

STARAbility[®]
FOUNDATION

Shining light on ability, not disability.

FY2020 Impact Report: A Year of Resilience

5125 Castello Drive, Naples, FL 34103, 239.594.9007

STARAbility.org

FY2020



Our Mission

To transform the lives of individuals with disabilities through social, vocational and educational connections to the community, while strengthening awareness and respect for individual abilities.



Our Core Values

S = SUPPORT

T = TEAMWORK

A = AWARENESS

R = RESPECT

We **support** people with disabilities by providing life-transforming opportunities that emphasize **teamwork**, connection to the community to build **awareness** and **respect** for individual abilities.

Board of Directors

Officers

Lisa Kahn-Allen: President
Carrie Cooney: Vice President
Ken Gilman: Treasurer
Kelly Moynihan, Ph.D.: Secretary

Directors

Eric Cosentino
Steve Evangelista
Laura Georgelos
Domenic Lucarelli
Jerry Schoenfeld, Ph.D.

Advisory Board

John Cooney
Anne Fleming
John Pollock
Myles McHale

Directors Emeriti

Stacy Bolesky
Arnold Karp

Chief Executive Officer

Karen Govern

A Year of Resilience

If one word defines 2020, it's resilience.

The year started with great promise for STAR participants. They kept learning, found jobs and stayed engaged with the community.

The pandemic temporarily halted our momentum.

But our STARS did what they always do; they adapted and moved forward.

And you, our loyal supporters, families and volunteers, did what you always do; you stepped up.

You saw the value of virtual programs and helped make them a permanent part of our programs. Your investment is helping to reach people near and far and connecting them to life-enriching programs.

In both the virtual and in-person realms, you helped strengthen existing partnerships, developed new ones and built awareness of the abilities of STAR participants throughout Southwest Florida.

Your support also made it possible for us to demonstrate the impact our centerpiece program, the Trailblazer Academy, has on participants. You shopped at and donated to the STAR Store and made the STAR*Made Studio a blossoming social enterprise for participants.

As you explore the following pages, you will read stories of just a few of the STARS who define resilience. We hope you're inspired by what you helped them accomplish.

Deepest thanks to you for helping to shine light on ability, not disability.

Lisa Kahn-Allen
President, Board of Directors

Karen Govern
Chief Executive Officer



Meet Our
STAR
Matt!



A Positive Impact

We've noticed a huge difference in our son since he joined STARability and TBA (the Trailblazer Academy). He has a part-time job, which they found for him, and he's so much more confident and outgoing now than he was before. STARability provides a caring, supportive environment with compassionate and dedicated staff who encourage the participants to utilize and improve their abilities.

Matt has made many friends at STARability, both participants and staff members, and he looks forward to attending TBA, whether in their building, outside at North Collier Regional Park or virtually using Zoom. He takes everything from "A," art class, to "Y," yoga class (or "Z" if you count Zoom), and loves all the classes.

Matt works two afternoons a week for a local architect firm (Stofft Cooney Architects), cleaning and organizing their conference rooms and lunchroom,

where he also cleans and stocks the refrigerator, and since the pandemic, he has also been disinfecting door handles and other surfaces. Matt loves it there, and the other employees love him!

Matt is far from the only STARability success story—there are many, many others. And as a parent of a special needs child, I know that not all improvements can be measured, but we do meet with Matt's TBA instructors formally twice a year to review his progress and goals, and informally whenever we have any questions. The staff and instructors always have time for participants and parents/caregivers.

I can't stress enough the positive difference STARability has made in our son's life and in our life, as we now have less to worry about regarding Matt's future. We're blessed to be part of the STARability family!

—Mark Martel, Matt's father

Program Impact

We exist to support and empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. STAR participants connect and engage with the community through continuing education, art and creative expression workshops, health and wellness classes, sports leagues and many other activities.

