



SMART Recovery®

Life beyond addiction



**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2020

Leading the Future
of Recovery



The year 2020 was unlike any other due to the COVID-19 pandemic. SMART Recovery witnessed, first-hand, the devastating impact of this global crisis upon individuals in recovery and their families and friends. When this crisis forced us to suspend in-person meetings, individuals lost a critical lifeline while already suffering from isolation, job and income uncertainty, and other sources of stress that increased the challenges of recovering from harmful addictions.

When people could not meet safely in person, thousands found support at the meetings we have offered for decades at our national [SMART Recovery Online Community](#). We nearly doubled the weekly schedule there to more than 60 meetings, each attended by 25 to as many as 300 people. They could find more specialized, individual support in chat rooms and on message boards covering numerous recovery challenges.

At the local level, we moved more than 600 meetings to online platforms using Zoom. People who had been meeting in person could continue supporting each other online. Facilitators and participants at some local meetings used social media to provide real-time, emergency support by convening special meetings for individuals facing a crisis. Some local online meetings have resumed to being held in person, although the rate is slow due to ongoing public health concerns.

As we started a strategic planning process before the pandemic, we knew increasing online meetings would be critical to our growth. These can reach more families in rural America, younger people, and those who cannot attend meetings easily due to transportation constraints and child- and elder-care responsibilities. Whatever problems this pandemic has posed, it inspired us to resolve this strategic need.

While COVID forced our organization, like many others, to adapt to the challenges of a global pandemic, it also highlighted our need to be better prepared for unknown challenges to allow us to remain a leader in the recovery field. We increased support for the compassionate volunteers who deliver support to the people who need it.

In the midst of all this, we invested in technology to help us maximize our efficiencies, control costs, and enhance our service and support to people in recovery. We also expanded staffing support for our volunteers to ensure they have the resources, training and support to better help others in need, and to find personal gratifications in their volunteer efforts. We recognize that our volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization!

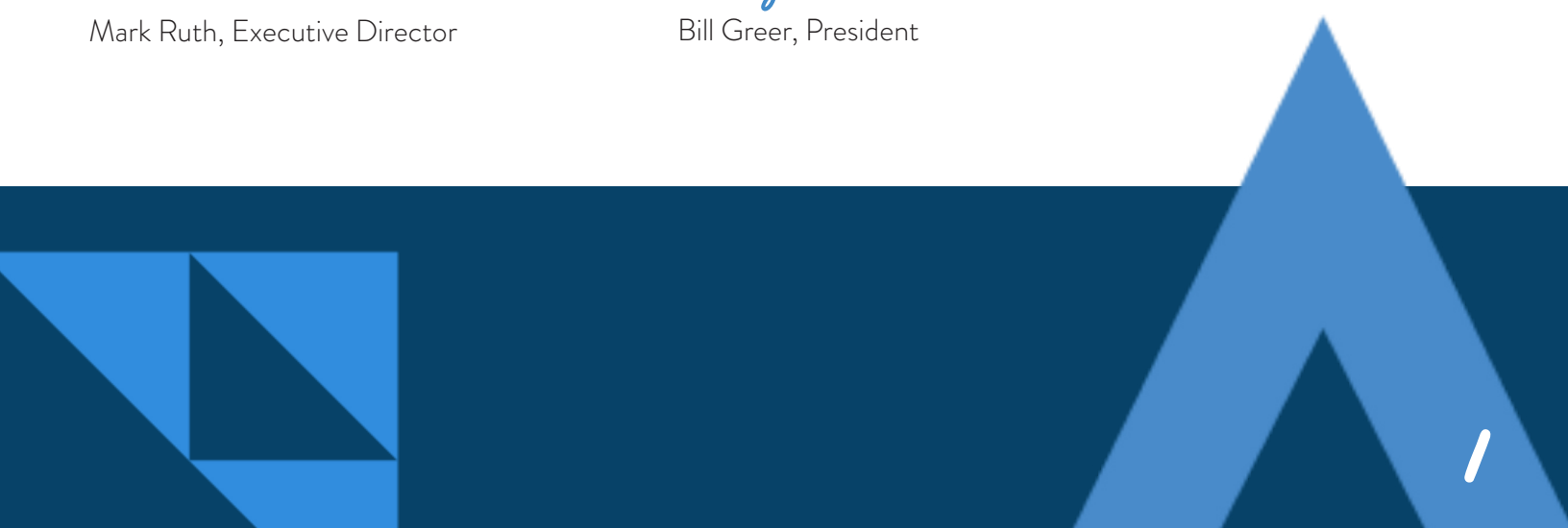
The leadership of SMART could not be prouder of the achievements of the entire SMART Recovery Community in the face of extraordinary challenges. We worked together, we worked harder, and we worked with our focus entirely where it belongs: helping people through our self-empowering pathway to recovery that truly creates **Life Beyond Addiction**.

