

# The Art and Impact of Gathering

THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



MONONA  TERRACE



## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Every day, I have the privilege of working in one of the most beautiful and iconic buildings in Madison—one that is recognized across the globe for its Frank Lloyd Wright architectural design. But Monona Terrace is more than an architectural masterpiece. It is a space where ideas spark, businesses grow, communities celebrate, and visitors experience the vibrancy of Madison.

As I look around and see the tremendous growth happening in our city—cranes on the skyline, new projects taking shape, and a collective momentum forward—I'm reminded of the role Monona Terrace plays in this transformation. Anchored in the heart of Madison, we are proud to serve as a hub for progress, a gathering place where ideas turn into action, and a welcoming front door to our community. And we look forward to being a centerpiece in the Lake Monona Waterfront development efforts over the next several years.

While our convention and meeting spaces generate significant economic impact – an estimated \$41 million of business sales were generated in 2024 alone – Monona Terrace's mission is uniquely rooted in service to the broader community. In 2024, we welcomed more than 35,000 people to 124 free and low-cost community programs, from yoga sessions overlooking the lake to educational and cultural experiences that enrich lives. These events embody our dedication to making Monona Terrace a place where everyone belongs.

As we move forward, we remain focused on innovation, sustainability, and accessibility—ensuring Monona Terrace continues to evolve alongside Madison's growth. Whether through enhancing our event experiences, expanding our community programming, or deepening our commitment to environmental stewardship, we are dedicated to fostering a space that serves both present and future generations. Monona Terrace is more than a venue; it is a cornerstone of connection, creativity, and progress.

This year's report, *The Art and Impact of Gathering*, highlights the many ways Monona Terrace serves as a premier gathering place, both through its architectural heritage and its tangible contributions to our region. As you read on, you'll hear from civic and industry leaders who recognize Monona Terrace as more than a gathering space—it is an anchor for our city's economic growth, cultural vibrancy, and community connection. From the shore of Lake Monona to the national stage, its impact is undeniable.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We look forward to another year of bringing people together in meaningful and memorable ways.

*Connie Thompson*

Connie Thompson  
Executive Director  
Monona Terrace



## A \$41 MILLION BOOST: MONONA TERRACE POWERS MADISON'S ECONOMY

Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center continues to play a vital role in driving economic growth for the Madison area, generating an impressive \$41 million in economic activity in 2024. Through a diverse array of conferences, conventions, and community events, Monona Terrace attracts thousands of visitors each year, fueling local businesses, hotels, restaurants, and attractions. The center's impact extends beyond event attendees, as it supports hundreds of jobs and enhances Madison's reputation as a premier destination for both business and leisure travelers.

Its ability to draw national and international events ensures a steady influx of visitors who contribute to the local economy, making Madison a thriving hub for meetings and events. The success of Monona Terrace reflects a collaborative effort with Destination Madison and other partners, reinforcing its role as an essential driver of economic vitality in the region.



“Monona Terrace continues to be a key partner in Destination Madison’s efforts to boost our local tourism economy. It is the Meetings and Events anchor for the city. With its instantly recognizable Frank Lloyd Wright design and waterfront location, Monona Terrace is more than a building – it’s an integral part of Madison’s story, drawing both business and leisure travelers and boosting our local tourism economy.”

– Ellie Westman Chin, President & CEO, Destination Madison



## THE MADISON LAKEWAY PROJECT: A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION



The Madison LakeWay Project is set to redefine the Lake Monona waterfront, creating a more accessible, sustainable, and dynamic public space that strengthens Madison's connection to one of its most treasured natural assets. Designed with community input, the project will introduce expanded green spaces, improved pedestrian and bicycle pathways, and new gathering areas, making the waterfront a welcoming and active destination for residents and visitors alike. By enhancing accessibility and environmental sustainability, the



LakeWay Project will enrich the city's landscape while honoring the legacy of Frank Lloyd Wright, whose vision for Monona Terrace was always deeply tied to the lake.

For Monona Terrace, the LakeWay Project represents an exciting opportunity to further integrate with the waterfront and enhance the visitor

experience. New pathways and park spaces will improve access to the facility, drawing more people to its programs, events, and stunning lakeside views. The revitalization will create new possibilities for outdoor programming, offering fresh opportunities for cultural events, public gatherings, and community engagement in a beautifully reimagined setting. As the heart of this transformation, Monona Terrace will continue to serve as a premier destination for both residents and visitors, seamlessly blending architecture, nature, and community.



Photo Credits: Saski and Madison Lakeway Partners

## THE MADISON LAKEWAY PROJECT: A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION CONTINUED

Beyond its physical transformation, the LakeWay Project is expected to boost tourism, increase economic activity, and elevate Madison's national profile. A more vibrant waterfront will attract event planners, businesses, and cultural organizations, reinforcing Monona Terrace's role as a key driver of economic growth. As these exciting developments unfold, Monona Terrace remains committed to embracing this vision, fostering connections, and playing a central role in shaping the future of Madison's lakefront. This project is not just about revitalizing the waterfront—it's about creating lasting impact for generations to come.



