Annual Report
2020 Make Moves That Matter
Our Mission

Back on My Feet combats homelessness through the power of fitness, community support, and essential employment and housing resources.

Supporting people is what we do. We are a community that comes together to help each other avoid the backslide and navigate challenging times. And the societal shift in the wake of the senseless loss in the Black community allowed us to recommit shaping a better tomorrow. We have always been committed to building communities that dismantle stereotypes and prejudices and work towards a more equitable world. And this year, together, we stood squarely against systemic racism and social injustices. We took a pledge to do more — to take a stand, determined not to stand still. This was made even more possible through our valued partners who also made a commitment to ensuring our members have equitable access to training, jobs, and housing resources.

While a year of unprecedented challenges, 2020 also presented us with some exciting wins. In November we expanded to Ft. Lauderdale, FL thanks to a close partnership with Burdette Beckmann Inc. and the Salvation Army Adult Recovery Center. We also implemented the Elizabeth & Phill Gross Alumni Emergency Fund, offering emergency grants to alumni and senior members who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19, helping to keep them from slipping back into a cycle of homelessness.

Our community continues to be as active as it was before the pandemic — phone calls, virtual workouts, virtual circle ups, and encouraging signs posted outside windows all show that we are still here. Our members are still getting new jobs and finding true stability, even as the effects of COVID-19 persist.

To our countless volunteers, our corporate, foundation and non-profit partners, our National Board, and all our supporters and donors — thank you for your dedicated partnership in moving our mission to transform peoples’ lives ever onward. Together, we are continuing to innovate and make an impactful difference for thousands of lives across the country.

Dear Friends,

During a year of unprecedented nationwide shutdowns and civil unrest, we saw our Back on My Feet communities come together and support one another. And while our team has always thrived on high-fives, hugs and in-person moments, we quickly pivoted our program delivery to better meet the needs of our members and to continue helping them move their lives forward.

That spirit of unity and support was apparent as the effects of COVID-19 disrupted the lives of our members and alumni — some of the most vulnerable in our society. As we saw the hiring freezes and layoffs mount, due to the economic and health crisis around the country, we introduced new avenues of participation and support. From phone calls to virtual check-ins and skills training, we ramped up our employment partnerships with emerging industries, which allowed our members to shift quickly into new jobs. When many of our alumni were laid off at the beginning of the pandemic, we were nimble enough to quickly help them find new employment and maintain their housing during the unforeseen times.

With Gratitude,

Katy Sherratt
CEO

A Letter
From Our CEO

Katy Sherratt
Chief Executive Officer

With Gratitude,

Katy Sherratt
CEO
COVID-19

COVID-19 disrupted our lives and forced us all to deeply reflect on the importance of a safe home, livable wage and the power of community. For far too many of our members, the “shelter in place” orders only intensified the already existing barriers preventing them from finding jobs and homes. It exacerbates the feelings of isolation and solitude that many who are dealing with addiction or experiencing homelessness already feel daily. As hiring freezes and layoffs mounted, Back on My Feet was there.

Over the course of a weekend in March 2020, we pivoted our program delivery to virtual when possible. We worked with partners to bridge the tech gap for our members and alumni so they could access our virtual circle. Many of our alumni experienced layoffs and furloughs, but again, Back on My Feet was there. We stayed vigilant and at the forefront of the needs for the current job market. Alumni worked closely with us to find new employment, learn new skills, including how to interview over video, and apply for emergency financial aid grants to keep their housing and their utilities.

Since 2007, Back on My Feet has helped individuals experiencing homelessness through the power of fitness, community support and essential employment and housing resources, providing a space for them to thrive and be healthy — mentally and physically. 2020 was no different, we just added more resources to our toolbox.

“COVID-19 caused me to lose my job and I needed to ask for more assistance from Back on My Feet. They were there to help me get another job making great money. I felt as though my life had meaning again. With every challenge that has come up for me, Back on My Feet has been there to say, ‘Let’s try again,’ and I feel invigorated to dust myself off and start over.”

- Logan, Back on My Feet Member

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- Jerome, Back on My Feet Member

Eric graduated from his culinary program right as COVID hit but couldn’t find a job because of restaurant restrictions. Instead of giving up, he decided to go back to his original profession and look for jobs in construction. As of today, he’s moved out of his sober living into a studio apartment and has started a new job with an excellent salary!

