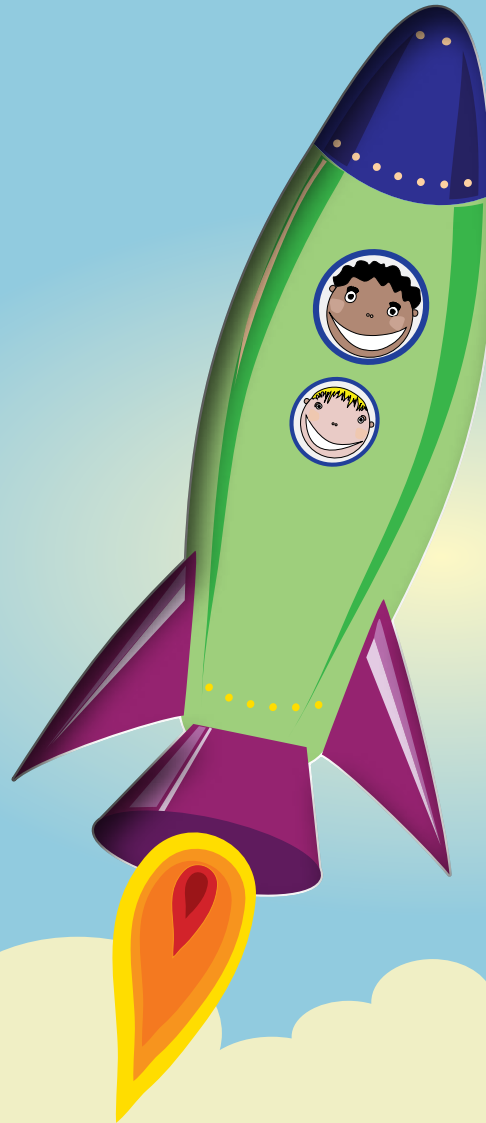


*Our Parent Empowerment Program*



# Launching Families to Success

**A Spotlight on PEP!**



**STARFISH**  
FAMILY SERVICES

*Report to Donors August 2014*

Dear Friends,

All of us at Starfish thank you for your continued and generous support. Individual donors, foundations, and corporate sponsors provide the valuable resources we need to create, improve and sustain high impact programs like the unique Starfish Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) which is featured in this report.

Five years ago, we identified a gap in parent education programs. Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, we worked with Dr. Bob Sornson to develop and roll-out a program that addresses the specific needs of our Starfish families – building knowledge, skills, and confidence among the parents of young children in our care.

We have proudly watched the number of PEP program participants expand, but even more gratifying has been watching our parents embrace the program, grow in life's most important role as mother or father, and create a supportive community of learning. Parents actively recruit their friends and families to join PEP and readily share their program feedback so it gets better every year. Starfish parents, often isolated and defeated, befriend and support each other through PEP.

Meet Leon. Leon was one of our first fathers to participate in PEP. I remember the first session where he sat slouched in his chair hoping for the session to end. Clearly Leon had been coerced to attend by his girlfriend Sarah. Over the course of the 9 month program, Sarah and Leon had a baby who joined two young siblings. By the end of the program, Leon was waving his hand throughout the morning, hoping Dr. Bob would call on him. Leon shared a reflection at the closing ceremony, "I know I've been given another chance to do right by this baby and make some improvements in how I relate to our older kids."

One of the gifts we appreciate each day at Starfish is seeing our parents grow - gaining confidence and skills so they can find joy and success in raising their children.

Again, we thank you for working with us to achieve our mission of "strengthening families to create brighter futures for children."



Ann Kalass, CEO

## **Thank You to these Foundations and Corporations who help make our Parent Empowerment Program possible:**

**Conrad Charitable Foundation**

**Dearborn Rotary Foundation**

**Karen Colina Wilson Foundation**

**Macy's**

**MGM Resorts Foundation**

**PNC Foundation**

**TJX Foundation Inc.**

**The Village Club Foundation**

# PEP A Launch Pad to Family Success

Our Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) addresses the needs of parents who are trying to place their children onto a course of achievement and who recognize that a key factor in their child's success is their own ability to model positive behavior and apply proven parenting techniques.

PEP is a 9 month course led and created specifically for Starfish families by the President of the Early Learning Foundation and nationally renowned author and childhood expert, Dr. Bob Sornson. Families are provided a hot breakfast and childcare so they can focus on the techniques shared by "Dr. Bob" as he is affectionately called by our parents. Lessons are highly interactive and full of real life examples.

Dr. Sornson has a passion for sharing his knowledge and a deep respect for the parents in the program, allowing him to break down defensive barriers and connect with the participants. The course lessons are built on the Love and Logic philosophy of parenting. The two main tenets are firm limits set in a loving way and letting children learn from their mistakes. Parents are often surprised to find that teaching their children how to delay gratification, use respectful speech, control their emotions and stick to routines helps them model this behavior themselves. "Do as I say" turns into "do as I do."

