

# Starr News

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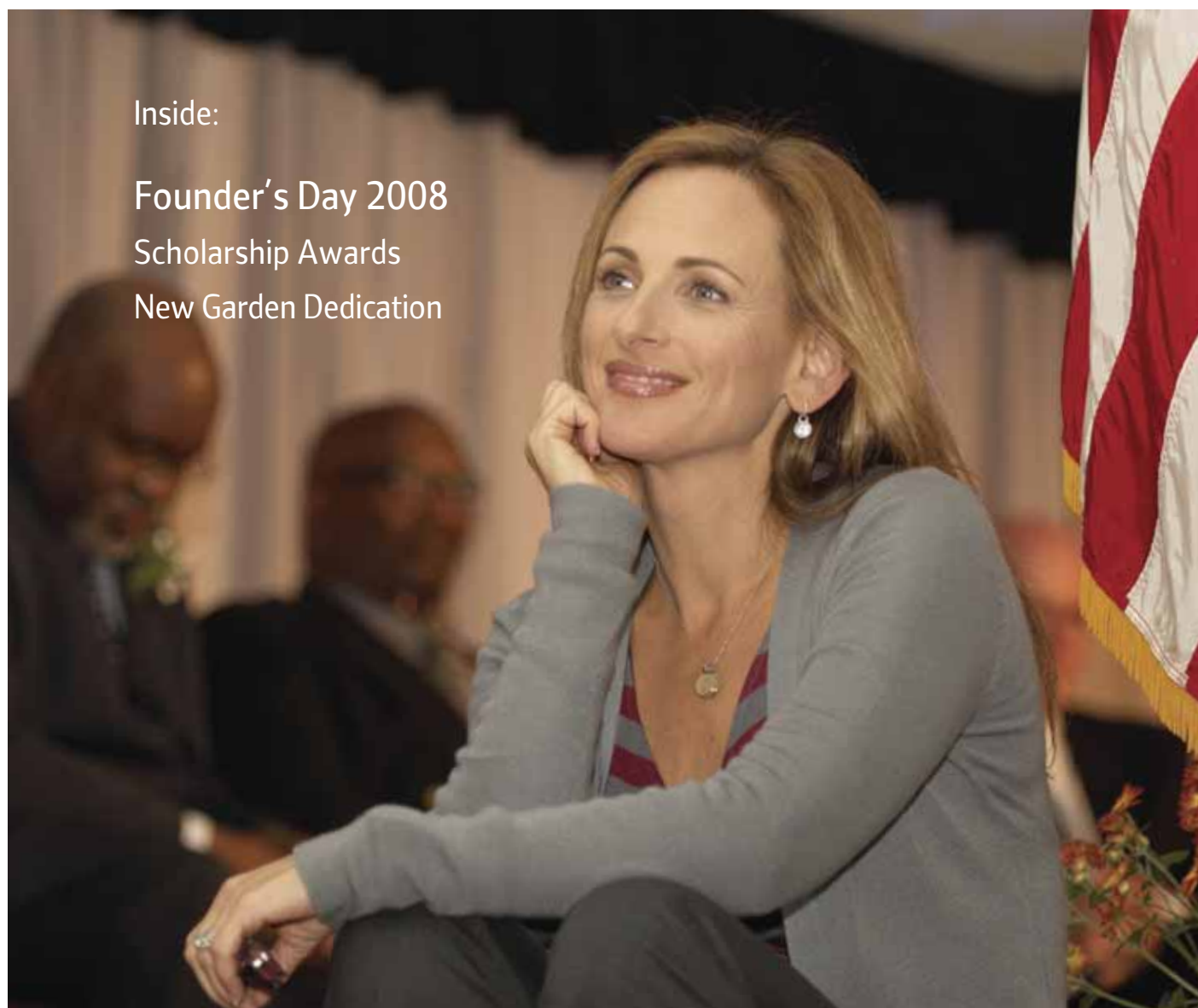
STARR COMMONWEALTH SERVING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SINCE 1913

Inside:

