



# Annual Report 2023-2024



**Spr****ckets**

*Find out what moves you* 

Sprockets Reporting Period June 1, 2023 – May 31st, 2024



# Sprockets Overview

Sprockets, Saint Paul's afterschool network, works to increase access to and improve the quality of afterschool programs in Saint Paul while increasing youth voice and decision-making throughout the city.

Sprockets plays a pivotal role in strengthening youth-serving organizations through a variety of network engagement opportunities including networking, professional development, and continuous program improvement. Central to this effort is the Activator Cycle, a structured framework guiding organizations in collecting and analyzing data on program quality, participation, experience, and outcomes. Using this data, organizations develop informed improvement plans to enhance their programming. By supporting organizations annually, Sprockets ensures that youth programs deliver high-quality, impactful experiences. Networking events further connect youth workers and organizations, fostering collaboration and sharing innovative practices to address common challenges. Professional development is another cornerstone of Sprockets' work. Each year, the organization provides youth workers with training in equity, social-emotional learning, and youth work practices including relationship building. Supervisors and frontline staff gain practical tools and strategies, for creating environments where youth feel supported and empowered. These sessions not only strengthen individual practices but also build a robust community of skilled youth workers dedicated to the success of young people.

In parallel, Sprockets elevates youth voice and decision-making in local governance through initiatives like Youth on Boards and the Saint Paul Youth Commission (SPYC). These programs provide young people with leadership experiences and decision-making power. Through placements in groups like the Parks & Recreation Commission, Financial Empowerment Community Council, and SPYC, youth contribute fresh perspectives to City decision-making, advancing racial equity and inclusive governance. Additionally, initiatives like the Youth on Boards Summer Academy, teach participants about navigating local government and using their identity as an asset to their leadership.

By investing in program quality, professional growth for youth workers, and leadership opportunities for young people, Sprockets not only supports immediate improvements in youth services but also builds a pipeline of empowered leaders poised to shape a more equitable future for Saint Paul.

# Network Engagement

## Professional Development

Professional development supports youth work professionals to build skills, improve confidence, and grow as a youth work practitioner. Sprockets trainings cover a variety of topics throughout the year with a focus on topics that introduce and reinforce quality practices that directly apply to the work they do with young people.

As programs have come through the pandemic, there continues to be an increased call for practices that support social and emotional skills for youth and youth workers that informed training offerings.

### Trainings Offered:

- Foundations and Self-Awareness of Emotional Development
- SEL Program Quality Foundations and Self-Assessment
- Behavior Management: Self-Awareness and Regulation
- Creating Healing-Centered Spaces for Youth
- Promoting Responsibility and Leadership
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Naloxone Training
- STEM TPT



### Network Gatherings and Building Connections

The pandemic impacted more than youth participation in programs. The network saw a lot of turnover among front line staff, coordinators, and program directors. Citywide gatherings brought youth workers together to reconnect with each other around topics impacting youth workers and young people in community. Topics during this time included networking, learning about Sprockets, planning for summer, and exploring identity.



# Continuous Program Improvement (CPI)

How often a young person **participates** → in a **high-quality** program → that **provides positive experiences** = **positive outcomes**. Research shows that these things matter, which is why Sprockets supports youth programs in making meaning of all four of these areas of data. The annual Activator Continuous Improvement Cycle helps partners Assess – Plan – Improve their programs. But it is more than just the data. Sprockets creates space for program teams to reflect and provide perspectives that makes the data relevant and provides their insight into action items for the improvement plans that will make the most impact.

From 2023 to 2024 we saw Activator numbers double, nearing pre pandemic participation.

**Congratulations to our partners that completed the 2023-24 Activator Cycle!**

The following partners used data to inform their Activator CPI plans:

