2021 was a year of big changes in our organization. We have a new name - Minnesota Tech for Success - but the same mission: to create digital equity for all Minnesota students.

With programming focused on expanding access and digital equity, while protecting data and honoring sustainability, our former name encompassed just one part of our work and not the entirety of our impact - in classrooms and beyond. Our new name reflects our full-circle approach to digital equity and our focus on the full life cycle of technology.

We were one of the first e-waste recycling facilities in the state to receive the R2v3 certification. This updated standard incorporates experience gained from more than a decade auditing and implementing the R2 standard and reflects changes in the electronics landscape, customer demands, and the regulatory environment. We are proud to center refurbishing and recycling in our organization, because equity and sustainability go hand in hand.

Our strategic work led to an overall bigger impact in our community. With the help of our partners and donors, we were able to place over 4,800 computers with schools, educational non-profits and students who bounced between in-person and distance learning.

With a new name and new website, Minnesota Tech for Success continues to create digital equity across the state with the help of individuals, partners, and the community. Our work won't stop until digital equity is ubiquitous across the state.

Tamara Gillard
Executive Director

OUR MISSION

Minnesota Tech for Success creates digital equity for students by partnering with schools and educational organizations to provide technology access, engaging STEM programming, and IT workforce development in underserved communities.

OUR VALUES

DIGITAL INCLUSION
We believe that everyone deserves access to technology to thrive in today’s digital world.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION
We believe in being rooted in our community to give the best help we can to those who need it.

SUSTAINABILITY
We believe that digital inclusion and environmental sustainability go hand in hand, and work to provide top tier resources while recycling responsibly.
2021 BY THE NUMBERS

13,568
REFURBISHED COMPUTERS
distributed to 45 schools or educational organizations and nonprofits through our programs, 123% of our annual goal.

21,211
RECYCLED ITEMS
or 64% of our overall donation intake

252,320 LBS
EQUIPMENT RECYCLED
e-waste kept out of landfills

4,800+
COMPUTERS PLACED
295 placed directly with students/families, and many more students received equipment through their school programs
WHO WE SERVE

AGE

- 20% 14-17
- 20% 18-26
- 60% 27-65

GENDER

- 45% Female
- 55% Male

ETHNICITY

- Black or African American: 40%
- Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish: 20%
- White: 20%
- Asian or Pacific Islander: 15%
- Other: 4%

Numbers do not reflect placement through our Computers for Classrooms Program.
OUR TRAINING

OUR PROGRAMS

CORE: IT Certification Training - IT Workforce Development
CORE: IT Certification Training offers a curriculum to build the foundational knowledge and skills for professional readiness for adults with little to no technology experience who want to continue their education or pursue employment in the information technology field.

DISCOVER: IT Certification Training - IT Professional Exploration
For high school students who want to improve their academic achievement or economic stability, this training offers a free curriculum to explore and prepare for a future job in the IT field.

MTFS Internship for CORE:IT and DISCOVER:IT Graduates
The MTFS paid internship gives our graduates the opportunity to work in a variety of technical roles at MTFS from sorting and recycling, to testing and refurbishing, and tech support. In addition to hands-on experience, all interns work on developing soft skills including resume building, college and job applications, interview preparation, and more.

The success of our 2021 Programs are reflected in the following metrics:

- 168 students were trained and received case management to pursue the next steps in their professional and educational development.
- 163 students participated in soft skill development through learning positive work habits and professional etiquette, which can be transferrable to any workplace setting.
- 128 students engaged in job placement and Internship opportunities or continued education in the field within 12 months of receiving course certification.
- 21 participants engaged in hands-on STEM learning experiences where they could design their own website, video game, or app.
- 16 MTFS Interns refurbished 13,568 computers and recycled 21,211 tech items at our recycling and refurbishing facility, which totaled over 2,000 hours of hands-on and relevant work experience.
2021 FINANCIALS

