

Celebrating 67 years of Excellence
1952 – 2019
A Timeline for
STAR Inc., Star Residential Services and The STAR Foundation, Inc.
Lighting the Way...

- 1952 STAR is incorporated to meet the needs of families with children with mental retardation.
- First program of outreach begins.
- 1953 Certification from ARC/US (formerly the National Association of Retarded Children - NARC) is obtained.
- 1954 First grant from the Department of Mental Retardation to hire a part-time social worker is secured.
- 1957 The first social management program for children with mental retardation begins.
- 1960 STAR's Pre-School program opens under the direction of June Mather.
- 1962 Karen Kagey is hired as the first Executive Director for STAR.
- First lease is signed for space at the old Save the Children federation building on Dry Hill Road, Norwalk.
- 1967 STAR decided to purchase property and build a facility that would house all of its various services under one roof.
- 1970 The land located at 182 Wolfpit Avenue is purchased and a fund drive to raise \$450,000 needed to match a HUD grant to build a building begins.
- 1972 IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) is passed in Congress
- 1973 STAR Center, a contemporary complex designed to house all STAR's programs is dedicated and space is leased to the Norwalk and Wilton United Ways and the Greater Norwalk Community Council.
- The first disability civil rights law in the United States, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is passed into law.
- 1974 The first Ann & Angie Rubino Concert/fundraiser is held.
- 1978 Arc/CT files a lawsuit calling for the closure of Mansfield Training School, a state operated institution
- 1979 Founders' Cottage, STAR's first residence for four individuals is opened in Norwalk.
- 1982 Stoler House in Norwalk opens as a home for six individuals and Ted Bergeron becomes the second Executive Director of STAR.

- 1983 STAR's Infant & Child Development Services relocates to Saint Mark's Episcopal Church in New Canaan in order to give children with special needs the opportunity to play and grow with their non-disabled peers in the New Canaan Community YMCA day care program.
- Kagey House in Westport opens to six women.
- Shivers House in Norwalk opens as the first co-ed home for six residents.
- Mansfield Training School closes as the last resident is moved into the community.
- First Director of Employment Services is hired to focus on employment for individuals with disabilities.
- 1984 Norwest and Horizons Condominiums in Norwalk are purchased and become homes to 13 individuals.
- STAR develops its first supported employment enclave at Wonder Corporation and begins a major expansion toward development of new strategies for individuals to gain access to individual competitive employment.
- TEC (Training and Employment Co-Op) is opened in South Norwalk as a hub for job placement and supported employment.
- 1985 STAR spins off Star Residential Services, Inc. as a separate corporation. Perii Katz becomes the Executive Director of Star Residential Services. Katie Banzhaf becomes the Executive Director of STAR, Inc.
- 1986 STAR initiates a Pension Plan for fulltime employees.
- 1987 Star Residential Services, Inc. opens Ryan House in Norwalk providing an accessible home to four elderly residents.
- STAR expands employment services including enclaves and competitive employment.
- 1988 Star Residential Services, Inc. opens O'Brien House in Weston.
- 1989 STAR opens its first Community Experience Program providing alternatives to employment to meet the needs of individuals who require or prefer less than a full-time job but who also require training and supervision in order to participate in non-work-related activities.
- STAR opens the Senior Services Program in conjunction with the Norwalk Senior Center enabling participants to interact with others who share similar interests.
- STAR's Infant and Child Development Program is renamed The Rubin Center for Infant and Child Development in recognition of over 15 years of dedication and tireless efforts by Angie and Ann Rubino in running benefit concerts and dinner dances for STAR.
- The American's with Disabilities Acts is signed into law.
- The STAR Foundation Inc. is incorporated as a separate entity with the sole purpose to raise funds to support efforts to further the development and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities.

- 1991 Star Residential Services, Inc. continues its growth and commitment to smaller more personalized services with the opening of Wilton Crest, an apartment program for two young men.
- Murray Street, a home for three young men in Norwalk opens.
- STAR forms The STAR Foundation, Inc. creating an endowment fund for STAR.
- 1992 The second Community Experience Program is opened providing supports to eight individuals with severe multiple disabilities.
- A network of in-home respite providers is created to meet the growing needs of families supporting their adult children at home.
- STAR receives certification as a CT Birth to Three Provider.
- 1995 The Rubino Center in Norwalk opens as a creative collaboration between STAR and Catholic Family Services of Norwalk, a unique program where children with and without disabilities could learn and play together.
- 1997 The STAR Foundation reaches its endowment goal of \$1.5 million and the board decided to explore innovative, non traditional residential supports. Focusing on the principals of self-determination, STAR aspired to the challenge of listening to individuals with developmental disabilities, along with their families and friends, and enabling them to determine their own future, make choices about supports that will best meet their needs, and control their own resources.
- 1998 STAR creates the Family Support Department for families of school-aged children and residential supports for adults.
- 1999 Star Residential Services, Inc. merged with and into STAR, Inc. in an effort to make both agencies more efficient and better equipped to offer improved quality of services.
- 2000 S.T.A.R. (The Society to Advance the Retarded and Handicapped, Inc.) officially changes its name to STAR Inc., Lighting the Way...and adopts a new mission statement which reflects STAR's commitment to person - centered planning, self-determination, individualized supports and community education.
- 2001 Rubberband is formed featuring individuals with and without disabilities making magical music.
- 2002 STAR celebrates its 50th Anniversary with monthly events culminating in the unveiling of 50 giant stars painted by local artists.
- South Avenue Cottage opens in New Canaan – a co-ed home for 6 adults.
- STAR holds its first Annual Gala Auction, auctioning the giant painted stars that were created for the 50th Anniversary.
- Self-determination takes hold resulting in the first individualized apartment.

