Two Grants Help Fund New Sensory Gym

With generous funding from both the Marigold Charitable Trust and the New England chapter of Turnaround Management Association, our campers enjoyed a great new space this summer: the Activate! Sensory Gym. Housed in what used to be our Learning Center (also known as the “LC” by campers and “the chapel” by our rental groups), Activate! has swings, a traversing wall, a ball/foam pit, mini-trampolines, medicine balls and weights, climbing ropes, and more! A giant A-frame with customizable connectors along its top allows for an ever-changing array of wobble bridges, rotational swings, gymnastics rings and ladders to challenge campers of all ages and ability levels.

Activate! quickly became a favorite area on camp. Campers came to know it as a place to participate in organized physical activities such as yoga, jumpercize and tumbling, and also as a good place to let out excess energy when they were feeling overstimulated. Counselors appreciated having a place designed so intentionally, yet also so flexibly. “I had one younger camper who really got to the ball pit and think for a while,” shared a Fish Village counselor. “At some point, his burnout would bounce on the trampoline or hang upside down on the rings.”

“We want the spaces at Starfish to feel fun, friendly, investigative, creative, and welcoming. So we gave the space a friendly name and we call it a gym,” says Assistant Director Jamie Ingram, who in addition to her role at Starfish, provides children with school-based physical therapy. “But the ideas behind its creation and use came from research into best practices of trauma-informed sensory-integration therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Often, our Starfish campers have these things integrated into their school and home routines, so it’s great to be able to continue that growth and provide a familiar outlet while they’re at camp.”

Everything in Activate! has been designed for installation at the start of the summer and a leave-no-trace takedown in August, so the rustic space remains completely available for group use. The Learning Center activity moved to its new home, one of two cabins built in 2016. The bright, cherry space got high marks from campers and staff even though it is smaller than the old location. “We got two awesome new spaces. You don’t need a whole gym to build a model volcano,” explained one returning teen when asked about the change.

Comedy Night Fundraiser is Major Success!

The first Comedy Night Fundraiser for Starfish, generously organized and hosted by Cara & Jena Falconi, raised $19,283! Cara, a member of the Starfish Board of Directors, and Jena are the parents of a long-time Starfish camper. “Starfish has had a tremendous impact on our family,” said Cara. “We wanted to do something to give back.”

Over 75 tickets were purchased for the event, which took place at China Sky in Winchester, MA and included delicious appetizers and dinner. Among items in the Silent Auction were an Italian dinner with wine basket, an original art piece by Kate Johnson, a sensory strategies basket, and a 31 basket with Jamberry and a KEEP bracelet. The Live Auction saw bidders for Red Sox tickets, a round of golf at Brookline Country Club and Disney Park Hopper passes, along with the most popular item of the night: Send a Child to Camp, which opened with a $5,000 donation! Everyone who bid on this item was a winner, with more than two full camperships being crowd-raised in less than 5 minutes!

Comedian Paul D'Angelo and talented voice performer Joey Voices provided the entertainment. Following the successful evening, Cara and Jena have graciously offered to host a 2nd Comedy Night for Starfish in 2017! Comedy Night 2016 was a wonderful night supporting our campers, and, we can’t wait for another round of laughs, food, friends and fundraising! Tickets for Comedy Night 2017 will be available online at the Starfish website in early spring.
New Crescent Lodge Opens in 2017; Offers Rentals, New Programs

We're excited to announce that our first fully-winterized building at camp will be completed this spring!

Crescent Lodge is the result of a strategic plan to increase use of our 43-acre property year-round. The site currently has plenty of wooden cabins and uninsulated buildings, as well as a few “three season structures,” but once the water gets turned off in late October, use of the camp has traditionally been shut down until April, when the ground thaws again. The new building will expand earning income opportunities in the colder months, helping to ensure long-term financial stability for the organization. Several generous donors, who requested anonymity, provided the funding for the creation of a year-round building.

