

The Mission Project and Camps for Kids Share Tiny Spaces

What comes to mind when you think of a shared space? Do you think of organizations with abundant space? So much space they might as well share with another organization? While that can be the case, this time we find ourselves recognizing two organizations, [The Mission Project](#) and [Camps for Kids](#), for sharing a small space across the hall from Support Kansas City.

Originally, The Mission Project did not have a permanent office and operated out of apartments while helping adults with developmental and cognitive disabilities live independently. In 2012, once the organization gained more participants, the leadership team decided to rent space from The Down Syndrome Guild in Mission, Kansas. This was a convenient location because many of The Mission Project's participants live in the apartments across the street. However, as The Mission Project and Down Syndrome Guild continued to grow, The Mission Project decided to move into an office suite of their own. Executive Director, Sarah Mai, says the space in their new office suite is perfect for The Mission Project's clientele. "There is a home-like lounge area where participants can spend time in community or in one-on-one counseling, and there is a classroom where programs can take place". Plus, Mai has her own office.

Shortly after moving into the new office suite, Mai was approached by the property manager about leasing space to Regina Weir, Camps for Kids Executive Director. At the time, Camps for Kids was leasing space in another building from the same property manager, who realized the two organizations have similar missions that focus on helping individuals with disabilities.

Camps for Kids works to assure that no child in the Kansas City area will be turned away from summer camp due to low income, physical ability or developmental ability. With their matching funds campaign, they support 21 camps around the Kansas City metro targeting different populations. The nature of the organization requires minimal office space, which is convenient when sharing space with The Mission Project.

When Weir isn't visiting camps, she spends time in the office focused on fundraising, grant writing, and other administrative tasks. Originally, Mai worried that hosting programs in the office suite would disrupt Weir's work, but Weir shared that it is quite the opposite. Weir enjoys leaving her door open, getting to know the program participants and is ultimately inspired by their energy. This among other examples is why sharing a small space works for these two organizations. Another prominent reason is that The Mission Project and Camps for Kids are single-staff, women-led organizations. Sharing space allows Mai and Weir to bounce around ideas, share resources, and even promote one another's missions. They oftentimes find themselves talking big picture ideas surrounding nonprofits and the community. They enjoy raising visibility for one another and do not look at each other through a competitive lens.

Mai and Weir are grateful to the property manager for caring enough about their missions to recognize this as a good fit. It has been six months now since they began sharing the tiny space and they look forward to many more years to come.



Left to right: Sarah Mai, Mission Project Executive Director; Regina Weir, Camps for Kids Executive Director