Many Starfish parents did not benefit from having strong parental role models and have found it difficult to find a like-minded community of parents who can provide an emotional support system. As a response to our parents' evaluation of the program, we added PEP CHAT to the curriculum. PEP CHAT is a monthly gathering where PEP parents can review the techniques they've learned and candidly discuss their results. They encourage each other to keep trying when they run into setbacks and applaud each other when they have parental success. The welcoming and interactive environment has allowed many PEP parents to forge friendships outside of the program.

PEP has shown tremendous growth since its start. Five years ago, we averaged 50 PEP parents a session. This year we averaged nearly 100 parents a session. Our goal is to continue to expand the program to meet the ongoing need in our community.

## Ground Crew

*Our dedicated staff and volunteers keep PEP running smoothly*

PEP takes a lot of behind the scene work. We would not succeed without the volunteers and staff who sacrifice their Saturday morning to make sure PEP families have a wonderful experience. Our ground crew stays busy setting up tables and chairs for hundreds of participants, preparing a healthy breakfast for parents and children, ensuring registration is smooth and providing age appropriate activities for children of all ages.

Longtime Starfish volunteer, Bill Polomik, especially enjoys PEP Saturdays. Explaining why, "my favorite has been volunteering with the childcare staff. I found being able to help the children socialize and learn is very rewarding. Their enthusiasm is infectious." Bill shares that volunteering has benefited him in surprising ways. "Spending time with children that come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences helps me keep everyday trials in perspective."

**Our Captain:  
Dr. Bob Sornson**



# Rocket Fuel

## *Our many **generous supporters** including:* **Beth Beson**



Starfish is able to offer PEP through the generosity of many donors. One donor, Beth Beson, found her way to Starfish through a friend who knew she was passionate about programs that elevate women and children.

Several years ago, Beth found herself with vastly increased resources. She wasn't sure what to do with the money but decided to start giving it away. The sense of gratification she felt from helping enrich the lives of others inspired her to increase the generosity of her time and funds. Eventually she created the Conrad Charitable Foundation which has been a loyal supporter of PEP since its beginning in 2009. Her generous support has been instrumental in the launch and expansion of PEP.

Beth speaks of her great admiration for the families in PEP, "I give great credit to a family's awareness of needing help with parenting and seeking assistance. Their willingness to improve upon the parenting skills of their parents and grandparents shows great courage and is inspiring."

*Beth Beson enjoying our butterfly garden surrounded by Starfish kids.*

## *and* **PNC Foundation**

PNC generously provided funds to launch the program in 2009. Five years later, they continue to be a great partner to Starfish. PEP aligns wonderfully with PNC's corporate mission to fund early childhood programs via their Grow Up Great program. In their words, "Start them early. Nurture their dreams. Help them GROW UP Great" We couldn't agree more.

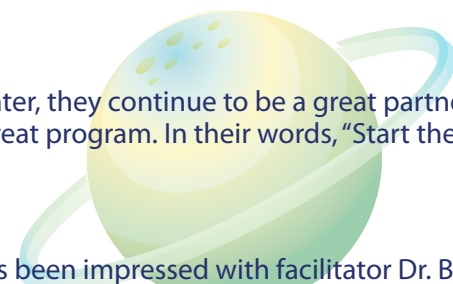
### ***Providing Financial and Volunteer Support***

Anne Harpe, PNC Client & Community Relations Specialist, has volunteered at several PEP sessions. She's been impressed with facilitator Dr. Bob Sornson's method of constant, firm and loving guidance. "PEP offers real solutions, actions and behaviors to address situations in a positive, loving, guiding way that averts conflict and leads to better outcomes for the entire family."

Along with PNC's financial support, PNC volunteers help each month in classrooms with childcare so parents can devote their undivided attention to learning.

### **Calling All Volunteers**

Volunteers are as critical as funds to the success of PEP and our other Starfish programs. We are happy to find a volunteer role within our agency that fits your experience and interests. Please call, Cheryl Majeske, Volunteer Resource Specialist for more information: [cmajeske@sfish.org](mailto:cmajeske@sfish.org) 734.728.3400 ext. 3491.





# Air Crew

## *A Dispatch from an Air Crew Member*

Greetings Starfish Supporters:

A good friend and her husband convinced me and my husband to attend Starfish's Parent Empowerment Program. Our family loved it. We dropped our child off with caregivers while we learned about Love and Logic. It was a date each month when we could come together as a parenting team and look at where our child was and where she needed to be developmentally. We were given time to examine what is going smoothly in our household and what routines needed to be tweaked to provide consistent patterns which help children feel safe and secure.

Every session PEP presented a new topic such as reading and language development, math in the home, or rewards and consequences. Every Saturday we walked away with steps to help us be more effective parents. We also enjoyed the friendship and support we received from other members attending PEP. We are so grateful to have had Starfish be a part of our lives and plan to give back to this amazing organization. As the saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child. Starfish is part of our village." Thank you Starfish for blessing our family.

