



DAVE'S CORNER

On behalf of the Board of Directors and STARS team members, greetings and happy 2018 to all! I hope your holidays were safe and enjoyable.

As my newsletter commentary typically highlights events having a financial impact on STARS and other Arizona providers for people with developmental disabilities, I'd like to note two factors significantly affecting our nonprofit business: 1) the increased AZ minimum wage – 24% on Jan. 1, 2017 with another 5% this year, and 2) stagnant DES-DDD reimbursement rates, which have not yet recovered from 2008 recession cuts of 15%.

Given this backdrop, how is STARS doing financially? Here are comparative results of the past 24 months:

- **At 12/31/2015, with a fiscal budget of \$3.07M and YTD operating expenses of \$1.51M, the 6-month operating deficit was (\$93,605)**
- **At 12/31/2017, with a fiscal budget of \$3.94M and YTD operating expenses of \$1.73M, the current operating deficit is (\$2,203)**

Of significant note is the approximate 20% gap between DDD-authorized hours and billable program hours. This means that for every 8 hours of authorized support, STARS is billing 6.4 hours for reimbursement. Because our State contract is ratio-based, staff is paid for a full 8 hours. We are making efforts to close this gap by encouraging full-day program participation.

From a programming perspective, our youth, day training, center-based and group-supported employment programs continue to provide quality supports for STARS participants. Increased production opportunities in the CBE program, along with expanded job-training enclaves at local businesses, have contributed to a near-doubling in participant training expenditures. And in each of the past two years, several STARS participants gained employment in community-integrated settings!

Our star is rising and there are many more positive outcomes the STARS leadership team would love to share with you! To learn more, please join us for a Community Open House at our Cholla campus

on Thursday, February 22 at 7:00 PM. RSVP to Linda Hamrick at lhamrick@starsaz.org.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Dave



FASHION SHOW

On December 7, 2017 STARS presented “Shine,” our annual fashion show. STARS participants showed as they walked the runway and modeled clothes they had chosen. It was a great community event. Dinner was served by the Scottsdale Police Department. Our thanks to Board Member Mary K who organized the event and Chief Alan Rodbell & his dedicated officers.



STARS Holiday Party

We had a great Holiday Party on Friday night December 15th. Our partners, Notre Dame Prep swc STARS and provided all the magic. The Saints decorated the cafeteria, brought and served dinner danced the night away with STARS participants. We are very grateful for their generosity. Each STARS participant received a STARS ballcap – delivered by Santa!

HANDLEBAR HELPERS



Handlebar Helpers is STARS' newest enclave. STARS took over a portion of Scottsdale bike donation and repair program last fall. Under the guidance of an experienced individual, STARS is now able to offer participants the chance to learn bike mechanics and repair. Bikes are donated to Handlebar Helpers. STARS will refurbish the bike, make sure it's in good working order and will then offer it for sale. All proceeds return to STARS. It's a great opportunity for our participants – new skills that are highly transferable! We are improving lives through new opportunities.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Always a great day when the Scottsdale Fire Department drops by for lunch!



LENNY'S BIRTHDAY

Lenny has been working in STARS Honor Health Enclave for 2 years. Lenny and his team clean the hospital's common areas, the nurses' stations and the med rooms. Lenny loves to contribute his efforts to the hospital and loves going home with a paycheck. According to Lenny, his paycheck enables him to "buy scary movies." My favorite thing." Lenny excels at cleaning and the hospital staff has taken notice and is grateful. The med rooms in particular "need a high level of cleanliness" according to staff and Lenny delivers. The Nurses at Honor Health relate that, "Lenny is a ball of energy and ready to help everyone with a smile." The nurses were delighted to celebrate Lenny's birthday with him.

THANK YOU

Thank you to our partners at Fry's, Fox Restaurants, Wildflower Bread Co. and Dick's Sporting Goods for providing gift certificates and discounts that allow us to provide opportunities to our staff and participants.

NEW AND UPCOMING

STARS wish list campaign is underway. Please visit starsaz.org and take a peek at the wish list. Consider donating an item or 2 and making a STARS wish come true!

The Cholla Cafeteria is going to be transformed into a social recreational area complete with exercise equipment and areas to eat and socialize. Hoping to complete the project by early March. Looking forward to showing off the new area. Plan on a visit!!



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