



THE STARFISH SCOOP



Dear Friend of Starfish,

Do you remember the ups and downs of your teenage years? The angst, the carefree fun, the thrill of planning a future you were convinced would be wonderful?

Hopefully, you were blessed with parents or family who could support and encourage your dreams. But, imagine if you weren't so lucky. What if you were on your own, with nowhere to go and definitely no one to help you plan your next steps? Would you have fared well?

Decisions we make as teens reverberate long into adulthood, so it's crucial that teens receive the support they need during this pivotal time.

The Starfish Shelter and Crisis Center supports youth in crisis to achieve their goals in completing high school, finding employment, pursuing post-secondary education, and making the most of their transition into adulthood.

Who makes all this great work possible? You do! Your generous support fuels our success and the success of the youth we serve. I hope you enjoy meeting Grant (p.3), a teen who has made the most of his 18-month Starfish Shelter residency. We are very proud of him and hope you will enjoy reading his story.



Ann Kalass | CEO

Questions,
Comments,
Newsletter Ideas?

We'd love to hear from you. Contact us at marketing@sfish.org

Your Support In Action: The Starfish Shelter and Crisis Center

A place for youth with nowhere else to go

The Starfish Shelter and Crisis Center

Goal:

Protect the safety of youth and promote their healthy development. Reunite youth with their families, when possible, and facilitate the resolution of family problems through counseling and other support services.

Method:

Provide each resident with an individualized program of shelter, counseling, skills training, family reunification, and support services.

Programs



Parenthood Program

Pregnant and parenting teens up to age 21 are eligible. The program is designed to provide a support network for parenting teens and their children.



Youth Assistance Program

A community based program designed to prevent Inkster youth from entering the juvenile justice system. Individual case management, group therapy, and recreational opportunities aid youth in developing accountability, problem solving and coping skills.



Transitional Living Program

An 18-month housing program serving youths age 16-20, who are ageing out of foster care or who are homeless.

Fast Facts

**WE ARE AVAILABLE
24 HOURS/DAY, 365 DAYS/YEAR**
to house those in crisis and in need
of a place to stay.



Staff answer an average of
1,400 hotline calls a year.

1-866-672-HELP (4327)



200

Each year, the Shelter **serves over 200 youth** through shelter and placement services.

\$25
provides hygiene
and school
supplies for
one youth

\$150
pays for a teen
to take their
GED test

\$525
sponsors 3 days
of care and
residency for
a youth

Relief. Protection. Sanctuary!

That's what YOUR support provides to teens like Grant

The staff at the Starfish Shelter always smile when mentioning Grant, "Very bright", "Self-aware", "He's a great kid, we love him!" "Sooo much potential!"

That's Grant, a great kid with so much potential, but who had a rocky start.

Grant always received harsh punishment for normal childhood misadventures. He's not sure why, but from a young age he didn't feel a connection with his adoptive mom. Home was not a haven, instead it was filled with conflict. At 17, Grant attended a basketball game after school without permission. As punishment, his mom took all his clothes and personal belongings, and locked them in the basement. Washing his clothes out in the sink at night so he could wear them the next day soon became frustrating. After a week passed, he decided he would negotiate the end of his punishment, like he often did by bargaining with his mom. He took an old, unused mobile phone of hers and said he would return it to her, if she returned his clothes. She took the deal and returned one pair of clothes.

A Surprise Trip to Jail

The next day Grant was shocked to be called into the school office and faced with police officers. His mom had him arrested for the "stolen" phone. He was charged with larceny, and she admitted she wanted to see him in jail. His father bailed him out but told him his mom decided he couldn't live there anymore. With nowhere to go, Grant bounced around on friends' couches for months.



"Starfish pushed me to do better and now I have big dreams, and I have the confidence to pursue them. They've helped me in every way possible and I'm grateful."

A school social worker suggested Grant contact Starfish, where he not only found a safe place and warm bed, but the resources to get his life on track. Starfish provided weekly individual therapy sessions for Grant, along with group therapy sessions and life skills training. Starfish also aided him in getting a job and finishing high school. "Without Starfish, I know I would be in juvie [juvenile detention]. I had no money, no transportation, and would have never made it to my court dates. If you don't show for court, they issue a warrant for your arrest." Grant continues, "I'm proud that I got my first job and worked hard to pay off all \$867.00 of my fines and court fees. Starfish pushed me to do better in school and now I have big dreams, and I have the confidence to pursue them, they've helped me in every way possible and I'm grateful."

