

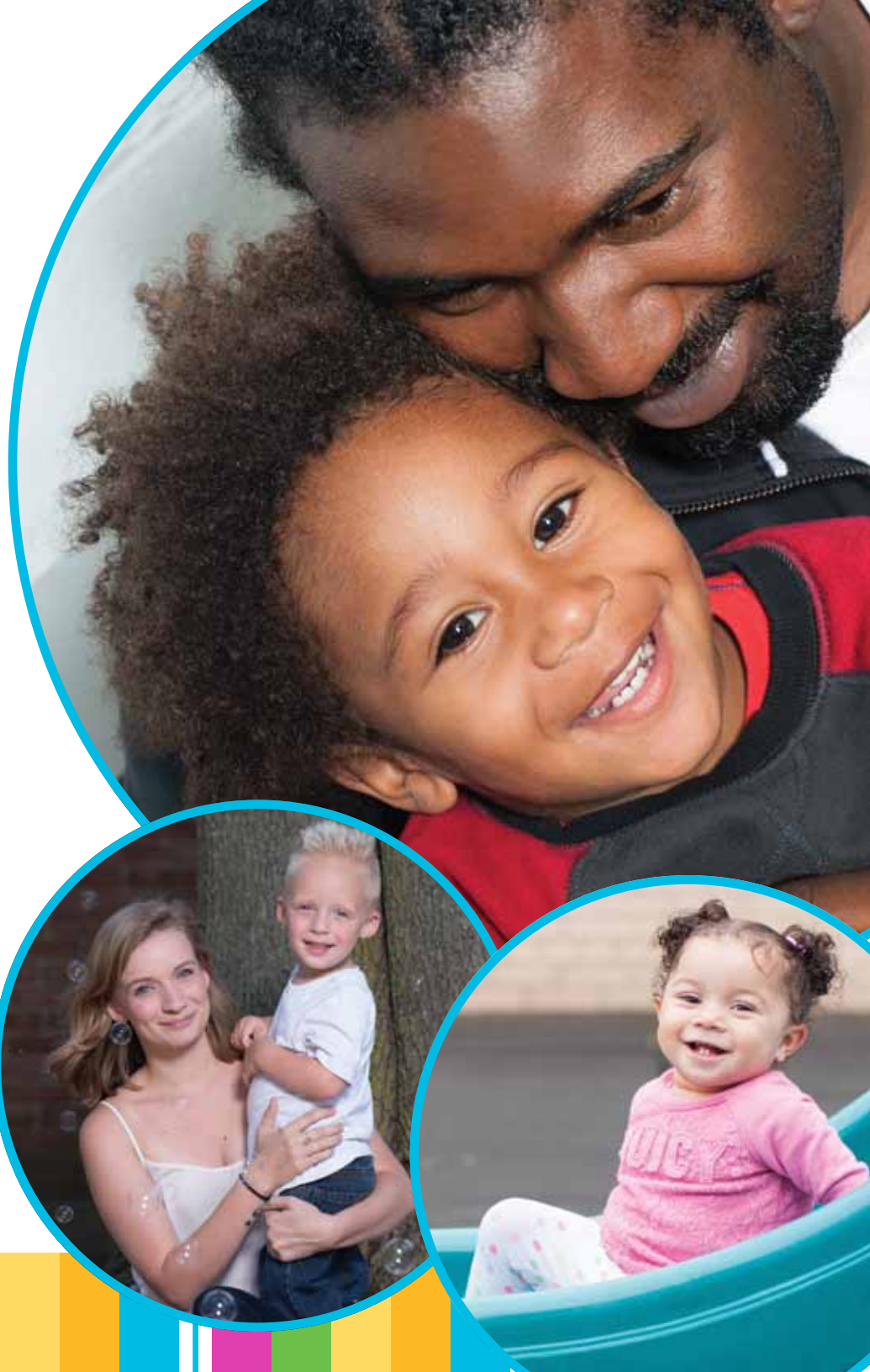


STARFISH
FAMILY SERVICES

Strengthening families to create brighter futures for children.

Building Healthy Parent-Child Connections

*A Starfish Report to our Donors
September 2016*





Ann Kalass,
CEO of Starfish

Ann Shares

What is the “two-generation approach” you’ve been lauding and why is it so important to Starfish?

