



**CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**  
**STARFISH FAMILY SERVICES**  
**Inkster, Michigan**  
[Starfish Family Services](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Starfish Family Services in the search for a Chief Development Officer.

The Chief Development Officer will have responsibility for all Starfish Family Services development, marketing, and volunteer activities. The Chief Development Officer will partner and engage with the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer, donors, program leaders, and other stakeholders in fundraising and financial stewardship to ensure the success of key initiatives. The Chief Development Officer will be an external facing, passionate, and energetic executive who emulates Starfish values and mission, connecting donors and prospective donors to the precious families and children it serves. The Chief Development Officer will play a critical role in strengthening Starfish's philanthropic culture while leading a talented team of professionals and supporting their individual goal achievement, growth, and development.

Starfish annually raises \$3 to \$3.5 million in private funding from individuals, corporations, and foundations which represents about 7% of its annual operating budget of \$45 million. The Development program has shown steady growth over the last ten years, fueled in part by new networks and supporters engaged through the annual Great Hearts Gala. In 2019, the gala raised over \$1 million, a record for the organization.

Last year, Starfish engaged about 1,000 volunteers who contributed well over 20,000 hours to advance the mission of Starfish. The CDO will cultivate and steward these key individual and corporate relationships that support activities such as classroom learning, administrative functions, and building beautification efforts. The marketing department builds the Starfish brand by increasing awareness of Starfish and its impact among key stakeholder groups and strengthening the organization's reputation both locally and nationally, in partnership with a retained public relations firm.

Starfish Family Services has served children and families across Metro Detroit since 1963. Its mission is *strengthening families to create brighter futures for children*. Through a family-centric and integrated service model, it impacts three primary outcome areas: Healthy Families, Successful Students, and Empowered Families. With over 450 staff including teachers, social workers, nurses, psychiatrists, nutritionists, and administrators, Starfish positively impacts over 4,000 children and their families each year. Early childhood care and education programs and a full continuum of children's behavioral health services represent its primary service areas. Parents have a strong and valued voice at Starfish and report high levels of satisfaction with its services and their relationship to Starfish.

With 18 centers across Wayne County, the reach of Starfish Family Services continues to grow. And as it grows, it is important to ensure that the way it collaborates is innovative, mindful, consistent, but creatively flexible, sustainable, and ultimately leads to even brighter futures for children and families.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Development Officer will report to the Chief Executive Officer, Ann Kalass, and is a key member of the Executive Leadership team. The Chief Development Officer oversees a team of nine who works across fundraising, marketing, and volunteering.

## PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

*I'm truly excited to welcome a new Chief Development Officer to Starfish Family Services. I certainly want to acknowledge, in our search, that these are not normal times. Although the near- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 are less than clear, I am confident Starfish will be at the forefront in navigating our way through the crisis, putting the shared interests of our staff, clients, and community at the forefront of our decision making.*

*That said, there's never been a more pivotal and opportunistic time for philanthropy at Starfish. We benefit from incredible momentum driven by a number of things: our 2018 recognition as Crain's Detroit Business Best Managed Nonprofit; significant strategic growth over the last decade that has expanded our footprint and impact into Detroit; and the Fall 2021 opening of a brand new, exemplar early childhood center on the campus of Marygrove College. Starfish will operate this center that sits at the epicenter of early childhood systems change in our region and state and is integral to a transformational cradle to career educational campus stewarded by the Kresge Foundation. The campus brings the expertise and resources of the University of Michigan, Detroit Public Schools Community District, the Marygrove Conservancy, and Starfish together to put children and families at the center of economic redevelopment in Northwest Detroit.*

*And it gets even better! We're bringing our 2020-23 Strategic Plan forward to our Board for approval in June 2020. This plan defines a compelling vision around Starfish's role in creating a just society in which all children, families, and communities have equitable opportunities to grow, learn, and thrive. Our plan prioritizes the strategic importance for Starfish to embrace a culture of philanthropy by boldly clarifying what we need to reach our goals and then creatively generate the revenue necessary to fulfill those inspiring needs. Key Board members and I are energized to work with the CDO to form a Philanthropy Committee of the Board this fall to harness and leverage our organizational and its fundraising momentum as we move towards the opening of our new Marygrove early childhood center next fall.*

