Our Eighth Season Adds New Programs!
An update from our Executive Director, Emily Golinsky

For eight summers Camp Starfish has grown, developed and changed the lives of children by following our motto: at Starfish, campers and staff alike come to “learn, grow, and have fun.” Every summer Starfish staff help children to develop stronger social skills, to learn and then practice using the Starfish tools, to ask for help and to build coping skills.

We have also been fortunate every summer to have an increasing number of returning campers who enjoy the benefits of spending eighteen days at camp, participating in activities and receiving unparalleled support and structure. In response to this growing population of older campers, we implemented three new programs during the summer of 2007: the Older Camper Program, L.e.a.d.e.r.s., and S.T.A.R Corps.

Designed for our 13-15 year olds, the Older Camper Program provides new, unique and challenging activities such as raft building, outdoor skills, and more comprehensive art, music and drama. Additionally, the ability to offer teens more choice and responsibility within the activity structure is a significant part of this enhanced programming.

L.e.a.d.e.r.s. is a leaders-in-training program that was developed to provide Starfish teens ages 14-15 with new activities focusing on self and peer leadership, teambuilding, communication and group dynamics. Teens act as “big brothers and sisters” to younger campers, give input on their daily program choices, and lead camp Gatherings each session. L.e.a.d.e.r.s. also earn privileges by exemplifying the skills of Leadership, Enthusiasm, Achievement, Determination, Enrichment, Responsibility and Service.

S.T.A.R. Corps is our Staff Training and Readiness program designed for 16-17 year old Apprentices who are looking to develop further leadership, childcare, work and life skills. Supported by a staff mentor, the Apprentices live in camper cabins where they assist the bunk staff while gaining valuable experience. In addition, the whole Corps meets up daily to experience training, skill-building or service-work sessions. As part of their service project for camp, the 2007 STAR Corps Apprentices designed and created beautiful Starfish-themed picnic tables for the waterfront area. By their participation in the program, many of these teens are hoping to gain the skills needed to work at camp as Junior Counselors in future summers.

The introduction of all three of these programs this past summer was a rousing success. They have added wonderfully to the core camper program that has been carefully developed and crafted through eight summers. Sponsoring a camper to attend any of these programs is a life-changing gift, and I sincerely thank you for your support of Camp Starfish children and teens. I also encourage you to learn more about each of these dynamic program offerings online at www.campstarfish.org or by visiting us this summer at camp to see our kids, staff and mission in action!

Smiles from the Campfire,

Emily Golinsky
Executive Director
If you get a chance to walk by the Starfish waterfront during the summer, you’ll see right away why it’s one of our campers’ and counselors’ favorite places on camp. During free-play times, campers and their staff buddies can go swimming, kayaking, canoeing, and tubing, build sandcastles, or just play on the beach. In addition, each camper receives a daily one-to-one swim lesson from our trained, lifeguard-certified waterfront staff.

For many children who struggle with social skills, learning challenges and emotional or behavioral needs, all too often in their daily lives they hear “you can’t.” But at the Starfish waterfront, staff consistently help children see that they can. They can get in the water even though it’s a little scary. They can put their head underwater for the first time. And they can pass a swim test and achieve things they never thought possible. The bond between swim counselors and their campers is one of the most unique relationships that develops for children at Starfish each summer. Many campers who returned for their eighth summer of camp this year still remembered the swim counselor they had during their first year at camp!

Despite the wonderful excitement of the waterfront, every summer there are a few campers who, to say the least, do not find this area to be amongst their favorite places at camp. Those campers who arrive at Starfish afraid of the water would rather be anywhere else during swim time – even at cabin cleanup! One of these campers, Jake*, is a 10-year-old who has been coming to Starfish for the past three summers. Staff at Starfish always encourage campers to try new things and participate in activities at camp, however campers are never forced to go into the water. So, for the past two summers, Jake and his swim counselor spent most of their time together at the edge of the water and getting in the very shallow water for basic skills. This summer, Jake accomplished amazing feat while working with his swim counselor – she helped him learn the skills to pass a swim test and even to jump into the deep end!

The success of our campers is always celebrated at Starfish, and the waterfront is no exception. After Jake accomplished his deep end dip, all the campers and staff at the waterfront, in grand Starfish tradition, stopped what they were doing to sing him a congratulatory song. Later, at Evening Gathering before dinner, Jake heard his name and swim test level announced by the waterfront director in front of the whole camp. A month later, when asked what his favorite parts of the summer were, Jake still says going swimming. And, as his mom says, “that’s huge!”

Starfish Welcomes New Development Team

Starfish is pleased to welcome two wonderful and experienced professionals to our Year-Round staff team. Karen Solomon, Director of Development, comes to Starfish from Rhode Island, where she has lived for thirty years. Having spent the past twenty years honing her skills in the development field, Karen has held chief development posts for both start-up and well established non-profits, and has extensive experience working with disadvantaged youth. Anne Beardsley, Development Manager, also brings to Starfish several decades of experience in the non-profit arena. Anne believes strongly in helping children get a foothold in life and a brighter outlook for the future. Born and raised in Denmark, she has traveled and worked in many European countries, the Far and Middle East and India, and has a passion for exploring unfamiliar cultures. Karen (karen@campstarfish.org) and Anne (anneb@campstarfish.org) both look forward to meeting the many friends of Starfish, and welcome you to stop by the office to visit, call or email anytime.

