



STARFISH
FAMILY SERVICES

Autumn 2017 Volume II



THE STARFISH SCOOP



STARFISH
FAMILY SERVICES

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Strengthening families to create
brighter futures for children

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With Us!**



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Our Family Won't be Defeated by Muscular Dystrophy!



Hope for a Bright Future: That's What **Your Support Means** to Parents like Rola

Being part of the Starfish Family has been a great experience! When I enrolled my oldest son in the Starfish home visiting preschool program, I expected Laura, the home visitor, would be a great teacher for Taym and help get him ready for school. I didn't expect that Laura would also be a great support for my entire family and encourage us to view Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy-which runs in our family-in a different manner.

My younger brother died from the disease. My oldest child Taym has the diagnosis and as a carrier I also struggle with symptoms. Fortunately, we are a very close-knit, happy family. My husband and I live with my parents and my mother, father, and sister are a great help. They understand exactly what I am going through and are ready to give of themselves to make everything easier on me and on Taym.

"I know he (Taym) will face difficulties so our goal is to make him as strong and independent as possible."

Initially as a family we were very protective of Taym and often did for him things that he could probably do for himself. But, from the beginning, Laura had very high expectations of Taym. She referred us to Early On Michigan, which offers early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. Laura and the Early On team didn't let his diagnosis of Muscular Dystrophy stop them from establishing routines and enforcing rules. He was expected to pick up his toys, the same as any child of his age. We were taught ways to deal with his temper tantrums and be firm with him regarding his leg braces. At first he resisted wearing them because he thought they would limit his motion and make him different from other children. Laura also suggested Taym enroll in swimming classes to strengthen his legs.

Now every week, we head to the pool as a family and Taym loves it. Laura also helped us discuss our feelings of guilt as a family. We know that our diagnosis is no one's fault. In addition, we understand that Taym needs to be independent, and we will never let the disease rob him of that. I know he will face difficulties so our goal is to make him as strong and independent as possible for as long as possible. I am so thankful that Starfish brought such a fantastic person into our life!



"I love my work! Every day, I get to use my background in social work and early education. Our home visiting preschool program is more than just teaching the kids, we are there to support the whole family. A lot of my role is problem solving and helping families with referrals, and supporting them as they advocate for themselves.

Working with Rola and her family has been especially inspiring. Rola doesn't give up-she is hungry to learn, do, and advocate for her son. She listens to recommendations and follows through with referrals to other agencies that can be a help to her; the whole family is a delight to work with."

- Laura

YOU Can Help Us Launch an Innovative Solution to a Tough Problem

A Classroom Devoted to Trauma Work

An Innovative Solution to a Tough Problem

Preschool Director Krystle Maudlin has a vision for a classroom solely dedicated to ensuring that a child who is in melt-down mode has a safe place to release their anger, to step away with an adult, and be reminded that they are safe. Her dream is to outfit an empty classroom with the latest tools designed to help children who are experiencing the effects of toxic stress and trauma.

Imagine a room where the floors are covered in mats, providing a safe place for tantrums and rough and tumble play.

Weighted vests and blankets will provide gentle pressure on children and help them self-regulate and calm down-much like the swaddling of a baby. It will be completely stocked with the latest sensory tools for soothing children including feel and roll bumpy balls, wobble chairs, even an indoor balance beam



"After attending Trauma Smart® training, my view on Trauma and how it truly affects our little ones changed. I knew that I needed to do something different as a leader to ensure our little ones are getting the best possible head start in life. This is when I had the idea of creating the Trauma Sensory classroom...I am honestly beyond grateful that you have taken the time to listen to my dream and the needs of the children."

used to help children focus and calm themselves. This is not a time out room, but a safe sensory environment that will allow a child a safe place to process their feelings and ensure that the rest of the class isn't disrupted by the child's outbursts. It will be the first of its kind in Michigan. We are proud to move this important work forward, and **YOU can help us by donating today!**

\$30
can purchase a set of Feel & Roll Bumpy Balls

\$100
can purchase a soft plush weighted blanket

\$200
can purchase an Air-Lite Ball Pit

Pat Yourself on the Back, **YOU** Helped Us Have a Record Year



2017 Volunteer and Community Highlights

You donated 29,180 hours of your time—a 677 hour increase from 2016!

These hours translate into **\$686,891.** Volunteer dollar/hours are critically important to our mission and bottom line. Did you know that many of our grants, including federal ones from the Office of Head Start, mandate that we raise a certain amount of “in-kind” dollars, and volunteer hours can be counted toward this goal?

This year we **harvested 1500** pounds of produce to feed about 200 Starfish families. That’s a 700lb increase from last year. The harvest was indeed bountiful!!

Over 50 groups helped to make sure our children were read to, our garden was tended and harvested, and our youth mentored. Thank you to our most frequent volunteer groups:



We have over 20 volunteer Foster Grandparents who regularly volunteer in the classrooms. They keep busy rocking, consoling, playing and helping in any way they can. We love their dedication and beautiful smiles.



Thank you to the Fairlane Sunrise Rotary who distributed over 200 coats, hats, and gloves to Inkster families. They are already preparing for this year’s coat give-away!



We had a wonderful time hosting the Alpha Kappa Alpha Annual Heart Healthy Event, Pink Goes Red, in our Hiveley gym. This event raises awareness on the importance of being heart-healthy by eating right, and getting regular exercise!



We were thrilled to host Camp Inspire’s Tea Party fundraiser in our very own garden. Camp Inspire provides opportunities for girls in 4th-8th grade, to get firsthand experience with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math).