*The new CDO will leave a legacy at Starfish by taking our strong development program to the next level and by partnering strategically with me and our talented executive leadership team to raise the bar of excellence, impact, and systems change for precious children and their families across Southeast Michigan.*

–Ann Kalass, Chief Executive Officer

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Development Officer will

- lead all development areas including major gifts, individual, corporate, planned, and annual giving, special events, foundation and government grants, and stewardship/donor recognition;
- leverage CEO and Board member involvement in fundraising and marketing opportunities, occasionally acting as the CEO's representative;
- educate and engage community leaders and stakeholders about Starfish's key programs and initiatives;
- create and implement multi-year funding strategies and provide advice and counsel on new program development;

- manage a top prospect portfolio for cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship;
- partner with the CFO to reconcile philanthropic giving with financial statements and to effectively steward philanthropic resources;
- lead marketing and volunteer engagement:
- create and implement the overall brand and messaging strategy for Starfish Family Services;
- oversee the development of donor-centric publications and compelling case statements to highlight needs for key programs and initiatives;
- oversee volunteer strategy and engagement opportunities;
- oversee department staff including professional development and department succession planning; and
- actively participate in strategic planning and the achievement of Starfish strategic goals.

### KEY COLLEAGUES



**Ann Kalass**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Ann Kalass has served as the Chief Executive Officer of Starfish Family Services since 2007. Ann brings a passion for children and families to her work—along with a belief that all children in the community can learn, grow, and thrive. She is driven by the gross inequities in the community’s educational and social systems that hold back too many children and families.

As CEO, Ann is responsible for strategic planning, fund development, board development, fiscal management, and program and organizational development for the \$45 million private, nonprofit agency. In this role, Ann has led a period of unprecedented strategic growth (over 300% growth in revenue), by defining and strengthening the agency’s core competencies in early childhood development, behavioral health services, and family support programs. Ann has expanded Starfish’s impact in Inkster, Detroit, and surrounding communities, and the agency currently serves more than 4,000 children birth to age 21 across Wayne County on an annual basis. Working with parents, Starfish drives positive outcomes for its children with 82% of its preschoolers leaving for Kindergarten assessed as “school ready.”

In 2016, Ann was appointed by Governor Rick Snyder to the state’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Commission to contribute to the development of a long-term strategy to drive necessary improvements to educational outcomes for all Michigan children and to better prepare students for a global economy. She currently serves on the State’s Office of Great Start Advisory Council as well as the board of the Michigan League for Public Policy.

The Aspen Institute named Ann as a member of the 2015 Class of Ascend Fellows, placing her in a group of 21 national leaders from a range of sectors who bring breakthrough ideas to build economic security, educational success, and health and well-being for low-incomes families in the United States.

Ann has 25 years of management and leadership experience in the profit and nonprofit sectors, including 13 years at Ford Motor Company prior to joining Starfish. Ann volunteers in leadership capacities in causes important to her—specifically, education and healthcare. She just completed five years of service on the Northville School Board.

Ann earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania and her MBA from the Tuck School at Dartmouth College. In 2009, she received a certificate from Harvard Business School’s *Strategic Perspectives on Nonprofit Leadership* program.

Ann and her husband Scott reside in Northville and are proud parents of two daughters.



**David A. Williams**  
**Chief Administrative Officer**

Driven by providing meaningful service to the community and a passion for helping people, David joined the Starfish team as Chief Administrative Officer, in August 2017. His role provides leadership, direction, and inspiration that supports the achievement of program objectives.

The son of a Methodist minister, David learned at an early age what it means to be part of a giving community, working together to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. This upbringing provided diverse experience and helped shape the values that drive his efforts to this day. The fact that David was adopted into his home and has served on nonprofit boards that provide services similar to those at Starfish further connects him personally to

the mission of this organization.