mark ruth

Mark Ruth, Executive Director

bill greer

Bill Greer, President

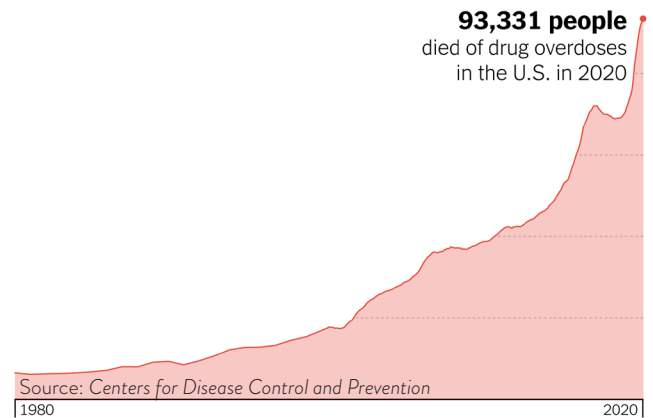


SMART RECOVERY SUSTAINS IMPACT DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

On a worldwide level, substance abuse and overdoses of drugs, alcohol, and other problematic behaviors had already caused substantial loss of lives, while adversely impacting many individuals, families and communities. The COVID pandemic further exasperated the crisis, challenging those in the recovery and treatment industry to respond.

One aspect of SMART Recovery that was critically important to support the impact of the crisis was our commitment and support in helping individuals, family members, and friends to overcome problems they were facing. So often, individuals working to overcome their addiction problems need help and support from others close to them throughout their recovery journey.

For people struggling with addiction, the pandemic made recovery more difficult. Since physical distancing nixed in-person meetings, recovery meetings had to migrate entirely to online platforms. An unheard of challenge.



What we managed to do was to respond with a major initiative to increase the number of free weekly meetings online for people in recovery and for family members and friends who support them. Since SMART had already established an online presence for more than 20 years, we had the know-how to undertake such a herculean task.

At the local level, one of the most positive aspects about moving to the Zoom platform was that participants could see familiar faces online, which made the experience more valuable. This kind of continuity is vital to continued recovery. Volunteer meeting facilitators did a tremendous job converting meetings. Many underwent special training to learn the technology and different dynamics of holding meetings online, such as engaging people, minimizing disruptions, and monitoring the chatbox.

We also moved all facilitator training online, and all staff members worked remotely for about 75% of the calendar year. Despite all the challenges and changes, SMART not only survived but, in many ways, thrived.

*SMART recognized for
continuing positive work*

600 
meetings moved online

200 
volunteers facilitators trained

1.3 million
in the smart online community

As a result of COVID, all our in-person support meetings, along with virtually all other recovery meetings, were put on hiatus. Worldwide media attention was subsequently placed on how persons in recovery were coping. We were featured in a number of significant news stories about the new reality of online meetings and other kinds of help for those struggling with addictions of all kinds.