Founder's Day 2008

Scholarship Awards

New Garden Dedication



M I C H I G A N   A N D   O H I O ' S   P R E M I E R   C H I L D R E N ' S   C H A R I T Y

Michigan: Albion, Battle Creek, Detroit | Ohio: Van Wert, Columbus Hannah Neil Center

# Starr News

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**Mission:**  
**Create positive  
environments  
where children  
flourish.**

## < 2008 Scholarship Recipients

*See Page 17 –  
College scholarships  
awarded to Starr and  
Montcalm alumni*

## Cover Story: >

*See Page 4 –  
Marlee Matlin was  
guest speaker at  
Founder's Day*



## Starr News Winter, 2008 Volume 65, No. 4

Starr Commonwealth is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families & Children. Starr Commonwealth is a non-profit organization serving children and families regardless of race, religion, color, or national origin. Founded in 1913, Starr is licensed by the states of Michigan and Ohio and serves children and families from locations in Albion, Battle Creek, Detroit, MI.; Van Wert, and Columbus, OH. The Albion campus is a Michigan Historic Site. Starr Commonwealth receives funds from social agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals.

Jon Rhoades, Chairman of the Board; Martin L. Mitchell, Ed. D., President and Chief Executive Officer; Herman J. McCall, Ed. D., Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer; Christopher L. Smith, B.A., C.P.A., Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer; Simon P. Bisson, B.A.(Ed) Hons, Executive Vice President and Chief Development Officer; Wm. Chuck Jackson, MA, Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer.

13725 Starr Commonwealth Rd. Albion, MI 49224-9525 517-629-5591 info@starr.org

## ***Humor in healing.***

*They say laughter is the best medicine, but seeing the humor through difficult and challenging times is sometimes difficult.*

*There's nothing at all funny about the issues that our youth, families and professionals seek help for. There's no laughter in the great challenges that many of our youth hope to overcome.*

*But when used effectively, humor can be a tool for communicating the irony, cruelty and ignorance of day-to-day life.*

*For example, this year's guest speaker Marlee Matlin was quite comedic in her telling of stories in which she has dealt with others and their inexperience with those who, like her, are deaf or hard of hearing.*

*There's the producer who thought Marlee was doing an exceptional job of "acting" deaf; the stewardess who "recognized" Marlee as being deaf and brought her a Braille menu; and the interviewer who wanted to share with Marlee that her dog also was deaf.*

*More humorous than distressing, Marlee said, showing how with humility and a little bit of laughter, these incidents weren't going to define her or her abilities.*

*Among the many messages and sentiments that Marlee Matlin left us with, there's one that I want to reiterate – Marlee created a world for herself in which she knew she would succeed instead of waiting for the world to create a place for her. Her deafness did not define her. The discrimination of those who are different did not prevent her. Those who doubted did not stop her.*

*For many of our students, there has been far too many doubters and, unfortunately, far too little laughter in their lives. We hope that Marlee's visit will serve as a reminder to us all that listening is just as important as being heard, and that laughter goes a long way in healing.*

*Thank you all for helping us celebrate 95 years of service to children.*

*Martin L. Mitchell*

Martin L. Mitchell, Ed.D., President/CEO



Martin L. Mitchell, Ed.D.  
President/CEO





In choosing a guest speaker for Founder's Day, one question is always asked.

*How will he or she connect with our students? Will he be able to motivate our youth? Will she leave behind an inspiring message?*

Sure, the speaker should be someone who will attract visitors and who will entertain the audience, but not just any celebrity will do. Founder's Day speakers are chosen for their ability to communicate a positive, uplifting and motivational message, just as Marlee Matlin gracefully did on October 5, at Starr Commonwealth's Albion, Michigan campus.

Matlin, an Academy Award winning actress, author and advocate for children and disability causes, joined the students, families, alumni, trustees, staff and community in celebrating 95 years of serving youth and families in need. She congratulated the organization on its success and promised to help spread the word about Starr Commonwealth.

"I cannot begin to tell you how much your work here at Starr Commonwealth inspires me," Matlin said as she addressed the crowd of about 1,500 people. "I am humbled that you have been at it for 95 years; the success of your programs is an accomplishment I have to applaud you for.

"Thank you for introducing me to the wonderful work that you do here at Starr Commonwealth," she continued. "Your philosophy in finding the strengths in every child despite what barriers and obstacles they face is a philosophy I have lived by all my life."