Career experience spans from municipal to profit focused as well as a nonprofit organization. David had a decade long career in the real estate industry managing real estate offices for national companies that focused on commercial and residential real estate services. He honed his leadership skills as well as ability to carefully manage budgets, setting profit records and gaining national recognition. In phase two of his career, David used these skills to install business acumen in what was then a quickly growing organization managing operations as the Chief Operations Officer at an animal welfare organization—one of the largest in the country. “Discovering the emotional paycheck one achieves in cause related work has been the secret to a fulfilled professional life” says David. Joining Starfish continues that quest for making a meaningful contribution to society.

Formal education includes an undergraduate degree in Health Services Administration emphasizing finance and management as well as a Master’s in Business Administration. David is a graduate of the University of Arizona and a proud wildcat fan. He lives in Brighton with his wife Lesley and their daughter Ava.



**Steve Holda**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

Steve Holda joined the leadership team of Starfish Family Services in November of 2015 as the Chief Financial Officer. He has held key positions with the Washtenaw Community Health Organization as well as the Community Mental Health Partnership of South East Michigan where he most recently served as Chief Financial Officer.

Steve earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting and Finance from the University of Michigan and his MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Steve lives in Ann Arbor with his children Jake, Katie, and Nick.



**Marisa Nicely**  
**Vice President of Clinical and Youth Services**

Marisa Nicely, LMSW, Vice President of Clinical and Youth Services at Starfish Family Services oversees the operations of Lifespan Clinical Services, the mental health division of Starfish, as well as a variety of programs for youth and families.

Marisa has long been a part of the Starfish family. She began her tenure with Starfish in 1997 as a Masters of Social Work intern at Northwestern Community Services. In 1998, Northwestern Community Services and Youth Living Centers merged and created Starfish Family Services. While still an intern in the clinical branch of the newly created agency, Marisa was hired on by Starfish Family Services' Safe Stay Crisis Nursery and Respite Center. She was employed in that program until she was offered a clinical position upon her graduation in 1999.

As the Director of Clinical and Youth Services, Marisa along with her team, has implemented and launched innovative initiatives at Starfish including the Intensive Home Based Program and the Child Welfare Treatment Program. Her department has created one of the largest Infant Mental Health units in the country whose work has been presented at the national and international levels. The clinical team has also brought trauma informed care to the mental health array and is a state leader in the development and implementation of Pediatric Integrated Health Care models.

Marisa earned a bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science from the University of Michigan Dearborn and a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Michigan Ann Arbor.

Originally from San Juan, Puerto Rico, Marisa is still very connected to her family and culture. She is proud of being a Latin American and sets a high standard for herself as a representative of a minority that is growing amongst professional women in the workplace. She resides in Lincoln Park.



**Karen Roback**  
**Vice President of Early Childhood Policy and Programs**

In June of 2014 Karen Roback joined the leadership team as Vice President of Early Childhood Policy and Programs. Karen leads strategy development and brings thought leadership for early childhood policy and programs to the organization. She also keeps Starfish connected with early childhood program policy and growth opportunities at the state and federal levels.

Previously, Karen was Senior Director of Early Learning Innovation for the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC). She also served as Director of Lenawee County's early childhood program, Communities Helping to Increase Learning and Development (commonly known as Lenawee's CHILD), and as Director of St. John's Early Learning Center. Karen has dedicated her career to ensuring the most vulnerable children have access to high-quality early learning, and she values helping Starfish achieve its vision.

As Senior Director of Early Learning for ECIC, Karen, was instrumental in leading the transformation of Michigan's early learning and care quality efforts including Great Start to Quality, Michigan's quality rating and improvement system. Karen directed the establishment, implementation, and evaluation of 29 local early childhood funds that provided families with greater access to high-quality early learning and care programs. Karen also partnered with Detroit Public Television to develop 42 Michigan Emmy Award-winning early childhood development pieces and increased the number of early childhood educators who completed professional development by 57 percent, among other accomplishments.

