
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STARFISH FAMILY SERVICES AWARDED \$76,000 GRANT BY DRESNER FOUNDATION TO LAUNCH SECOND PHASE OF BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

INKSTER, MICH. (Dec. 4, 2017) –Starfish Family Services has received a \$76,000 grant from the Dresner Foundation in support of launching Phase II of Starfish Family Services’ Building Resilient Communities (BRC) initiative. Starfish launched BRC in response to one of our most serious public health threats—childhood trauma, which can harm social-emotional development and eventually physical health.

Studies show 1 in 4 children experience trauma by preschool, but key adults in a child’s life can be trained to be a buffer against traumatic experiences. Thus, Phase I of BRC consisted of, embedding trained trauma therapists into preschool classrooms, screening all Starfish preschoolers for trauma, and implementing a ten-month Trauma Smart[®] training program for the first wave of 140 staff persons. Developed by experts at Crittenton Children’s Center, Trauma Smart[®], is an evidence-based intervention model, recognized, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, to be effective in helping children and the adults who care for them effectively address the negative impact of violence and trauma.

Starfish is very excited about Phase II of the initiative which will include: Trauma Smart training for an additional 45 staff, clients, and parents, and the translation of program materials into Spanish and Arabic for parent groups who are more comfortable learning in their native language. In addition, “train the trainer” education will enable Starfish to sustain the Trauma Smart[®] program internally in future years.

“Starfish is so grateful that the philanthropic community continues to support this work,” said Ann Kalass, CEO of Starfish Family Services. “The Dresner Foundation with its mission to support organizations that empower children and their families make them a natural fit for this initiative. Initial results of the Building Resilient Communities work have made such a positive impact on the families we serve. Our teachers feel more supported and engaged, our children display fewer incidents of disruptive behavior, and we are excited to offer some of the same training to the parents of our children so that these important learnings can also be utilized in the home.”

To learn more about Starfish’s Building Resilient Communities Initiative, please visit:
<https://www.starfishfamilyservices.org/what-we-do/brc/>

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 every-day lives. In addition to early childhood services, we provide parenting programs, and children’s mental health services. www.starfishfamilyservices.org.

About the Dresner Foundation The Dresner Foundation is dedicated to transforming lives in profoundly positive ways through grants focused on health, youth and family, and animal welfare. At the Dresner Foundation, we believe in working with organizations in our focus areas to create opportunity, have community impact and promote well-being. For more information, visit www.dresnerfoundation.org.