



THE STARFISH SCOOP



Happy Fall!

I think you'll agree autumn in the Midwest is a beautiful time of year! We hope you are enjoying the wonders of fall and have found the change in weather an invitation to slow down and fit some relaxation and rejuvenation into your schedule. It seems we are all so very busy, that we often neglect self-care and taking the proper time to nurture our spirits. How often do you assess your mental and emotional health? Or your children's or that of a family member? Probably not often enough. It's a sad reality that our society often ignores the importance of self-care and stigmatizes admitting that one could benefit from mental health support and therapy.

In this newsletter edition, you'll meet two parents who were vigilant about taking care of their family's social-emotional health. In the case of Robin, she recognized her son was struggling with grief and trauma and sought help for him. In the case of Chanchal, she initially felt guilty for carving out time away from her children to attend the first semester of Starfish University. But, she soon recognized that caring for herself meant she had more to give her children, and ultimately her increased confidence and energy were a benefit to her entire family.

Your support of Starfish Family Services and the mental health services we provide has lasting benefit for the families we serve. Thank you so much for generously supporting our work.

Sincerely,



Ann Kalass | CEO



Giving Tuesday!
Mark your calendars for this year's **#GivingTuesday**, Tuesday, November 29. Visit our Facebook for more updates!

Confidence. Self-reliance. Strength!



That's What Your Support Means to Parents like Chanchal



Last semester I took as many **Starfish University** courses as possible. At first I felt guilty about taking that much time for myself away from my kids. But Ms. Celina, who teaches my favorite class, *How to Create a Meaningful Day While Balancing Life*, eased that guilt by reminding me that 'if you're doing good for yourself, you are going to be a good mom for your kids.'

I learned so much in her class, like how to set goals in life and achieve them a bit every day.

Ms. Celina was right, taking time for myself has been good for me and my family. The various mental and physical strengthening classes have made me a totally different person.

Since attending Starfish University fitness and nutrition classes, I've lost 80 pounds. I feel more

energetic, a lot stronger and confident and ready to deal with the challenges of life. I'm in a much better position to take care of my family

"Thank you to each and every person who makes this dream of Starfish University available to everyone. It's a huge success. I believe it is going to change the life of many people like me."

–Sincerely, Chanchal

What's Next for Starfish University?

We are creating an online-based registration system where students can quickly and easily browse course descriptions and register for classes.

You can help us make this a reality!

\$500

provides expert instructors for 4 Starfish University courses.

\$100

purchases books and supplies for two Starfish University students.

\$1,000

helps launch the web-based Starfish University Registration system.



Celina and Chanchal share a hug.

A Safe Haven: That's What Your Support Provides Teens like Mar'Shawn



"I really just wanted to give back because my family has had some hardships and organizations have helped us, so it's only right to help others."

Have you ever lost a close family member?

It's devastating, especially for a child. Mar'Shawn knows this first hand. He tragically lost his uncle and within a few short years, he also lost his godfather, great-grandfather, step-grandfather and his great-grandmother. All whom he was very close with. He felt lost with most of his immediate family members and all of his father figures gone.

New research proves that unaddressed childhood trauma has a severe effect on brain development and can lead to a lifetime of negative outcomes, including poor impulse control.

Fortunately Mar'Shawn has a watchful, proactive mother who recognized that her young son was struggling and needed help. She turned to Starfish for bereavement counseling.

Starfish is nationally recognized for our work with children affected by trauma, so Mar'Shawn was in good hands. Therapy proved so helpful for Mar'Shawn that years later when he seemed to need more assistance his mother sought out Starfish for additional help.

Now fifteen, Mar'Shawn has greatly benefited from having a support system at Starfish. His mom reports great improvement with his school work, chores, and ability to express himself. "His mentors

have helped him be much more open and talkative. He tells me now how he is feeling and if something is bothering him. Overall he's really doing great."

Active in the Community, Giving Back, Reaching Goals. Excelling!

