

# Mark Ruth Named Executive Director at SMART Recovery USA

SMART Recovery USA is pleased to announce and welcome **Mark Ruth** as executive director. In this role, he will oversee all operational, fund raising, financial, technology and other supportive responsibilities for the organization.

“We are pleased to welcome **Mark** to our executive team,” said Joe Gerstein, president, SMART Board of Directors. “SMART Recovery USA is experiencing unprecedented growth and demand across the country. It is critical that we have someone with **Mark’s** drive and knowledge in this role so that we can continue reaching more people who need science-based, self-empowering recovery meetings and/or educational services.”

## On a Professional Level

**Ruth** has extensive leadership experience with non-profits both as a member of staff and as a volunteer. Most recently, he served as Executive Director of Western Reserve Counseling Service (WRCS) overseeing a professional counseling staff. WRCS provided general counseling to support various forms of addiction including sex, drugs, alcohol and others, family and children behavior and parenting problems, divorce and relationship problems, domestic violence and sexual abuse and many other mental and behavioral health issues.

**Ruth** also served as Director of Fund Raising & Development for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio to help them expand their donor base, increase their corporate sponsorships, and increase the volunteer base of adult Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Prior to working as a staff person for BBBS, Ruth also served many community organizations and Boards as a volunteer in Lake County Ohio, including as President of the Mentor Area Chamber of Commerce; Campaign Chair of United Way of Lake County; the Lakeland Community College Foundation Board, and Leadership Lake County.

“I am looking forward to working closely with the SMART Board of Directors to achieve its 5 Year Strategic Plan, the Central Office staff to

support the organization and the many committed and passionate volunteers and participants that are critical to SMART's services," **Ruth** said.

Before he transitioned to serve the non-profit industry, **Ruth** had extensive business and entrepreneurial experience as the owner of several management consulting companies, which focused on helping other for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations to improve profitability by streamlining operational inefficiencies, leveraging technology, and building effective staff and team members. Ultimately, his management consulting experience was designed to help organizations to grow both financially and in impact to the community.

### On a Personal Level

**Ruth** was born in Bradford, PA but was immediately put into St. Joseph's Home for Children in Erie PA, along with his 7 other siblings. At their peak, the orphanage housed over 60 children. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, he moved back with his father and younger brothers and sisters. Despite his difficult childhood, **Ruth** successfully graduated from both high school and college. He eventually raised a family of three children who are now living independently and with successful jobs and personal lives. After graduating from college, **Ruth** developed his professional career as cited above. He believes his life journey – that includes support by many individuals, organizations and friends – has helped him appreciate the simple things in life, be more empathetic to others going through various life journeys and be willing to help other organizations and individuals in need of support.

**Ruth** began his SMART leadership role by attending the 2018 SMART Conference in Tempe, AZ where he was able to meet, shake hands and talk with many of the SMART facilitators, volunteers and the Board of Directors. With his for-profit and non-profit leadership background, and his own life changing experiences, he is uniquely positioned to hit the ground running in this role and have a meaningful impact on the organization and its mission.

“For more than 24 years, the collective efforts of many individuals are at the core of a truly awesome story about an organization that has grown steadily and made a huge impact,” said **Ruth**. “And yet, despite clear evidence of success, SMART is still somewhat a secret! I am truly honored to be joining this team and its mission to better share its resources with the world at a time when our society is facing so many life changing and ending crises.”