



# Self Reliance, Inc.

The Hillsborough County Center for Independent Living

*Annual Report*  
2013-2014



## *Our Mission*

The mission of Self Reliance, Inc. is  
to **promote independence**  
by **empowering people with disabilities** and  
**improving the communities** in which we live.



## Chairperson's Message

The Board of Directors for Self-Reliance, Inc. is comprised of a uniquely qualified group of volunteers utilizing their respective skills and gifts to assist the staff in fulfilling our mission of increasing independence for those with disabilities. It has been my pleasure to serve as an officer of the Board since 2012 and to be part of the positive growth and evolution of the agency that has taken place during that time.

This year began a new chapter in Self-Reliance history with the hiring of Finn Kavanagh as our Executive Director. Finn was chosen by the Board for his executive leadership experience, strong communication and interpersonal skills, and teachable spirit - a valuable quality to embody in any job, but most especially when entering a previously unexplored community as the disabilities community was to Finn. As Board Chair, I can confidently express that Finn has met our expectations during his first year in the position and we are working closely with him to develop the future vision for growth at the agency.

In addition to increasing the number of consumers served in 2014, we were successful in increasing unrestricted funds and that, in turn, will enable us to expand our valuable services to the many deserving Hillsborough residents with disabilities on waiting lists to receive basic needs crucial to their independence and quality of life. In the coming year, we will continue to focus on diversifying our funding as well as exploring how we can expand on our core service offerings and more active outreach to the rural and underserved areas of Hillsborough County.

Kimberly Albritton  
Chairperson of the Board



## Executive Director's Message

Self Reliance, Inc. is in the freedom business. Our work in service of people with disabilities is focused on empowering them to enjoy the most autonomous and self-directed life possible, free of the historical trappings of discrimination and marginalization.

As advocates, we amplify the voice of those we serve in an effort to overcome the marginalization of bureaucratic indifference. As trainers, we provide education that facilitates achievement of goals, sometimes small and sometimes great. As peers, we share time-tested experience from the disability perspective. As residents of our community, we provide education to friends, neighbors, businesses and leaders that will promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in community planning and action.

**“This year, Self Reliance increased the number of men, women and children we served by more than thirty percent.”**

Like many in America, Self Reliance is recovering from challenging economic times. *This year, we increased the number of men, women and children we served by more than thirty percent.* Six hundred and forty-seven people with disabilities, and their families, found access to services that were characterized by results, authenticity and understanding.

I began my service at Self Reliance, Inc on January 6, of 2014 with big shoes to fill upon the retirement of Brenda Ruehl. For more than ten years, Brenda led the company, its consumers and our staff through good times and challenges. She retired from Self Reliance on October 4th of 2014 to open a new chapter in her life. The consumers and employees of Self Reliance owe Brenda our gratitude and we honor her time at Self Reliance.

**Finn Kavanagh**  
Executive Director

## Our Services

Self Reliance, Inc. is a nonprofit *Center for Independent Living* that exists to promote the independence of men, women and children with disabilities. The array of services we provide is intended to promote the autonomy and self-determination of the consumers with disabilities that we serve. Our primary services areas include:

- **Independent Living Skills Training:** Skilled instructors provide training specially designed to facilitate the development of skills and competencies that are critical to independence.
- **Information and Referral Services:** Our Independent Living Coordinators listen to consumers with disabilities, educate them about available resources, and connect them to the right assistance.
- **Advocacy Services:** We advocate on behalf of consumers with disabilities to assist them in securing accessible and affordable housing, securing medical equipment crucial to their independence, overcoming obstacles to mobility in public transportation and a variety of other situations where our assertive communication can benefit their interests.
- **Peer Support and Mentoring:** We facilitate support activities that can maximize the experience of other people with disabilities in solving day-to-day challenges.
- **Youth Transition Services:** By educating young adults and their families we assist them to shape a future of self-direction and autonomy.
- **Equipment Distribution:** Self Reliance collects donations of lightly used durable medical equipment and recycles this equipment into the use of our consumers. We also provide safety and communication equipment to consumers with disabilities such as amplified telephones and door-bell flashers for the hearing-impaired.



