

Courage Against COVID



CONNECTION

CONTINUITY

COMMUNITY

CONFIDENCE

CONSTRUCTION

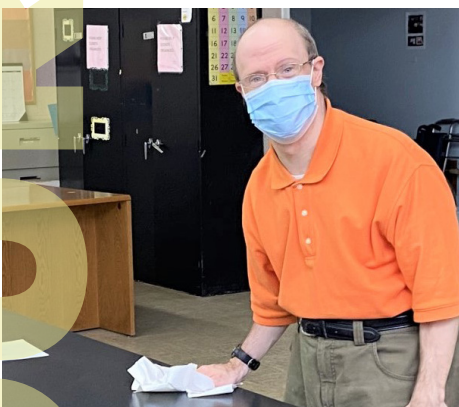


2019-2020 Annual Report

Providing services to people impacted with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families in Fairfield County since 1952

Early Childhood Intervention • Employment & Day Services • Residential • Recreation
Senior Program • Transportation • Family Support • Sports Buddies • High School Transition

COVID Challenges



WORDS FROM STAR BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is hard to look at the past fiscal year without recognizing the cloud of COVID-19 that defined the second half. However, with this crisis came opportunities. Program closures and quarantines resulted in Telehealth visits for families with infants and young children. We quickly pivoted to zoom programming (STARcasts) for our adult program participants that strengthened **connections** with our **community** of volunteers as teachers. Program participants inspire us with the proficiency of their newly-acquired technology skillset. Most important, during the days of closure, STAR proudly continued programming for the children, adult participants, residents and their families who rely upon us.

STAR employees displayed their unfaltering **commitment** and **courage** as they focused on the safety of each individual with their strict adherence to protocols. Program coordinators ensured the **continuity** of activities to engage clients and their families during isolation. In turn, our clients and their families displayed **confidence** by entrusting STAR with the responsibility to protect their well-being.

STAR took advantage of the closure of our center to proceed full steam with our extensive renovations of the entry way and redesign of exciting new program areas for Assistive Technology, Day Services, and the addition of a Senior Memory Care Center.

We finalized our plans for expansion of the STAR Rubino Family Center Early Childhood Intervention program to offer enhanced service options now from birth to age eight years of age.

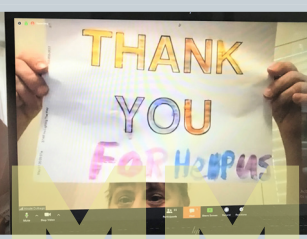
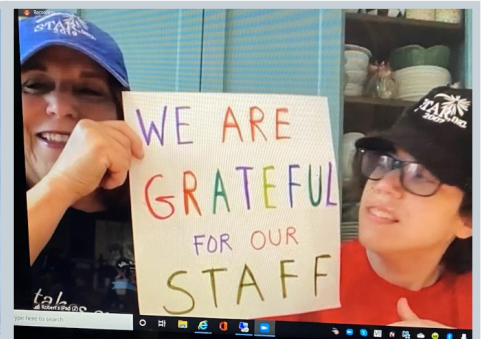
We know we are going to come out of this pandemic stronger, smarter, and continuing to reach for the stars in services for our neighbors with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We invite you to learn more about STAR by visiting www.starct.org and we thank you for your continued support.



Meghan Cioffi
President of Board



Katie Banzhaf
Executive Director



ANNOUNCING...

*STAR Rubino Family Center
Expanded Birth through Early Childhood Intervention*



- ★ Direct intervention with a coaching approach by licensed Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Therapists, Behavioral Therapists and Special Education Teachers
- ★ Approved provider accepting Medicaid, most medical insurances and private pay
- ★ Developmental evaluations and consultations
- ★ Transition to school support
- ★ Introducing early childhood group activities such as feeding, movement, play, and music groups (pending Covid-19 restrictions)
- ★ Additional services include behavioral supports, assistive technology, translation, and family supports as well as service options for 6 to 8 year olds

Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director

STAR Rubino Family Center

starrubino@starct.org | (203) 855-0634 | 120 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851

STAR MOURNS LOSS OF LINDA SNELL

...Director of Family Supports and Shining Light at STAR for 37 years, who passed away on June 15, 2020.

Linda began her career with STAR as a case manager in 1983, later became Residential Director of STAR Residential Services and eventually the Director of Family Support Services. She coordinated respite and directly supervised STAR's Recreation and Senior Services. She was always thoughtful, caring, and fought for families to have the best information and worked tirelessly as she coordinated the intake process for families of adults for many years.

"Linda's warmth, kindness and beautiful smile enriched the lives of so many inside and outside of STAR as she created a culture of acceptance and respect. She led by example, emboldening others to live a life of empathy, love and compassion," says co-worker and Director of the STAR Rubino Family Center, Barbara Fitzpatrick.

In her memory, the family has established the Linda Snell STAR Family Services Support Fund so important work can continue in her name.



STAR extends heartfelt thoughts to comfort all families who have lost a loved one during this past year and sending healing prayers to all who are facing illness.