## Community Partners

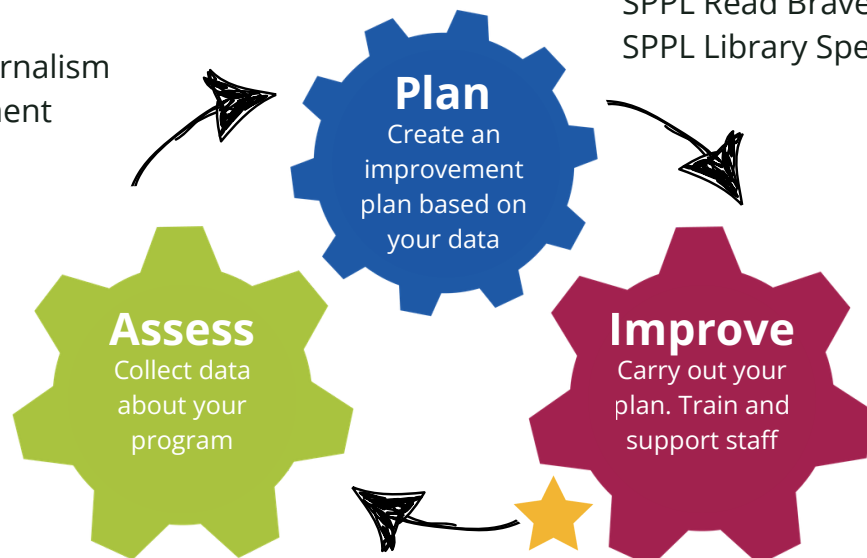
Athletes Committed to Educating Students (ACES)  
CommonBond Community- Youth & Teen Programs  
ComMUSICation  
Family Values for Life  
Hmong American Partnership  
Karen Organization of Minnesota – 2 programs  
Keystone Community Kids  
Opportunity Neighborhood at Ames Lake  
Saint Paul Public Schools Community Education  
Saint Paul Urban Tennis  
Theatre Mu  
ThreeSixtyJournalism  
The JK Movement  
Urban Roots

## Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

Battle Creek Recreation Center  
El Rio Vista Recreation Center  
Jimmy Lee Recreation Center  
North Dale Recreation Center  
Phalen Recreation Center  
Sprockets Youth on Boards  
Right Track

## Saint Paul Public Library

SPPL Homework Help  
SPPL Read Brave  
SPPL Library Specialists





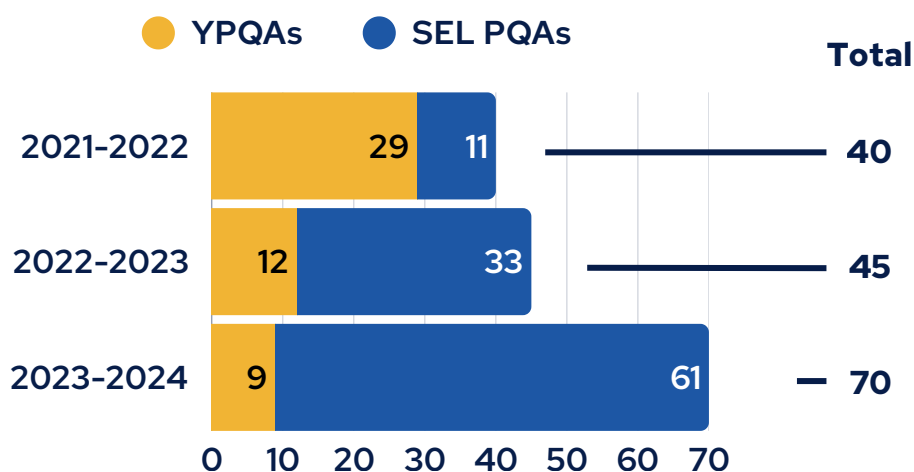
# Moving to the SEL PQA

The Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) has provided Sprockets network a shared language and framework to think about quality practices in programming. As youth workers have been thinking more about the social and emotional needs of young people, Sprockets has been growing supports in utilizing the Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA).

Supports include trainings on using the SEL PQA for program planning, self-assessment, external observation, and training content related to supporting social, emotional, and learning skills.



## Completed SEL PQAs vs YPQAs (2021 - 2024)

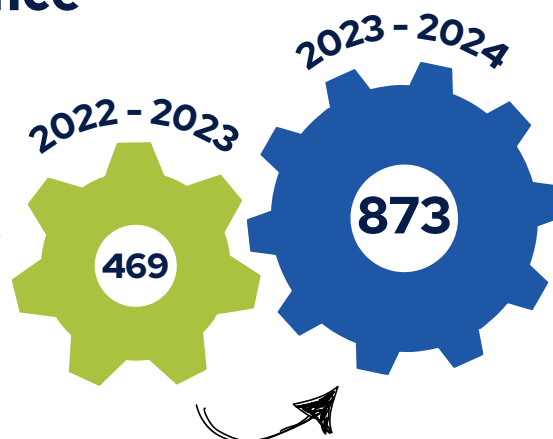


In addition to programs conducting self-assessments, nine Sprockets network partners trained to assess and provide external observations.

## Network Engagement Attendance

Network engagement includes trainings, network gatherings and Continuous Program Improvement.

Network Engagement attendance nearly doubled from the previous program year



# Youth Voice and Decision Making



**"I loved Youth on Boards. It has really sparked my interest in local government."**

## Youth on Boards

Youth on Boards is a partnership with the Mayor's Office and Saint Paul Parks and Recreation to implement an initiative to train, place, and support young people (ages 14-20) on Saint Paul's boards and commissions as equal voting members. Youth on Boards also partners with Saint Paul's youth employment program Right Track to hire and compensate the participants.