Services for children are very important but in reality parents' stability, financial resources, and emotional well-being have an outsized impact on the future success of their children. Thus it's crucial that we offer programs that provide social and emotional support for parents along with programs for children. Our two-generation model focuses on ***meeting the needs of both the parents and the child simultaneously and recognizing that the long term success of children is closely linked to the success of their parents.***

In addition, we know that cultivating successful children starts with a strong, loving, parent-child attachment. Research shows it is vital to the healthy development of a child. A child's ability to self-soothe, trust, and learn from other adults, develop self-esteem, problem solve, and make friends are all impacted by the early parent-child attachment. Launched in 2012, Baby Power is designed to strengthen the bond between parent and baby and support parents as they cope with life challenges.



A big **Thank You** to the many donors who support our work!

Starfish is fortunate to have donors who recognize that a holistic focus on building stable, nurturing families leads to many positive, lasting outcomes for children.

Baby Power: Encouraging the Mommy-Baby Bond

Parenting isn't easy for any of us, but when a family is living at or below the poverty line, the challenges of trying to provide for and care for their children can be overwhelming. Trauma and toxic stress are common and can negatively affect parents' ability to **create a secure parent-child attachment**. Children's delay in cognitive and motor development, increased behavioral problems, and difficulties in school have all been linked to their parents' inability to cope with life stressors. Providing parents resources to overcome life's difficulties and aiding them in creating a secure bond with their children leads to much better outcomes for children.

You Invested Wisely

We are happy to report that Baby Power, a two-generation Starfish program that has successfully impacted both mothers and their young children, is now self-sustaining. Initially supported via charitable donations, we used the funding to test and refine a model of care that now qualifies for and is sustained by Medicaid billing. We are using our learnings from Baby Power to launch a similar program for Fathers. The positive impact of your contributions will continue.



Baby Power and Dad Power Funders

Center for Arab American Philanthropy
The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
DeRoy Testamentary Foundation
Flinn Foundation
The Jewish Fund
Karen Colina Wilson Foundation
The Metro Health Foundation
The World Heritage Foundation-Prechter Family Fund

You Gave, They Gained

How Is Baby Power Serving Two Generations?

Developing a healthy, resilient child who is likely to grow into a successful adult begins with early parent-child attachment.

In 2012, Baby Power began as a 10-week pilot program. Developed in collaboration with the University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry, it consists of home visits, group therapy sessions for mothers, and developmental support for children. Mothers of young children experiencing trauma, crisis, depression, or anxiety benefit from having a safe space to learn parenting skills, share parenting stress stories, and gain encouragement from other mothers and trained therapists. Therapists use group discussion, stress reduction exercises, and films of parent-child interactions for parent education.

Strong parent-child attachment, crucial to a child's future success, is facilitated.

While mothers participate in the weekly 3-hour group session, their children are engaged in enriching activities conducted by trained early childhood educators who assess and support the child's developmental progress and identify any potential concerns. The two-generation approach in action.



"I want to be a good mom and I think I can be."

Laura*, age 17, reported a long history of trauma, including abuse, suicide attempts and growing up in foster care. Her experience with her mother was not one of protection and safety. She DIDN'T want to be like her mom. "I want to be a good mom, and I think I can be," she stated when asked why she joined Baby Power.

Initially, Laura exhibited a distressing disconnection with her 10-month old daughter. She'd leave without saying a word to the baby or childcare staff, walk down the hall to her group and not look back.

But mid-way through the program, Laura began to have purposeful and meaningful interactions with her daughter when leaving her with the Baby Power staff. At drop off, she'd tell staff how her baby was feeling and say good bye to her daughter with an, "I'll see you soon." At pick up, Laura began asking more questions about what her daughter had been like the past three hours. She'd greet her daughter with "I see you!" and "I know you missed me and I missed you too!"

It's clear that Laura and the other Baby Power mothers can develop a strong, healthy bond with their children and learn to identify and meet their child's needs.

*Names have been changed to protect the family's privacy.



How Do You Know It's Working?

Dr. Maria Muzik, a clinician-researcher by training and current Medical Director of the University of Michigan Women and Infants Mental Health Clinic, designed (with her U of M colleagues) Baby Power and guided a rigorous data collection of participant outcomes. Refining Baby Power to qualify as an evidence-based model that could be replicated was one of the goals of the research work.

