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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**STARFISH FAMILY SERVICES TO HONOR THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN AND ITS PRESIDENT MARIAM C. NOLAND AT THE GREAT HEARTS GALA JUNE 10<sup>TH</sup>.**

INKSTER, MICHIGAN (May 16, 2016) – Starfish Family Services is pleased to announce that the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM) and its longtime President, Mariam C. Noland, will be the Great Hearts Award Honoree at this year’s Great Hearts Gala to be held on Friday, June, 10<sup>th</sup> at Eastern Market, Shed 3.

Through its talented staff and longtime leader Mariam C. Noland, CFSEM has brought together organizations as well as community and civic leaders to support critical regional initiatives in areas such as early childhood education, greenways, economic development, and quality of life. Starfish Family Services was one of the first of more than 190 local nonprofits to begin building their endowment with the CFSEM. Since 1991, Starfish has received more than \$3.6 million from various funds of the Community Foundation.

“Starfish has benefitted greatly from the longstanding support of the Community Foundation. Mariam is known for bringing creativity and skilled collaboration building when tackling difficult issues facing our community, we are very grateful for her organization’s continued support” said Ann Kalass, Starfish Chief Executive Officer.

This year’s gala has received generous support from the philanthropic community, including gala co-chairs, Lauren and Phillip Wm. Fisher, Allan Gilmour and Eric Jirgens and Lois and Gail Warden. The event will support parent-focused programs, specifically the launch of *Starfish University*. *Starfish University* is a transformative approach to providing parents with a variety of educational and enrichment opportunities, designed to strengthen families and empower parents to serve as their child’s best teacher, role model and advocate. According to Phillip Wm. Fisher, “Starfish is an impactful organization that strives to provide families with resources and strategies to accomplish their life goals. I have witnessed first-hand these inspiring stories of partnership and the success we’ve created. Starfish is amongst the highest of my philanthropic priorities, and I encourage you to support our mission of *strengthening families to create brighter futures for children.*”

Event tickets are \$225.00 and include complimentary valet parking, a cocktail reception, plated dinner, live music and dancing. Event sponsorships are still available. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit [www.starfishgala.org](http://www.starfishgala.org).

**About Starfish Family Services:**

Founded in 1963, Starfish Family Services is a private, nonprofit agency serving vulnerable children and families in metropolitan Detroit. Our passion is early childhood development. We strive to prepare young children for a successful start to school. Our programs and services uniquely recognize and respect the important role of parents and other caregivers in the long-term success of children. As a leading provider of Early Head Start and Head Start programs, we embrace a comprehensive strategy that also works to address the complex challenges that children and their families may face in their every-day life. In addition to early childhood services, we provide parenting programs, children’s mental health services, after-school programs, and other youth services including an emergency shelter for teens and youth in crisis. [www.starfishfamilyservices.org](http://www.starfishfamilyservices.org).