Have you ever met an Eagle Scout? It's the Boy Scout rank Mar'Shawn is currently pursuing. Earning it would place him in rare company. It's the highest rank a Boy Scout can attain, only four percent of Boy Scouts are granted this rank after a lengthy review process. As part of his Eagle Scout project, Mar'Shawn collected over \$2,500 dollars' worth of backpacks and school supplies for the youth living at the Starfish Shelter & Crisis Center. Mar'Shawn shares, "I really just wanted to give back because my family has had some hardships and organizations have helped us, so it's only right to help others."

Mar'Shawn continues to benefit from having passionate supporters who help him avoid peer pressure and strive to be a role model in his community. No youth should fall through the cracks because they lack access to supportive adults and networks. **You can help us continue to provide great support for the youth in your community.**



You Are Helping Parents Get the Support they Need

We know that helping parents be the best person they can be will have a profound impact on the lives of their children. Your support is providing the community a variety of educational and enrichment opportunities that strengthens families and empowers parents.

Our vision for Starfish University has come to life and you helped make it happen!

Starfish University Semester 1 Report Card



At-a-Glance

- 204 students enrolled
- 29 courses held
- 655 course session slots filled



Semester Outcomes

- 77% said they have more confidence to succeed
- 63% said their social network improved
- 77% said their comfort using Starfish as a resource increased

Student Satisfaction

Students who participated felt...

Instructor treated me with respect = **100%**

Information was useful = **99%**

Material was taught in an interesting way = **98%**

I would recommend a course to a friend = **95%**

Overall satisfaction = **100%**



Words From Our Students

"I enjoyed each class I took. It enhanced me professionally and personally."

"It is an excellent program offering great opportunities and support for the community. I love it."

The Student Becomes the Teacher

Lakeba loves saving thousands of dollars each year by using couponing strategies. Looking to learn more she attended a recent Starfish University couponing class. A last minute scheduling conflict meant there was no instructor but lots of eager students.

Starfish University Parent Resource Coordinator, Jackee Brown knew of Lakeba's extensive knowledge of couponing. She pulled Lakeba aside and asked if she would be willing to teach the course. Lakeba recounts, "I get so nervous talking in front of people but Jackee just told me to be myself. I was so nervous but I did it. It ended up being great fun. Her little push led me to leading more classes." Since then, Lakeba has taught her coupon class several more times, once at another local nonprofit.

Most Popular Courses:

- Zumba
- Painting with Parents (see box to the right)
- Cooking Matters (see box to the right)
- Natural Hair Care
- Introduction to Parenting Through Change



Cooking Matters

A collaboration with Beaumont Hospital and Gleaners Community Food Bank. This 6-week, hands-on seminar is designed to help low-income families learn how to eat better for less. Culinary and nutrition experts teach participants to shop smarter, use nutrition labels to make healthier choices, and cook delicious affordable meals. Participants receive a complimentary keepsake cookbook filled with nutritious budget-friendly recipes.

Painting with Parents

An opportunity for parents and teens to receive hands-on, step-by-step art instruction, from an experienced and enthusiastic teacher. The course is designed to be therapeutic, help break down communication barriers, and facilitate teen-parent bonding. Participants leave with a painting they can proudly display and possibly a new found talent to explore.

OUR SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS



June



Great News: **Starfish is awarded \$22 million in federal funds** over the next five years. Starfish will use this funding to offer high quality pre-school education to children ages 0-5 in Western Wayne County. **AND**, we **celebrated the grand opening** of the first full-service **children's behavioral health services clinic in Inkster**, co-located within the Western Wayne Family Health Center.

July



Governor Rick Snyder visited Starfish Family Services to read a story to our children and announce the expansion of dental coverage for low income families in the state of Michigan. Now ALL Michigan children from low income families will have regular access to free oral healthcare!

August



We hosted **our largest ever Community Fun Fair**. 900 people, 241 families and over 34 community partners participated.



September



School is back in session! We welcome you to visit one of our classrooms.