Artwork by Trish

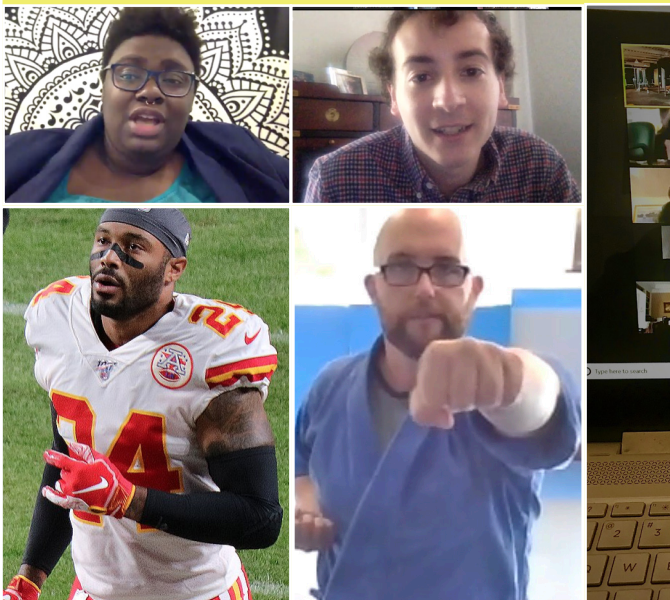
OH, THE PLACES WE GO AND...

STAR Day Services provided over 1000 community classes in the last year, enlisting partners in dance, theater, fitness, athletics, cooking, nutrition, art, music, games, trivia, Zumba, gardening, and so much more. Prior to the pandemic, STAR participants were engaged in over 714 classes in inclusive community settings. In late March, pandemic restrictions necessitated an immediate redirect on the zoom platform to ensure continuity of programming and to maintain important personal connections between clients, staff, families and peers in isolated times. STAR runs up to five zoom sessions daily for adults with disabilities, including additional zoom "chat n' chill" gatherings to reconnect with friends.



...AND THE JOBS

STAR's job placements, and the richness of our other community life skills, but actually engage adults in safe, happy, healthy and... the pandemic, STAR's state-leading program of supported employment successful placements. Over 65 individuals held paying jobs in the many return or plan to return from Covid shutdowns, some jobs held their return due to health concerns. Despite these hurdles, STAR learn more about hiring a STAR participant visit www.starct.org.



ZO
Group Messaging

Sign Up

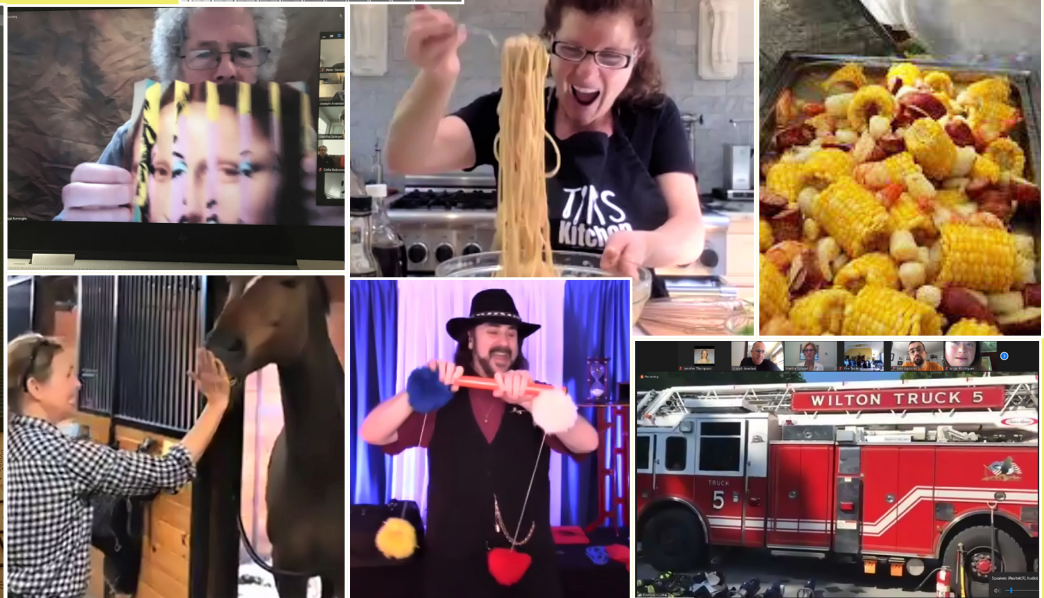
THE PEOPLE WE MEET ON ZOOM..

STAR hosted over 230 zoom classes since March with volunteers from the community willingly sharing their time and talents to improve the lives of STAR participants. Likewise, scores of STAR participants, staff and families made quantum leaps in their technology skillsets as they have become more proficient in using ipads, cellphones, laptops and in navigating the processes of signing on, muting and unmuting, screen sharing, chat, and more on zoom. STAR thanks the community for this unparalleled support.



JOBS WE DO!

