshia chose social work because of her passion for social justice and creating a change that leads to equality for all.

“Daily, I observe the lack of mental health support that I have seen in my community due to oppression, cultural beliefs, and stigmatism. The challenge for communities of color and healthcare providers is defining what a healthy community looks like through the prisms of stigma and historical adversity, including race-based exclusion from health, educational, social, and economic resources. I want to keep growing my leadership skills so that I may continue to have an impact on systemic issues on the micro, macro, and mezzo level of social work.”

Aleshia is also the current co-chair of the EDI committee at People Incorporated in addition to working full time and completing her internship.

Congratulations to our three outstanding team members and scholarship recipients!
Introducing Artability On-Demand

People Incorporated’s Artability program has been a core part of our programming for 25 years. This program provides free art workshops to any individual in the community experiencing mental illness. In addition, the Artability program provides ongoing art therapy to our various crisis, treatment, and residential programs.

In response to the social distancing and group size requirements of COVID-19, People Incorporated had to temporarily suspend in-person classes. Although we were able to continue offering some options to our internal People Incorporated programs through virtual meeting platforms, we wanted to build a more user-friendly, long-lasting option for our community. After months of hard work and development, we’re excited to announce that Artability On-Demand launched last week and is now available online!

Artability On-Demand is a free online library of short art, music and mindfulness videos. On-Demand videos include creative activities that encourage expression, exploration, and reflection. A variety of themes and topics will be explored through both visual art and music offerings. Artability On-Demand provides our community with opportunities to engage in art-making and music exploration from the safety and comfort of your computer, phone, or tablet. This program is accessible, regardless of the types of art supplies or media you have available on-hand.

“Thank you so much for creating Artability On-Demand. It’s a great program, and it really helps. I really like the art kit I received too. I finished one of the classes yesterday, and I’ve already started another one this morning.”

- Mary

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“Int his time of uncertainty, we know that creativity can be a powerful way to cope and find strength in the face of challenges. It is important, perhaps now more than ever, that we take the time to reflect, create, and play through expressive arts,” says Corilyn Wagner, Artability Programming Coordinator & Teaching Artist.

You can experience Artability On-Demand by visiting our website at PeopleIncorporated.org and clicking on the “On-Demand Artability Video Workshops” under the Get Involved tab, or directly with the following address: https://www.peopleincorporated.org/get-involved/artability/on-demand/

Expanding Service to Community

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration Help People Incorporated Look to the Future

When People Incorporated was founded 50 years ago, mental health care looked decidedly different than it does today. Fifty years ago, the field found itself at a turning point away from institutionalization, and towards person-centered care, that sought to assist individuals with significant mental illness to achieve to their personal capacity. Amazingly, this was a ground-breaking thought at the time.

Today, whole person integrated care is how we work to support those living with mental illness. People Incorporated and others like us, have spent the last fifty years building supports into the community to help individuals live independently. We have filled the gaps that exist in all systems, and created services that recognize that mental illness is a fluid disease, and requires dynamic solutions to manage day-to-day. Fifty one years and counting, we are still learning and honoring the individual experiencing mental illness as the principal voice in the care they receive. These are key to our core values.
Looking to the future, our core values require us to ask essential questions with every client:

› What do you want to achieve, what are your goals? How can we support you with the creation and achievement of your plan?
› How can we be a part of the solution, so you feel consistently supported? What are we learning from you that will help us achieve improved solutions and care for others?

Not everyone who needs mental health support knows where to turn for that support. Moreover, people from diverse backgrounds and other cultures are less likely to receive needed mental health care due to the stigma associated with mental health, a lack of providers from diverse backgrounds who understand their experiences, and distrust of a health care system that may have fallen short of meeting their needs in past experiences. We’re focusing on mending many of these barriers with improved access, better training, and enhanced opportunities for mental health practitioners from diverse backgrounds.

This is great, right? But our vision for community integration is so much bigger, and we’re going to need help to make it possible.

In 2020, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA) joined us in this effort by providing a transformational gift that will allow People Incorporated to expand this important work. This gift will support the growth of our Service to Community programming, so essential to community health and wellness, while also supporting training efforts in the areas of cultural understanding and awareness, and the development of career pathways in the mental health field for individuals of diverse backgrounds desiring such.

“You’re a part of our legacy of healing.
- Sr. Sue Ernster

A core area of People Incorporated’s care model is our commitment to Service to Community – a mental health care model that creates partnership throughout the community to connect individuals in need with vital resources. This is shown in our ability to go to the person in need where they want to be seen, collaboration and partnership with key community providers to identify and support need; areas like the hospitals, homeless shelters, corrections, police and other areas.