Starfish has now served over 200 mothers via our Baby Power program. Mothers who participate in Baby Power report increased knowledge of what to expect during pregnancy, along with decreased depression and anxiety, improved parenting awareness and improved relationships with their infants and toddlers.

Starfish and U of M researchers reported outcomes that resulted in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services approval of the program as a Medicaid funded intervention for parents experiencing mental health challenges.

Could Things Get Any Worse?

Could Things Get Any Better?

Laquanda, a mom to three, was pregnant with her fourth child when an electrical fire burned her house and everything in it to the ground. Once aid from the Red Cross ran out the family was homeless. Next a sudden illness resulting in multiple hospital stays and surgeries meant that Laquanda was no longer able to work. Having a support group in Baby Power proved to be instrumental to her ability to cope with crisis. "Nat (Baby Power therapist) listened to me; I didn't feel judged by her. I never felt like just another case, or number with Nat. She always went above and beyond. I was so sick and had so many doctor appointments, numerous times she would drive me to appointments and watch my son in the waiting room. My son loves her to pieces." Laquanda continues, "I feel safe and like I have support. If I ask for help there is someone there."

Laquanda has secured housing for her family and is in the process of transitioning off of medical leave and returning to work. She credits Baby Power with helping her successfully navigate the very stressful past two years.



Your Donations: Creating A Lasting Impact

Starfish partners with **University of Michigan** to develop an evidence-informed program for mothers. We name it **Baby Power!**



Your **donations** help launch Baby Power.

Starfish implements Baby Power and **collects outcomes data**. Data is used to **monitor** and track **effectiveness** and continue to refine Baby Power.



It works! The **effectiveness** of the model **now proven**, Starfish seeks to **establish Baby Power** as a **self-sustaining program**.

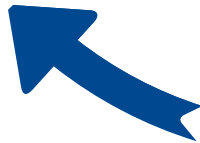
Success! Michigan Dept. of Health and Human Services **recognizes** its **benefits** and **approves** it for **Medicaid funding**.



Impact continues. **U-M/Starfish** collaboration uses findings to **design** a similar program for **Fathers**.



Dad Power is **Launched!**



Circle of Impact

Donor Spotlight

Over the past 12 years, The Jewish Fund has awarded Starfish Family Services grants totaling \$465,000! They've supported the launch of Baby Power and are now funding Dad Power. Margo Pernick, Executive Director of The Jewish Fund, shares why The Jewish Fund continues to support Starfish.

"We were impressed with the evaluation component that was built into the Baby Power program. Our fund prioritizes initiatives that are evidence-based, improve health outcomes and serve early childhood at-risk populations. We also seek programs that have measurable outcomes. Baby Power checked all those boxes. In addition, there was a defined plan for sustaining the program beyond the grant period. We applaud any agency that takes a strategic approach to designing programs that are self-sustaining once the grant period is over."



"We applaud any agency that takes a strategic approach to designing programs that are self-sustaining once the grant period is over."

Thank You, from our Fathers

We've applied learnings from Baby Power to create a program specifically for fathers. We recently concluded our first Dad Power series and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Much like Baby Power we will continue to refine the program to make sure it is aligned with our fathers' needs.

"I love the staff, they are very respectful and nice. I'd recommend the group to a friend, some Fathers are going through stuff! You learn a lot and get (help with getting) your life right." - Nathaniel, father of one

"The staff are warm and friendly. I have found this to be a great group and a good outlet for a lot of things that I deal with as a father." - George, father of five



About Starfish Family Services

Preschool

Parenting Programs

Mental Health Services

Shelter for Youth in Crisis

After School and Summer Enrichment Programs

You Help us Provide a Hand Up and a Way Out

We help individuals and families create personal success stories through strategic programs and focused outreach. By providing access to the right resources at the right time, children and their families are better equipped to cope with challenges related to education, financial management, and mental health issues. This helps prevent serious setbacks to a family's standard of living and quality of life.

Starfish employs more than 400 professionals – including educators, social workers, psychiatrists, nurses, nutritionists and administrators. These individuals work with parents, caregivers and others to help children thrive. As a community-based nonprofit, Starfish has more than 50 years of experience providing the highest caliber of programs that improve the lives of infants through teens. Our efforts touch thousands of lives every day.



STARFISH

FAMILY SERVICES

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