A PBS NewsHour segment displayed SMART Zoom participants (with their permission) sharing about changes in their recovery and how they were coping. PBS, due to its national audience, introduced SMART to many, and reporting that SMART had been doing online meetings prior to COVID highlighted our forward-thinking.

In the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky media market, SMART was exclusively featured on the ABC network affiliate WCPO in a story about our response to the new risks to those in recovery inherent in the increased isolation brought on by COVID. A SMART national board member, who is also a meeting facilitator in the area, was extensively quoted about specific tools available through our program.





BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR NATIONAL IMPACT

SMART is poised to launch initiatives across America through the activities undertaken in 2020. With effective work and demonstrated impact, we have the resources to reach underserved or discounted populations, e.g., incarcerated individuals, veterans, juveniles in treatment centers, LGBTQ individuals, and students. Through grants, SMART was also able to bring a science- and research-based approach to the attention of current treatment providers.

We are using a grant from the Funders' Response to the Heroin Epidemic (FRHE) to help end the opioid and heroin epidemic raging in the tri-state region of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. This allowed us to provide materials (including handbooks), build training capacity, pay for Zoom licenses for volunteer-led meetings—all things needed to move meetings online. The FRHE grant also supported developing a plan to sustain virtual meetings indefinitely.

In much the same way, we addressed the issue of making sure courts are aware of constitutional obligations in Drug Court referrals to mutual-aid groups, including non-religious options.

We also stressed the importance of a mutual aid group's attitude towards Medication-Assisted Recovery in referring clients undergoing such treatment. SMART made sure the court knew we don't stigmatize those using medication prescribed by an appropriate healthcare professional.

Additionally, a Federal grant allowed us to undertake a major campaign to help individuals and families during the holiday season, the worst time of the year for people struggling with addiction. We held online meetings where they could receive help to stay sober and not succumb to the many holiday triggers that can be overwhelming. The holiday season during the pandemic created additional stress as many people could not spend time with their families and friends.

These Federal Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) funds were given to us to take a leadership role in providing free online recovery support meetings, a chatroom, numerous message board forums, support videos, and links to additional resources.

TRAINING ADVANCEMENTS

COVID-19 prevented us from holding all but two on-site training programs in 2020. In response, through a massive team effort, we created a web-based training program using the Zoom platform. This allowed for real-time interaction between trainers and participants, a huge advancement for our capacity to reach those interested in being trained.

It started with a healthcare facility asking if we could conduct such training online. There was a steep learning curve. Impressively, the newly constituted team of on-site trainers and national office staff, many of whom had never been involved in any previous training activities, developed and refined effective strategies over the year for a limited number of addiction professionals.

For volunteers, the training consisted of a rigorous 20-hour volunteer facilitator online training course, which teaches cognitive psychology concepts and tools widely used in addiction treatment. The training also teaches essential meeting management skills, including Motivational Interviewing, which has been proven effective in helping people decide for themselves to stop addictive behavior.

We conducted 11 online training programs in 2020 for a total of almost 200 people. Participants gave our web-based training high marks and benefited from decreases in travel, hotel, and other costs – creating a model that could be expanded significantly.



SMART RECOVERY ONLINE

SMART USA's online community (SROL; smartrecovery.org/community/) continued to grow and innovate, as it has for more than two decades since the World Wide Web went public.

Because not everyone chooses to attend meetings as their preferred method of recovery, SMART's online community offers more specialized help through message boards featuring a myriad of forums for topics including each of the 4 points, SMART tools, dealing with grief during recovery, parenthood, self-harm, and mental health conditions, along with addiction to gambling, sex, opiates, marijuana, cocaine, and other drugs. A special group forum is devoted to helping people stop smoking.

In 2020, despite the pandemic, we also added specialized meetings incorporating principles of Mindfulness, LGBTQ+ topics, and Spanish language meetings.

The SMART online community provides 24/7/365 support and continues to attract a growing number of new users, totaling more than 1.3 million in 2020.