Classes, Workshops & Activities

- Art Class
- Bingo
- Blue Zones Classes
- Club STAR
- Computer Class
- Cooking Class
- Eyes on Smiles with Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Program
- Fit 5 with Special Olympics
- Garden Club
- Health & Wellness
- Improv with The Naples Players
- Monthly Socials
- Musical Theater with The Naples Players
- Nutrition Class
- Next Chapter Book Club
- Photography Workshop
- Tai Chi
- Trivia Night
- Yoga
- Zumba

Sports Leagues

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Bowling

By the Numbers:



Number of STAR participants



Number of volunteers

Volunteer hours: 2,259

53 Individuals on Trailblazer Academy Waitlist



Trailblazer Academy participants

241 Zoom activities



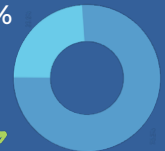
158 Facebook videos



6,187 Center-based experiences

10 Employed Trailblazer Academy participants

24%



15 Employment network partners

20 Vocational training site partners



Virtual Connections

When the COVID-19 outbreak hit in March 2020, our STAR participants needed to keep learning and stay connected to their community. In a matter of days, our staff tailored face-to-face programs to virtual platforms.

And our STARs didn't miss a beat. They quickly logged on to Zoom classes and Facebook workshops. And there, they brushed up on their math, read some good books, stretched in yoga classes, cooked meals, learned job skills and danced in Club STAR.

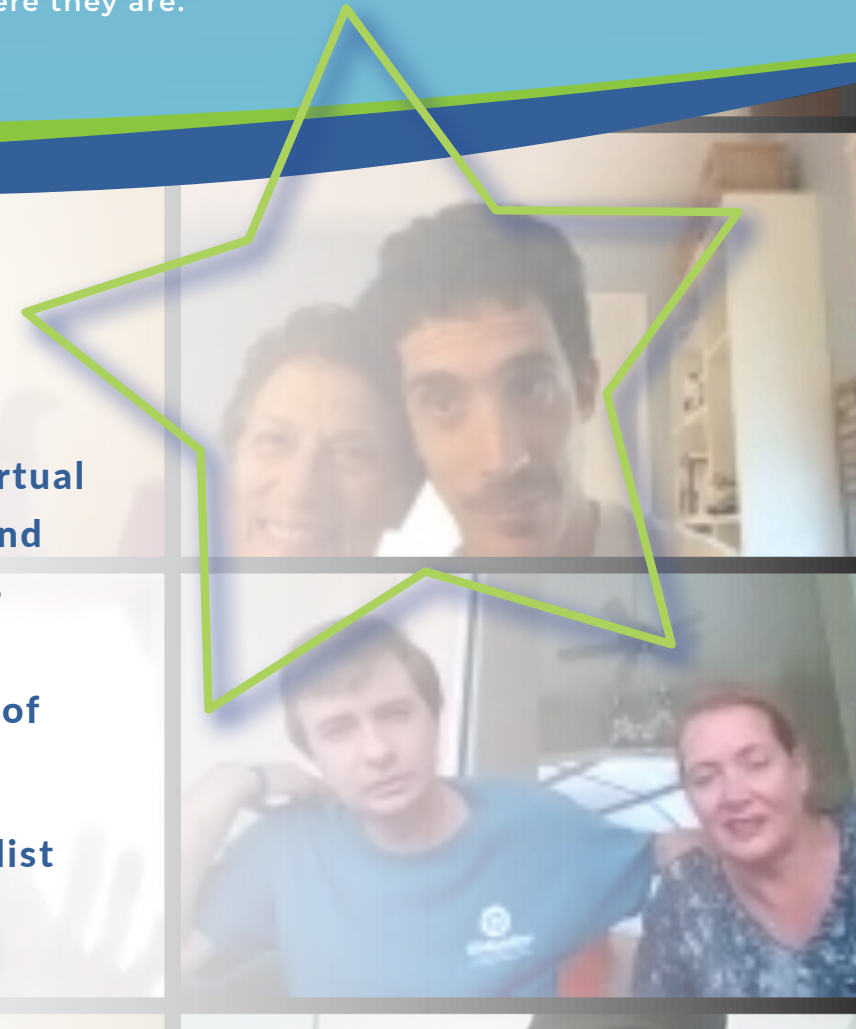
Between March and June 2020, they engaged in 241 Zoom and 518 Facebook activities, classes and workshops.

