

RIA, Inc.

ready · inspire · act



Annual Report 2020



ria

We Practice the Power of Presence

Our vision is a world where people's bodies are not victimized, exploited, bought or sold for the sexual gratification of another person.

Our mission is to stand with and support people with experience in the commercial sex trade, and its associated exploitation, trafficking and prostitution, by providing a range of community-based services.

Letter from *Heather & Tiffany*

What we know and witnessed in 2020 is that the women (and the few men) we walk alongside every day are the strongest people we know!

Up against a global pandemic, we have had the opportunity to listen and learn, and try our hardest to meet people literally where they are in their life experiences. And along that way, we have even made each other laugh which always helps us too.

We are thinking of a young mother who lost her job early in the pandemic and overnight received an eviction notice, even though they said that evictions were on hold. Because of our generous donors, we helped her cover the cost of her rent not for a month or two, but through the year so that she and her young children would not become homeless. Covering her rent was only one piece that we could help with.

The RIA team overnight went from meeting together weekly in-person, to meeting three times each week virtually and from our homes. We did this for the first few months of covid. At this time, and because of our generous donors, we were able to provide every member of our team a new computer, and a home printer and a fabulous cell phone, if they needed. Thank YOU! Throughout the year, we have showed up for the people we serve not once a week, but 3-4 times every week if necessary and desired by our participants. We did this virtually via our phones, FaceTime, and computers, and via in-person meetings conducted outdoors and distanced on front porches or from cars parked or at the park or during a walk – we conducted more than 5,000 ‘encounters of care’ as we call these touchpoints in 2020.

The isolation and loneliness that so many of us have experienced over this past year has made RIA an even stronger team because – we stayed together for each other and the more than 200 survivors who we’ve walked with through the unknowns, losses, and personal victories that have come across our path throughout 2020.

Just grateful!

Handwritten signatures of Heather and Tiffany Lillie in blue ink.

Board of Directors

Tiffany Lillie
Chair

Becky Keys
Vice Chair

Padmaja Surendranath
Treasurer

Manleen Singh
Secretary

Alaa Abusalah
Joanne Frye
Rebecca Hawk
Rev Lucy Marshall
Drita Protopapa
Members

*In loving memory of
Lisa Jackson,
friend and former
Co-Chair, member*

ready

We got ready fast for what 2020 brought. Our team joined together and became stronger in the process. Ready to offer support, care, and steadfast presence in these trying times.

Our team stepped up to the challenge and doubled this year, as we brought on one new clinician, 2 peer fellows, and 3 clinical interns.

Meet our Team

We are a trustworthy resource for our participants, and a dependable cause for our donors. RIA exists to contribute to a better world, and we never give up!

We are a team of survivors, advocates, clinicians, allies and dynamic leaders who are committed to standing alongside people with lived experience in the commercial sex trade as they grow and heal. We offer a range of services including emotional and safety support, information and referral, personal advocacy, peer mentorship, clinical therapy, and case management. RIA also provides peer support groups and access to a caring and informed community.



Amy
Clinician



Audrey
Clinical Intern



Beth
Director of
Operations



Chantha
Development
& Strategy
Associate



Danielle
Supervisor
of Clinical
Training



Emily
Clinical Intern



Heather
Founder &
Executive
Director



Jessica
Peer Fellow



Malika
Peer Fellow



Margo
Grant Writer



Paola
Acting Clinical
Director



Rosemary
Peer Mentor



Stacy
Supervisor
of Peer
Mentorship
Services



Stephanie
Clinical Intern

Earnest

We do our best to speak about the sex trade in honest terms.

Affirming

We don't have judgment around a person's progress; we affirm our participants' realities and provide support from there.

Egalitarian

We believe in an equitable world. Regardless of one's history, we all deserve equal rights and opportunities.

Encouraging

We are a trustworthy resource for our participants, and a dependable cause for our donors to stand behind.

Resolute

We can be courageous together with the power of presence.

We are



Our new logo icon reflects these domains. A circle undergoing a transformation as it moves from left to right. On the left, an open circle, ready. In the middle, gaining momentum, inspired. On the right, whole, taking action. We hope to describe the power of our work through this symbolism; a sun's path moving across the sky, representing a new day for those we walk alongside.

RIA walks with people undergoing a moment of transition in their lives, as three entities side-by-side, as a supportive unit; the three words that make our name.

