



Center for Independent Living

# ANNUAL REPORT

**JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024**



## SMILES Board of Directors

Lanette Ayers, President  
*Blue Earth County Human Services*

Drew Campbell, Vice President  
*Community Volunteer*

Alex Swanson, Secretary/Treasurer  
*Begalka + Swanson, CPA*

Dan Robinson,  
*True Commercial Real Estate*

MaryJo Brindley,  
*Community Volunteer*

Megan Davis,  
*Old National Bank*

Jennifer Svien,  
*Pioneer Bank*



## Community Impact

- 1667 People Served
- 871 Received Information and Referrals
- 122 Received Independent Living Skills
- 201 Received Consumer Directed Support Planning Services
- 45 Received Advocacy Services
- 13 Received Assistive Technology Services
- 76 Persons Utilized Temporary or Permanent Ramps
- 5 People Transitioned from Institutional Settings to Community Living
- 38 Participated in Peer Mentoring
- 66 Received Personal Care Services
- 230 Received Representative Payee Services
- 47 Volunteers Provided 1634 Hours of Service

Outreach to 144,000 households in the service area with a grant funded through the Minnesota Department of Health.



# Highlights of the Year

## New Endeavors

- SMILES, CIL established a fleet of adaptive bicycles and made them available to our consumers and community members who live with a disability.
- A Neurodiversity Support Group was launched.
- We organized and held a Disability Awareness Backyard Bash.
- SMILES secured a new physical location for the Waseca office.
- Increased interest from individuals requesting services at all of our branch offices.



## *Supporting Others A Summary of Success*

Our staff works collaboratively as a team and connects deeply with each of the consumers we serve. With caring hearts and a person-centered approach, we consistently go above and beyond to meet their needs.

Erica Rewitzer, ILS Program Manager shared that an Independent Living Skills consumer recently graduated from the program and took a leap of faith by moving out of state. She is now living independently.

While assisting a new individual with a Social Security application, our Advocacy Manager, Jenn Jones, recognized that the applicant required more support than SSDI could provide. Assisting the individual with advocacy, we helped them establish a case manager through the county, secure health insurance, and receive independent living skills through SMILES.

Katie Hanson, PCA Program Manager assisted a high school graduate who had lost Personal Care Assistance and Waivered Services through the county. She advocated on his behalf and successfully helped him regain those essential supports, allowing him to live independently.

A family needed access to and from their home, as both the mother and son used motorized scooters for mobility. The son also had a visual impairment. They contacted Howard Rosten, our Ramps & Technology Manager for help. During the fall season, he and his team provided a temporary ramp and returned in the spring to build a permanent ramp for the family.

An individual who had been homeless for ten years and lived in her car, connected with Tricia Garza, Rep Payee Manager. She helped the person obtain housing despite having no credit history. Tricia has also appealed several Social Security decisions, resolving discrepancies that resulted in back pay or waived overpayments for our consumers.

Anna Johnson, Peer Mentoring Program Manager assisted an individual in building confidence and independence. He began attending a support group and recreational activities, eventually branching out to help others in the program and share his experiences with SMILES in the community. He now participates in a bowling league and is employed. He has expressed interest in becoming a peer mentor for others.

We welcome you to walk alongside our consumers and staff in support of our mission and vision so that we can continue sharing success stories for years to come.

## Statements of Activities

	2024	2023
<b>Support</b>		
Contributions from General Public	44,761	16,292
Foundations	15,575	13,625
<b>Revenues</b>		
Grant Revenues	1,097,769	723,092
Service Fees & Miscellaneous	2,225,712	1,999,482
Investments	73,251	40,724
<b>Total Support and Revenues</b>	<b>3,457,068</b>	<b>2,793,215</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program Services	2,875,212	2,413,144
Management & General	251,524	227,246
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,126,736</b>	<b>2,640,390</b>
<b>Total Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>330,332</b>	<b>152,825</b>

## Statements of Financial Position

	2024	2023
<b>Current Assets</b>	1,384,619	1,311,747
Property & Equipment	316,682	61,039
Operating Right-of-Use Asset	502,483	561,098
Other Assets	9,644	9,077
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>2,213,428</b>	<b>1,942,961</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	330,988	309,673
Long-Term Liabilities	441,492	522,672
<b>Net Assets without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>1,435,980</b>	<b>1,104,587</b>
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	4,968	6,029
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>2,213,428</b>	<b>1,942,961</b>

## Thank you for your support.

Your donations make it possible to support people with disabilities as they strive for independence.