The Youth on Boards initiative is a two-fold initiative with a Summer Academy and a commitment to serving on Saint Paul's Boards and Commissions. The Summer Academy program provides a foundation of how the City works, what boards and commissions are and how to serve on one, navigating local government and politics, engaging with the community as a representative, and much more.

**13**

interns appointed to a City Board or Commission in 2023

## Board and Commission Partners:

- Business Review Council
- Capitol Improvement Budget Committee
- Climate Justice Advisory Board
- Financial Empowerment Community Council
- Human Rights & Equal Economic Opportunity Commission
- Mayor's Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities
- Neighborhood Safety Community Council
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Saint Paul Children's Collaborative
- Transportation Committee



## Quotes from Youth on Boards Cohort 3

"Ever since I've joined, I have developed skills I thought I'll never have and that has made me gain more confidence."

"When I first arrived, I was so nervous and shy and barely talked to people because I was scared to come out of my comfort zone. I hate being judged and thinking people thought of me a weird way, but everyone was so sweet and welcoming. They definitely made me more talkative and more outgoing."

"I really enjoyed my time during the program and I hope to go to better things in the future."

## Youth on Boards Stats (as of May 2024)

**3** cohorts

**37** alumni

**26** young people serving/served  
on a City Board or Commission

**18** young people trained in Summer Academy 2023 (Cohort 3)

**14** alumni still serving on a  
City Board or Commission



## Saint Paul Youth Commission

The Saint Paul Youth Commission (SPYC) is the place where Saint Paul Youth: Stand up. Speak out. Lead. Established in 2006, the Saint Paul Youth Commission is where young people learn to enhance their civic leadership, work in partnership with elected officials and stakeholders, represent their peers, and advocate for youth voice in decision-making to ensure that Saint Paul is a city that works for all of us.



Each year SPYC works on IMPACT (Igniting Movement through Passion, Actions, and Community Togetherness) projects. IMPACT projects are youth-led projects that bring awareness and solutions to issues faced by youth in Saint Paul. Each year commissioners select issues they are passionate about to focus their IMPACT Project on.

### Schools Represented:

- Central Senior High
- Como Senior High
- Concordia Academy
- Cretin-Derham Hall
- Harding Senior High
- Hmong Academy
- Saint Paul Academy
- Sejong Academy
- St. Agnes School



**"I have learned how to connect with people to get things done. Networking and leadership skills are also valuable things that I have improved in since joining the youth commission."**

**"I've had a great time since joining SPYC. These programs have helped me focus more on my community and learn more about my surroundings."**

**"The Youth Commission has genuinely helped me open up more and to feel more stable in my sense of self. I've always felt safe here and am grateful for the opportunity to be here."**



2023-2024

## Saint Paul Youth Commission IMPACT Projects

Igniting Movement through Passion, Actions, and Community Togetherness

### **Do-Nation V2:**

A team of five youth commissioners hosted a clothing drive and received about \$300 to assemble 30 hygiene packages and buy a bulk of additional hygiene care products. The group partnered up with Joseph's Closet, a free store providing goods and services to those in need, within an environment of dignity and respect, and donated clean clothes, hygiene packages, and additional hygiene care products.

### **MN Nice:**

Led by a team of five youth commissioners, MN Nice focused on supporting immigrant and refugee youth in Saint Paul. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by these students, the team partnered with Hope Community Academy, a local school serving immigrant and refugee families. The commissioners prepared self-care gift bags to uplift middle and high school students as they neared the end of the school year. Each gift bag included items like stress-relief tools, snacks, school supplies, and other fun self-care treats. These gifts provided encouragement and support, helping students feel seen and celebrated as they navigated both academic and personal challenges.

### **School-to-Prison Pipeline:**

Five commissioners collaborated on an advocacy project focused on raising awareness about the school-to-prison pipeline. They designed a presentation to educate both teachers and students on how disciplinary practices in schools disproportionately impact marginalized youth, contributing to higher rates of incarceration.

### **Saint Paul Senior Support:**

The Saint Paul Senior Support project organized two special events to connect youth commissioners with older community members. The first was a St. Patrick's Day celebration, complete with a photo booth, snacks, and festive activities that brought joy to everyone involved. The second event was a lively bingo night, where participants enjoyed some friendly competition. During both occasions, the youth commissioners spent meaningful one-on-one time with the older adults, gaining valuable wisdom, learning about their life stories, and forming connections across generations.



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