Job-based opportunities for people impacted by I/DD, not only teach active lives that match their personal interests and goals. Prior to employment for people with I/DD was trending above average with the community, with eight being new placements or "first jobs." As have been lost permanently and some people have chosen to delay is committed to finding jobs for all participants who seek them. To



The STARS Align for Some Good News.

STAR received a \$10,000 grant from The Arc-US and Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to collaborate with community partners, Open Doors and Person-to-Person, to address local food insecurity and hunger. This new STAR initiative honors the work of Dr. Martin Luther King on the 25th Anniversary of the MLK Day of Service. Our project targeted teaching healthy cooking to people with disabilities, preparing and serving healthy meals to the Open Doors kitchen, and collecting non-perishable food items from over 2 dozen locations to distribute at the Person-to-Person food pantry. Through the efforts of our volunteers, staff and participating businesses, STAR donated over 1,400 pounds of nonperishable food items and served over 250 meals to people in need prior to a pandemic-related pause.



The last round of Governor's Non Profit Grant Program provided an additional \$1.3 million to continue the dramatic transformation of STAR Center that already included exterior stucco and insulation, new windows and doors, new HVAC, interior carpet and paint, sprinkler and computer system.

The current phase, scheduled for completion in summer 2021, includes converting garages and stock areas to create flexible program space for the growing variety of current and future programs and resources including an Assistive Technology Resource Center and Memory Care Center for Seniors.

In addition, STAR continues construction of a dramatic new entryway complete with an awning-covered handicap access ramp, two-story glass windscreen, attractive brick terracing, seasonally appealing landscaping, and an abundance of exterior accent and safety lighting. Even before its completion, and especially during the pandemic, the building project inspires all to see the bright future for STAR as we prepare for generations to come.



Led by Old Greenwich resident, Tony Williams, and Wilton cardiologist, Tom Nero, a group of Fairfield County residents planned the challenge of a lifetime that raised over \$126,000 for STAR and close to \$100,000 for the David Nott Foundation in the UK. The challenge was to cycle Route 20, the longest continuous road in the United States, stretching from Newport, OR to Boston, MA. Due to state-by-state quarantines that would prevent them from completing the route, they pivoted to "Circum-Cycle" Italy. Starting in Milan, they saddled up on Sept. 1 on a month-long ride that covered over 2,000 miles with around 100,000 feet of ascent. Despite a series of hurdles and injuries, we thank them for their perseverance and the significant impact they make during this time of pandemic.

Our Mission **STAR, Inc., Lighting the Way** is a not-for-profit organization serving individuals of all ages who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), as well as providing support services to their families. We create opportunities for individuals to live full lives with independence, freedom of choice, and personal growth by providing support, services, and advocacy. We inform and encourage the community to recognize and appreciate the value of all individuals.



182 Wolfpit Ave., Norwalk, CT 06851 | 203.846.9581 | www.starct.org



STAR's Annual Gala in November 2019 raised over \$390,000 for people with I/DD. More than three hundred guests attended the event held at Woodway Country Club in Darien. Harnessing the energy of returning professional auctioneer C. K. Swett, generous donors hit a new record in support of the fund-a-need paddle raise. Unfortunately, STAR has cancelled this biggest fundraiser of each year for November 2020 due to the pandemic.

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- Joe Muro II**
- Pat O'Connor**
- Cathleen Piscitell**
- Lauryl Schembri**
- Charlie Sherman**

KEY STAFF MEMBERS

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- Lynda Swift**
Director of Human Resources
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STAR's 15th Annual Walk, Run & Roll did a quick change of course from Sherwood Island in Westport to a virtual format. The traditional one day peer-to-peer fundraiser engaged hundreds of participants and dozens of volunteers and local celebrities who hosted a series of special zoom segments. Despite many hurdles, over \$100,000 for STAR was raised during the extended, month-long event. STAR is thankful to all who participated, especially the top fundraising teams: Team Ariel, Team Wolf, Laura's STARS, and Team Dynamic Athletics.



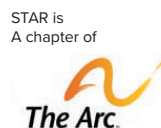
STAR was proud to be selected as one of the local organizations honored at this year's Mayor's Ball hosted by Mayor Harry Rilling and his lovely wife Lucia. The masquerade ball was held January 2020 at the Italian Center in Stamford. STAR parent Laurie Agostino, joined by her husband Charlie and famous son DJ Joe, shared her family's uplifting story with the enthusiastic crowd.

DJ Joe, who received a grant from the State of CT Dept. of Developmental Services to launch his own DJ business, "Shared the love" with a series of free, Saturday night virtual dance parties. The Facebook live events connected people through music during the pandemic. Hundreds of people from across the globe "Got Down with DJ Joe."

FOLLOW US ON:



STAR is especially thankful for our partnership and support from:



STAR is grateful to all of our generous corporate, foundation, and individual donors throughout the year. We appreciate the families and friends who choose to make STAR the beneficiary of special gifts in memory or in honorarium, especially those who have included STAR in their estate planning and wills as new members of our STAR Foundation Legacy Society.

Photo credits: Miggs Burroughs, Katie Banzhaf, Jennifer Thompson | Peter Saverine, Editorial Director
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