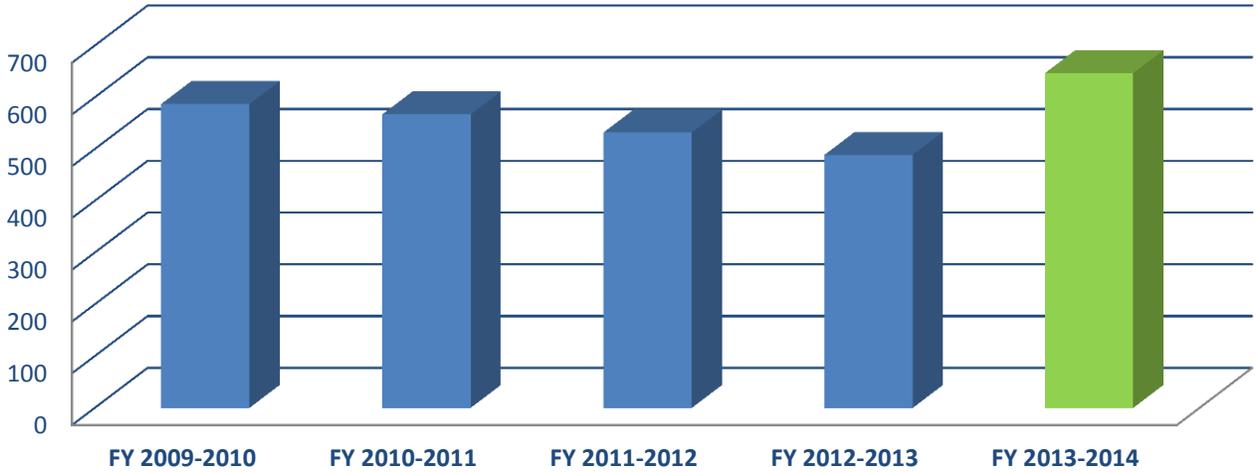
A Self Reliance Home Access Project



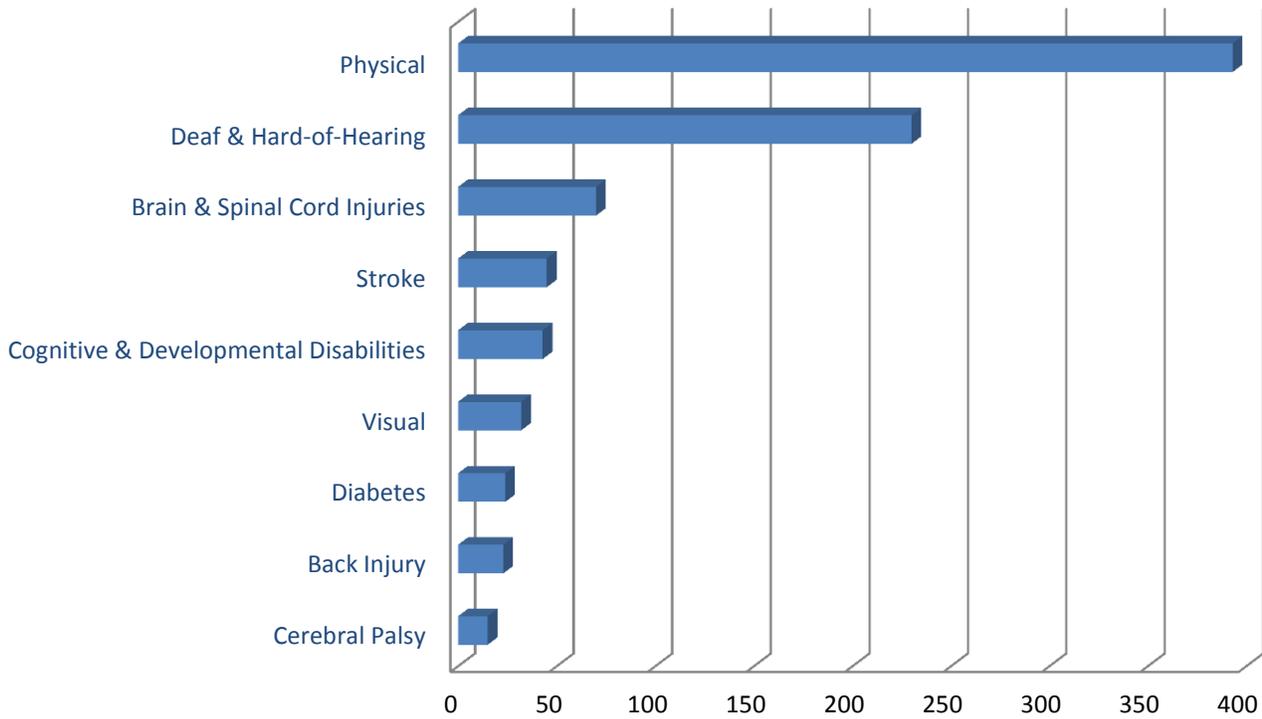
Staff and Consumers at  
The 2014 Annual Empowerment Event

