



# 2024 Annual Report



# Table of Contents

- Meet The Hugs Cafe Inc Team
- 2024 In Review
- Hugs Cafe
- Hugs Greenhouse
- Hugs Training Academy
- Hugs Home Cooking
- Social Events
- Hugs Volunteers
- The Future for Hugs Cafe Inc



# Meet The Hugs Cafe Inc Team

## Hugs Cafe Inc Board of Directors

Ruth Thompson	Lee Ann Parsons
Alex Beard	Mark Potter
Georgian Leonard	Kellee Rice
Shannon Patterson	Marc Robertson
Matt Fuhrman	Jeanine Roddy
Mark Johnson	Jenay Sherman
Michael Jones	Chris Thompson
Janice Morriss	Dan Wilson
Timothy Newsome	

## Hugs Cafe Inc Leadership

Lauren Smith- Executive Director  
Evan Jones- Director of Culture & Expansion  
Eric Weinhagen- Director of Programs  
Jennifer Buschman- Development Manager  
Bill Crump- Hugs Greenhouse Manager  
Raul Guerrero- Hugs Training Academy Manager  
Bwayla Nawa- Hugs Cafe McKinney Manager  
Wendy Semper- Executive Assistant  
Michael Talley- Accounting Manager  
Stephanie Van Kirk- Community Engagement Manager  
Diana Zamora- Hugs Cafe Dallas Manager

## Hugs Cafe Inc Ambassadors

Ben Jennings	Rickey Woods
Kalyn Bradley	Danny Sigler
Jack Cunningham	Blaine Hardin
Hunter Heinrichs	Lydia Stufflebean
Jacob Shaw	Kit Marschal
Clay Kendrick	Bradley Kelman
Manni Deslarzes	Ashton Roberts



