



STARFISH  
FAMILY SERVICES

# fall photo album



FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER  
[www.starfishonline.org](http://www.starfishonline.org)

# A Message from the CEO



## Dear Friends of Starfish,

Take a look back with us at our Starfish family photo album. These precious children come from all different backgrounds and walks of life. They differ in age, height and gender, but they all have one thing in common.

You.

Our teachers dedicate their time to developing lesson plans and educating children. The social workers help parents set and achieve their own goals and help children grow from a social-emotional perspective. Donors give monetarily so that we may continue to provide these services. To everyone, we say thank you.

All of this could not be done without the dedication of our volunteers, staff and donors.

Our work is not done yet. We are only just getting started. Our new programs and continued efforts will propel our children through elementary school and beyond.

Continue with us in our mission of strengthening families to create brighter futures for children.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ann".

Ann Kalass  
CEO



Questions,  
Comments,  
Newsletter ideas?

We'd love to hear from  
you. Contact us at  
[devdept@sfish.org](mailto:devdept@sfish.org)

# Our Early Head Start and Head Start kids are off to a fun, enrichment-filled school year!



**How Our Garden Grew: We harvested over 700 pounds of produce this season which we gave away to friends, families, neighbors, employees and volunteers.**

*My Garden~ unknown*

This is my garden, I'll plant it with care,  
Here are the seeds I'll plant in there,  
The sun will shine,  
The rain will fall,  
The seeds will sprout and grow up tall.

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## Happy Autumn!

When you visit Starfish Family Services you'll notice our locations are bursting with activity and smiling faces. We're glad to share with you snapshots from our photo album and hope it will inspire you to support our efforts.



### **Blessings in a Backpack Results in Nourished Kids Ready to Learn**

**Contributor: Cheryl Majeske, Volunteer Resource Specialist**

Every Thursday morning during the school year, Starfish volunteer Barbara Williams lines up 75 bags and fills them with food for our Inkster Head Start students. Blessings in a Backpack, a nationwide program, provides food for school children across America who may otherwise have little or no food to eat on weekends during the school year. Due to the kindness of Eric and Lisa Widner, who fund our Blessings in a Backpack program, volunteer Dave Otzman, who picks up the nutritious, kid-friendly food from Meijer, and the leadership of Barbara Williams, Starfish is able to participate for the third year in this wonderful program and provide food to Inkster children for the weekends.

Ms. Williams, along with volunteers from PNC and other members of the community, personally delivers the packed bags to the classrooms so the children are guaranteed their meals for the weekend. Thanks to the support of our generous donor and volunteers, Blessings in a Backpack will be able to feed children for another school year which results in nourished kids ready to learn.



### **Diaper Drive!**

**Local Church Collects Diapers for Starfish Families.**

**Contributor: Cheryl Majeske, Volunteer Resource Specialist**

Thank you to New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church for hosting their annual diaper drive on October 4, 2014. New Jerusalem collected over 90 packs of diapers and 34 packs of wipes for our Starfish families. Girl Scout Troop 71162 came out to support the drive and help load our diaper van. If you are interested in hosting a diaper drive, please contact Cheryl Majeske at 734-728-3491 or [cmajeske@sfish.org](mailto:cmajeske@sfish.org)



## Updates from the Inkster Family Literacy Movement

Contributor: Daisy Truss, Outreach Coordinator - Inkster Family Literacy



*"Children are made readers in the laps of their parents." - Emilie Buchwald*

The Inkster Family Literacy Movement (IFLM), led by a dedicated team of community partners, works towards a common vision - to enhance the literacy skills of the entire community, starting with its children. In pursuit of our goal we host many activities and events including fan favorite: our monthly McDonald's Family Literacy Night.

Over the course of the summer and fall, children and their families had the opportunity to listen to storytellers, practice yoga, meet live parakeets, play fun literacy activities, and select free books to take home after receiving a free Happy Meal. Yum!

Thus far we've exceeded our goal to provide 5,000 books to Inkster families and are on pace to reach a new goal of 7,000 books. If you would like to host a book drive at your organization please contact Cheryl Majeske at 734-728-3491 or [cmajeske@sfish.org](mailto:cmajeske@sfish.org)

## Starfish Family Services Addresses our Region's High Infant Mortality Rate

Contributor: Lindsey Biggs, LMSW, IMH-E (II), Infant Mental Health Supervisor

Starfish Family Services strives to create better outcomes for children and families who reside in some of Michigan's poorest areas, including Detroit and Inkster, through an impressive variety of programs. Parents in Detroit and Inkster face the highest infant mortality rate in the state and among the highest in the country.