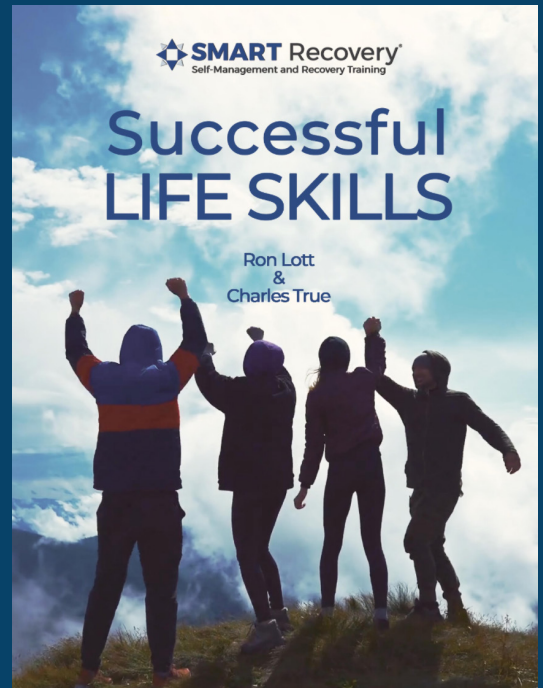
2020 DEVELOPMENT OF SUCCESSFUL LIFE SKILLS

Further development of the **Successful Life Skills** handbook in 2020 made it more accessible and less focused on the correctional environment for recovery. This guide now can help any population learn and improve their lives on a holistic level, focusing on solutions rather than labels or diagnoses. It focuses on choices, which are paramount for people to engage and participate in a learning experience.

This revision makes it the easiest, most targeted, and user-friendly treatment tool available today. It meets standards for evidence-based treatment, follows a natural progression, and can be used in either facilitator- or participant-led groups.

SMART Recovery's evidence-based InsideOut Correctional Program—originally developed with \$1 million in grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse—has been used in prisons and jails around the world over the past 22 years to great effect. Successful Life Skills has upgraded and updated this program for the 21st Century, including many valuable skills for managing basic life needs such as managing finances and seeking jobs.

Focused and thoughtful reading of this book will instill hope in people who wish to make changes in their lives and find the power within themselves to make them.



SMART 2020 PARTNERSHIPS

Financial and program partnerships generated almost \$400K in revenue for SMART USA in 2020, much of it targeting COVID-19 response (approximately \$260K). The combined funding from public agencies and private foundations shows SMART's status as an effective and prudent nonprofit recovery organization.

Major grants were provided by:

- Ohio Department of Addiction and Mental Health Services
- Interact for Health Foundation
- Cleveland Foundation
- Greater Cincinnati Foundation



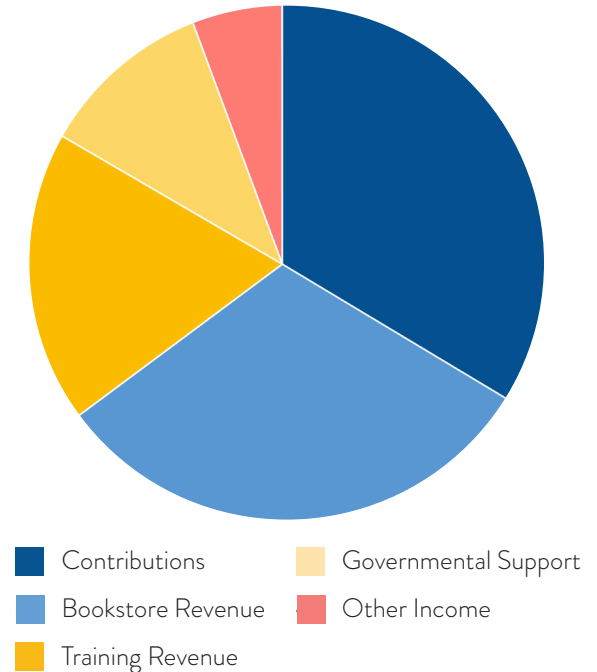
2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2020 overview

