MENTORING FOR IMPACT

SPRING/SUMMER 2020
ASTEROIDEA
Third Edition
Dear Friends of Starfish

In recent months, our city, along with the entire nation, has experienced the greatest health and economic pandemic of our lifetime. My thoughts and prayers go out to all of the families that have been negatively affected by COVID-19.

As Starfish Initiative braced for the impact of COVID-19, our team seamlessly transitioned to a virtual atmosphere to ensure our scholars and their families had the support they needed during this unprecedented time. Thanks to our 2 Gen Initiative, “Starfish Generation++”, participating scholars and their families have been connected to wraparound services and resources needed to achieve their educational and career goals. This has in turn led to even better support of the scholars and helping them to achieve their educational, career/employment goals.

Simultaneous with a global health pandemic, our nation is in the midst of a national movement fighting for civil rights and social justice for ALL people, particularly for the rights of our black and brown Americans.

In this edition of Asteroidea, you will read stories of perseverance and triumph, resilience and determination and most importantly courage. We at Starfish cannot solve these issues by ourselves but we can provide help to those we can reach one scholar at a time. We hope that you will join us. Volunteer, Be a Mentor.

Respectfully

Kimberly N. Bostic, CFRE, MPA
President and CEO
Starfish Initiative

"Help one young person succeed by teaching them about a better world that holds promise for you and the next generation.”

Mike Feeney, Co Founder of Starfish Initiative.
After Match Night

**Scholar And Mentor:**
We Gradually Became Friends

![Robert and Mentor Tom](image)

Their first meeting was at Match Night, an event hosted by Starfish that echoes excitement, anticipation, nervousness, and sometimes the awkward silence that comes with the first interaction between Scholars and Mentors. For Mentor Tom and Scholar Robert, the first meeting was built on a desire to develop a mentoring relationship that would support Robert through high school, but it became much more during their 4-year Scholar-Mentor relationship.

“I have had the honor of mentoring Robert. I have watched him thrive academically, expand culturally, grow spiritually, and perform beautifully as a first chair oboist in high school orchestra.”

“My life has been broadened by Robert sharing his culture in Myanmar. I would not have known this without the Starfish mentoring relationship.”

Tom does not shy away from how richly he has been impacted through the friendship that has developed during his four years as Robert’s Mentor. Like most successful relationships, theirs started with developing a trust through a mutual respect for their differences and the willingness to learn more about each other by experiencing the cultures that shaped their personal journeys.

Robert will attend Indiana University in the fall as a freshman in the College of Arts and Science. This multi-scholarship recipient will major in biology, with plans to eventually enroll in medical school.

A new citizen, Robert is still proud of one of his earliest accomplishments, winning a bicycle in the 4th grade for being the best reader. Ranked #12 in his graduating class, Robert, with the continued friendship of Tom will go on to greater things, a shining example of all that is good in Starfish Initiative. Tom would go on to say, “The world is Robert’s oyster now.”

“My Starfish experience taught me a lot about connections. I have so many friends from Starfish.”

Robert, a member of Perry Meridian High School’s Class of 2020, will attend Indiana University Bloomington, College of Arts and Science where he will major in Biology.

“When I was very young, my parents made the decision that our family should leave Myanmar, where there was much poverty and oppression. They wanted our family to enjoy the freedom and opportunities which America offered.”

- Robert
Class of 2020

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- Robert
Class of 2020
On June 25th, Starfish Scholars and Alumni participated in a student led and moderated discussion following the events that have led to recent protests regarding social injustice.

’Beyond the Violence: Inspire | Encourage | Prepare’ was a platform created to allow Starfish teens and young adults the opportunity to ask the questions they needed answered. The platform also served as a place to provide tools for Scholars and Alum to be informed leaders.

Dr. Martin Luther King
“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Julie
“I have been fortunate to have had some amazing mentors in my life, and I am thrilled to be able to give back in this very personal capacity. Being a part of Emily’s life for the last year and a half and watching her navigate high school is among the most rewarding things I have ever done. I love Emily’s enthusiasm for going out in the city and trying new things. We have a lot of common interests, and we always have a lot of fun. I can’t wait to see what the next three years bring to Emily – her future is so bright! I’m grateful to Starfish for this opportunity that truly allows me to get even more than I give.”

Brittany
IU Health - A “Hero” mentors a Starfish Scholar. Brittany helped start a new COVID ICU.

Norma
It's been my pleasure to be a mentor to an amazing young Scholar. If my scholar knows there is another person in her corner, someone to provide encouragement, guidance, or simply listen, then my time as a Mentor is successful. We have talented young people in our community. I am thankful to be a mentor for an organization committed to nurturing this talent and making a difference in the lives of their families.

Donna
Donna is a member of the Regional Service Line Marketing & Communications team at Indiana University Health Suburban Indianapolis Region, serving IU Health North, Saxony, Tipton & West Hospitals.

