

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Rob, Mark, Julie and Bruce have known each other for 6 years through their MnCAN connection!

Fostering *Connection and Friendship*

Supporting *Aphasia*

Encouraging *Life Participation*

Finding *Purpose and Confidence*

Mission and Vision

Our Mission

The mission of MnCAN is to improve the life participation of individuals impacted by aphasia through comprehensive programs, education, peer connections, and community support.

Our Vision

People with aphasia actively participate in life without barriers.

A Message from our Executive Directors

Minnesota Connect Aphasia Now's mission of improving the life participation for individuals impacted by aphasia was our core focus in 2024. We reached new milestones of growth in both program opportunities and fundraising.

The MnCAN community-including speech-language pathologists, volunteers, graduate students, community donors, leadership staff and the Board of Directors-all played a vital role in providing high-quality and dedicated programs for persons with aphasia and their care partners.

We are honored to carry on the work of Cindy Busch and Julia Halvorson and make a difference in the lives of those living with aphasia. We are inspired every day.



*With gratitude,
Angie Maier and Jessica Wald,
MnCAN Co-Executive
Directors*

Leadership Team

Board of Directors

In 2024, MnCAN welcomed four diverse and talented new board members into vacant seats. Our board now has 10 active board members. Meet our newest board members:

- Ken Kerns, a person with aphasia, joined the board in the spring. Ken brings expertise in high-level business and administration.
- Ganesh Asaithambi, MD, a stroke neurologist, joined the board in the fall. Ganesh has seen firsthand the impact aphasia can have in his daily practice.
- Eric Marschke, a finance expert, joined late fall and filled our Board Treasurer role. Eric brings his knowledge of financial matters as well as a personal connection to a person with aphasia.
- Kim Homan, a medically based speech language pathologist, joined late fall. Kim works directly with individuals who have aphasia in the outpatient rehabilitation setting.

Executive Directors

MnCAN is lead by Co-Executive Directors and speech-language pathologists Angie Maier and Jessica Wald. Carly Cauley served in a Communications and Outreach Coordinator role through October 2024 before she made the decision to dedicate her time to her growing family.



**MEET OUR
MnCAN Board of Directors**



Jane Anderson
Secretary



Ganesh Asaithambi



Gus Avenido



Jeannie Bridgeman



Cynthia Busch
Emeritus Member



Kim Homan

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Linda Johnson



Ken Kerns



Lynette Lamb
Board Chair



Eric Marschke
Treasurer



Nancy Zugschwert



**MnCAN
Executive
Directors**



Angie Maier
Executive Director



Jessica Wald
Executive Director

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Programs and Services

- Aphasia Conversation Groups (virtual and in-person)
- Coffee Club (virtual)
- Book Club (virtual)
- Talk to Me Aphasia Drama Club (virtual)
- Care Partner Support Group (virtual)
- Speak Up! Young Aphasia Group (virtual and in-person)
- Staying Connected Education Class for Primary Progressive Aphasia (virtual and in-person)
- Primary Progressive Aphasia Support Groups (virtual and in-person)



Group Facilitators

MnCAN had 11 speech language pathologists facilitate groups in 2024. Additionally, a Clinical Social Worker was hired to provide mental health support in our support groups.



MEET OUR MnCAN Group Facilitators



Rebecca Wilson
Speech Language
Pathologist



Sheen Chiou
Speech Language
Pathologist



Carly Cauley
Speech Language
Pathologist



Mary Strom
Speech Language
Pathologist



Jill Dimitri
Speech Language
Pathologist



Leah Snow
Speech Language
Pathologist

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Amber Beyer
Speech Language
Pathologist



Krista Petersen
Speech Language
Pathologist



Angie Maier
Speech Language
Pathologist



Jessica Wald
Speech Language
Pathologist



Erin Helgeson
Speech Language
Pathologist



Sara Nuahn
Clinical Social Worker

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2024 by the numbers

Thanks to the generosity of individual and corporate contributions, MnCAN made a big difference!

