



# 2016 Annual Report

The mission of Fit To Recover is to help people maintain recovery from drug and alcohol misuse by providing a safe, supportive environment that includes exercise, nutrition, creative endeavors and community service.

### Letter from Ian Acker, Founder and Executive Director

Burpees, air squats, hill runs and planks. The light shining through the clouds in long clear stripes. Freezing rain, sweltering heat. Sugarhouse Park – this is where it started and how I remember the early days of FTR in 2012. A boom box playing hip-hop music. Four people connected through exercise, hard work and a willingness to get sober.

Those were hard times. Times full of questions and self-doubt. Can I stay sober? Can I help other people stay sober? Where will this lead? At some point the answers didn't matter. It became my purpose to help people struggle through the same thing I was struggling through – addiction. And so I kept showing up, and so did my friends.

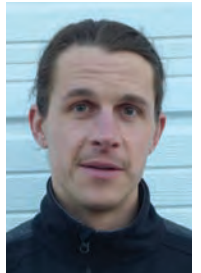
The Saturday boot camps grew, slowly at first and then faster, as people began to trust that every Saturday morning we would be there – for each other, and for recovery. Many of those same incredible people are still with FTR, as pillar leaders, staff, sponsors, volunteers, and members. They helped me develop the philosophy that gets me up in the morning and guides FTR: **consistency + passion = purpose.**

If you show up for people, build trust and unity in a safe environment, and offer healthy alternatives that strengthen the body and soul, the odds of recovery from drug and alcohol misuse get way better. It's that purpose that has driven us from four people in a park to 300 people showing up each week in our new 5,500 sq. ft. facility, where we're supported by our 4-Pillar model that has become a touchstone for those in recovery.

Good, safe exercise that leaves people feeling better and stronger than when they came. Nutrition taught by registered dietitians in a beautiful new kitchen. Creative arts, including a writing group, music studio and brush strokes on the wall. Sharing gratitude through community service where we serve the less fortunate. We have created a community with positive, safe energy where people can be themselves and connect with each other around these four pillars.

My greatest liability has become my greatest asset, and that's something everyone in recovery has in them. I still have questions, probably always will. But they're answered each time I walk through the door of FTR, and witness that with each day, we get stronger together.

With gratitude,  
Ian C. Acker



### Letter from John Parrish, Board Chair

Fit To Recover is a remarkable "break the mold" organization and I am proud to serve as Board Chair. As former chair of Fourth Street Clinic, and the parent of a son in recovery, I understand the devastation substance use disorder has on individuals, families and entire communities. I also understand how glimmers of hope can become beacons of light on the path to recovery. One such glimmer is Rachel Santizo, the woman who introduced me to Fit To Recover, and who now serves as FTR's Community Service Director.

Rachel lived the raw and real terror of addiction; she lost her kids, lost contact with her family and friends, and ended up homeless on the streets of Salt Lake City. She credits in great part the kindness of strangers on those streets and a little gym called Fit To Recover for her ascent to recovery. Rachel now has her kids back, has a great job, and sits on the consumer advisory board of Fourth Street Clinic. She regularly leads homeless outreach and other volunteer efforts in service to the most vulnerable among us for the Fit To Recover community.

Rachel convinced me that I had to meet Ian and the people of this little gym – which, by the way, is not so little anymore! I was immediately taken by their honesty and integrity, their limitless dedication to helping everyone who comes through the door maintain their recovery. It's a daily job and a lifetime of work to maintain recovery, but I saw that the more they helped each other, the more they helped themselves.

Once I stepped inside I knew I couldn't step away from the possibilities this place holds for the tens of thousands of people in Salt Lake County alone who are held captive by substance use disorder.

In the past year we've made great progress strengthening our exercise, nutrition, creative arts and community service programs. We call them our 4 Pillars of recovery. Last year we added a climbing wall, and this year a sparkling new kitchen for group cooking and nutrition workshops, women's group meetings and art and writing classes. I can't wait to see what 2017 brings!

We've only just begun and there is much more to do. I hope you'll join us on our remarkable journey.