Today, virtual programs are a permanent and critical part of our curriculum, connecting STARs to engaging and innovative classes and activities—no matter where they are.

A Place to Strive

The virtually based programming STARability is providing to participants is definitely a multidimensional experience. This goes way beyond the experience of a passive viewer accessing content from a piece of hardware. For Jake, he's accessing the virtual programming from his home; his safe space, a place of comfort and control where he's willing to take risks he may not take in a real-world setting. He's seeing his friends in their homes; he's seeing his instructors. He's getting the opportunity to process all kinds of interactions in a way he never has before.

—Nancy Ross, Jake's mother and Individual Academy Plan Specialist





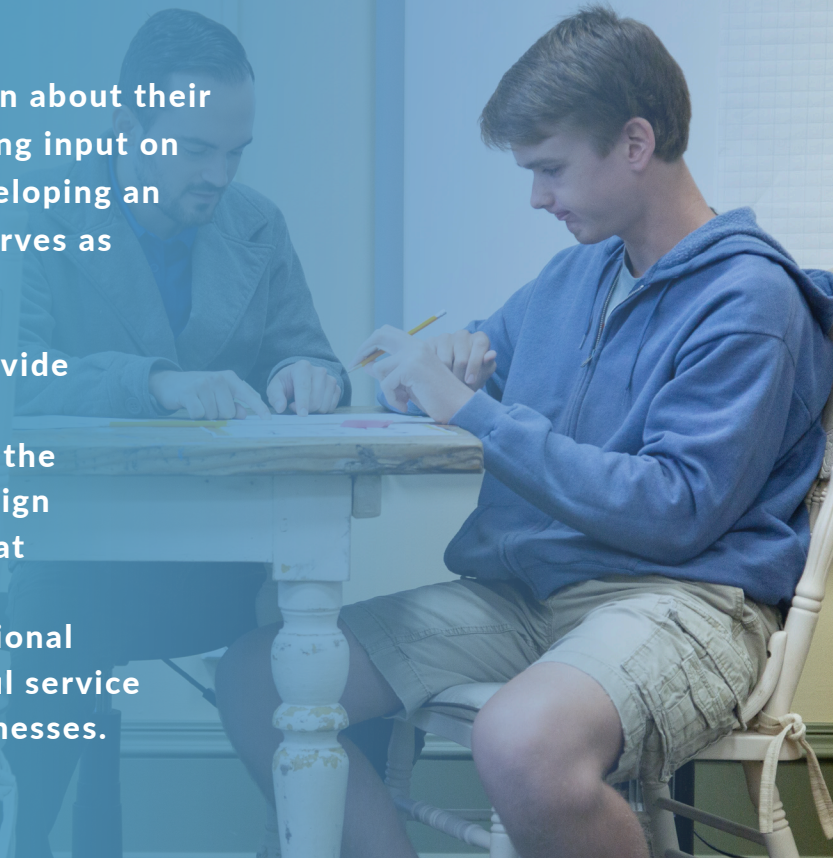
STARability
FOUNDATION

TRAILBLAZER ACADEMY

Our pioneering outreach program, the Trailblazer Academy, offers community-based skill development experiences for young adults, whether they are on a path to life enrichment or have vocational aspirations.

We partner with families to learn about their Trailblazer's aspirations, including input on their strengths and goals in developing an Individual Academy Plan that serves as a roadmap for success.

Our vocational site partners provide opportunities for Trailblazers to access training and exposure to the work world. And instructors design guided work-based activities that enable our Trailblazers to learn, practice and demonstrate vocational skills while providing meaningful service to our vocational partners' businesses.