“This road to recovery cannot be walked alone, and since I’ve started, I’ve had to find that out, but with good people in my corner rooting for me it can be done.”

- Eric, Back on My Feet Member
Thank you to all who supported our mission in 2020.

We take a well-rounded approach to help members move towards self-sufficiency, and we ask our partners and supporters to do the same. Game-changing partners literally alter the course of our organization. The partners featured here impact member success nationwide through employee engagement, programmatic support, financial support and board engagement.

$50,000+ in Support

- Philip & Elizabeth Gross

$10,000+ in Support

- Alphawood Foundation
- Arbor Dog Foundation
- Atalaya Capital Management
- AT&T
- Balega
- Bank of America
- Bombas
- Brown Advisory
- Bruce and Beth White Family Foundation
- Capital One
- Carroll’s-Gill’s Permanent Endowment Fund
- Connelly Foundation
- Crown Family Philanthropies
- Eastern Bank Foundation
- Ernst & Young
- Esther & Harold Mertz Foundation
- Fancy Hill Foundation
- Frank E. Clark Charitable Trust
- Friendly Inn Association of Baltimore
- Gordon Charter Foundation
- Hoka One One
- Horizon Race Solutions
- Hyde and Watson Foundation
- ImageFIRST
- Independence Blue Cross
- IuluNeman
- Marriott International, Inc.
- Mercer Family Fund
- The Moody Foundation
- Malex
- Nonprofit Emergency Relief Fund
- OMP
- The OrthoIndy and Indiana Orthopedic Hospital Foundation Fund, a fund of Central Indiana Community Foundation
- Patricia Kind Family Foundation
- Philadelphia Parks & Recreation
- The Shirley and William Fleischer Family Foundation
- The Philadelphia Foundation
- Thomas H Lee Partners
- Tito’s Handmade Vodka
- TPG Global LLC
- UBS
Stories From Our Members

Patrick, Member

Patrick was one of the first members to join our Denver team in July 2019. He quickly got on track and graduated from a culinary arts program later that year. At Back on My Feet, we make space for everyone who is willing to show up and be part of our community. Even with a nagging knee injury, Patrick was able to support our circle. He was excited to serve as Team Assistant with 100% attendance. He soon became employed in his field, but the knee injury became a bigger issue as he entered the profession of his dreams.

Self-care is a luxury that many of our members are unable to afford prior to their journey with us. That changed for Patrick as he prioritized healthy decisions for himself. He scheduled surgery for his knee right before COVID hit. Unfortunately, by the time he recovered, he had been released from work due to the pandemic.

However, Patrick is incredibly determined and knew he had the potential to continue towards his culinary professional goal. To keep his spirits high during the pandemic, Patrick helped other members with their resumes and interview skills. Patrick also took it upon himself to recruit 20 new members and serve as the facility liaison during the COVID shutdown. Working hard and remaining in the Back on My Feet community paid off — Patrick was hired as a cook at a senior living center in Denver. He now prepares meals for those in the Memory Care Unit, and he loves it!

“Back on My Feet has given me so much,” says Patrick, “I’ve got to pay it forward!” And he did.

Vincent, Member

Vincent first came to Back on My Feet in Baltimore in 2019 to find and maintain sobriety. After obtaining a full-time job as a forklift operator at a warehouse, Vincent moved into transitional sober housing with a goal to prioritize saving for his eventual move into independent housing. He began to work towards recovery with CLEAN Cause, a Back on My Feet national partner.

Through the skills he learned in Back on My Feet workshops and winning the CLEAN Kickstart scholarship, Vincent is on the way to saving for independent housing. Budgeting, saving, and planning for a bright future are part of Vincent’s daily practice. He believes in himself, and we are excited to be with him every step along the way.

“Back on My Feet has helped me find the courage and confidence to pursue my goals and dreams,” says Vincent, “this financial assistance will help me have a fresh start at budgeting and saving starting with my first paycheck!”
When Devon relapsed in 2019 and found himself unsure of his future, he knew where he could go. After all, he had been part of the Back on My Feet circle in Chicago once before. He knew the sense of camaraderie, the opportunities, and the potential he could unlock by rejoining our circle. And once he recommitted to the program, he never looked back.

Devon began jumping on nearly every opportunity to take part in our Next Steps program. His dedication was second to none as he eagerly worked with our team. Devon would attend nearly every workshop we offered and is now a staple at every Team Harbor Light morning circle up — even after becoming employed. This time he stayed close to our circle and continually gave back to the community that was there for him.