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration are committed to building bridges of relationships that stretch us to be people of encounter who stand with all suffering in our Earth Community. Our collaboration with People Incorporated provides opportunity for us to fulfill that mission, to help provide person-centered health care to those in need and bridge the gaps of social inequity they experience.
- the FSPA said in a statement

“Our communities need innovative and sustainable solutions. The need for these solutions has never been greater, and our opportunities to collaborate and forge those solutions have never been more present. At People Incorporated, we are committed to the development of new solutions that not only serve the community, but engage the community. Thoughtful gifts and grants allow us to create these new pathways, solve problems and create sustainability. Getting started is always the most difficult space, but easily the most exciting as well,” says Jill West, CEO of People Incorporated.
“Over the past year, we’ve been a safe space,” says Markevius Collier, Program Manager for Northside Community Support Program, “COVID has thrown a curveball into everything we do, and those challenges haven’t been easy, but our clients and my team have adjusted as best we can. Northside Community Support Program is committed to being there for the community that counts on us.”

Northside Community Support Program is a unique program rooted in building a safe, welcoming community for residents in the North Minneapolis area working to overcome the challenges of mental illness, trauma, COVID and more. It is a free membership-based program. Prior to COVID, individuals could drop-in for support, help accessing community-based services, therapy, or sometimes just a friendly ear. Those services are still available, but due to the pandemic, the program has moved to being appointment-based. The program works closely with many local community partners to ensure people have access to emergency food, employment supports, legal assistance, and more.

Northside Community Support Program takes a community-healing approach to providing mental health support. Each week, the program hosts weekly meetings to identify new ways the program might support the community, and how they can collaborate to make it happen.

One focus of the programming is to provide a wide array of ways for interpersonal connection.

“We unintentionally overlook what a bit of quality time and just a consistent presence can do for someone. Today we’re baking cookies, making jewelry, and providing other opportunities for connection, just trying to make navigating this situation easier,” says Markevius.

Being a part of the Northside program is deeply personal for Markevius.

“I’m super passionate about mental health. It changed my life, and I want that for our members. I love being able to share that knowledge with my community. I love being able to stand back and see someone blossom – to see people have a better grasp on their mental health. Everyone deserves that freedom.”

When asked what the Northside community looks like, the passion for the work they do and the connections they build together is evident:

“It’s young. It’s old. It’s happy. It’s strong. It perseveres. It’s all walks of life. It’s all different kinds of backgrounds with one goal in mind – to find the best way to better serve each other. It looks like a team. It looks like forgiveness. It looks like empathy,” says Markevius.
A year ago, most people thought the pandemic might only last a few months, then life would return to “normal.” A year later, vaccines are just starting to make their way through our communities, and families have been stretched thin by cancelled activities, working/schooling from home, and general frustration and grief about the things we miss the most.

People Incorporated’s School-Based Mental Health team recently released these tips for continuing to manage your family's mental health as the pandemic continues.

**Realistic Routines**
Creating and maintaining a routine helps lower anxiety by helping prepare us for what is next. Here are some ways to help you and your child/student create a distance learning routine.

1. Create the schedule with your child. Try to use their input so they feel more in control and take ownership.
2. Be flexible. Decide what the “must-do” items are and be more flexible with the rest of the day.
3. Match each child’s age and needs. Younger kids (and some older kids) may need frequent breaks in order to stay on track.
4. Make time for family connections. Find activities that work for your child and family: walks, meals, reading, games, dancing, whatever!
5. Make time for movement. Let kids get the wiggles out or take a short walk like they normally would between classes. If they need it, allow for a longer activity.

**Create a Mindful Moment**
Take a moment for yourself to keep the stress at bay! If you are experiencing overwhelming or out-of-control feelings, try to name five things you can control right now in the moment (like a grounding activity). Use your fingers to count and take deep breaths for each statement. You could say something like “I can control my breathing. I can control my words to myself. I can control my body.”

*Adapted from The Parish School Blog*

**It’s Okay to lower your expectations**
Of yourself and others... Whether an educator, staff member, parent, or student, the 2020 school year presented many challenges, and many of those continue today. It’s okay to prioritize what is most important for you and your family, and it’s okay to say “no” when it’s getting to be too much.

**Make Time to Talk About It**
It is important to make sure you continue to check in and have conversations about how you are feeling. Make sure to avoid labels such as good/bad, instead try comfortable/uncomfortable. For educators, if at all possible, make time during class when you can to check in with the students. It can help relieve some of the uncomfortable feelings and increase a sense of togetherness. *Remember: Everyone has mental health, you are not alone!*
CCBHC Extended

We’re thrilled to announce that our funding to continue our work as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) has recently been extended for three more years! This program is critical to our effort to provide and integrated model of care to our clients and the community. People Incorporated’s Central Access team provides care that is coordinated across platforms, working to ensure that no one falls through the cracks.

“You look at the whole person and meet them where they are at and deliver the services we agree are right for their needs with fewer barriers,” Wendy Waddell People Incorporated’s COO.

This program also ensures that People Incorporated has the resources to provide treatment that combines a holistic, multi-faceted approach to improving mental health.

“When you go in for open-heart surgery, they have a cardiologist, a physical therapist, a nutritionist all there and you pay in one lump-sum payment for your treatment. We want to be the place people go to coordinate all of the care they need,” says Jim Olson, People Incorporated’s CFO.