Sincerely,

Kelly and Ivan Patino



*PEP parents learning together*

## Pre-Launch Checklist

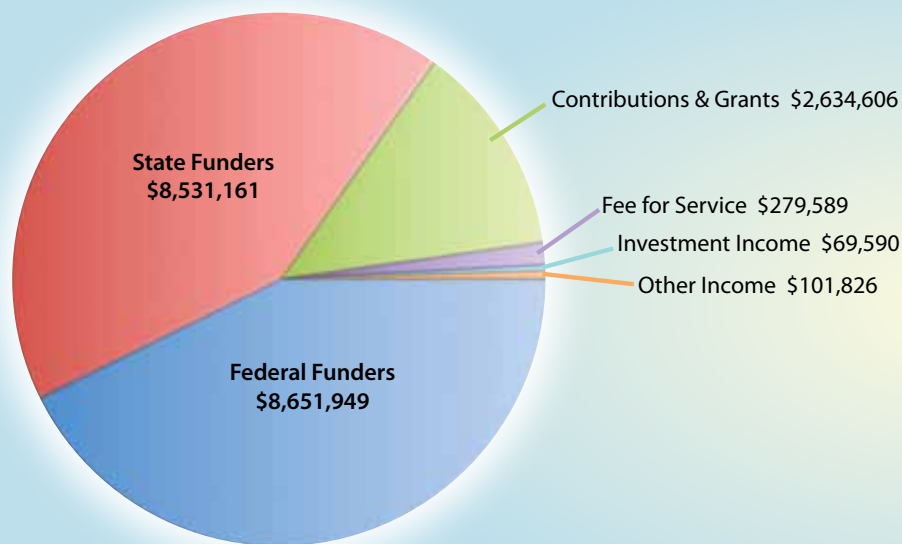
### *A Peek inside the PEP Curriculum*

1. Developing family routines
2. Developing emotional control
3. Developing language and literacy
4. Setting behavior limits in the home
5. Developing motor skills
6. Rules and relationships
7. Developing number sense
8. Great mistakes
9. Routines for physical and emotional health

# Finances *Fiscal year October 1, 2012 - September 30, 2013*

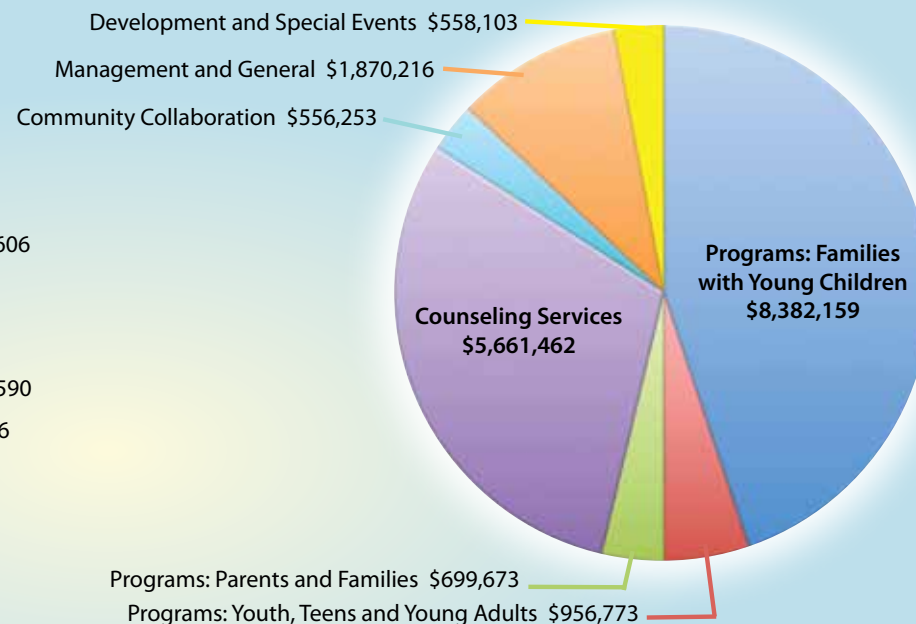
## Revenue

Total Revenue/Other Support  
**\$20,268,721**



## Expense

Total Expense  
**\$18,684,639**



**STARFISH**  
FAMILY SERVICES

30000 Hiveley Street • Inkster, MI 48141  
**734.728.3400 • [starfishfamilyservices.org](http://starfishfamilyservices.org)**

## About Starfish Family Services

Founded in 1963, Starfish Family Services is a nonprofit organization serving vulnerable children and families in metropolitan Detroit. Starfish's mission is **strengthening families to create brighter futures for children.**

For us, creating brighter futures means making the most of the first five years of life for every child.

We recognize and respect the important roles of parents, caregivers and community in the long-term success of children. Daily, we provide over 1,000 children and their families an array of services including prenatal support, preschool education, parenting education, after school programs, and mental health services for infants, children and teens. Based in Inkster, Starfish has 15 service sites throughout metropolitan Detroit, 370 employees and a total annual budget of nearly \$22 million dollars.

Starfish Family Services is a nonprofit, charitable organization classified as a 501(c)3 by the IRS. Gifts are tax-deductible.