Share Your Wisdom!
Do you have any advice for Grant?
Email us at marketing@sfish.org and we will be sure to pass it along.



A New Country, A New Language, A Newborn Child, How Would You Cope?



Vjolca Shares Her Story From Starfish Parent to Starfish Teacher

Feeling Isolated and Alone

My husband Usein and I came to the USA 14 years ago. None of us spoke English so it was extremely difficult to function. We had a three-year-old son Albi, and soon after our arrival, a daughter Dea. We were a happy family but very isolated, with no ability to communicate with the outside world.

Once Dea was ready for preschool a friend told us Starfish Family Services is the best place to go for preschool. The first time I visited Starfish I felt lost and confused, but the young lady in the office, with her big smile brightened my day and made me feel at home. Her warm heart and her patience were very comforting. Though my English was broken I felt understood. From that moment on, I thought, "I am no longer isolated, people can understand me when I talk to them." It meant a lot to me.

Starfish Becomes My Second Home

As my daughter was learning her ABC's, I, as a parent, was learning more about how to help her grow

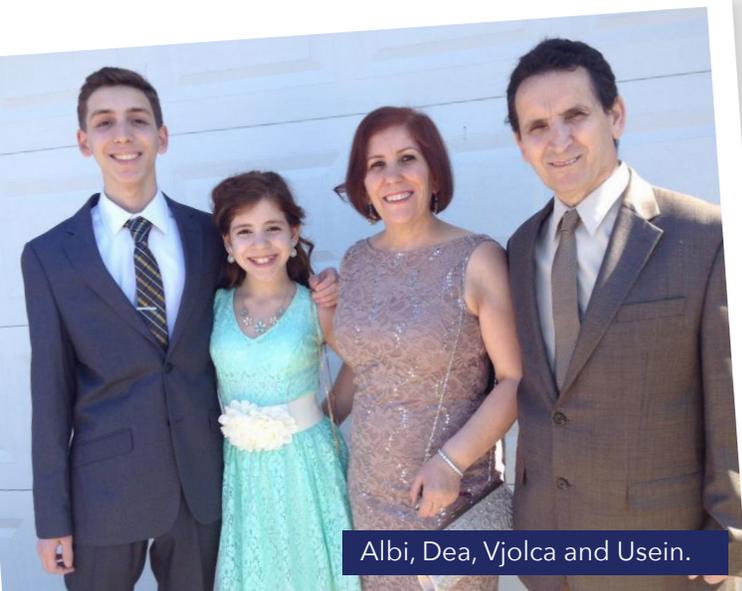
physically, academically and, socially. I volunteered countless hours in my daughter's class and attended many parenting programs. Every time I felt down, I had somewhere to go to lift me up again. At Starfish, I got it all. The help and support our family got from the preschool program was, and still is, very much appreciated.

As a preschooler at Starfish, Dea received her first opportunity to perform for an audience. She discovered her talent, built her confidence and found joy in singing and dancing. The arts continue to be a large part of Dea's life. She keeps busy with dance classes, piano lessons, volunteering, and singing competitions which is her biggest passion. She even won the singing competition, Canton Idol. She works very hard to balance her extra curricular activities with maintaining her grades and membership to the National Junior Honor Society.

"For almost ten years I've loved working for Starfish, making a difference, one child at a time."

When Dea started kindergarten I had a hard time saying goodbye to our Starfish family who helped us take our "baby steps" out into the world. I searched for a way to say THANK YOU. I applied for a job, not only to work, but also, to share what I've learned with others. I am honored to be working in a teaching position at our Crestwood site. Starfish even made it possible for me to go back to school. I do not feel lost anymore. I have found a bright future, for me and my family.

Dea, who is now in eighth grade, and my son Albi, soon to graduate high school make us proud every day. They are great kids, partly due to the wonderful parenting resources Starfish provided for our family.



Albi, Dea, Vjolca and Usein.