$1,422,764
TOTAL EXPENSES

$1,665,518
TOTAL REVENUE

$1,114,050
PROGRAMMING

$141,370
ADMINISTRATIVE

$167,344
FUNDRAISING

$396,746
CONTRIBUTIONS & GRANTS

$962,252
COMPUTER SALES

$267,033
GOVERNMENT GRANTS

$39,487
EVENT INCOME

Net Assets 1/1/21: ($19,523)
Net Assets 12/31/21: $124,437

Balance sheet, income statement, functional expense allocation and program expenses available upon request. Financial audits are available by request and on our website.
OUR DONORS

Thanks to our financial and equipment donors who make our vision possible:
SUCCESS STORIES

Markus
Meet Markus, who received a computer with our Tech Connect (formerly Lifelong Learners) program. His mom said: “Markus is all caught up on his online learning programs! He was very behind in his hours before he received such a wonderful gift of a home computer. During school hours, Markus would focus his free time on getting caught up. Now he’s able to play and truly enjoy his free time doing fun things with his classmates!” Every student deserves the opportunity to thrive, which in today’s digital world means access to technology.

Yoni
We want to introduce Yoni, a former CORE: IT student who completed a paid internship at MTFS and then became a full-time technical program manager. Yoni said this about his experience with us: “I learned to be a deeper problem solver when troubleshooting, have patience in pursuit of determining the solution and received hands-on experience of all I learned in the course. The most beneficial experience was teamwork, communication, and goal completion. I feel my future became brighter once I completed the course and my internship.”

Kuzie
Meet Kuzie, 2018 graduate of MTFS’s CORE:IT training program and former MTFS instructor. Kuzie and his family moved to Minnesota from Zimbabwe seeking a better life when he was just 13 years old. After High School, and following a short stint at UW River Falls, Kuzie graduated from St. Cloud State with a degree in Liberal Arts without a clear vision of his future, but with a long-standing interest in computer technology. During his IT Certification training, Kuzie worked with the Geek Squad at Best Buy and was able to complete all three certification courses we offered at the time (IT Fundamentals, IT Essentials, and A+) within just seven months. Kuzie joined our Intern program and then became a CORE:IT instructor for our organization.

Today, Kuzie is employed at American Youthworks as a full-time Pathways - IT/MediaCorp Instructor based in Austin, TX. He has since earned an IC3 certification on track to earn his Python Certification and is seeking an Adobe Illustrator and a Manufacturing Certification in the future. In his personal time, he is taking a professional course on Quantum Computing and hopes to get into machine learning and Artificial Intelligence.

“MTFS created the blueprint for the success that I have attained the privilege of enjoying and opened more doors for my personal growth and development. Honestly, if this opportunity had not existed, I am not sure how my life’s trajectory would have turned out.” We’re thrilled for Kuzie and are so proud of the life he’s built from the foundational skills we were able to impart to his life.
Our Board of Directors

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John Pepper
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Katie McMahon
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Brian Beaupre
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Our Staff

Jason Burford
Production Manager

Yoni Debesai
Technical Program Manager

Gunnar Aas
CORE:IT Instructor

Esther Kearney
Contract CORE:IT Instructor

Dan Kelcher
Contract CORE:IT Instructor

Eileen King
Contract CORE:IT Instructor

Kuzie Nzara
Contract CORE:IT Instructor

Claire McManus
Contract Consultant

Victor Cole
Computer Technician

Kevin Fogarty
Warehouse Associate and Truck Driver

Marcus Henne
Computer Technician

Abdi Mohamud
Computer Technician

Heather Olson
Clerk

Jim Thirsten
Intake Manager
2021 was another year where we reckoned with a global pandemic and a changing school landscape. As things continue to improve with regard to the pandemic across the state, we're looking forward to more in-person connections as we work together to create digital equity. Our partnerships and volunteers are critical to our mission.

Internally, we look forward to expanding the work of our Culture Committee and Health & Wellness Committee so that we're always learning, growing, and bettering ourselves. We are committed to a diverse, thriving workplace, and are excited to learn more about the different cultures that make up our community.

With our new name and website, we are seeking to expand our services and classes to better serve our community. We look forward to serving more people with more resilient and valuable services.