So what's being done to address this troubling problem?

One of the key ways Starfish works with expecting moms is through a home-visiting program to provide support, education and resources. Through the Maternal & Infant Health Program, Starfish staff provides parent education and care coordination services to pregnant women and infants less than 12 months of age. Moms who participate in this program receive support from both a nurse and licensed social worker. Both disciplines provide education and support around various topics such as safe sleep, breastfeeding, nutrition, infant development, secondhand smoke effects, the importance of attending routine prenatal/well-child check-ups, and maternal stress and depression prevention. Many of the pregnant women in the program are young and having their first child. They often feel scared and unsure about what labor, delivery and taking care of an infant will be like. Many of these young women do not feel their OB-GYN has enough time to address their questions and concerns, nor do they have appropriate and positive role models in which to turn to. It is through conversations with their nurse and social worker within the comforts of their own environment that pregnant women feel supported and able to make informed decisions about the choices they make in their pregnancy and about their infant.

## Introducing Thrive by Five Detroit

Imagine a community where babies are born healthy and where curious children are arriving at kindergarten doors ready for school and life success. Parents and caregivers are engaged, educated and meeting the challenge of raising successful adults. Thrive by Five Detroit, a collaboration spearheaded by Starfish Family Services and comprised of Development Centers, Focus: HOPE, and Southwest Solutions, endeavors to make this a reality for Detroit children.

Earlier this year, we received funds from the federal Office of Head Start to pioneer an innovative prenatal through age five approach which will initially serve 1,000 children and families. We will provide a comprehensive Early Head Start and Head Start program that addresses the needs of not only the child but also the needs of the caregivers. Expectant parents are encouraged to enroll as we will also offer prenatal care that ensure babies are off to the earliest and best start.



## Young Achievers Going Places

Contributor: Chatana Campbell, 21st Century Young Achievers Site Supervisor

Our Young Achievers participants had the best time this summer traveling on their bus to field trips. Outings included: swimming at the Romulus Athletic Center, a tour of the Detroit River with Diamond Jack River Tours, a family fun day at CJ Barrymore's Family Entertainment Center, and "Reading & Rhythm on the Riverfront" a literacy event hosted by The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy. Each of the trips, along with daily activities, was very well attended. We had the privilege to serve over 50 energetic students via our Young Achievers Summer Program.



### Our Mission:

Strengthening families to create brighter futures for children.

### Our Philosophy:

We believe in the potential of all children and the power of healthy caregiver-child relationships to break the cycle of poverty and create long term positive outcomes for children.

## Please Donate Today!

Help us ensure that our children are provided with the childhood development programs they need for a successful start to school. And that our parents are engaged with programs that empower and educate them to become their child's best and most important teacher.

Visit us at [www.starfishonline.org](http://www.starfishonline.org), to make your donation. On behalf of the children and families you strengthen, thank you for your generous support of Starfish.

Starfish Family Services is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible as outlined by IRS tax regulations.



## We're an all Smiles Zone at our 21st Century Afterschool Program



## Adopt-A-Family:

## Help a Child Experience the Magic of the Holidays

### Adopt-A-Family

**Contributor: Cheterrria Stephens**

Please help us provide a happy and joyful holiday for a family in need this season. Starfish is pleased to announce the return of Adopt-a-Family! Over 250 families were helped by donors like you last year.

Individuals, Families, Groups - all are welcome to sign up to adopt-a-family for the holiday. It's a great team-building project - it feels good to help someone. We will match you with one of the families we serve who needs help providing a joyful holiday to their children.

You can make a difference this year. Call our hotline today to find out how you can help: Adopt-a-Family hotline at 734-728-3400 ext. 3345.





# STARFISH

## fall photo album

Starfish Family Services strengthens families to create brighter futures for children. With locations throughout metro Detroit, Starfish serves more than 10,000 at-risk children and families annually.

Non-Profit Org.

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Ann Kalass  
Chief Executive Officer

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STARFISH  
FAMILY SERVICES

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