

SMART LOVE[®]

FAMILY SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to help children, parents, and families achieve greater inner well-being, sustain closer relationships, and build happier, healthier lives. We do this by providing counseling, early childhood education, assessments and therapeutic tutoring, and community and parenting support programs.

SMART LOVE

The principles of Smart Love™, an approach to parenting and child development originated by Martha Heineman Pieper, Ph.D., and William J. Pieper, M.D., inform and guide all of our programs. Endorsed by scholars and child development experts around the world and supported by the latest child development research, the Smart Love approach focuses parents' attention on maximizing their positive influence on their child by understanding the child's mind and emotions at every age and stage.

One of the cornerstones of the Smart Love approach is the knowledge that every young child copies the care they receive but cannot evaluate it. For this reason, informed

parenting, teaching, and caregiving are crucial if children are to grow up treating themselves and others with compassion and have the ability to care for their bodies, work productively, have stable inner happiness, and sustain enjoyable relationships.

Programs and interventions based on Smart Love principles promote closer, more enjoyable parent and child relationships, and increase success and confidence for both caregiver and child. *Smart Love* (1999) describes the application of the Piepers' approach to parenting, and their underlying psychological theory is described in *Intrapsychic Humanism* (1990), the Piepers' book for professionals.

EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Creating a future that is free from racism and hate of all kinds begins with how we treat our children today. Children grow into open-minded, patient, caring, and loving adults through the relationship they experience with their parents and caregivers. When parents offer kindness, acceptance,

and love even when children display mad, angry, or other unhappy behaviors, children will grow up to show that same kindness, acceptance and love towards others. Smart Love's programs are designed to help create that future for the children of today and the children of tomorrow.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

2021 was a demanding but meaningful and productive year for Smart Love. Covid-19 continued to have major impact on the mental and emotional well-being of children and families in our community and we strived to meet the needs of all who sought our services.

Our Counseling program set new service records, both in spite of and because of COVID and its continuing upheaval on the lives and well-being of so many. While vaccination rates remain high in our service area, the pandemic has touched everyone—from restrictions on daily life, job losses, and disruptions to school, to falling sick or the devastating loss of loved ones. And for many, the pressures and stresses caused by COVID are exacerbating existing mental health issues. I am glad to report that we have been able to help more children and families during the past year. To do this, we have added therapists, adopted new virtual platforms for therapy and parent coaching, and brought on a new unifying care management system which will make us even more effective in serving increasing numbers of clients. It has been a very big stretch, but our clinical staff has done incredible work in making these changes while caring for so many.

The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool is operating two classrooms after the prior year's scrambles to deliver services remotely. The Preschoolers are as expressive as

ever, encouraged to play, think, and create as they explore their classrooms, learn about themselves and the world around them, and so much more. Smart Love was also honored to win a Schoolyard Habitat Award for our nature/pollinator garden from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

We are also pleased to note that our newer service initiatives continue to develop. Therapeutic Tutoring continues to grow and we are bringing on and training new tutors to meet the requests for service to help children that are struggling with schoolwork amid all the turmoil around them. *It Takes A Village*, our support program for families of color in the greater Oak Park area has been expanded and deepened and now welcomes African-American and Latino parents in parallel tracks led by therapists from those specific communities – along with a group for youth. Our free-of-charge In the Pursuit of Happiness webinar series drew attendees from across the region, giving viewers insights and guidance around a host of topics throughout the year.

As is true for everyone, COVID-19 influenced every aspect of Smart Love, our programs, and the families and communities we serve. We continue to respond in every way we can to provide for those in need thanks to the generosity of our donors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Stolper Friedman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Carolyn Stolper Friedman
President & Executive Director



FINANCIALS

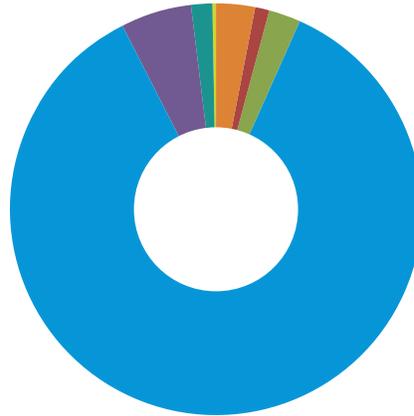
Income

Contributed Income

Individual Donors	\$94,321
Foundations, Corporations & Public Support	\$40,522
Annual Gala & Other Events (net)	\$76,746

Earned Income

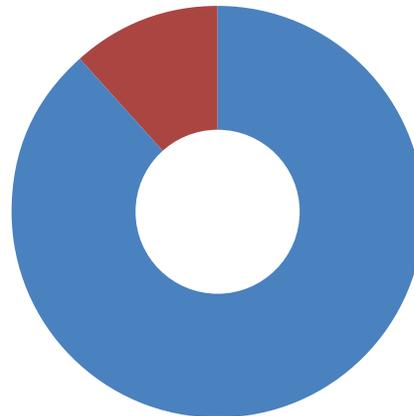
Counseling Services	\$2,619,217
Early Childhood Education	\$171,823
Tutoring, Community & Parenting Support	\$51,190
Other Income	\$369
	\$3,054,188



- Individual Donors
- Foundations, Corporations & Public Support
- Annual Gala & Other Events (net)
- Counseling Services
- Early Childhood Education
- Tutoring, Community & Parenting Support
- Other Income

Expense

Program Services	\$2,676,283
Operating & Administrative	\$346,911
	\$3,023,194



- Program Services
- Operating & Administrative

Note: SBA Payroll Protection Program Loan received in 2020 to retain staff and cover occupancy costs was forgiven in 2021.



