

## 2020 not only marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), SMILES Center for Independent Living is also proudly celebrating 30 years of service in Region Nine!



July 26, 2020 marked the 30th anniversary of the passage of the ADA, the first civil rights law for people with disabilities and a national landmark which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places open to the general public. SMILES Center for Independent Living has promoted the inclusion of people with disabilities since our inception 30 years ago. We find there is still much to be done to remove stigma and barriers that prevent people from living in the mainstream of community life and realizing their full potential.

For 30 years SMILES has built bridges to the community, developed leaders within the disability community, and cultivated a culture of consumer led service. SMILES continues to grow and mature as an organization recognizing and responding to the needs of people in our community.

The pandemic has brought to life the true meaning of "essential." SMILES cannot shut down and cancel the support that people with disabilities need in their lives. In a time of uncertainty and fear, we've had to change our operational environment to keep individuals with disabilities, staff, and families safe and still provide the support to the individuals we serve. We are navigating what that looks like on a day-to-day basis. Our communities' caring and outreach has helped. We care for people, for all of us it is at the very core of what we do.

SMILES has plans to increase our outreach. We need to let everyone know about the incredible services we offer. Our goal is that SMILES will no longer be the best kept "secret", we will work together to make sure that more people know about us.

We are grateful for all those who believe in our mission to support people with disabilities to realize their full potential. Our success would not be possible without the participation and guidance of our Board of Directors, and our amazing staff, volunteers, supporters, and community partners. We want to personally thank each and every one of you for your time, commitment, dedication, and support over the past year. You are all AMAZING and we are so proud to be in this together.

*Bonnie Danberry*  
Bonnie Danberry, Executive Director

*Dan Robinson*  
Dan Robinson, Board President

## 2020 Board of Directors

**Dan Robinson, President**  
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Center for Independent Living  
Expanding Access, Choice, and Independence

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

### OFFICES 1-888-676-6498

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**Mankato** 507-345-7139

**New Ulm** 507-354-7106

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Mankato MN 56001-3804

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## 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.

## INDEPENDENT LIVING PHILOSOPHY

Independent Living philosophy emphasizes consumer control, the idea that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, having crucial and valuable perspective to contribute and deserving of equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities, particularly in reference to services that powerfully affect their day-to-day lives and access to independence.



Center for Independent Living  
Expanding Access, Choice, and Independence



## Celebrating 30 Years

**2020 has been a year of challenges, a year of learning to adapt, a year of incorporating technology to assist what was once taken for granted, a year of exclusion, and a year of fear.**

While the challenges and learning curves have been steep and at times almost foreboding, these are the everyday challenges that people with disabilities have always faced. As an organization led by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, SMILES Center for Independent Living quickly and responsibly advocated for our needs during trying circumstances, resourcefully pivoted to a new way of doing things, adapted to learning new communication and mentoring skills, and nimbly transitioned to a new normal incorporating new and assistive technologies leading to a new future. We were well prepared to exercise our determination to adapt.

Just as people with disabilities continue to face barriers to their community participation and inclusion, SMILES Center for Independent Living celebrates 30 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act and 30 years of service to our region.

We invite you to celebrate the gains achieved over the past 30 years and our hope for the next 30 years and beyond. Our vision is a world without barriers with equal opportunities and choices for an independent life.

## ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

### Timeline:

**1990:** SMILES opened its office at 709 S Front Street in Mankato (yes, we are still at the same address!).

**1990:** Americans with Disabilities Act signed into law on July 26th by President George H.W. Bush.

**1990:** Steve Larson and Larry Foukas, founders of SMILES Center for Independent Living receive Governor's Award for Community Service.

**1991:** Disability Conference at Minnesota State University, Mankato; formalized agreements with MN Dep't of Rehabilitation Services and Regional Service Center for People with Hearing Impairments

**1992:** Mankato Post Office builds accessibility ramp

**1993:** SMILES softball team began playing

**1994:** SMILES extended services to Fairmont and New Ulm; Buses are fitted to accommodate ramps and lifts; waived services began in Brown, Nicollet and Watonwan Counties.