By Jessica, Peer Fellow

JOINING RIA HAS BEEN and is such an amazing experience! The women I work with are smart, funny, compassionate and kind. I love the diversity of our team. I feel heard and seen daily. Working alongside them for the betterment of the women we service has added a level of healing that I never expected. I am so grateful for that added bonus!

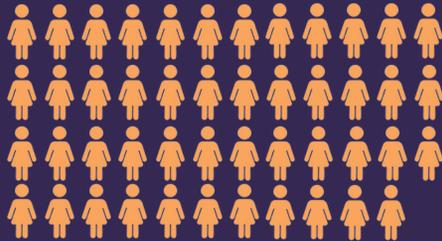
Being a Peer Mentor allows me to be transparent and

share my own lived experiences. I see what a difference this makes in the participants lives. I understand these women. I feel for these women. It is such a privilege to offer them support, love, encouragement and consistency. Something some of the women have never felt. We are connected! These connections these relationships are growing me as a human being, a woman and as a Survivor.

2020 Numbers at a glance:

47

New intakes



Number of people across the state

5185

Total number of care encounters

inspire

We are here to elevate the voices of the people we serve. We not only provide resources that people need to move forward, we help participants uncover their own power and inner strength.

WORDS FROM THE FIELD What has this year meant to you as a new RIA staff member?

By Amy, Clinician

*Hold the hand of fear
even when it tremors,
smile, exhale soothing words on long deep breaths
this too shall pass.*

*Be bold,
this is a passage that must be taken, this is a bridge that must be crossed.*

*Dance with the skeleton on the bridge,
Twirl and stomp and clap until you have forced a blessing from her bony lips,
until she turns and opens the great way.*

*Fear is transformed in these ways,
she is a courageous bird who flies ahead an emissary of your arrival.*

THE CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST Angeles Arrain teaches about the second half of life and the great passageway of midlife. In places where traditional wisdom is still revered they call this phase a great crossing where we will meet many teachers. One of these will be the skeleton. This skeleton is fierce and fearsome, she will awaken all that is unresolved. And, she is always good, she will bring a great boon for those who can face her. She teaches us to get in touch with our bone people, our ancestors, and what is core and essentially us.

I joined RIA during my own passage, after 12 years of living and

working internationally. I returned home to my roots. Joining RIA also coincided with our collective passage we entered into the never before experienced territory of a shared global pandemic. And in the work of RIA, I too see this passage as participants in our program bravely with shaking hands face their fears, and courageously enter upon bold journeys of healing. My experience in my first year at RIA is one of gratitude that in personal and global uncertainty the work is grounding in that it holds great meaning. The work is a daily reminder that we can dance with what we fear and force a blessing way that becomes a new tomorrow.



We can be
courageous
together
with the power
of presence.



act

We've spent hours on Zoom & Facetime, sent thousands of texts, and made consistent phone calls to ensure each person who comes to us, is supported and seen no matter what the world throws us.

*In the face of 2020's challenges and concerns our team was **ready to act.***

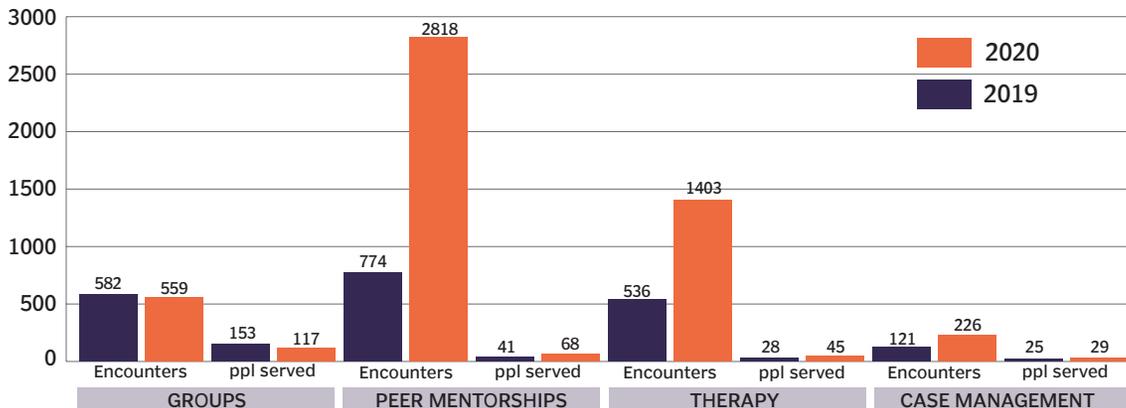
In 2020 we conducted 47 new intakes.