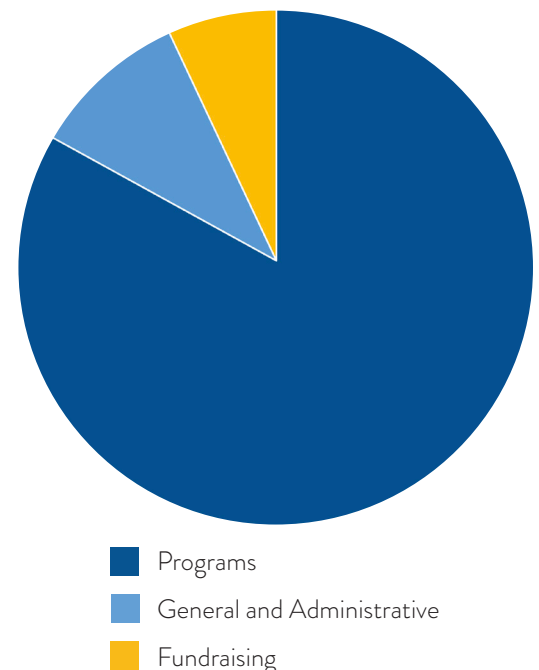
PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE	
Contributions	\$640,873
Bookstore Revenue	\$596,026
Training Revenue	\$353,814
Governmental Support	\$209,278
Other Income	\$10,770
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,810,906
EXPENSES	
Programs	\$1,396,641 (83%)
General and Administrative	\$176,617 (10%)
Fundraising	\$109,637 (7%)
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$1,682,895
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	\$128,011
INVESTMENT INCOME	\$21,162
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$149,173
NET ASSETS - Beginning of Year	\$212,896
NET ASSETS - End of Year	\$362,069

SMART Recovery USA Inc. 2020 Audited Financial Statement and IRS Form 990 are available at:
www.smartrecovery.org

2020 revenue



2020 expense



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

“ Not since SMART was founded more than a quarter-century ago, have we assembled a more talented and dedicated group of people to help lead our organization. They have the diverse skills and vision we need to innovate our services and extend SMART’s reach to every individual and family who needs our help.

— Bill Greer, Board President

Bill Greer, MS
President
Washington, DC

Brett Saarela, LCSW
Vice President
Ancram, NY

William Stearns, Esq.
Secretary
Cincinnati, OH

Randy Lindel
Treasurer
West Chester, PA

Rob McDonough
Assistant Treasurer
Atlanta, GA

Roxanne Allen
Midlothian, VA

Elaine Appel
Columbia, SC

Bobbe Baggio, PhD
Coopersburg, PA

Desean Duncan, CPRS, LADC
Apollo Beach, FL

Timothy J. Eddy, PhD
Swampscott, MA

Joseph Gerstein, MD, FACP
Miami, FL

Barry Grant, MHS
Hyattsville, MD

A. Tom Horvath, PhD, ABPP
La Jolla, CA

Dan Hostetler, MNM, CADC
Chicago, IL

David Koss, JD
Silver Spring, MD

Ron Lott
Houston, TX

Ana Troncoso
Phoenix, AZ

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Mark Ruth
Executive Director
markruth@smartrecovery.org

Christi Alicea
Assistant Executive Director
christif@smartrecovery.org

CONTACT US

SMART Recovery USA
7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F
Mentor, OH 44060
Tel: (440) 951-5357
Fax: (440) 951-5358
information@smartrecovery.org



Self-Management And Recovery Training (SMART) is a global community of mutual-support groups. At meetings, participants help one another resolve problems with any addiction (to drugs or alcohol or to activities such as gambling or over-eating). Participants find and develop the power within themselves to change and lead fulfilling and balanced lives guided by our science-based and sensible 4-Point Program®.

www.smartrecovery.org