The space was designed in-house by Emily Golinsky and long-time Starfish friend, architect and general contractor Chris Mawhinney, who is responsible for the beautiful improvements, new cabins, and site work done since we permanently acquired the property in 2008. The new Crescent Lodge will offer 3600 sq. ft of housing, meeting space and dining area, including a full commercial kitchen. An additional 1800-sq. ft. fully heated basement will provide both indoor recreation space in the winter and act as a designated emergency shelter in the summer.

Because of its 40-bed capacity with dormitory-style bunkrooms, hallway lighting, and indoor bathrooms, the Lodge is distinctively suited to host a series of shorter specialty camps which will complement our current programs. The Cove program will offer a first-time camp experience to small groups of 6-9 year olds, while our new Sibling Camp will enable brothers and sisters who do not need a 1:1 staff-to-camper ratio to make friends with other children who also have relatives at Starfish. Our new 4-week TIDES program, focusing on transitional independence skills for older teens and young adults, will also utilize the Lodge, especially since TIDES participants will be planning, shopping for, preparing and cooking their own meals! Crescent Beach will be used for swimming and boating with these programs, and we will also continue to donate its use as the daily swim location for the Ridge camp, which has no lake or pool.

In the off-season, the Lodge will be home to our year-round Weekenders respite program, as well as be available as a retreat rental for non-profits, school groups, family reunions, and similar short-term events. The new Lodge is adjacent to Crescent Beach for water and beach activities, features its own entry from East Monomonic Rd., a full parking lot, athletic field area, covered outdoor spaces for activities, and a beautiful deck & fire circle which overlooks the lake. We are currently fielding rental inquiries, so if you know anyone who is looking for a great space, please send them our way!

Milestones

Alisha Pollastri, Kevin Sullivan Jr. Retire from Board of Directors

Our Board celebrated two long-term members this year: Kevin Sullivan, Jr. and Alisha Pollastri, Ph.D. Kevin, an experienced real estate lawyer, spearheaded the purchase of our permanent camp home in Rindge, then managed our relationship with Christ Church (who owned the camp) over the following years. As the longest-serving Board member, Kevin also served as a source of deep institutional knowledge. Alisha also joined the board in 2009, where she quickly became known as an outstanding advocate for our campers, staff, and families. Alisha's clinical, research, and evaluation work in psychology focuses on the population Starfish serves, and Alisha provided expertise to our year-round and summer staff on topics varying from how we help campers achieve their goals to how we train staff to evaluate camper success. She spoke annually at staff training, teaching about brain science, the importance of self-care, and specific behavior management techniques that expanded staff's repertoire of proactive response to behavior. Both Alisha and Kevin intend to remain involved with Starfish in the future, but will definitely be missed at meetings of this team of dedicated leaders!

5-Year Awards:
Sue Riley & Erin Mawhinney

Affectionately known around camp as “Nurse Sue,” our Director of Health Services, Sue Riley, R.N., has over 35 years of pediatric nursing experience. She’s been at the helm of Starfish’s Healthy House team for 5 years, joining us as a staff nurse in 2012 and quickly improving Healthy House in numerous ways, including the creation of a guidance manual for future health providers at camp!

The mom of a Starfish camper! S.T.A.R. Corps alum (and four other grown sons!), Sue works full time as a School Nurse in MA and for the Public Health Department in her town as well. Starfish is lucky to have such a talented, caring and dedicated individual overseeing Healthy House and taking great care of our campers and staff!

After starting at Starfish as a Day Camp Assistant, Erin joined the staff team in 2012, spending two summers as a Counselor at Day Camp, becoming a Day Camp Administrator in 2014. In 2015 she moved to overnight camp and Fish Village as an Administrator. She was Co-Director of Fish in 2016. Erin is also a Groups Ambassador for fall retreats and volunteers to staff our year-round Weekenders respite program. She graduates this winter with degrees in Special Education and English. Erin says, "I've worked at Starfish for so long because it's like a second home to me. At Starfish there's so many people with the same objective as you - to work with kids and try to make a difference. I've never seen such a strong community like that anywhere else. It's nice to return to a safe and happy place after year." Erin will be back on the senior summer leadership team in 2017 as our Director of Camper Success.
Thank You to our Shining Stars!