An Adrian, Michigan native, Karen earned a Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education from the University of Michigan, and a Bachelor of Science from Eastern Michigan University. Karen and her husband Jay live in Adrian with their two daughters.



**Janet C. Lawson**  
**Chair, Board of Directors**

At all times, Janet Lawson is an advocate for Children and Families. As CEO of the Shepherd Group, she focuses on strategic solutions for not-for-profit, high-impact organizations. Janet engages clients to advance their mission, optimize and energize board member involvement, strategically manage their team or brand, and create powerful solutions for future success.

Janet's personal pride point is the recent release of her first two children's books – *Uncle Buddy and the Flowers* and *Uncle Buddy and the Treasures*.

For 13 years she was Director of the Ford Volunteer Corps, a global organization that is part of the Ford Motor Company Fund. While at Ford, she was responsible for launching a global volunteer program, creating the Bill Ford Better World Challenge and 30/Thirty, a national model of millennial philanthropic engagement.

Prior to Ford, she was appointed by former Governor Jennifer Granholm as the Executive Director of the Michigan Community Service Commission, the state's commission for all things related to volunteerism including all AmeriCorps members.

From 2000-2004 Janet served as the National Director of the UAW-Ford Family Service and Learning Centers, building family centers and creating programming in 31 major cities across the United States.

In earlier careers, Janet was an Executive at United Way Community Services in Detroit, organizer of America's Promise with former Governor George Romney, and an experienced educator.

In addition to Starfish Family Services, Janet serves on the boards of the Salvation Army, and Southwest Solutions. She is married to David M. Lawson, a United States Federal District Judge, has three grown sons, and 4 grandchildren.

### **PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS**

Starfish Family Services seeks a Chief Development Officer with

- a persuasive approach to cultivating and stewarding relationships that effectively connect the goals and interests of donors to the Starfish mission;
- the experience, passion, and capacity required to be a strategic fundraising partner to the CEO and Board and to develop and implement a culture of philanthropy institution-wide;
- a demonstrated ability to recruit, lead, and manage a high-performing team;
- a proven track record of successful results in fundraising and Board and volunteer engagement;
- experience leading organizational marketing activities;
- a demonstrated track record of continued career progression and increased scope of responsibility and impact;
- outstanding interpersonal skills;
- a passion for children and families;
- management of a major donor portfolio; and
- experience with capital campaign planning and execution.



A bachelor's degree is required for this position. At least seven years of experience in development or a relevant for-profit function is preferred as is five years in a senior leadership role.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

Through its policies, systems, and culture, Starfish Family Services strives to create an inclusive and welcoming climate that embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions so that its employees can better serve its clients and support its mission in the community. Starfish employees should be culturally aware and adaptive to the respective needs and experiences that its clients, staff and community stakeholders. To this regard, it is expected that all employees of Starfish, including volunteers and interns, will act at all times to promote the diversity and inclusion of all persons.

For purposes of this policy, diversity is defined to include the range of differences including backgrounds, identities (including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability, gender, gender identity, religion, and sex), perspectives, and working styles and learning styles that employees and other stakeholders bring to Starfish Family Services to better serve children, families, and communities.

Starfish is committed to the philosophy and the legal principle that all applicants and employees are entitled to equal employment opportunities in their work environment. SFS will recruit, hire, train, and promote employees without regard to the race, color, religion, national origin/ancestry, sex, age, physical or mental disability, citizenship, genetic information, AIDS/HIV status, height, weight, marital or veteran status or misdemeanor arrest record.

### **SALARY & BENEFITS**

Starfish Family Services offers a highly competitive compensation and full benefits package.

### **LOCATION**

Starfish Family Services is located in Inkster, Michigan, fifteen miles west of Detroit. The successful candidate will be expected to reside in Southeast Michigan.

### **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Starfish Family Services.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

*To apply for this position, visit:*

[Chief Development Officer, Starfish Family Services.](#)

*To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson:*

[annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

*All inquiries will be held in confidence.*