IMPACTability

Last year, we began using a proven approach to assess Trailblazer Academy participants' mastery of critical life skills as they work toward goals. Modeled after Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research & Training Center, this evidence-based approach focuses on building knowledge, skills and communication abilities in eight life skill areas.



Life Skills Assessment

In June 2020, we worked with families to take an interim read on what was happening on the home front, especially related to the participant goals. Participants' abilities grew in three key areas:

5% ↑
leisure & recreation

5% ↑
communication, socialization & peers

8% ↑
home living

This degree of growth is particularly impressive, because in mid-March center-based programming was suspended in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



STAR *Made Studio*

Who would have thought that hand-poured soy candles would become a hot-selling item?

They have, thanks to STARability participants. Our social enterprise, the STAR*Made Studio, employs two STARability participants and provides vocational training for Trailblazer Academy and Junior Trailblazer Academy participants.

Visit the studio at the STAR Store and you will see participants hard at work making candles that have become one of the store's top-selling items. The intricate candle-making process has a place for all abilities to contribute to a beautiful finished product. It also provides a way for participants to express themselves, learn individual tasks and work as a team to achieve a vocational goal.

In 2020, we expanded our enterprise by introducing a line of hand-poured ornaments and partnering with Products of Purpose, a Fort Myers-based company that collaborates with nonprofits to provide job training and employment opportunities. Products of Purpose supplies the studio with greeting cards and other items that participants complete in the manufacturing process.

Our holiday candle collection included the Florida Winter scent.



Visit the STAR Store at 106 10th St. N. in the Naples Design District. To donate décor, furniture or other home goods, call 239.263.1894 or email STARstore@STARability.org.



STAR*Made Studio Assistant Taylor Collins

An Independent Path

On Tuesday mornings, Taylor leaves her new apartment and takes the Collier Area Paratransit bus to the STAR Store. There, she clocks in and gets to work.

Taylor melts wax, adds scents like Warm Vanilla Sugar and Balsam Pine into the liquid, and pours the mixture in glass jars and other containers.

How many candles has she made since becoming an assistant at the STAR*Made Studio?

"Probably a lot," Taylor says.

Definitely a lot. She's helped make hundreds of candles for businesses, events and store customers in the past year. And she's been involved in choosing seasonal scents.

Taylor likes the routine of having a job and the camaraderie of working with others.

Employment Services

In FY 2020, 10 Trailblazer Academy participants were employed by local businesses because of the vocational skills they learned in the program.

As an approved provider for the Florida Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), we also offer job readiness services and connect individuals with local employers and job training sites. Our dedicated employment specialist is certified through VR and the State of Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) and provides comprehensive services such as an initial consultation, a skills inventory and on-the-job coaching.



Stofft Cooney Architects is an inclusive employer and STARability vocational partner.

Inclusive Workplace

Stofft Cooney believes in an inclusive workplace because we feel that we equally benefit from each other. STARability participants assist with organizing, sanitizing, recycling, re-stocking and other housekeeping responsibilities at our office. They help us set up for company events and work on specific marketing projects. We teach and learn from them by helping.

Creating a Purpose

An employer will experience joy and satisfaction in a different way when they hire an individual with a disability. Not only will the employer be a positive influence, they will also be creating a purpose and responsibility and will be providing the individual with a sense of pride that so few have offered before.

—Jennifer Haire, Stofft Cooney Architects

Kurtz Homes Naples is a vocational training partner site.

Attitude, Creativity and Attention

Trailblazer participants not only bring a smiling face but invest in every task, big or small. The creativity comes out with projects such as the Reach for the Stars window display (which highlighted STARability's mission and partnership with Kurtz Homes and The Collective). Attention to detail can be seen when they leave our offices in perfect order by stocking supplies and organizing.