Camp Starfish is tremendously grateful to our many friends for their generous sponsorship between Oct. 31, 2015 & 2016.

Anonymous (3)  
Brian Anderson  
In Memory of Deb Berman  
Marion & Joseph Armstrong  
Josh Belfer  
Deb Berman  
In Honor of Starfish Staff  
Brad & Angel Santos Burres  
Stephen & Jocelynne Caplow  
Lynne Castronovo  
Kay Charron & Arlene Averill  
Alexander Chu  
Mindy & Michael Celona  
Jill & Josh Connell  
In Honor of Emily Golinsky  
Jim & Kathy Deady  
In Memory of Kevin L. Sullivan Sr.  
Peter & Betsy Dempsey  
Diane DeLaney  
Bruce & Kristen Dillaire  
Joe DiZello  
Billy & Lindsay Donovan  
Thomas Downey  
Michael & Susan Duffy  
David & Rae DuVernois  
John & Anne Endries  
In Honor of Carrie Endries  
Carrie Endries & Paul Morgan  
Dr. Ann Evans  
Cara & Jena Falconi  
In Honor of Starfish Year Round Staff  
Robert & Constance Falconi  
In Honor of Ian Falconi  
Craig & Kaitly Felton  
Janice & Scott Fitzgerald  
Joseph & Linda Francis  
In Memory of John L. Francis  
In Memory of Mr. Mackey  
Andrea Fox  
Joel Giffin  
In Honor of my loving Nonna & Papa  
Shari & Richard Gelber  
Christina Gere  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Gigliotti  
Herb & Doris Golinsky  
Emily Golinsky & Michelle Cyr  
Jay Gordon  
Evelyn & Paul Graham  
Paula Hallarman  
Michelle Hankins  
Mitch & Janice Hobish  
Alison & Heath Huffman  
In Honor of Michael Huffman  
Thomas & Amy Immoh  
Janice Ignatow  
Milos & Erin Janicek  
Claire & Clarence Kay  
In Honor of Emily Golinsky  
Judith Kenny  
Kelly Lemire  
Emily Lord  
John & Mary Lord  
Elaine Maerz  
In Honor of Pete Maerz  
Brian & Karen Mariscal  
David & Barb Markowitz  
In Honor of Heather Markowitz  
Gigi Manasse & Lisa Pola  
Jacki & David Mayall  
Fred & Polly Melvin  
Terri & Dr. Mike Memers  
In Honor of Kellene Rose  
Michael & Dawn McGee  
Michael & Betsy McLaughlin  
John McNamara  
Mary Beth McNamara  
Pilgrim Morgan  
In Honor of Carrie Endries  
Jim & Ginny Neumann  
In Honor of amazing starfish staff  
John & Ellen Nylis  
Maureen Oates  
Susan Okie Bush  
Matthew Pasko  
Carole & R. Wayne Parrish  
Janet & John Patton  
Anne Peretz  
Michael & Trina Pisko  
Alisha & Michael Pollastr  
Stephen Riddin  
Katy & Mike Riddle  
In Honor of Starfish Staff  
In Honor of Emily’s 10 Year Anniversary  
Beverly Rimer  
Cal & Nan Sholl  
Trina Rocha  
In Honor of Carrie Endries  
Alan & Elisabeth Kay Rocklin  
Anthony & Vera Sarantakis  
Michael Ross & Brenda Stevens-Ross  
Margaret M. Schmidt & Kenneth Danila  
Carrie Simmons  
Benjamin Smith & Judith Pinsker  
Jennifer & Val Smithwood-Green  
Iris & Eric Spungin  
Helen Adrienne & Mark Spurr  
In Honor of Deb Berman  
Sondi Stanton  
Bill & Janice Stanwood  
Candace Sturtevant  
Deana & Jeff Stephens  
Martha & Mark Stewert  
David Stolow  
Kathleen Sullivan  
In Memory of Kevin J. Sullivan Sr.  
Iran & Cheryl Sullivan  
Douglas Sutherland & Kate Johnson  
Celia Taule  
Steven & Clair Tunick  
In Memory of Dr. Robert Aronoff  
Jonathan & Jennifer Wall  
In Honor of Zach’s Bunk & Counselors  
Jane Williams  
Sally Winter  
Diane & Paul Vieira  
In Honor of John Farrell & Beth Armer  