Sincerely,  
John Parrish





## WHY WE ARE NEEDED

More than 20 million Americans have substance use disorders and 12.5 million reported misusing prescription drugs in the last year (2016 Surgeon General's Report). Substance misuse also has serious economic consequences, costing more than \$400 billion annually in crime, health, and lost productivity. In Salt Lake County, 61,477 Utahns needed treatment, and public programs could only meet 12.4% of this need (2016 Surgeon General's Report; 2015 Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Annual Report).

### What we are doing about it:

Fit To Recover is a Salt Lake community resource center that addresses these grim addiction statistics and offers hope and evidence-based practices to support those in recovery. Our members, their families, and other supporters are banded together to decrease the discrimination associated with substance use disorders and spread the message that **people do recover**. In fact, 50 percent of adults who once met diagnostic criteria for a substance use disorder—or about 25 million people—are currently in stable remission of one year or longer (2016 Surgeon General's Report).

FTR's services are directed by a vision of support that emphasizes the reality and hope of long-term recovery. Our 4 Pillars program recognizes there are many intertwined pathways to healing for people with addiction and mental health challenges. FTR's members actively participate in recovery-oriented programming and help others with their recovery. FTR, and other community recovery centers, "are emerging as extremely cost-effective programs that generate 'recovery capital' that sustains recovery and curtails the relapse rate." (Mericle, et. al., 2014).

### Financials

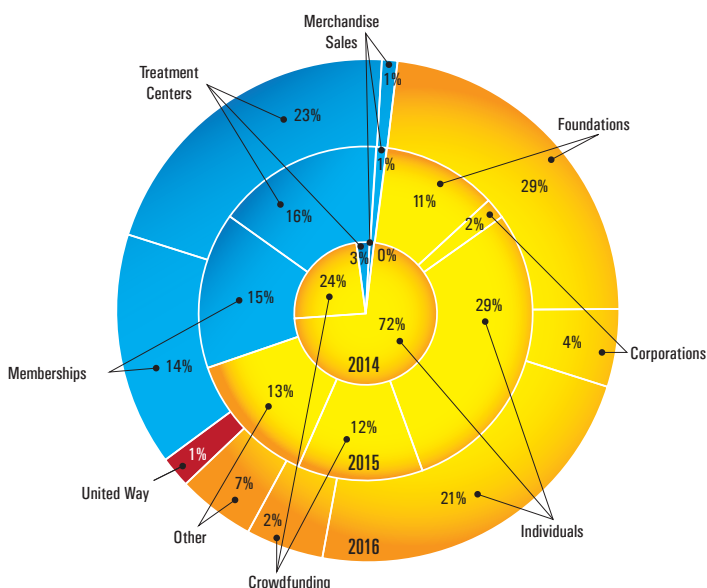
Fit To Recover's annual revenue has increased 250% in two short years. Our \$192,963 net asset carry-over has been allocated to constructing our new kitchen and offering exciting new nutrition services that will commence in February of 2017. We will maintain a fiscally responsible reserve of \$100,000. Note that we are well on our way to achieving our target of deriving 40% of revenue from earned income by 2018.

