

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**STARFISH FAMILY SERVICES AWARDED \$22 MILLION, 5 YEAR HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START GRANT**

INKSTER, MICH. (June 29, 2016) – Starfish Family Services is pleased to announce that the Office of Head Start (OHS) has awarded the agency approximately \$22 million in federal funds over the next five years. The grant enables Starfish to continue to offer quality and comprehensive services to local children aged 0-5 and their families. The new grant expands services to pregnant women and children 0-3 while offering more full-day services for preschoolers. Programming will serve income-eligible children in the communities of Dearborn Heights, Redford, Inkster, Garden City, Plymouth, Canton, Northville and Livonia.

Quality early childhood programming, including Head Start, is proven to have long-term benefit. Studies show that children who arrive at kindergarten ready for school success are more likely to graduate from high school and move out of poverty. Therefore, it's critical that families facing limited economic and educational opportunity have access to quality preschool services like those at Starfish.

Starfish has extensive experience delivering Head Start programs most recently launching a collaborative platform known as *Thrive by Five Detroit* - which provides early education services to over 1,300 children in the city of Detroit. In addition, for over 15 years, Starfish has provided Head Start and Early Head Start preschool services in Western Wayne County. The OHS funds allow Starfish to continue to offer these services and support a much needed expansion of services for those aged 0-3 (Early Head Start). Starfish has also added more, aged 3-5 (Head Start), full day classrooms to meet the needs of families in the community who have expressed a preference for a longer day of service.

"We are very excited to continue this foundational work of offering high impact and high quality infant-toddler and preschool services for our families," said Starfish CEO Ann Kalass. "Our agency's approach to creating brighter futures for children is holistic. We realize that helping families realize their full potential includes support of parents and caregivers as well as children. Head Start parents will have access to our newly launched Starfish University – a transformational initiative that provides parents with a variety of educational and enrichment opportunities that strengthen families and empower parents."

Starfish will continue to invest in parent engagement programs, teacher and classroom quality, and the integration of mental health supports into its programming. To learn more about these programs or to enroll your child, please call 1-888-887-9980.

**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 challenges that children and their families may face at home. 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).

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