Giving Tuesday 2015  
Anonymous (multiple)  
Deb Berman  
Macy, Reese & Jaden Cohn  
The Dean Family  
Kathy John  
Jayne Ellis  
The Easton Family  
Jill & Toly Kanner  
Liz Kay & Alan Rocklin  
Beth Montplaisir & Ryan McCollum  
Brooke Rosenberg  
Adam & Aimee Sparks  
Stefanie  
The Tanners  

Comedy Night 2016  
Michael & Debra Aylward  
Linda Bartolli  
Robert Bickford  
Canelina Borinet  
Janet & Reid Boswell  

Special thanks to these foundations & corporations for the outstanding support provided:

Christensen-Dunn Early Foundations Fund  
Constant Contact Cares4Kids Program  
CBImentum Community Fund  
B.R. Alexander & Co.  
The GIFT Foundation  
In Honor of John Farrell  
J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation  
Ridge Women’s Club  
Stanton & Company  
In Honor of Carrie Endries  
In Honor of Emily’s 10 Year Anniversary  

Thank You to our friends at WeValley who donated time, equipment & services to make sure that Starfish had access to internet in camp, Ridge NH.

Thank You to our sponsors!

Walmart, Rindge, NH  
Market Basket, Rindge, NH  
Central Supermarket, Winchendon, MA  
Buffalo Wild Wings, Leominster, MA  
Hometown Diners, Rindge, NH  
Belletes, Jaffrey, NH  
Market Basket, Leominster MA  

And the 520+ Individuals who Adopted Ducks!

While we wish we had space to list everyone, please know how thankful we are for each of you! You Adopted 3,327 Ducks:  
265 Solos (1 Duck)  
82 Quack Packs (4 Ducks)  
60 Bunches (10 Ducks)  
19 Flocks (22 Ducks)  
38 Leaders Of The Flocks (40 Ducks)  
49 Aorted Combos (Lotsa Ducks)

We are proud to collaborate with 100+ agencies, schools & programs:

- Advanced Behavioral Health
- Adoptive Families for Children MASS
- Arbor Counseling
- Alpha Omega Sorority @ UMass
- Jason Hayes Foundation
- The Butler School District
- Bay State Community Services, Inc.
- Berkshire Children & Families
- Central MA Alumnae Chapter, Sigma Delta Tau
- Children and Families
- Community Bridges
- Counseling Services of Berkshire County
- Conway School District
- Frank Matt Foundation
- Doug Flute Jr. Foundation for Autism
- Gardner Public Schools
- Gateway Community Services
- Hampton & Hockessin School Districts
- Hamden-Willbraham RSD
- MA Department of Mental Health
- MA Department of Children & Families
- Beacon Hill Circle For Charity
- C.J. Mawhinney Construction Co.
- Dallman-Cousons Giving Fund
- Manifold Charitable Trust
- Minnie Parker Charitable Trust
- Novack Family Foundation
- NH USDA Summer Food Program
- Constance O. Putnam Foundation
- Timothy Sabol Memorial Fund