- 2003 Deloitte makes a \$1million gift to The STAR Foundation to create a Leadership Institute that will provide for tuition reimbursement for full time employees of STAR.
- 2004 STAR is awarded a CT State contract to manage a group home for 7 men and women at 200 Newtown Avenue.
- 2006 The STAR Senior and Adult Day Care Programs relocate to St. Peter's Church in Norwalk.
- 2007 STAR holds its First Annual Walk, Roll, and Stroll at Sherwood Island State Park.
- 2008 Theater of STAR's is created and a star is born.
- 2009 The Darien Cottage is built by parents to provide a home for 3 men and 3 women.
- 2010 Sibshops is initiated as a program for siblings.
- 2011 A home for 5 residents is opened on Old Lantern Road, Norwalk.
- 2012 The Rubino Family Center providing B-3 Services is chosen by the state to expand services from 60 to 70 children per month.
- STAR celebrates its 60th anniversary
- Rubino Center receives grant for i-Pads to be used with children.
- Fifteen adults are supported in their own homes or leased apartments.
- With a grant from McDonald's Owner/Operator of Tri-State, STAR implements a healthy eating and living program in our residential programs.
- The State of CT Department of Developmental Disabilities initiates the "Employment First" Program.
- 2013 STAR holds its first Annual Speaker's Luncheon featuring Jenna Bush.
- Theater of STAR's produces STAR's on Broadway.
- The STAR Self-Advocacy Group (SAG) forms and starts meeting monthly.
- 2014 Founders' Cottage is converted from a respite home to a home for 3 residents.
- STAR holds its second Annual Speaker's Luncheon featuring Norah O'Donnell
- STAR's hosts the First Annual Galaxy of Gourmets at Aitoro's Appliance Store.
- CT State Non-Profit bond grants provides for 16 new vans and a truck.
- 2015 STAR holds its third Annual Speaker's Luncheon featuring Liz Murray.
- STAR's fleet grows to 42 vehicles transporting individuals to work, appointments and leisure activities.

More than 65 individuals retained jobs in local companies with an average tenure of 9.6 years.

STAR participants were supported in volunteering over 3700 hours in local non-profits including Meals on Wheels, grocery shopping for the elderly, Norwalk, Fire Dept., nursing facilities, Domestic Violence Center, Norwalk Hospital, Girl Scouts Police Department, and more.

STAR reinvigorates its recognition of volunteers by holding its first Annual Volunteer Recognition Breakfast.

2016 STAR takes over the management of Sports Buddies, an athletic program for children and young adults with disabilities who are paired with typical peers and held on Saturdays at the New Canaan High School Sports Complex.

STAR holds its fourth Annual Speaker's Luncheon featuring Elizabeth Smart.

STAR adds a 5k Run to the Annual Walk 5k Run and Roll

2017 STAR completes the last of its subcontract work and closes the Sheltered Workshop Program, and sub minimum wages – converting all services to competitive employment and Day Services Options.

STAR holds its fifth Annual Speaker's Luncheon featuring Jen Bricker.

STAR takes over management of St. Vincent's program for individuals with significant medical needs and names it STAR Connections.

STAR collaborates with Waypoint Adventure to offer kayaking, hiking and rock wall climbing.

STAR is recognized by the Department of Developmental Services as the lead agency in the state in finding competitive jobs for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

STAR receives State of CT Non-Profit bond grants to upgrade HVAC, insulation and exterior improvements, and replacement windows at STAR Center, as well as upgrades to the cafeteria and interior lobby and offices, and the replacement/addition of 10 vehicles.

A teaching greenhouse is added to the main building.

STAR sells TEC Building in South Norwalk.

STAR opens an office in New Canaan at 111 Elm Street.

The STAR Foundation conducts a feasibility study to determine the viability of a capital campaign.

STAR holds its 15th Annual Gala Auction.

STAR implements electronic recordkeeping through Medisked.

2018 STAR is awarded state contract to manage Martin House a group home for eight residents located on the Sound in Norwalk.

Legislature passes minimum wage bill for direct care staff providing services to the Department

of Developmental Services.

STAR holds its sixth Annual Speaker's Luncheon featuring Ali Wentworth.

2019 STAR is awarded another CT Non-Profit bond grant to renovate former workshop space into more appropriate programming space including a sensory room, Assistive Technology Center and Senior Memory Care Center. Renovations scheduled to be completed in 2020.

A new accessible property at 321 Newtown Avenue is purchased to relocate the 5 residents at 200 Newtown Avenue which no longer meets the residents' needs. Renovations are underway with a target move in date of March 2020.

STAR holds its seventh Annual Speaker's Luncheon featuring Barbara Pierce Bush.

STAR partners with JumpStart and the Stamford JCC to form JumpSTAR's a network of family support for parents of all ages.



VISION

STAR, Inc., Lighting the Way, in partnership with the families and communities we serve, is an innovative leader in providing individuals with disabilities opportunities for a meaningful life through personal development and participation in the community.

MISSION

STAR, Inc., Lighting the Way, is a not-for-profit organization serving individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities, 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.

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