By making healthy decisions in his sobriety and utilizing his newly found workforce skills, Devon landed his first stable job in years at Macy’s. As a member in good standing with a strong attendance record, Devon was able to apply for Back on My Feet’s Financial Aid and received his ServSafe Food Handlers certification needed for that job. Additionally, we provided him with bus cards to get to and from work, as well as work shoes and clothes, while he waited for his first paycheck.

When COVID-19 hit, it especially hit the most vulnerable of our society the hardest. However, Back on My Feet remained vigilant, working to get our members and alumni the stability they need. During the initial months of COVID, Devon was able to start another full-time job as a custodian at the Harbor Light Center. He also became our program staff’s right-hand man, actively recruiting members when we couldn’t physically be inside of the center due to COVID restrictions. In just three months, Devon helped Back on My Feet get ten new recruits into our program and onto the path of success. Helping others is one of his primary goals.

Laurentiu, Member

Laurentiu joined Back on My Feet in March 2020, just before the pandemic hit with one goal in mind: find full-time employment. Due to COVID-19 he could not attend a morning circle-up, but he was to jump into our virtual programming when it began later that spring. Laurentiu took full advantage of our virtual workshops like Financial Literacy and worked one-on-one with program staff to achieve his goal of finding employment.

In three short months, Laurentiu was able to check employment off his goals list. Laurentiu started working as a shipping department loader in June and secured a steady income to start working on his overarching goal to receive his CDL. One major barrier standing in his way of obtaining his CDL was paying off ticket debts and getting his suspended driver’s license back in good standing.

Years of debt from mistakes of the past weighed on him and he could not negotiate a payment plan that would have a realistic timeline for him to get his license. Laurentiu, had the job, but how could he continue to grow? With the help of Back on My Feet’s financial aid and our financial literacy workshops, he was able to pay off his traffic-related debts and get his driver’s license back. Laurentiu has now begun a CDL program with hopes of soon becoming a truck driver.

“Thank you so much for the help you have given me. I appreciate all the help Back on My Feet gave me.”

— Devon, Back on My Feet Member

“**My ultimate goal is to complete my GED and go on to college so I can get a certificate in Drug/Alcohol Counseling. I want to help as many people as I can, especially those who have dealt with drug addiction like myself. Thanks to Back on My Feet, I now have the tools to make healthy decisions over my life, and hopefully one day I’ll be able to pay it forward.**”

— Devon, Back on My Feet Member
Current Chapter Locations

- Atlanta, GA
- Austin, TX
- Baltimore, MD
- Boston, MA
- Chicago, IL
- Dallas, TX
- Denver, CO
- Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Indianapolis, IN
- Los Angeles, CA
- New York City, NY
- Philadelphia, PA
- San Francisco, CA
- Washington D.C.

Upcoming Chapter Locations

- Houston, TX
- Phoenix, AZ
- San Bernadino, CA
- Seattle, WA

Back on My Feet launched three new teams in September 2020:
- Dallas – Team Free Man
- New York City – Team Upper East Side
- Washington DC – Team South East

Expanding our reach to new cities has allowed us to provide new and improved resources to support members and alumni including skill shares, enhanced workshops, an online job board and employment partnerships.

Skill shares allowed for informal opportunities for members, alumni and volunteers to share their skills and talents with our community. We revamped our workshop curriculum with new materials and topics as well as developed a library of video workshops that members and alumni can access anytime. Our members and alumni can also access our new online job board filled with job postings from our employment partners and from our community. And we were able to launch a new employment partnership website to elevate our partnerships opportunities and relationships.

How We Impacted the Community

At Back on My Feet, we believe that every single one of our members has the capacity to achieve. But it takes work. In 2020, it took even more work. Self-transformation is not for the faint of heart, and it takes boldness to be willing to try something new. Every year we are pushing more and more people to be bold and to transform their lives.

Nationwide we’ve helped more than 7,500 individuals achieve jobs and homes – and we’re continuing our efforts through the pandemic.

Program Impact Numbers

Handling COVID-19

We believe that every single one of our members has the capacity to achieve. But it takes a lot of work, dedication, and serious perseverance to overcome the obstacles those experiencing homelessness face. And this year, it took even more work. But together, we discovered tremendous value in creating a community through virtual workshops and programming.