Determination and Joy

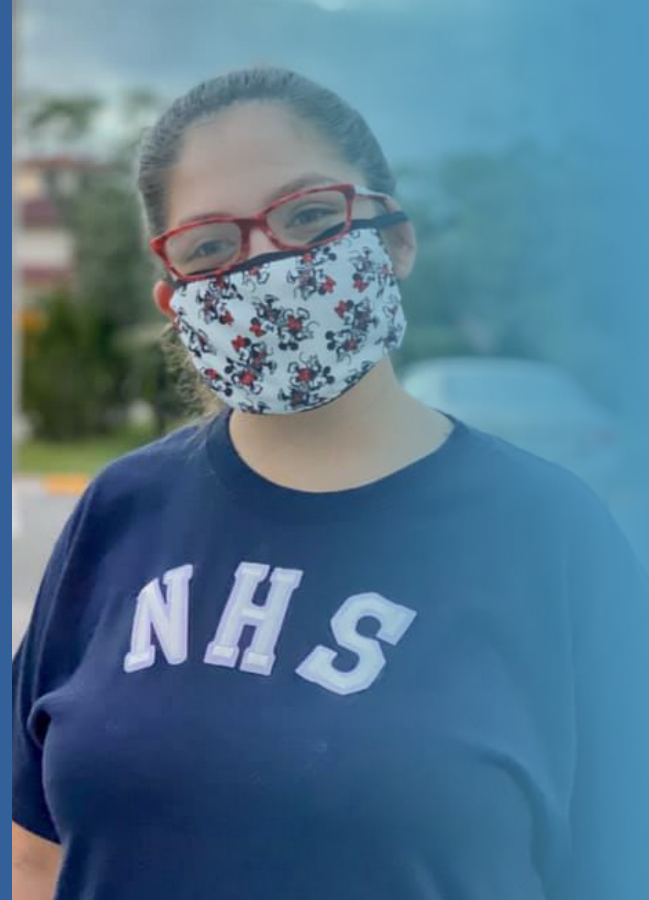
Every STARability participant has a talent, and through vocational opportunities they are able to hone in on them and become a real benefit to any business. These young adults have determination and joy that should be admired and utilized.

—Elizabeth Kurtz, Kurtz Homes Naples

Cherry Hill Tattoo Company • The Collective • Conservancy of SWFL • Cosmos Ristorante & Pizzeria • DoubleTree Suites By Hilton • Dylan's Drafthouse • House of Gaia • Humane Society Naples • LowBrow Pizza & Beer • Naples Art • Naples Botanical Garden • The Naples Players • Naples Therapeutic Riding Center • Oakes Farms Seed to Table • Paragon Theaters • The Pub • Peniel Church • Rusty's Raw Bar & Grill • South Street • STAR Store • Tacos & Tequila Cantina



The Junior Trailblazer Academy is a structured after-school program that offers vocational training, continuing education and life-enriching opportunities such as art, health and wellness activities to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities between the ages of 14 and 21 who attend Collier County high schools.



Blazing a Trail

Alexis struggled with boundaries and social skills, but she began to experience transformative breakthroughs after becoming a Junior Trailblazer.

The program's small-group settings and community-based curriculum has opened a world of possibilities for her. Alexis has visited places like The Naples Players for improv classes. At restaurants, she's learned to clean and set tables. And the classes at Naples Art have brought out Alexis' creativity.

In the past year, she's made new friends, learned new rules and has come to accept boundaries in various settings.

"She's happier, more socially engaged, and looks ahead to program dates and opportunities available through the program," says Jan Carpenter, Alexis' grandmother.

A STAR with Goals

I started working at STARability as the administrative assistant in 2018. I do a variety of office work as well as create candles at the STAR Store, and I have goals to do even more.

Working here has allowed me to learn new skills, be more flexible, and feel productive and included. My days working with Halley (Employment Specialist Halley Kretschmer) and Cayla (Director of Communications & Special Initiatives Cayla Childs) are the highlight of my week.

STARability also helped me get a second job, at Publix, and I have made great friends through bowling, art, drama, baseball and awesome social events.

Because of STARability, I have grown so much.