Your donations build ramps, offer recreational activities, champion advocacy, strengthen transition, support peer mentors, and offer information and referrals.

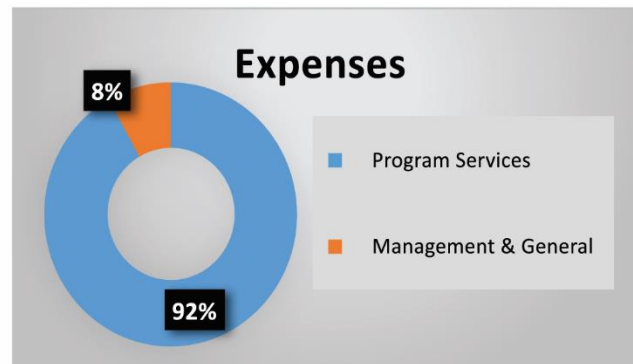
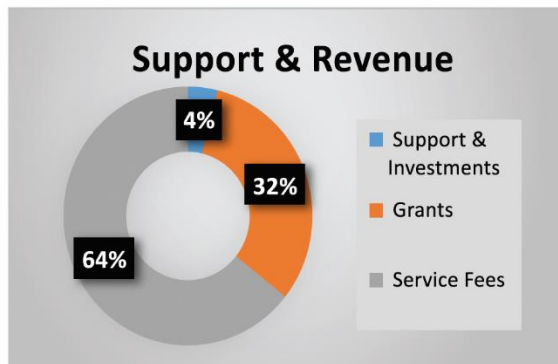
Your gift to SMILES Center for Independent Living is tax deductible as allowed by law, but most important your gift supports dignity.

We offer secure credit card donations on our website: [www.smilescil.org](http://www.smilescil.org)

*On behalf of the thousands of people in our service area and beyond we serve annually:*

**THANK YOU!**

Complete Audited Financial Statements and accompanying Notes are available on request.



# Striving Strong

Reflecting on the past year, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the strides we have made together at Southern Minnesota Independent Living Enterprises & Services (SMILES). 2023-2024 was a year of progress, resilience, and collaboration. We set out to achieve ambitious goals, and thanks to your support, we have made significant headway in our mission to support people with disabilities to realize their full potential.



New this past year, SMILES offered adaptive bike ride experiences to individuals who may or may not have ridden a bike before. Adaptive bike riding is an empowering activity that allows people of all abilities to experience the joy and freedom of cycling. Adaptive biking opens the outdoors to everyone, promoting a sense of belonging and adventure for people of all ages and abilities.

The legislature provided the Centers for Independent Living with the Home and Community Access Grant, allowing us to create materials in other languages. We developed relationships and reached out to Immigrants/Refugees, People of Color, LGBTQIA+, Veterans, and rural/farming communities. SMILES provided ramps for individuals with disabilities, a crucial step toward creating accessible, inclusive environments where everyone can navigate spaces independently and safely.

We continue to work with various city partners to strive for an accessible and inclusive community. Pedestrian safety is essential to our community members, and fostering a shared responsibility for cautious and courteous behavior is equally important.

Our efforts have increased the number of people we can serve and accessibility and inclusivity in our community, among other achievements. SMILES' accomplishments are evidence of the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners, who have worked tirelessly towards our vision of a world without barriers with equal opportunities and choices for an independent life.

As we look forward to 2024-2025, we are more determined than ever to build on our successes and tackle the challenges. We will continue to create new partnerships, collaborate with others, and provide outreach and education to ensure we meet the evolving needs of those we serve.

None of our achievements would be possible without the generous support of our donors, partners, and community members. I am also deeply grateful to our board of directors, whose guidance and leadership have been instrumental in steering our organization through this year.

To our dedicated staff and volunteers, your passion and commitment drive everything we do.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie Danberry".

Bonnie Danberry, Executive Director

[www.smilescil.org](http://www.smilescil.org)



**Center for Independent Living**  
*Expanding Access, Choice, and Independence*

**OFFICES**

Mankato 507-345-7139  
Fairmont 507-235-3488  
New Ulm 507-354-7106  
Waseca 507-310-0266

709 S. Front St., Suite 7  
Mankato, MN 56001

## MISSION & VISION

**SMILES Center for Independent Living's mission is to support people with disabilities to realize their full potential.**

**Our Vision is a world without barriers with equal opportunities and choices for an independent life.**

**We work toward achieving our mission and vision through five core services:**

- Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Information & Referral
- Peer Mentoring
- Transition to Community

**Alternative Reading Formats Available Upon Request**