In 2020, we helped more than 540 members and alumni start new jobs starting at an average wage of $15.39 across the country. We provided financial support to over 340 alumni who were affected by the economic crisis, distributing 489 awards totaling $210,461. And in addition to the financial support, we have been in contact with nearly 500 alumni and engaged nearly 400 in workshops and community events. We started over 950 new individuals into the program, and we continued to have small in-person activities where safety regulations allowed us to do so.

Throughout the year, we pivoted to connect with our community virtually, ensuring our program was still reaching our members during lock downs. We implemented multi-city workshops including financial wellness for Black men and Cigna wellness sessions. Providing our members and alumni with mental and physical exercises they could perform inside, as well as access to our community through virtual workshops, was key to supporting their health and wellbeing.

A substantial number of our active alumni were either laid off, had hours reduced, or were furloughed at the beginning of the pandemic. And with our newly launched virtual job board and employment partnership web experience, we were able to help over 300 alumni find new jobs. We also implemented new workshops like stress management and sleep sessions as a critical way to help members and alumni learn healthy coping mechanisms and feel connected through quarantine. An alumna shared that the workshops helped her get back into walking after she was furloughed at her job and being able to reconnect with volunteers she knew as a member was key in maintaining her mental health.

Self-transformation is not for the faint of heart, and it takes boldness to be willing to try something new. We believe our members are capable of meaningful and, sometimes, extraordinary work. And when they join our program or begin a new job or find a new home, we want them to be able to say, This is just the start.
Finances

Back on My Feet + Financials

Back on My Feet has two defining revenue generation strategies:

• We utilize creative engagement practices to attract individuals, foundations and corporate investors to provide needed resources for the communities we serve.
• Diversified funding is a priority. The goal is for no more than 50% of revenue (locally or nationally) to originate from one source.

We are grateful for the thousands of donors who make this work possible. For every $1 invested in Back on My Feet, nearly $2.50 is returned to the community through increased economic activity and cost savings — and the community sees the return on their investment in as little as three years*. Our economic impact includes increased economic output from employment and the cost savings from housing, medical costs associated with hospitalization and low physical activity levels, incarcerations costs, and treatments for alcohol/drug addiction.*

* The economic impact results have been validated by PA Consulting Group.

In Grants Given

$137,000+

In Gifts, Grants, Contributions, and Membership Fees Received

$7,375,000+

Raised from Fundraisers

$177,000+

These grants enable Back on My Feet to increase the impact and help more people overcome barriers related to health and well-being, education, workforce development, and social capital.

Back on My Feet uses fitness and community to transform lives — and when people fundraise with us, they contribute to the same transformative work.

Back on My Feet recognizes those individuals whose leadership in giving helps make Back on My Feet one of the most innovative and effective programs combating homelessness in the United States.
Elizabeth & Phill Gross Alumni Emergency Fund

When the pandemic hit Elizabeth and Phill Gross knew that the population’s most vulnerable would be at the highest risk. Not only for the virus, but the economic instability that followed. The Gross Family had seen the impact of our work in Boston and wanted to support our alumni in a meaningful way during this unforeseen crisis. With their generous support, they worked with Back on My Feet to create the Elizabeth & Phill Gross Alumni Emergency Fund. The fund provides critical financial aid grants to our senior members and alumni who have been impacted by COVID-19.

The fund has proven to be transformational in the truest sense of the word. When our alumni dealt with job loss, we were able to help them stay housed while they secured new employment. Alumni were able to use the time off to upskill and return to the job force with a higher salary and more responsibility. We were able to solve transportation issues, the impact of long COVID, and so much more.

Over the next two years, The Gross Alumni Emergency Fund will enable Back on My Feet to provide our senior members and alumni with transformative and stabilizing support. Our senior members and alumni have been dedicated to Back on My Feet community members, taking tangible steps to improve their lives and increase their independence. Through their dedication to our program and perseverance to overcome obstacles and challenges, many of these individuals achieved their long-term goals of independent housing and stable employment.

Back on My Feet is deeply grateful for Elizabeth and Phill Gross’s continued support. The impact they have had on our organization and our communities thus far is significant. This partnership will play an integral role in the success of our senior members and alumni and will have far-reaching effects in the years to come.
Back on My Feet
OVER 580,000 PEOPLE EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS EACH NIGHT IN THE U.S.
WE’RE ON A MISSION TO CHANGE THAT.

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