Upon entry into the RIA program, participants state the following most often as their top personal hopes and goals for themselves.



After an intake, each new participant is matched with a staff member to continue the journey of reaching their goals.

Breakdown of number of care encounters provided by category



In the midst of a global pandemic, RIA continued to provide supportive services across the state, and not only maintained engagement but grew it exponentially. Our team rose to the challenge of the past year, and pivoted to an expanded virtual platform, ensuring that those who needed support most were not left alone.

“I want to get off the streets, reconnect with my children, get a place to stay, get my life back together.”

“I mean, to be able to regain my sense of self, to effectively stick up for myself, get connected to resources that I need...focus on emotional healing and move on with my life.”

“To remain in recovery and to have a good spiritual base in my life and go back to school...and be the mom I always wanted to be.”

A reflection by Danielle, RIA Supervisor of Clinical Training

OUR MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM especially at this moment can be at the mercy of time. There are limits on the time spent for a session, and limits on the times someone is allowed to miss appointments, and limits on the time someone has to wait to receive services.

With survivors of the commercial sex trade, we know that some days simply cannot be at the mercy of time. We know that often, people miss appointments, people need to talk for more than an hour, and people don't always have time to wait in a moment of a crisis.

In the midst of so many systems that run at the mercy of time, and in this complicated journey of recovery, we practice the power of presence.

This presence that RIA offers remains compassionate, patient, focused and person-centered. We give

participants the flexibility to draw closer or take space as needed. We understand the no-shows that happen when people are trying to make busy lives work. We are purposeful not to rush into action, and yet, we stand ready to take action the moment a participant is ready.

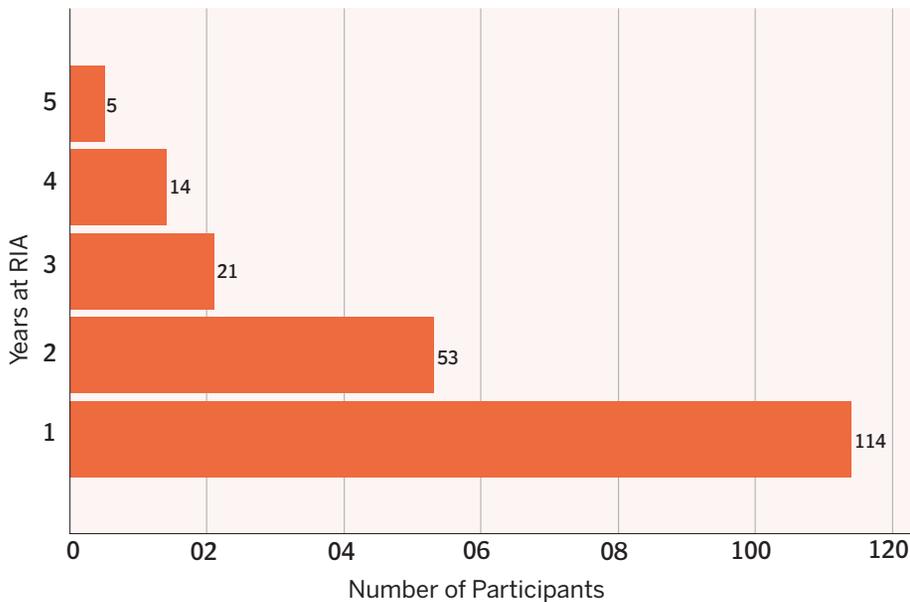
This RIA presence holds comfort in the midst of the agony, hope in the midst of desperation, and connection in the midst of isolation. We offer presence by hosting virtual support groups and inviting participants to lead topics. We offer presence by allowing participants to use the office to focus on virtual school, or work, or housing applications. We provide presence by being the person someone calls to celebrate setting boundaries and leaving a toxic relationship.

We practice the power of presence.

Presence Matters

We have seen that presence matters, in that over half of our participants have remained engaged in services for longer than 12 months and many for over 24 months to 3 years. This stability in relationship provides the time and space for individuals to thrive.

It is with intentional, consistent emotional and practical support that each person who comes through RIA has the opportunity to not just reach her goals, but far surpass them.



In July 2020 we brought on our first Development & Strategy Associate. Chantha has worked with our team and Board to increase our partnerships, monthly membership engagement, and expand our event reach so more people have the opportunity to be a part of the important work of RIA across the state.