# The Year in Review

## Number of Persons Served



## Types of Disabilities Experienced by Consumers Served



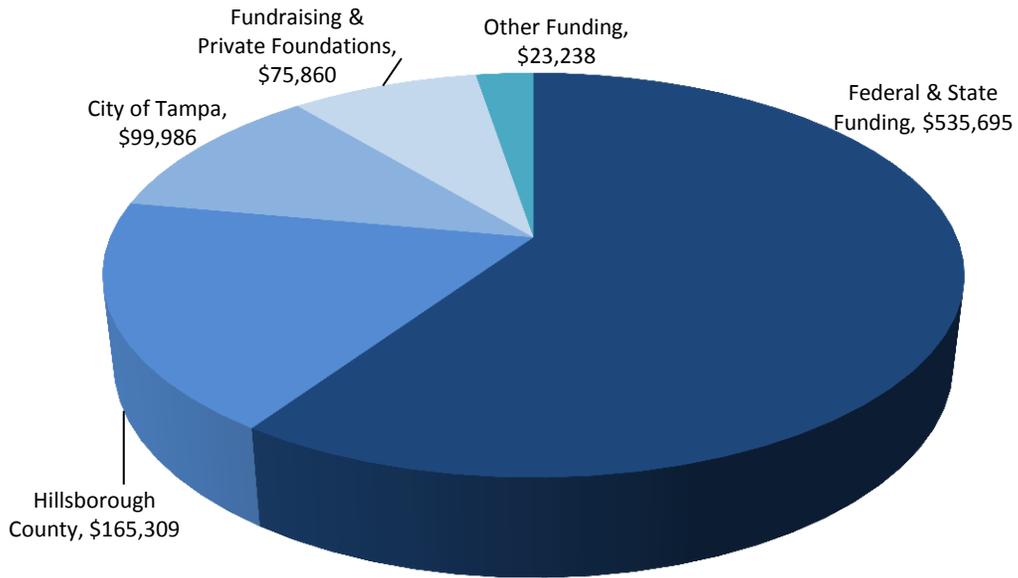
## The Year in Review

- We provided more than 300 amplified telephones to people who were hard-of-hearing.
- 44 high school students participated in the Resources for Advocacy and Youth Services (RAYS) Program.
- 27 teenagers who were deaf or hard-of-hearing received special life skills training from Self Reliance at Brandon and Alonso High Schools.
- Self Reliance served 647 men, women and children during the year, 32% more than the prior year.
- Self Reliance and our partners constructed physical modifications to 12 households for people with disabilities to promote independence, accessibility and safety.
- The *Grass Roots* peer support group saw increases in regular participation of people with disabilities who were willing to share their experience, strength and hope.
- Self Reliance dramatically enhanced its “on-line” presence through improvements to our web site, self-reliance.org. These improvements included enhanced accessibility, the addition of a consumer-driven Resources page and the development of a Blog.
- Self Reliance partnered with 45 other community agencies in Hillsborough County
- We honored Hillsborough County Commissioner Al Higginbotham for his empowered leadership in our community at our October 2, 2014 Annual Empowerment Event.