In Memory of Timothy Sabol

HMEA/Autism Resource Center of Central MA
- Harry Alan Gregg Foundation
- The Home for Little Wanderers
- The Institute of Professional Practice, Inc.
- Judge Baker Children's Center/Manchester School
- Justice Institute/Community Care
- Laconia Police Relief Association
- Lahey Health Services
- Lakes Region Community Services Council
- LUK, Inc.
- Monadnock Developmental Services
- Moore Center Services, Inc.
- One Can Help
- One Sky Community Services
- Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union
- Riverside Community Care
- ServiceNet, Inc.
- State of New Hampshire
- Towns of Westminster, Lincoln & Winchester, MA
- Wayside Youth & Family Support Network
- Wildflower Camp Foundation
- Willpower Foundation

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. We sincerely apologize for any error or omission.
From our Board President: "Thank You!"

In just a few weeks we will turn the calendar to the fresh pages of 2017! As the holidays and new year draw closer, I hope that you have the opportunity to reflect on good memories, of time with family and friends, and of plans for the future. That’s what we’ve been doing at Starfish - reflecting on our most recent successful and growth-filled summer of 2016 and getting ready for our upcoming 18th summer! I’m thrilled to report that by all estimates, it looks like it will be another fun-filled year for kids at Starfish.

It gives me immense pride to chair our Board of Directors and be a part of such an engaging and forward-thinking organization. Nowhere is that passion and strength more evident than in our summer staff team, made up of over 100 young professionals and leaders. While visiting camp this summer, I spent time talking with staff about their roles at camp and what drew them to being part of Starfish. Many said they were there to make a difference. Certainly several of them were at camp getting experience for their future and learning about the joys and challenges that come with caring for children with serious emotional, behavioral, social and learning difficulties.

And all of them expressed their intention to help campers experience the summer of a lifetime and to teach campers that they are more than the sum total of their abilities or disabilities. This is a message our staff hear often during training: our campers have names, not labels. They are individuals with strengths, hopes, dreams and a bright future. It is the job of our staff team to cultivate, nurture and grow each child’s unique gifts, while offering them a safety net as they take risks, stumble through attempts at friendships and try new things.

Starfish is lucky to count on so many friends and supporters like you. You might not be living in a cabin of kids or lifeguarding on Lake Monomonac all summer, but you are just as crucial a part of our team! Everyone who fundraises, joins a volunteer work day at camp, refers campers, gives their time, donates, and mentions Starfish as a charity worthy of attention, helps us provide a safe place for children that makes a difference. You help us make a difference. And we are truly grateful for your kindness, caring, and generosity. Thank you!

Carrie Endries, Ph.D.
President, Board of Directors

The Faces of Starfish
Your support helps these and all of our campers access the life-changing support of Starfish. Thank you!

Interns, Fellows & Certifications, Oh My!

According to human resource and recruiting companies, the interpersonal and leadership “soft skills” like those learned during a summer on staff at Starfish are as prized by future employers as GPAs and extracurricular activities. Our alumni go on to lead their fields and continue to change lives long after they leave camp. And, in addition to all they do for children while on our team, summer staff members become certified as Level I Care Specialists and amass 10x more hands-on real work experience than their peers do in one summer!

Do you know someone who is looking for a future in education, special ed, social work, psychology, therapeutic rec, behavior analysis, or any one of 100+ related fields? If so, they might be interested to know that in addition to hiring great counselors who just want to work at camp, Starfish also has an organized Internship program which can result in school credit for their summer on our team. And, for those interested in committing to a longer Starfish experience, we also now offer a 15-month Fellowship for school credit, consisting of a first summer on the team, the completion of a funded project during the school year with presentation at a Fellows Conference in the spring, then a second summer at Starfish in a leadership role.

Applications can be completed online at our website, www.campstarfish.org/staff. Inquiries should be directed to our Camp Director, Doug (doug@campstarfish.org). And, to learn more about the amazing opportunities offered, check out our Summer@Starfish guide online: http://tinyurl.com/starfishsummer.