# 2024 In Review

---

4

Impactful Programs

27

Hugs Training Academy Trainees

54

Mission-Based Employees

18,533

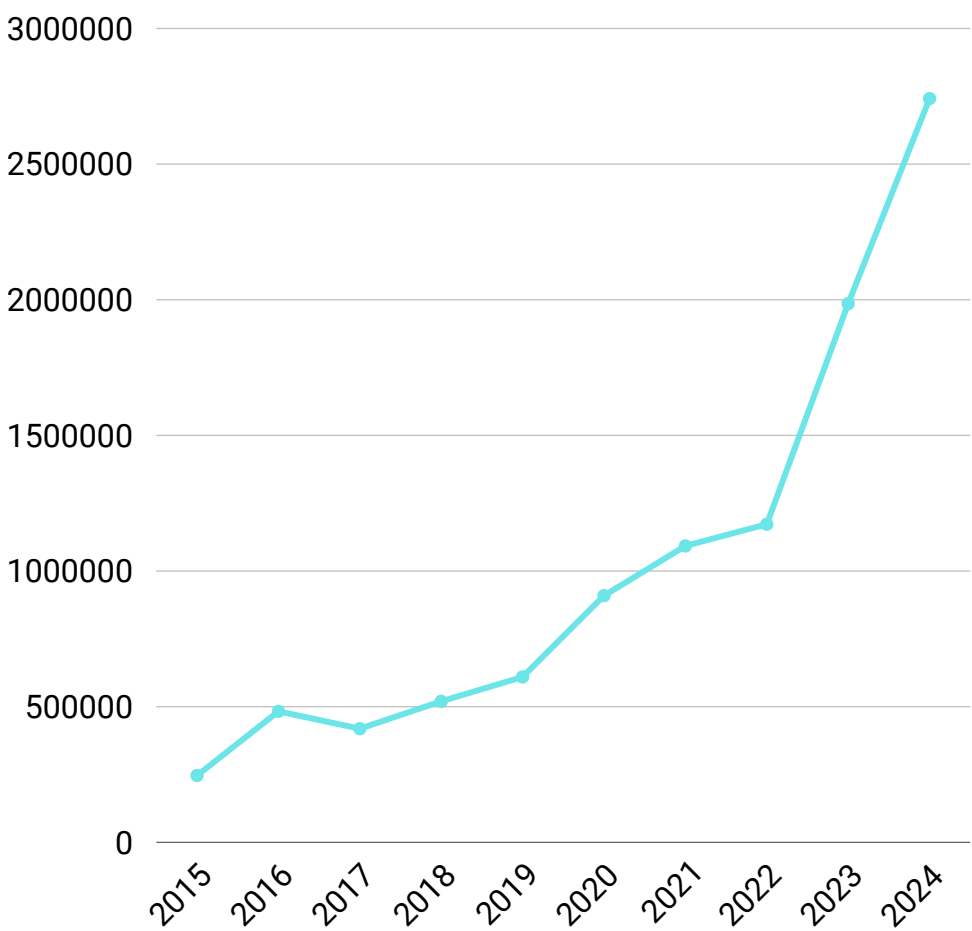
Hours of Meaningful Employment

\$146,890

Paid Out in Meaningful Wages



# Revenue Since Hugs Cafe, Inc. Founding



2015	\$246,486
2016	\$482,905
2017	\$418,994
2018	\$519,795
2019	\$609,773
2020	\$909,348
2021	\$1,092,677
2022	\$1,172,742
2023	\$1,985,713
2024	\$2,741,693



# 2024 In Review

---

## **2024 was a year of remarkable growth for Hugs Cafe Inc.**

Our training curriculum expanded nationwide, with three affiliate partners—The Lily Pad (Ridgeland, MS), Super Duper Cookie Company (Dallas, TX), and LARADON (Denver, CO)—launching programs that empower adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through meaningful employment.

Locally, Hugs grew in exciting ways. In July, we opened our first pop-up location at The Rook in Adriatica, making Hugs accessible seven days a week. Our flagship café began serving breakfast Tuesday through Sunday, creating new job opportunities for our mission-based team. The Training Academy launched a new site at Dallas College in January, extending our reach to even more students. At Hugs Greenhouse, generous partners helped fund our first forklift and a branded delivery truck, making teammates' work safer and more efficient. We also hosted our first staff retreat, a tradition we plan to continue.

Hugs remained a downtown McKinney staple, engaging in community events like Arts in Bloom and the Coffee Crawl. Generous supporters raised nearly \$50,000 through the North Texas Giving Machine, over \$100,000 on North Texas Giving Day, and helped make our annual gala a sold-out success.

The mission of Hugs reached wider audiences with features in Dallas Morning News, Texas Gardener Monthly, Texas Country Reporter, Medium, and more. We were honored as D Magazine's "Social Enterprise of the Year" and named one of the "Friendliest Places in the South" by Southern Living.

2024's successes strengthened every Hugs program and expanded awareness of our mission. We look forward to building on this momentum as we continue to grow and thrive.



Hugs Cafe is the first employment initiative from Hugs Cafe Inc. dedicated to providing meaningful training and employment in a restaurant setting. Our mission-based employees perform every job there is at our cafe including server, sandwich line attendant, and greeter. Offerings at Hugs Cafe include soup, salad, sandwiches, and sweet treats, made with love by our incredible employees.

Hugs Cafe has increased its reach this year through the new weekly pop-up lunch site at The Rook in Adriatica, as well as offering breakfast from 8 am to 11 am Tuesdays through Sundays at its flagship location. Our signature cookies also expanded this year, doubling in size!



45

Meaningful Jobs

10,264

Sweet Treats Baked

9,386

Sandwiches Prepared

8

Meaningful Jobs

2,500

Poinsettias grown

3,065

Perennials planted



Hugs Greenhouse continues to thrive in North Texas with additional wholesale orders and new retail customers. Our greenhouse continues to be a premier source for native perennials and bedding plants, as well as growing thousands of beautiful poinsettias every holiday season.

Hugs Greenhouse was supported this year with the help of brand new equipment - a forklift and a branded delivery truck, which help improve the speed and ease of filling flats and delivering plants to our customers, as well as making a splash at our McKinney Farmers Market stall.



# 27

Trainees attended in 2024

Hugs Training Academy launched in 2022 and completed its third year of programming in 2024. Trainees from all across North Texas took our course and received 120 hours of in-person workforce development and training support. Trainees ages 14 and older are able to both build employment and hospitality skills and expand their social networks through our program.