Andrew
Andrew has been a Starfish Mentor for 3 years.

Greg
“When I first began as a Mentor through Starfish Initiative, I wasn’t sure what to expect. I was matched with Elvin in August 2019, and we quickly connected over soccer, tortillas, and to my pleasant surprise, coffee! Elvin is a fantastic student and Scholar, who is inquisitive and curious about topics about which he is passionate, such as STEM. He has a bright future ahead of him, and I look forward to supporting him in any way I can!”

Edward
Corteva Agriscience - Human Health Risk Assessor

MTNOR SPOTLIGHT
Starfish Mentors Make a Difference
If anything you do is too easy it means you’re not growing. Take some challenges in your life so that there are places for you to grow. In the end, life is too short so enjoy the moments while you’re challenging yourself.

- Peng Thang, Match Specialist

During 2020, I have learned that our scholars are a fiercely resilient bunch. In conversations with them, they have found uniquely creative ways to manage their time and cope with the stressors that this year has presented. Many have also stepped up and have taken on more responsibilities at home with taking care of siblings and ensuring that the household thrives. They have displayed a strength and optimism at times that is not always easy to have, and they have largely spent a great deal of time educating themselves and reflecting on major social and political events that have occurred. Even though this year has not gone as planned, they have been incredibly adaptive to new situations and have learned to thrive through adversity.

- Austin Elliott, Match Specialist

During 2020, our Scholars have had to deal with an unprecedented amount of obstacles on top of their unearned adversities. Even in the face of these hardships, our scholars continue to flourish. When Indianapolis schools switched to on-line learning, our Scholars maintained academic excellence. When faced with the racial unrest brought on by police brutality, our Scholars become motivated to get involved by taking part in difficult conversations with their mentors and families and participating in peaceful protests. In 2020, Starfish Scholars stood as an example of the power of persistence, passion, and purpose.

One Scholar that impacted me a great deal in 2020 was Andrea. Her mother came to the US from Honduras so that her children could have a chance at a better life. While only speaking Spanish, unable to read or write, and having a third grade education, Andrea’s mother knew the importance of education and pushed her daughter to take advantage of all opportunities. Andrea grew up as a voracious reader and became the first high school graduate in her family. This fall, she will attend Indiana University. Andrea is motivated by the sacrifices her mother made for her.

- Lauren Reminih
Director of Programs
Why we challenged ourselves to MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In spite of the challenges, our youth must have the support and resources needed to help them become future leaders and decision makers.

Let’s face it. 2020 has dropped challenges in our laps that many of us have never experienced.

Through local news, national news and social media, we have witnessed the best and the worst of us. The responses have been varied, a reflection of diverse thoughts and ideologies. New champions have been birthed and existing champions have been encouraged to continue the journey. Starfish’s success is a direct result of the Champions who have invested in the mission and continue to wave the banner “to make a difference for that One” for more than 17 years. Starfish is also a place where new Champions, those that are now looking for a way to uplift and encourage can find a place to serve unconditionally but benefit immensely.

Starfish has committed to continuing to support Scholars, Alumni, and families by developing resource networks that create equity, and by offering tools including our one-on-one mentoring program to support those most at risk of accomplishing goals. Our hope is that now, more than ever, you will see the importance of your partnership with Starfish Initiative. Your financial support makes it possible for us to deliver in-person and virtual programming to equip Scholars, Alumni, Mentors and families in their journey.

THANK YOU for all you have sacrificed and we are grateful for your continued partnership and support, ‘to inspire, encourage, and prepare, academically-promising teens facing unearned adversity for college and career success.

- Jennifer McCloud
SVP & Chief Advancement Officer

We ask you to accept a “Call to Action”.
Become a Donor. Become a Mentor. Change a Life.

2020 MATCHING GIFT CAMPAIGN

Your gift can support Scholar Programming
- A gift of $1,500 supports 1 scholar for a full year
- A gift of $500 helps provide bus transportation to College Mega Visit
- A gift of $150 sends 1 scholar to Leadership Camp
- A gift of $100 sends 1 scholar to Freshman Orientation

Make your donation today.
- Donate on-line at www.starfishinitiative.org
- Mail your donation to:
  Starfish Initiative
  2955 N. Meridian St., Suite 101
  Indianapolis, IN 46208
- Make your gift of stock or include Starfish in your planned giving. Contact us for more info.

Starfish Initiative is a United Way Agency

INTERESTED IN MENTORING?
Doubling the Impact does not stop there. Serving more high school students means there is also a need to increase the number of mentors. The best recruiters for mentors is YOU! Partner with us by helping us recruit more mentors.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?
- Refer a friend
- Invite us to make a presentation to your organization or employer
- Invite a friend to a future Starfish event

For additional information, contact us at 317.588.6300
Thank you for supporting STARFISH!