

SouthSTAR Services Observer

Improving Lives of Individuals with Disabilities

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Expansion of Programs and Services

With the economic crisis and numerous people being laid off, SouthSTAR has been fortunate enough to continue to see significant growth within its programs and services. Below are some examples of the growth SouthSTAR has experienced in recent months.

Employment Services: The Employment Services Department has seen a significant increase in the number of individuals being placed in jobs within the community. Specifically, there are 35 individuals within the program either in Career Track training, Transition to Work training, or fully employed. Just in the months of April and May, 16 individuals were placed in employment within the community and these numbers are continuing to grow. The program is hoping to have a total of 60 individuals within the program by October 2009. For Employment Services, please contact Judith Holbrook at (708) 747-0627 ext. 112.



Jeremy at work with the Thunderbolts

Janitorial Services: The Janitorial Department is experiencing growth as well. In our last newsletter we announced the Janitorial Crew would be adding four new sites to their list of buildings to clean. With this expansion of available work, the Janitorial Services Department has added an additional 3 individuals to help serve these facilities. To date the Janitorial Department has 28 crew members cleaning a total of 14 sites.



Arnetha cleaning windows

If you are interested in having SouthSTAR clean your offices, please contact Luis Roldan at (708) 755-8030.



Dan Strick, President /CEO

President/CEO's Report

Excuse me as I paraphrase an unattributed quote often used but, the timing is too convenient to pass up. "The measure of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable citizens."

If this is true then it looks like Illinois does not measure up. Once again, the leaders of the State of Illinois are using our most vulnerable citizens as their pawns in the game of politics. As of July 1, the leaders of Illinois could not reach an agreement on a budget to support services for children, elderly, disabled, poor, medically fragile and victims of violence. The result of this lack of action is projected to result in the worst shut down and mass layoffs ever seen in the human services field in Illinois. There are projections that well over 10,000 people may lose jobs and 100,000 people may

lose services.

SouthSTAR Services receives 77% of its funding from the State of Illinois. Therefore, if Illinois has budget problems then so does SouthSTAR. Unless a resolution of the state budget is reached SouthSTAR will also experience significant lay offs and loss of services. We will have no choice but to turn people away for services and for those we currently serve, we will have to cut back on the scope of services.

The proposed state budget cuts exacerbate an already under funded community based system supporting people with developmental disabilities. In fact, the national report called State of the States in Developmental Disabilities 2008 ranked Illinois 51st, (yes, dead last), in the amount of funding it allocates to community based

services for people with developmental disabilities. An analysis shows that something costing \$1.00 in 1990 now costs \$1.70. Compare that to a state employee earning \$1.00 in 1990 now makes \$2.01 and that \$1.00 being worth \$1.35 to community based agencies serving people with developmental disabilities based on rate increases we have received. It is obvious to me that Illinois does not value our most vulnerable citizens.

I hope that by the time you read this the state budget mess has been resolved. Chances are it will not be. Either way, our state leaders and elected officials need to hear from all of us that the people that voted them in can just as easily vote them out. It is time to be heard and speak out for our most vulnerable citizens.

*"Do not follow
where the path
may lead, Go
instead where
there is no path
and leave a trail"*

*- Harold R.
McAlindon*

People You Should Know



Daniel Stefani—Day Services

Daniel has been a part of SouthSTAR since July of 2008. He currently works in the training center on the Production 5 Line on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Daniel recently received a Food Service Aide certificate from Prairie State College after having completed ten weeks of training in the areas of general safety, hospital sanitation, chemical safety, patient diets, patient tray set-up and patient/customer satisfaction. Daniel also attends the weekly support group with the Employment Services Department. He is currently applying and interviewing for jobs within the food service industry. Good luck Daniel on your efforts to become employed within the community.

Melissa Roelfs—Rehabilitation Coordinator

Melissa recently joined the SouthSTAR family as a Rehabilitation Coordinator. She began working at SouthSTAR in December of 2008. Melissa received a Bachelors Degree in Sociology from Western Illinois University and a Masters Degree in Organizational Leadership from Lewis University. In addition to her education, Melissa has 2 years experience working at a community based developmental disability agency. Melissa indicated that everyone at SouthSTAR is so nice and friendly. She indicated that she felt welcome the very first day she started working. Welcome aboard Melissa, we know you'll do a great job.

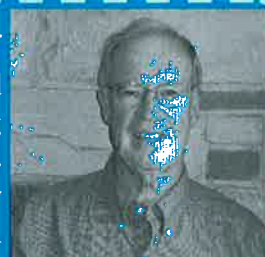


Torey McDowell—AmeriCorp Worker

Torey has been working as an AmeriCorp worker at SouthSTAR since February 2009. He is currently working with the Employment Services Department as a Vocational Counselor. His current job responsibilities include job placements, restructuring of individual files, completing follow-up job leads and follow-up with employers regarding job placements. Torey will complete his time with AmeriCorp in August 2009 at which time he hopes to become a full time employee of SouthSTAR. He indicated that he likes helping others, that it makes him feel good knowing that he has had an impact on their lives. Keep up the good work, Torey. We're proud of you!

Tom Ryan—Board Member

Tom has been a SouthSTAR Board Member since 1969. He has served as the Board President from 1970-1971, 1980-1981, 1997-1998, and again in 2002-2005. During this time Tom has served on numerous committees and helped plan various fundraising events. Tom indicated that being on the Board is the best way to know exactly what's going on especially since he is invested in the future of SouthSTAR as his son receives services here. It is because of his dedication and continuous commitment to SouthSTAR and other agencies serving the developmentally disabled that he was recognized as SouthSTAR Services 2009 Volunteer of the Year at the Membership Meeting held on June 25, 2009.



Save the Date

Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament

November 8, 2009 at CD & ME

Call 708-747-0627 ext. 115 to register

Early registration \$100 Non-refundable

SouthSTAR is going Green

The Senior Room along with Life Skills I and III have started a recycling program to teach "green" ideas to the individuals in the rooms. One example of the "green" techniques they are instituting includes: recycling the pop cans they consume each day.

The Development Department is also going "green". By providing SouthSTAR with your email address, we will be able to cut down on the use of paper and email you a newsletter and Annual Report.

If you are interested in providing SouthSTAR with your email address and help us go "green", please contact Terrhonda Hudson at (708) 747-0627 ext. 111.

Funding from Great Lakes Bank

SouthSTAR recently received a grant from the Great Lakes Bank Foundation to purchase equipment for our programs and services.

Since more individuals being served by SouthSTAR require assistance with changing clothes and hygiene maintenance, a Hoyer Lift has become necessary. This device will allow staff to effectively meet the needs of those severely impaired individuals without hurting themselves in the process.

SouthSTAR also needed new shrink packaging equipment because there has been an increased number of opportunities to bid on jobs that require this equipment. Having this new equipment will result in less downtime, and allow more individuals to be trained to use the equipment. This will allow SouthSTAR to bid on more packaging jobs and make it possible to complete jobs quicker.

SouthSTAR would like to give a BIG THANK YOU to Great Lakes Bank Foundation for providing the funding for this equipment.

Knights of Columbus Nina Council #3602

On June 10, 2009 the Knights of Columbus - Nina Council held their annual meeting honoring non-profit organizations that serve individuals with developmental disabilities. SouthSTAR's Development Department attended the meeting to receive this year's donation. SouthSTAR would like to thank the Knights for their continued support.