In 2024, Hugs Training Academy added a second location in Dallas with the partnership of Dallas College, which hosted 15 students in its first year, expanding the reach of Hugs' curriculum across the metroplex.

# 20

Trainees have received a job

# 1

Trainee is volunteering more independently or continuing their education





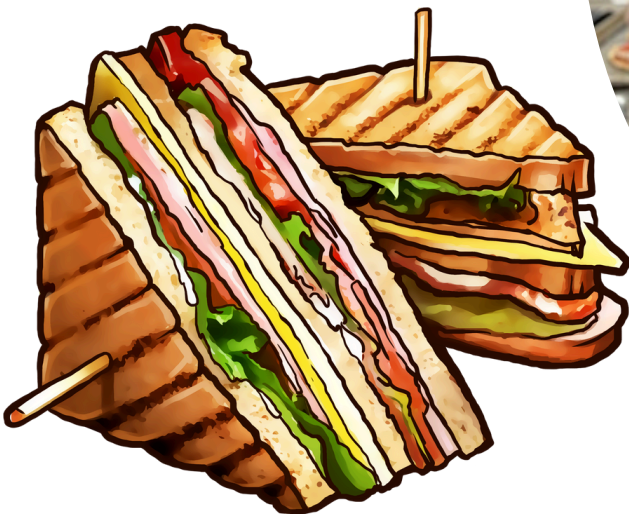
# 24

Classes held

Hugs Home Cooking supported the creative and social needs of its participants in 2024 with classes full of diverse cuisine and culinary methods. This social class is designed to engage individuals with the kitchen and potentially serve as a stepping stone in furthering a passion for the culinary arts. Through the help and support of our incredible teachers and volunteers, students meet twice a month to learn new recipes and make new friends with all the necessary equipment provided to help them become successful and confident in the kitchen.

# 18

Hugs Home Cooking  
Students



# Social Events

Hugs Cafe Inc. continues to prioritize staff events as a way for mission-based employees and volunteers alike to bond and socialize as well as celebrate their continued hard work. Hugs events like our sold-out annual fundraising gala and Christmas party were a huge success this year in helping us achieve our future goals.

In 2024, Hugs teammates were able to experience such exciting events as bingo nights hosted by Cornerstone Ranch and Roofing Ontop & Energy, and a Frisco RoughRiders game thanks to CoServ. These partners and many others allow our staff to kick back and celebrate their hard work throughout the year.

# 12

Socials  
& Special Events

# 140

Attendees at Our  
Annual Winter Social

## Staff Retreat 2024



In August, Hugs Cafe Inc. held its first inaugural staff retreat, where all Hugs employees gathered to do team-building exercises, learn about Hugs' growth and future plans, and socialize with other staff across our programs. This first session was a huge success for employee morale and will serve as a template for future staff events.



# Hugs Cafe Inc. Volunteers

Volunteers are an essential part of the Hugs Cafe Inc. programs and mission. Whether it is coaching a Hugs Cafe employee through a new skill or volunteering at one of our special events like North Texas Giving Day or our Byron Nelson concession stand, the time and dedication that our community pours into Hugs is second to none.

All of our programs at Hugs Cafe Inc. utilize a combination of paid supervisors and community volunteers to run each branch, saving significant funds but also helping Hugs create a wide network throughout the metroplex for the Hugs Family and its many beneficiaries.

1,296

Volunteer Shifts Logged in  
2024

5,030

Hours Logged by  
Volunteers

\$50,000

Saved in Wages





# The Future for Hugs Cafe Inc.

Hugs Cafe Inc. experienced an unprecedented amount of growth and expansion in the past year and we hope to one day be the model for inclusive employment programs for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the United States. As we head into 2025, the year of Hugs' tenth anniversary, we look forward to making even more community partnerships and expanding internally. Some of our biggest and most exciting projects moving forward are the creation of our new headquarters building in McKinney, which will serve as the main location for both Hugs Cafe and Hugs Training Academy as well as a permanent administrative office, and our second official Hugs Cafe site, which is projected to open in Dallas, Texas in late 2025. We are so excited to share these incredible success stories with our partners nationwide and build an even brighter future for Hugs and our wonderful teammates in the coming years.