#### Total Revenue:

- 2014: \$108,108
- 2015: \$186,161
- 2016: \$267,915

#### Net Asset carry over:

- 2014: \$73,974
- 2015: \$133,021
- 2016: \$192,963



- Private Support
- Earned Income
- Public Support



## FTR RECOVERY TIMELINE



**Summer 2012**

*The Music Motivator moved our first 4 people up the hill at Sugar House Park*



**July 2014**

*A nice day. 30+ faithful and proud that day.*



**September 24, 2014**

*We're a nonprofit in the eyes of the IRS!*



**January 5, 2015**

*Opening Day. Baby its warm inside*



**January 5, 2015**

*High Stepping in the Hot House- Growing numbers*



**Winter 2015**

*We get stronger*



**Summer 2015**

*The FTR Community gives back- 1,400 hours of community service*



**Summer 2015**

*The Food To Recover Garden is planted*



**Fall 2015**

*Reach High. Climb Strong Indiegogo Campaign*



**Summer 2016**

*Exercise is for kids, too!*



**Summer 2016**

*FTR does Spartan races- Lead on Santa!*



**Fall 2016**

*FTR Recovery Bars, fuel for the body and soul*





**November 2014**

*Indiegogo campaign earns \$26,000 to open a warm winter Gym*



**December 2014**

*Now What? 5,500 square feet of empty space and ugly walls*



**December 2014**

*Call on the community, of course!*



**Winter 2015 and beyond.** Team sports - Volleyball, Softball, Soccer



**Spring 2015**

*Love Utah Give Utah Crowdfunder- 30,000 exercises earned \$9,100 for the gym*



**Spring 2015**

*FTR Sound Studio Opens - Tell us your story*



**January 2016**

*And we built us a wall. Thank you Community, Petzl Foundation, Momentum Indoor Climbing and Marci!*



**January 2016**

*The Food To Recover Team in action*



**January 2016**

*Visual and Written Arts added to the Creative Program*



**September 2016**

*FTR awarded National Community Impact Award, The SCORE Foundation*



**October 2016**

*Thank you Team!*



**November 2016**

*Thank you FTR- 120 strong and growing stronger!*



*"Fit To Recover is a wonderful example of what it means to live a life in recovery. Thank you!"*

-Diane Driggs

## FOUR PILLARS

### Exercise Pillar

*James Sjostrom*

**What we believe:** We have a strong passion for fitness and an even stronger passion for recovery. We are grateful for the new way of life we have been given and one of the ways we cherish it is by taking care of our physical bodies. We gather in group exercise classes to create energy in the room and vitality in the body. We use several avenues to establish a stronger mind/body connection. We chase strength, mobility, and conditioning, knowing that we only get one body that has to last an entire lifetime.



**What we accomplished:** We reached our goal of increasing membership to 120. We introduced a new yoga class, administered two fitness challenges, and added three new trainers to accommodate the 30% increase in weekly class participation. At a nickel per burpee, we helped earn over \$9,000 to support our gym in the annual Love Utah Give Utah Program. We grew tired but have grown stronger.

### Nutrition Pillar

*Tessa Acker and Stephanie Roque*

**What we believe:** Proper nutrition is the foundation of a healthy life, and helping those in recovery balance their dietary requirements is a primary goal of Food To Recover. Established by a team of registered dietitians, the FTR Nutrition Pillar helps members develop and maintain a healthy relationship with food, and empowers them with the skills and knowledge to make the best nutritional choices for themselves. We provide the inspiration, encouragement, and tools to connect with others and with food in a safe and non-judgmental environment. We believe food has to be tasty, nutritious, and easy to prepare. We believe food is a center for both our community and for families.



**What we accomplished:** In 2016 we planted and harvested our community garden, provided food for the anniversary celebration, and offered monthly workshops on topics ranging from "Food and Mood" to "Healthy Holiday Eating." We planned our new kitchen which will open in 2017 and allow us to significantly increase our services to include basic nutrition education classes, interactive cooking classes and taste tests, community meals to enjoy together and community meal preparations to take home, one-on-one nutrition counseling and menu reviews, and analysis for treatment center facilities.



*"FTR offers a safe, inclusive environment that fosters support for those who are recovering. I'm very grateful for all that Fit To Recover has done and continues to offer. It re-introduced me to a passion for exercising, all while meeting incredible, fun people."*

-Tullivan



*"I joined a River Writing course with Sarah Kappos, not knowing my little world and soul were going to grow and change so drastically. We poured our hearts on to pages of our notebooks and released feelings and thoughts that touched us and bonded us together as a group. I can't imagine my life without River Writing and as long as Sarah keeps leading us, I will keep coming back."*

-Kelly Hughes

### Creative Arts Pillar

Sarah Kappos

**What we believe:** Every person has a story. Recovery is strengthened when a person takes ownership of that story and expresses it through different media. Using the artist's tools of poetry, prose, paint, murals, journals, sketchbooks, and the microphone, participants learn to speak, perhaps softly at first but in time with an empowered voice.

