

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**STARFISH FAMILY SERVICES TO HONOR THE JEWISH FUND AT THE GREAT HEARTS GALA,  
THURSDAY JUNE 8.**

**INKSTER, MICHIGAN** (May 22, 2017) – Starfish Family Services is pleased to announce it will honor the Jewish Fund with its 2017 Great Hearts Award at the agency’s annual Great Hearts Gala on Thursday, June 8, at Cobo Center in Detroit.

The Great Hearts Award annually recognizes an individual or organization that is making a profound difference in the lives of Starfish families. Starfish and the broader community have greatly benefited from the Jewish Fund’s generous support. Since 2004, Starfish has received grants totaling nearly half a million dollars from The Jewish Fund to launch innovative and high impact programs like Baby Power, a collaboration between Starfish and the University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry. Baby Power serves new and expectant mothers and their babies who face challenges like maternal depression, trauma, and parenting stress that, if unaddressed, could impede their baby’s healthy development. Baby Power offers home visits, group therapy sessions for mothers, and developmental support for children.

Since launching Baby Power in 2012, Starfish has been able to serve over 700 mothers and their children. Early results have been overwhelmingly positive, and the program has moved from a philanthropically-funded service to a Medicaid-billable service.

“At Starfish, we believe that healthy relationships are the foundation for lifelong learning and success. And, no relationship is more important than the one between a mother and her baby. The Jewish Fund has been a huge champion and supporter of our work, recognizing that healthy child development is linked to our parents’ ability to cope with life stressors,” said Starfish CEO Ann Kalass. “We are very grateful for the Jewish Fund’s support that enabled us to test and refine the Baby Power model and provide this critical program to new mothers. We are now using our learnings from Baby Power to develop and launch a similar program for fathers.”

Our 2017 Great Hearts Gala supports key initiatives like: **Building Resilience:** Starfish is committed to building resilience in children who have experienced emotional and physical trauma. **Strengthening the Parent – Child Bond:** Programs like Dad Power bring together fathers in weekly sessions, providing a unique space for them to share their stressors and successes with one another. **Empowering Parents:** Starfish is committed to helping parents succeed with their children and with their own goals.

This year’s gala co-chairs, Nancy Grosfeld and Karen Schoenberg, invite you to attend the 2017 Great Hearts Gala. **Event tickets are \$225.00 and include complimentary valet parking, a cocktail reception, and plated dinner. Event sponsorships are still available. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit [www.starfishgala.org](http://www.starfishgala.org).**

**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 the complex challenges that children and their families may face in their everyday lives. In addition to early childhood services, we provide parenting programs, children’s mental health services, and youth services including an emergency shelter for teens and youth in crisis. [www.starfishfamilyservices.org](http://www.starfishfamilyservices.org).