“Monona Terrace has been an iconic fixture on the shore of Lake Monona for more than 25 years and its beauty will only be enhanced by the Madison Lakeway project. As we increase access to the water and shoreline for all Madisonians, Monona Terrace will continue serving as an anchor, bringing our community and visitors together.” – Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, City of Madison



## WHERE ARCHITECTURE MEETS ARTISTRY: MONONA TERRACE ON TOP CHEF

“Travel Wisconsin was proud to set the table and bring Bravo’s Top Chef to Wisconsin in 2024. Frank Lloyd Wright left a legacy of inspiring beauty in Wisconsin, from Monona Terrace to all the other sites along the Frank Lloyd Wright Trail and elsewhere across the state. It was a joy seeing the “cheftestants” in Season 21 draw inspiration from visiting his creations, including Monona Terrace, for a Wright-inspired cooking challenge. Monona Terrace was a natural fit to celebrate the Madison-based episode of the season. You could feel the community pride fill the room as gorgeous shot after gorgeous shot of Madison appeared on the screen.”

– Secretary Anne Sayers, Wisconsin Department of Tourism



2024 was an exciting year for Wisconsin as Top Chef showcased the state’s rich culinary heritage on a national stage. As part of the season, the series spotlighted Monona Terrace, introducing viewers to Wisconsin’s Frank Lloyd Wright Trail and reinforcing the state’s architectural legacy. The show also highlighted regional landmarks and local businesses, celebrating Wisconsin’s unique fusion of design and cuisine.

This high-profile exposure reinforced Monona Terrace’s reputation as more than a convention center—it is a cultural destination where architecture, creativity, and community converge. By seamlessly blending design, gastronomy, and storytelling, the episode not only elevated Madison’s national profile but also solidified Monona Terrace as a key player in the city’s tourism and economic landscape.



Photo Credits: David Moir/Bravo

## EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT MONONA TERRACE

Meeting planners are increasingly seeking immersive, high-touch event experiences, and Monona Terrace continues to exceed expectations with impeccable service, top-tier cuisine, and seamless event execution. In 2024, our commitment to excellence was reflected in an outstanding 97% overall customer satisfaction rating, with 100% of clients expressing a willingness to return on their post-event survey. From the first inquiry to the final farewell, our dedicated team ensures that every event—whether a corporate conference, gala, or community gathering—is executed with precision, care, and creativity. As seen in the glowing testimonials from our clients and the vibrant event moments captured throughout the year, Monona Terrace remains Madison’s premier destination for unforgettable experiences.



**97% CUSTOMER  
SATISFACTION RATING**

**100% WILLINGNESS  
TO RETURN**

“The Monona Terrace AV team is an absolute sanity saver! We’ve done many events at venues that don’t have on site AV services like Monona Terrace and it’s incredibly stressful. With Monona Terrace AV team expertise and equipment inventory, every detail is managed seamlessly and any need to troubleshoot is easily handled on the spot.”

*- Beth Pinkerton, UW Health*

## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

### PROGRAMMING

In 2024, Monona Terrace continued to enrich the community, welcoming 35,483 participants to 124 free and low-cost programs across virtual, hybrid and in-person formats. From a vibrant summer on the rooftop to the launch of dynamic new events, we created more opportunities for connection, learning and celebrations. Some new events we launched in 2024 included:

**FAMILY WINTER PROM:** Monona Terrace partnered with Madison Parks and Olbrich Gardens to host this popular event for families featuring a DJ, craft stations and games.

**LAKESIDE DANCE LAB:** A fun series of multi-cultural dance workshops which brings a new dance style and instructor to the floor each week.

Our cornerstone programs such as the popular Wright Design lecture series, Lakeside Kids!, Moon Over Monona Terrace, and health and wellness programming continued to serve diverse audiences, extending our reach and impact. And our public, student, and group tours provided insights into the facility's rich history and architectural significance to 1,671 attendees in 2024.

### VOLUNTEERS

A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated volunteers, who generously contributed 1,049 hours of their time in 2024. Their efforts—from leading our architecturally focused building tours and maintaining our gardens to supporting community events—play a vital role in making Monona Terrace a welcoming and vibrant space for all.



### FRIENDS OF MONONA TERRACE



The Friends of Monona Terrace Board continued to provide its strong support of our programming through their outreach and financial support of our community programming.

### COMMUNITY AND PROGRAM PARTNERS

Our generous community partners provided financial support through grants and sponsorships for Concerts on the Rooftop and Lakeside Kids! programming totaling \$12,763.

### TESTIMONIALS

#### Family Winter Prom

"It was an incredibly magical night! Well done, the decorations were amazing, the food was spot on, the crafts were fun and the music was fantastic. Just what January needed." – *Debi K., Madison, WI*

#### Yoga Core

"Classes were perfect! Well-paced, opportunity to do less or more I feel so lucky to live in Madison and can participate in Monona Terrace's wonderful programs." – *Sylvia S., Madison, WI*

#### Tours

"Our guide was exceptional. He was knowledgeable and passionate on the history of the building while being friendly. Great experience!"