Our Mission: Camp Starfish fosters the success and growth of children with emotional, learning and behavioral needs. Our campers, staff and Board Members are selling Raffle Tickets to raise needed Campership dollars.

Congratulations to outstanding summer staff members David Mahnken, Camper Services Director & Katie Bunten-Wren, Program Director, on achieving their 5-year Employee Milestone Awards. Their dedication to the Camp Starfish mission is greatly appreciated!

Starfish Has New Winter Office

We’ve moved! Our new year-round base of operations is easily accessible from 3 major highways (I-95, Rt. 2, and the Mass Pike) as well as public transportation. It also allows us the space and technology to better provide services to campers and their caretakers in the off-season. We’ve even set up a “camper corner” for kids to relax while parents get camp information and work with our staff to complete paperwork. Please visit or call our new number to say “hi” anytime!

Our www.campstarfish.org “virtual home” and all staff email addresses have remained the same.

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Camper Raffle 2007

Starfish campers, staff and Board Members are selling Raffle Tickets to raise needed Campership dollars. Prizes include 2 Floor Seats to a Celtics Game, a $250 cash prize, gift certificates to top restaurants, a two-night hotel stay anywhere in the Continental U.S., and more! Tickets are $10 each or 3 for $25. These tickets make great last-minute holiday gifts!

If you would like to purchase raffle tickets, please call our office at 781-890-STAR or email emily@campstarfish.org. Thanks and Good luck!
Thank You to our Shining Stars!

Camp Starfish is tremendously grateful to so many individuals, foundations and corporations for their generous support of our program. Our valued supporters between October 21, 2006 and October 21, 2007 include:

- Elva & Israel Abrams
- Helen Adrienne
- Ashley & Philip Allen
- Anonymous (1)
- Aileen Aponte
- Joe & Marion Armstrong
- Eve & Ron Aseltine, Jr.
- Joshua Berlin
- Deb Berman
- Paula Berman
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IN MEMORY OF:

- Esther Baron
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- Trisha Flaherty
- Stanley Gladstein
- Hilda Halpern
- Elizabeth Hall Young
- Ruth Harelick
- Robert Hollander
- Stan Katz
- Kent P. Leland
- Lillian Marker
- David Oshin
- Honey Siegel
- Anne Themeling
- Martin Zeig

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- Jillian Davis
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- The Marriage of Maura FitzGerald & Allen Carney
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- Paul Savage
- Elinor Swinbeck
- The 2007 Summer Staff
- Jackie Weinstein
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- The marriage of Jon & Lisa Waltuch-Zeitlin
- The Anniversary of Jackie & Alan Weinstein
- The directors, counselors & staff members, both past & present, who have worked with Chris Neumann

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We sincerely apologize for any error or omission.
Dear Friend of Camp Starfish,

At this time of year, it seems natural to reflect on the many things for which we are thankful. Amongst many other things, I am very thankful that through the experience of camp, Starfish is able to positively touch so many children and play a vital role in the lives of so many families.

Thanks once again to the generous support of our donors, the incredible talent of our staff, and the open-minded adventurousness of our campers, Starfish has now completed an outstanding eighth season of camp. It’s a wonderful feeling to be able to say each year that this was our “best summer ever!” and it is once again true this year. New programs mixed with traditional Starfish activities, a wonderful staff, and of course, amazing campers made visiting camp an exciting and educational experience.

Over the years I have heard many expressions of appreciation for the work that Starfish is doing to help change the lives and better the futures of the youth of Greater Boston, Massachusetts, and now all of New England. As with past summers, feedback we receive highlights glowing stories of success, renewed interest in school, expanded abilities and improved adjustment to new experiences. It is with great pleasure that I share with you now one such letter, written by the parent of a third-year camper at Starfish:

“I would like to thank you all for the work you have done for my daughter. From birth, my daughter was traumatized to the point of hospitalization. We went to counseling for two years, as well as other services, in order to address some of her needs. By the time I found Camp Starfish I had almost given up hope. I didn’t know how she would overcome some of her early life. I took a chance in sending my daughter to Camp Starfish. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

One month later I came to pick up my daughter and was so amazed by the transformation and progress she had made. She was more independent. She was thinking more clearly. She was taking responsibility for herself. She learned to respect others. She had a love of nature, which in turn increased her love for other people. From one happy parent I say thank you to Camp Starfish for its dedication, vision and love for children.”

For the eighth year in a row, Starfish has helped children who cannot succeed at other camps to experience the joys of success, friendship, learning and fun in a safe and supportive environment. And, equally importantly, Starfish has given hundreds of children over the years the skills and confidence to improve their lives year-round at home and at school. Parents, guardians, and professionals involved with our campers express their thanks for these life-changing gifts in many ways, including one parent who said: “I am convinced that Camp Starfish is impacting the lives and destinies of young people who will travel the world and affect generations of others to come.”

We continue to grow, build, expand and reach out to more children in need of the special supportive environment that has been created at Starfish. The opportunities available at Starfish exist thanks to you, our generous friends and supporters. One camper’s Mom recently pointed out to me that “one should never underestimate the value of positively impacting a child’s life.” Please help Starfish impact the lives of children in need by giving as generously as possible. On behalf of the entire Starfish community, thank you for your compassion and support.

Sincerely,

Ned Rimer
President of the Board of Directors