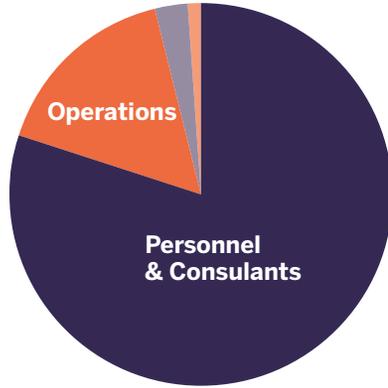


The pandemic not only forced us to pivot our direct services to an all virtual platform, but also challenged our creativity in the field of advocacy and fundraising. We successfully hosted two online events, our *Second Annual Stories I Haven't Yet Told*: storytelling event that brought in over a thousand viewers. And our *7th Annual Benefit Concert* that was hosted live at the Arlington Regent Theatre and featured 8 local musicians from across Massachusetts and Soyoung Kim a local artist who painted a custom piece that was live auctioned at the event.

2020 FINANCIALS

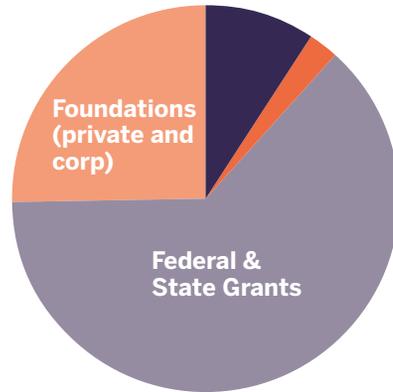
Expenses

■ Personnel & Consultants	\$492,881
■ Operations	\$97,684
■ General & Administration	\$17,385
■ Fundraising & Other Administration	\$6,377
Total Expenses	\$614,327



Income

■ Individual & Corp Contributions	\$57,941
■ Events	\$15,283
■ Federal & State Grants	\$394,335
■ Foundations	\$156,446
Total Income	\$624,000
Net Income	\$9,673



How we've responded this year

The SheFund has always been crucial to our work. It allows us to respond in practical tangible ways when our participants need it most. This year we saw an even greater need to help participants access basic needs like food, rental assistance, phones, car repairs, and so much more. In these times of financial instability, RIA was able to help prevent eviction, homelessness, re-trafficking & further exploitation.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE: **\$14,764**
Supported 18 participants with rental assistance & helped prevent eviction, homelessness, and re-trafficking and further exploitation in 2020

Total spent in participant costs in 2020: \$36,000

Item Type	Total items/support
clothing	47
B-day gift or other celebration	24
furniture (bed/couch/mattress)	6
groceries/grocery gift card	136
masks	22
meal/coffee	387
utilities	4
transportation	56
personal hygiene items	26
rental assistance	18

*Ready for the
year ahead.
2020 has taught
us that we are
indeed stronger
together,
and that none
of us can do this
work alone.*



ria

As we look ahead to 2021, we are investing in the lives of the people we serve across the Commonwealth.

We are committed to expanding:

programmatic outcome measurements

peer mentorship & clinical therapy by bringing on new staff

supportive housing programs

sustainable social business opportunities

Thank you to all who have taken action and have inspired us with your partnership, generosity, and ongoing support.

Financial Contributors

Albert W Rice Foundation
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Bob's Discount Furniture
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with Bank of America
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TD Bank
The MetroWest Women's Fund
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...all Board and staff, and dozens
of other individual donors

In Kind Contributions

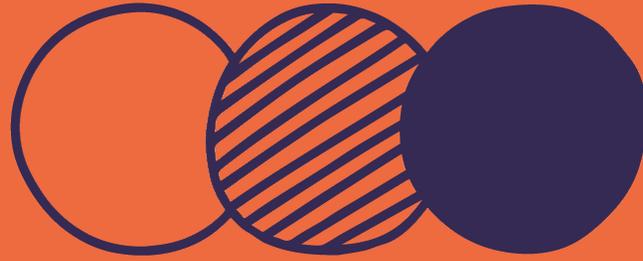
Bookkeeper
Catherine Aldrich for our
Annual Report
clinical Interns
Event Volunteers
Statistician & Data programmer
& our many volunteers who
helped with administration,

event planning, and more.

Collaborative Partners

Amilia's Light
Amirah
Ascentria HT Legal Services
Bags of Hope
Bob's Discount Furniture
Boston University School of
Social Work
BU Law Human Trafficking
Clinic
Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA)
Collaborative Partners:
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