Creative expression has the power to connect us. Sharing stories as we do in River Writing breaks down barriers between people who believe they are different from everyone else. Painting a group mural brings people together in a vulnerable way to make something they can be mutually proud of. Keeping a journal or sketchbook encourages reflection and mindfulness in a world that can be especially overwhelming for a person in recovery.



**What we accomplished:** Creative Arts Director Sarah Kappos developed multiple initiatives, including a "group paint" effort at the annual Recovery Day celebration; regular sessions of "River Writing;" public poetry reading sessions; and "Paint Nite" that partners nutritious food and painting. The FTR Creative Pillar program donated three huge original murals to worthy local nonprofits, and expanded contracts with treatment centers to include visual arts and writing classes.

### Community Service Pillar

Rachel Santizo

**What we believe:** Being selfless is be a big part of the recovery journey. Being of service allows us to step out of ourselves, our issues, our problems, and give back. In recovery we can get caught up in ourselves and our new lifestyles, so it is vital to take a few hours each month and do things for a greater cause without expectations. It empowers us as individuals and gives us purpose. Sharing love and feeling gratitude are two of the secret ingredients to maintaining sobriety.



**What we accomplished:** Our service work in 2016 included 1500 service hours helping vulnerable populations in collaboration with the following organizations and projects: Fourth Street Clinic, Legacy Initiative of Utah, VOA Homeless Youth Shelter, Safe Kids Fair, WVC Relay for Life, SL Marathon, Pride, SL County Building, Haircuts for the Homeless, Painting Murals at the Road Home, NAMI Mental Illness Hike, Out of the Darkness Walk, Recovery Day, Brides against Breast Cancer, and helping the less fortunate monthly with clothing, hygiene products and food. We shared the strengths of our other pillars to help the Salt Lake Community and to strengthen ourselves.

*"I'm thankful to be a part of FTR from the beginning. It's not because of FTR that I'm sober but without it I wouldn't be."*

-Josh Hall



## Staff Members

- Ian C. Acker  
*Founder, Executive Director*
- Georgia Gregersen  
*Operations Manager*
- James Sjostrom  
*Lead Trainer*
- Tessa Acker, Stephanie Roque  
*Nutrition*
- Sarah Kappos  
*Creative Arts*
- Rachel Santizo  
*Community Service*
- Lacey Garcia  
*Women's Group*
- Suzanne Acker  
*Development Coordinator*
- Bruna Brito, Parker Burns, Monika McKamey  
*Trainers*
- Aaron Garrett  
*FTR Attorney*
- Matthew Kendall, Matthew Lane,  
Jami Werner Wright, Maci Warner  
*Volunteers*

## Board Members

- John Parrish  
*Chairman of the Board*
- Jennifer Carlson  
*Board Vice-President*
- Doug McNeil  
*Treasurer*
- Stephen R. Acker  
*Board Member*
- Kathleen Bratcher  
*Board Member*

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## Supporters

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The Lawrence T. and Janet T. Dee Foundation  
Episcopal Diocese of Utah  
Intermountain Healthcare  
Val and Edith Green Foundation  
Larry H. Miller Family Charities  
Nicholas Zurn Scholarship Fund  
Petzl Foundation  
Utah Medical Association  
The Wheeler Foundation  
United Way of Salt Lake  
Zions Bank

Ascend Recovery  
Balance House  
Cold Creek Behavioral Health  
Renaissance Ranch Outpatient  
Turning Point Treatment Centers  
Salt Lake County Youth Services  
Strong Hope/Salt Lake Behavioral Health  
Wounded Warrior Project



And thank you to the 567 individual donors who helped make FTR happen!

Special thanks to the in-kind contributions to our new kitchen made by generous folks at Midwest!

*"Thank you FTR for creating such a unique organization and for creating such valuable programs that support people in recovery. I am so proud of the FTR community for the service projects that reach out to our Salt Lake City homeless community with kindness, compassion and generosity."*

-Mary Jo McMillen