—Hannah Kandel, STARability participant, Administrative Assistant, STAR*Made Studio Assistant



STAR Connections



Our largest program, STAR Connections, offers varied experiences to participants.

STAR participants connect and engage with the community through continuing education, art and creative expression workshops, health and wellness classes, sports leagues and many other activities.

FOUNDATION Golisano

Imagine the possibilities!

Ann Costello, Executive Director

As executive director of the Golisano Foundation, Ann Costello was touring Southwest Florida nonprofit agencies a few years ago to find a kindred partner to invest in.

Wherever she went, leaders in the local intellectual and developmental disabilities community kept telling her to meet with the STARability Foundation.

STARability was small, but word about its programs was getting around.

Since the first meeting, the Golisano Foundation and STARability have formed a partnership that continues to build on the quality programming people first told her about.

“Our missions are very compatible. Obviously, we both support and look for ways to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families,” Ann says. “But more importantly, we support STARability because we have come to realize that how you approach that support is very much like the Golisano Foundation. In that, I mean that self-determination for the individual is front and center and community inclusion for the individual and their families is front center.”

The Golisano Foundation’s initial grants invested in STARability’s signature program, the Trailblazer Academy.

In 2020, its grants helped to quickly launch a virtual program so Trailblazer Academy participants could continue learning, engaging and connecting with the community—in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“You already had the Trailblazer curriculum. You already had a captive audience. You already had engaged participants,” Ann says. “This is how you do your business. It was logical for us to partner with you and to take that risk, although it wasn’t much of a risk, because everybody needed to understand how to move to online learning, and you did it very quickly, to your credit, and it is very beneficial to the participants.”

The Golisano Foundation’s support helped make it possible to create a curriculum that focuses on key life skills so participants can gain greater independence and achieve goals.

“You’re always looking for how the person can be the best possible expression of themselves, be it socially, creatively, professionally,” Ann says. “You mirror and embody our motto, ‘Imagine the possibilities.’”



Ann with Golisano Foundation Founder Tom Golisano

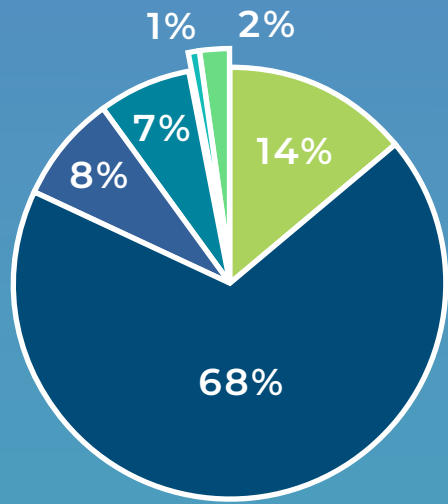
Financial Highlights

Donors showed their support of STAR participants by investing in programs that help STARs learn new skills, find jobs and make social connections.

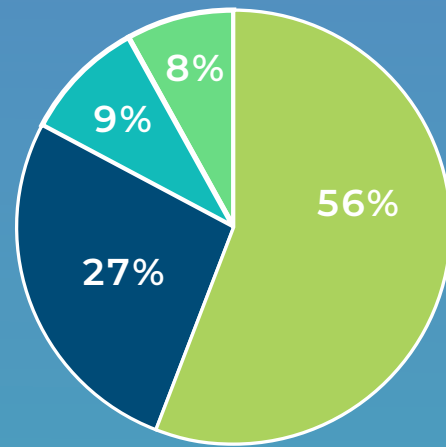


Revenue totaled \$1,778,427, while expenses came to \$1,555,753.

Support and Revenue



Expenses



- Contributions
- Special Events
- Program Income
- Grant Income
- Membership Fees
- STAR Store

- Direct Program Services
- Fundraising
- Supporting Services
- STAR Store



STARability is a gold-level GuideStar participant because of our commitment to transparency. GuideStar offers unbiased information to help donors make educated decisions about supporting nonprofits.