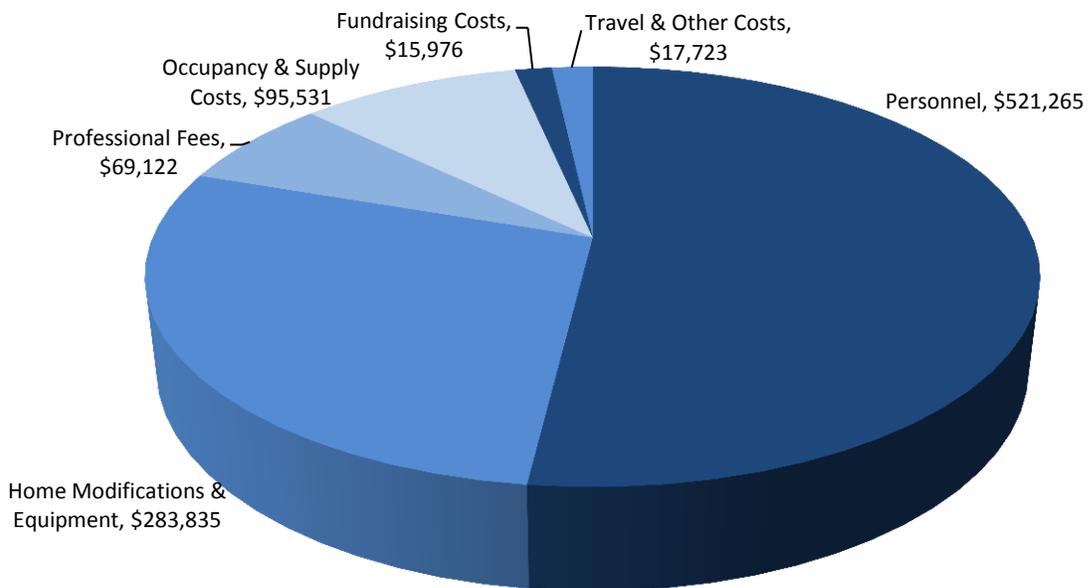


# Financial Summary

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



## Our Gratitude

We thank those organizations in our community who support and partner with Self Reliance to accomplish our mission.

**Tampa Tank &  
Structural Steel**

**Amerigroup**

**H.A.S. Construction**

**The Hillsborough County  
Medical Association Foundation**

**Regions Bank**

**Bay Cities Bank**

**FastSigns of Tampa Bay**

**The City of Tampa**

**Suncoast United Way**

**Rehabilitation Services  
Administration**

**MorningStar  
Property Management Services**

**Swenson Construction**

**Grace Lutheran Church**

**Florida Division  
of Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Health Aid Company**

**Platinum IT Services**

**Capital One**

**Hillsborough County**

**O'Sullivan & Associates**

**Florida Telecommunications  
Relay, Inc.**



RAYS Students enjoy a day of Bowling.



Board Member Jeniece Goodwin and  
Employee Karla Navas-Rodriguez.

*Self Reliance, Inc.*  
*Board of Directors*

Kim Albritton, Chairperson

Barbara Gaw, Vice Chairperson

Monica Ospina, Treasurer

Brenda Garner, Secretary

James Akes

Chad Gordon

Jeniece Goodwin



8901 North Armenia Avenue  
Tampa, Florida 33604  
813-375-3965

**Visit our website at [self-reliance.org](http://self-reliance.org)**

**Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn**