#### Concerts on the Rooftop

"Great venue, good people, beautiful event! The Monona Terrace is a jewel in Madison's crown and the events are free, safe and entertaining- in a gorgeous facility and setting. Please keep hosting these!" – *Michelle H., Madison, WI*





# MONONA TERRACE 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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District 4 Alder, City of Madison

“For 27 years, Monona Terrace has remained steadfast in fulfilling its three core mandates: serving as a community gathering place, a tourism destination, and an economic catalyst. Since opening, it has welcomed 9.8 million visitors and attendees, hosted 18,188 events, and provided a space for 2,379 free community gatherings. As a catalyst for economic growth, it has generated \$725.3 million in economic impact, while also drawing 88,725 tour guests to experience its architectural and cultural significance. Our governance model—uniting city, county, and state representatives—ensures that Monona Terrace continues to be a strong regional asset, working in partnership with organizations like the City of Madison, Dane County, Destination Madison, Downtown Madison, Inc., the Chamber of Commerce, and many others to keep our community thriving.”

*- Judy Karofsky, Chair, Monona Terrace Board of Directors*



## MONONA CATERING

In 2024, Monona Catering continued its commitment to exceptional service and sustainability, marking another successful year as Monona Terrace's exclusive in-house caterer. Whether providing coffee breaks, full-course meals, or elegant receptions, the Monona Catering team delivered outstanding hospitality to hundreds of thousands of guests. Beyond serving delicious food, they remain dedicated to making a positive impact—donating surplus food to local shelters and expanding their composting efforts to reduce waste and support environmental sustainability. Monona Catering's achievements this year reflect their ongoing mission to blend culinary excellence with customer care and eco-conscious practices.

Monona Catering remains committed to sustainability and community support. This year, approximately 6,771 pounds (3.4 tons) of food were donated to local shelters, helping those in need. Additionally, our composting program diverted approximately 41,420 pounds (20.7 tons) of pre-consumer waste from local landfills. From a greenhouse gas equivalency perspective, these efforts are comparable to growing 273 urban tree seedlings for 10 years, reinforcing our dedication to environmental responsibility.



### HOSPITALITY GUESTS

(coffee breaks)

**296,557**

### MEAL GUESTS

(breakfast, lunch, dinner)

**85,727**

### RECEPTION GUESTS

(weddings, galas, quinceañeras)

**66,581**

### TOTAL GUESTS

(including all misc.)

**562,784**





Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center 2022-2024 Year-End Performance Measures	2022 ACTUAL	2023 ACTUAL	2024 ACTUAL
<b>Conventions and Conferences<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>53</b>
Economic Impact from Conventions & Conferences <sup>2</sup>	\$27.8M	\$46.2 <sup>4</sup>	\$41
Average Attendance at Conventions or Conferences	712	662	702
As a Percentage of Total Events	9%	8%	11%
As a Percentage of Building Revenue	50%	46%	56%
Hotel Room Nights Generated	30,414	25,990	33,277
<b>Local Events</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>354</b>
Average Attendance at Local Events	465	474	546
As a Percentage of Total Events	74%	74%	72%
As a Percentage of Building Revenue	40%	42%	35%
<b>Community Events</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>124</b>
Average Attendance at Community Events	230 <sup>3</sup>	267 <sup>3</sup>	286 <sup>3</sup>
As a Percentage of Total Events	25%	24%	25%
Total Attendance of Tours	1,191	1,671	2,090
Volunteer Hours	901	1,138	1,049
<b>Building Activity</b>			
Number of National or International Events	28	26	30
Number of State and Regional Events	64	77	106
Average Number of Events in Building per Day	1.3	1.5	1.4
Total Square Footage of Space Rented	12.7M SQ. FT	13.5M SQ. FT	14.5M SQ. FT
Total Number of Hotel Room Nights Generated	32,414	28,365	34,726
<b>Total Number of Events</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>495</b>
<b>Catering Activity</b>			
Number of Meals Served	80,977	77,932	85,727
Number of Guests Served at all Catered Functions	341,550	349,734	562,784
Pounds of Food Donated to Charity	5,330	7,654	6,771
Pounds of Pre-consumer Food Waste Composted	31,625	43,563	41,420
<b>Customer Service</b>			
Percentage of Repeat Business	57%	61%	64%
Willingness to Return	96%	96%	100%
Overall Customer Satisfaction Rating	96%	96%	97%

Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Conventions are multi-space/multi-day business with peak room nights of 150 or greater. Conferences have peak room nights of between 50-149.

<sup>2</sup> The Destinations International (DI) Event Impact Calculator is used to estimate the economic impact of Monona Terrace. The DI and Tourism Economics created the calculator in 2011 and it has become the industry standard for measuring the value of conventions and conferences.

<sup>3</sup> Total in-person attendance of community events was 30,102, total virtual attendance was 5,381

<sup>4</sup> Source: Tourism Economics Economic Impact Study. 2023 figure includes direct, indirect, and net impact.



MONONA  
TERRACE

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