PROGRAMS

Counseling

If there has been any silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been the fact that so many people are now more comfortable seeking help in coping with the immense stresses, fears, and trauma that the virus and its wide-ranging impacts are causing. Even so, the emotional and mental health costs of the pandemic continue to mount.

This past year, Smart Love provided over 20,000 clinical sessions for children and families to help address the impact of COVID on every aspect of their lives, as well as other issues and challenges they face.

New clinician hires, technologies, and organizational improvements ensured our ability to provide the care and support families in our community needed. One vital addition has been investment in a new client care management system that streamlines our care system and enables easier secure access for our clients, ranging from initial inquiries and intake to communication with one's therapist and more. We are able to respond even more swiftly to both new clients and existing ones alike, whether answering questions and updating information to providing referrals for other community resources. This means we can dedicate even more time to providing the 1:1 care our clients need most.

The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool

The Preschool recorded another year of growth and great things as we emerged from the worst depths of the pandemic crisis, having weathered the challenges and ready for a return to full classrooms in August 2021. Welcoming growing numbers of families back to the Preschool was a great joy and this growth is continuing.

To see and hear the energy of busy classrooms welcoming so many new preschoolers has been great—feeling like we are indeed heading to a more “normal” way of being, no matter how new that normal ends up being. The children's joy and enthusiasm permeates every inch of the building and the effects of that are remarkable.

We worked hard to keep everyone safe. Following strict health and safety protocols, we ensured the well-being of the preschoolers, their families, and our staff, adding physical features and health-screening processes to protect and care for all who entered the Preschool. Keeping preschoolers masked during the course of their busy days was just one of the challenges, but we are grateful for our families' support for these efforts and very pleased with the results.

Bringing on several new, culturally diverse, teachers was another significant advance we achieved during the year, in keeping with Smart Love's overall commitment to building greater equity and inclusion at every level of the organization.



In another highlight from the year, our nature/pollinator garden won an Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Award from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources through a competitive application process and was the only preschool in Chicago to do so. We were excited to get this recognition and use our garden spaces to engage our preschoolers even more deeply with our natural world and their role in understanding and protecting our environment.

Assessments & Therapeutic Tutoring

Continuing its growth, our Therapeutic Tutoring program is expanding yet further. Demand for this highly-effective service for children having classroom challenges required us to recruit and train new tutors. Helping young people to understand and address the feelings and anxieties that surround schoolwork, our tutoring is winning rave reviews and making a real difference.

Parenting & Community Support

It Takes A Village

What had originally been our “Minority Family Program” was expanded and broadened into *It Takes A Village*, our facilitated peer-support, mental health care, and parent coaching program for families of color in the greater Oak Park area. The program now features two parent groups, Finding Strength Together for Black parents and Mi Familia for Spanish-speaking parents, along with a multicultural youth group—all of which meet biweekly throughout the year. A new group for parents of multicultural families is set to start in early 2022. Taking place virtually since the pandemic began, we hope to transition the program back to in-person as soon as conditions permit.

In The Pursuit of Happiness Webinars

Our webinars are proving popular with viewers from across the region and farther beyond. More than 300 registered to hear from Smart Love clinicians and guest experts on a host of topics, including everything from helping children cope with upsetting news, caring for elderly relatives in the time of COVID, encountering and overcoming systemic racism, and other timely and important issues.



FY21 ANNUAL & PROGRAM SUPPORT

Smart Love is deeply grateful for the generous support of the individuals, families, and organizations that contributed to Annual and Program funding in FY 2021. All of our programs are supported by these essential contributions, which enable investments in key services, research and development of new programs, and to provide our clients and staff with the tools and resources they need.

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OUR 2021 VIRTUAL GALA

The 2021 Gala was held virtually in keeping with COVID protocols, but that didn't stop our friends and supporters from making it a great success. We were delighted to welcome Funkadesi, the renowned Chicago-based world music/fusion ensemble, to join us for a festive evening. The proceeds of the Gala directly fund our care for local children and families facing financial hardship, enabling us to serve all who come to us for care and services.

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Assistant Teacher

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Teacher and Gardener

Glenny Perez
Teacher

Maddie Perez
Teacher

Elise Valencia
Assistant Teacher

SMART LOVE FAMILY SERVICES

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Natalie & Ben Heineman Smart Love Center
2222 N. Kedzie Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60647
p 773 665-8052

www.smartlovetfamily.org
www.smartlovetpreschool.org



COUNSELING

1010 Lake Street, Suite 500
Oak Park, IL 60301

Natalie & Ben Heineman Smart Love Center
2222 N. Kedzie Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60647

THE NATALIE G. HEINEMAN SMART LOVE PRESCHOOL

Natalie & Ben Heineman Smart Love Center
2222 N. Kedzie Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60647