**1996:** SMILES publishes accessibility guide for Mankato and North Mankato

**1997:** Handicapped parking available at Civic Center

**2001:** Adaptive Ski program

**2002:** Ramp program began with an Eagle Scout project

**2004:** Waseca Office opened, PCA Choice program



Statements of Activities		
	2020	2019
<b>Support</b>		
Contributions from General Public	48,350	27,482
Foundations	12,240	13,050
<b>Revenues</b>		
Grant Revenues	642,509	733,000
Service Fees & Miscellaneous	1,601,412	1,731,897
Investments	10,417	18,944
Total Support and Revenues	2,314,928	2,524,373
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program Services	2,009,179	2,138,137
Management & General	284,422	286,562
Fundraising	25,851	25,110
Total Expenses	2,319,452	2,449,809
Total Change in Net Assets	(4,524)	74,564

Statements of Financial Position		
	2020	2019
Current Assets	1,167,491	756,516
Property & Equipment	28,991	43,172
Other Assets	11,700	20,181
Total Assets	1,208,182	819,869
Current Liabilities	582,901	183,336
Long-Term Liabilities	4,513	11,241
Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	574,304	599,095
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	46,464	26,197
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,208,182	819,869

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

### Thank You for Your Support

Your gift to SMILES Center for Independent Living supports our work assisting people with disabilities as they strive to gain and maintain independence.

Your gift builds ramps, champions advocacy, offers information and referrals, promotes successful transitions, and supports peer mentoring.

Your gift to SMILES 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) for your convenience.

On behalf of the thousands of people we serve in southern Minnesota and beyond:

Thank You!

## SMILES Center for Independent Living ACCOMPLISHMENTS July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

During a year of extraordinary barriers, SMILES Center for Independent Living has been both strategic and bold. We excel at overcoming barriers as people with disabilities have throughout time. We continue to serve, champion, and advocate to ensure that people with disabilities can realize their full potential.

- ▶ 7,266 People Served Through Outreach
- ▶ 537 Information and Referrals
- ▶ 278 People Learning Independent Living Skills
- ▶ Recreational Activities Had 64 Participants
- ▶ Accessibility Ensured with 42 Ramps Built
- ▶ 90 Persons Reached with Assistive Technology
- ▶ Individual Advocacy Served 69 people
- ▶ 484 Participants were active in Systems Advocacy in 3 Communities
- ▶ 55 Volunteers Brightened Lives and Prevented Isolation
- ▶ 38 People Engaged in Peer Counseling
- ▶ 64 Individuals Received PCA Services, Employing 100+ PCAs

Numbers alone do not measure the impact of our mission. People matter. Independence matters.

Choice matters, as do inclusion and participation.

Our individual outcomes address our vision:

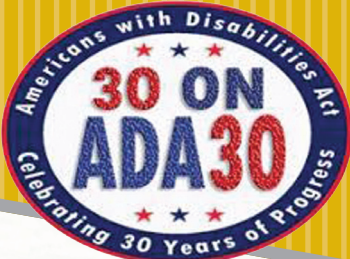
A world without barriers with equal opportunities and choices for an independent life.

Years of litigation, counseling, advocacy and support resulted in one individual no longer needing a guardian. She is successfully making decisions on her own.

Systems advocacy brought changes and improvements to public transportation, street, sidewalk and park designs. People with disabilities are learning to use their voices and they are being heard. Our communities are becoming more pedestrian friendly and accessible.

Self-direction through CDCS plans bring power and choice to people with disabilities. 70 families worked with our planners to determine how to best meet their needs.

## SMILES Center for Independent Living Community Action



If ever there were a time for cheerleaders and champions this has been the year. We are essential workers who provide essential services. In fact, it is abundantly clear that we are all essential.

Thirty years of reflection prompts us to see how far we have come and how far we need to go. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), an essential civil rights law, begins to level the playing field for everyone to participate in our communities. Participation is dependent on accessibility. Because of the ADA our communities are more accessible – buses have ramps, curb cuts transition pedestrians, public spaces are more accessible and designated parking spaces are common. This was not the case prior to the passage of the ADA.

We depend on essential civil rights for choice, access, and independence. Our success is built on creative partnerships that believe the fabric of our communities is a tightly woven tapestry beautifully displayed so all are recognized and appreciated. We continue to weave these threads and guard the tapestry.

We understand our role as essential workers who provide services for people with disabilities as long as there is a need. We will continue to champion essential workers who provide essential services to very essential people. Come join us in celebration and support. You are essential to our success.