300+

Community connection opportunities for people with aphasia

100+

People with aphasia or care partners participated in our programs

400

Hours served by our dedicated volunteers

42

Speech-Language Pathology Graduate School students trained

29

Participants benefitted from financial scholarships

10

MnCAN Board Members

383

Individual and Corporate Donors

84

Care Partners received support and resources from our programs

Growth and Development in 2024

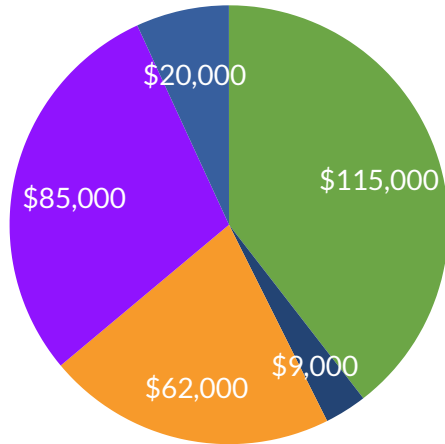
- Launched **two new in-person conversation groups** for people with aphasia
- Added **4 new board members** and **3 new group facilitators**
- Welcomed over **33 new participants** into our programs
- Hosted our most successful Break the Barriers for Aphasia gala to date: **200+ attendees** and **\$105,000** raised for MnCAN programs
- Presented to **12+ community organizations**
- Nominated by **Power of 100 Twin Cities- Women Who Care** to receive large donation to continue our life-changing work
- 75 new community donors contributed to the great work of MnCAN



Financial Review

Revenue Sources

MnCAN relies on individual donors and tuition payments to fund our programs.



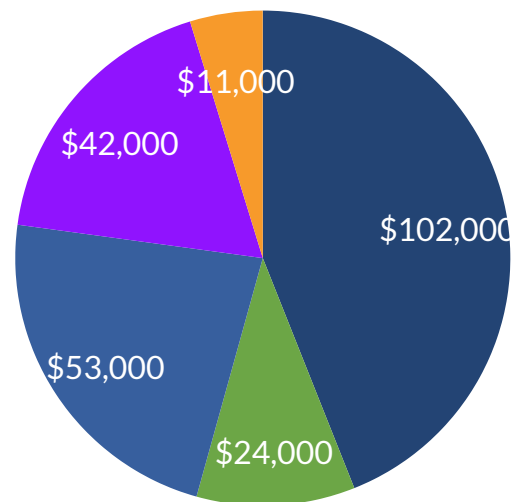
Our future goals include: social life participation activities, expanding outreach and aphasia education, and growing programs to meet the needs of our community.

MnCAN had a successful 2024. The surplus revenue will be used to expand 2025 goals and financially invest in our future.

- Individual Contributions (39.52%)
- Grants (3.09%)
- Program Income (21.31%)
- Event Contributions (29.21%)
- Sponsorships (6.87%)

Expenses

MnCAN values high-quality programs facilitated by expert staff. We are proud of our ability to use resources as conservatively as possible, while still maintaining sustainability and excellence.



- Program Expenses (43.97%)
- Professional Contractor Services (10.34%)
- Operating Expenses (22.84%)
- Fundraising Expenses (18.1%)
- Scholarships (4.74%)

MnCAN Participant Quotes and Experiences

A Winter 2024 survey revealed that 100 percent of people that completed the survey reported they were more socially active and confident because of MnCAN.

"MnCAN has helped Jay develop more confidence in social situations."

~ Pat, Care Partner

"I like my groups a lot. They all have aphasia. We talked and talked. If I am in another group they don't have aphasia, I talk a lot less."

~ 10 year MnCAN Participant



The MnCAN Primary Progressive Aphasia Support group hosts an annual holiday meal together to celebrate and support one another.

"I am much more confident in telling others, including strangers, that I have aphasia and they need to be patient with me when having a conversation. I have learned so much from my group facilitator and others in my group. I look forward to meeting them every week!"

~ Ken, 2 year MnCAN Participant



MnCAN Co-Executive Directors, Angie and Jessica, joined by MnCAN Board Members, Gus, Jane and Ken at a social gathering in 2024.

"I enjoy the socializing with our group weekly. We are family."

~ 4 year MnCAN Participant

"I was afraid to get out there again in the 'world' and me seeing everybody else that struggles with the same things was comforting. All of a sudden I was making plans and doing things by myself or with friends."

~ 2 year MnCAN Participant

Looking Ahead

We want to invite you to take a sneak peek into some of our organizational goals for 2025:

- Launch additional in-person aphasia conversation groups to meet needs of our community
- Develop opportunities to incorporate a music group for people with aphasia
- Create additional social opportunities for our community to gather together including Coffee & Connections monthly social with our Executive Directors and Summer Social events for participants
- Invite our Clinical Social Worker to educate our entire MnCAN community on mental health as it relates to aphasia
- Broaden our ability to provide education and resources to individuals living with aphasia through outreach opportunities, establishing connections in greater Minnesota, and meeting the needs of our diverse community
- Provide education to those affected by aphasia including care partners, family, friends, and community member using aphasia-friendly materials and ideas
- Simple upgrades to our website to make it easier for everyone to navigate and read

Save the Date

MnCAN 2025 Break the Barriers for Aphasia Gala

Sunday, September 21, 2025

Oak Ridge Country Club

Hopkins, Minnesota



mncan.org

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Minneapolis, MN 55423

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