Matlin, who continues to achieve Hollywood success despite naysayers and critics, told the crowd stories of her childhood and humorous and not so funny roadblocks in her path to stardom.



Growing up in Chicago during the 1970s, Matlin was different from the neighborhood kids but her parents refused to let her inability to hear disable her confidence.

“I strive to pass along the important message I learned from my parents and that still guides me today,” Matlin said. “It’s the same message that has guided you here at Starr Commonwealth for the past 95 years, ‘No matter what barriers are out there, all of us not only deserve respect, we deserve to be heard.’”



**“No matter what barriers are out there, all of us not only deserve respect, we deserve to be heard.”**

– Marlee Matlin



*The All Starr Choir performed*

Acting became an outlet and passion for Matlin, so when the coolest actor of the time, Henry Winkler, came to one of her performances she was adamant about meeting him and about someday being famous just like him.

During her lunch with the students and staff of Herrick Cottage, Matlin spoke about the importance of finding mentors and explained the importance of her friendship with Winkler.

“Henry told me all I needed to do was to follow my heart, open the front door and tackle the world,” she said. “And with that I created my own place in the world and made my own rules. Rather than waiting for others to see what I can do, I made it happen myself. Hollywood had plenty of barriers, but I would simply walk around them.”

Or, perhaps, waltz around them. Matlin recently finished a role on the ABC hit “Dancing with the Stars” and is scheduled to be on the upcoming tour.

“Life is grand despite what predictions there were 21 years ago that my Oscar was a result of a pity vote and I would never work in Hollywood again. I am still here.”

**She never heard  
“no you can’t.”**

“That courage and tenacity is what attracted us to Marlee Matlin. She understands how to turn challenges into opportunities and how to realize success can be a reality despite the many things possibly standing in your way,” said Martin Mitchell, President and Chief Executive Officer of Starr Commonwealth.

“For our students, Marlee’s message of persistence, following your dreams and ‘keep on keeping on’ is very powerful and something I hope they continue to remember beyond Starr.”

Founder’s Day is the annual celebration of the day founder Floyd Starr and 13 boys moved into Gladsome Cottage. We thank those of you who attended this year’s festivities in honor of Starr’s 95th anniversary and ask that you mark your calendars to join us on October 4, 2009 for our next Founder’s Day celebration.

# Commonwealthia

by Amy Reimann, Director of Archives and Alumni Affairs

The Albion campus area surrounding the Chapel-in-the-Woods has always been a place of peace and rest. At the top of the Great Cross, which was installed in the late 1960s, is the burial ground for our Founder and First President, "Uncle" Floyd Starr.



"Uncle" Floyd passed away in 1980 at the age of 97, having lived in the environs of his Commonwealth for 67 years. This small burial area is lovingly tended and kept attractive with trees that turn a vibrant red in fall. Named "Tiedje Hill," for one of the Commonwealth's favorite and long-time gardeners, Mr. Fred Tiedje, this spot is also one of the highest physical points on campus.

When looking from the crest of Teidje Hill toward the Brueckner Museum, the view takes you directly to the Christ of the Commonwealth statue. This statue is located in a wooded park area at the end of Meditation Lane named Sheseley Park. Dorothy Sheseley was "Uncle" Floyd's housekeeper and lived for many years in an apartment in Hillside, which we now call the



*Christ of the Commonwealth statue.*

Payne Family Center. In the area directly below the statue is another committal space – this one occupied by 6 individuals very important to the history of Starr. Erwin Mason, Dorothy Sheseley, Ida Bowle and Mary Lou Clark were women all very involved in the development of the Commonwealth. Mrs. Mason was the long-time treasurer and campus hostess and Mrs. Bowle and Mrs. Clark were both housemothers.

The other two souls recently re-interred in this space are Shawn and Timothy Ness, sons of President Emeritus Dr. Arlin and Mrs. Barbara Ness. The Nesses have made their own final arrangements to have their

final resting space on campus in this space also.

We invite you to visit these areas on campus – the Great Cross, Meditation Lane and Sheseley Park – and enjoy the serenity and beauty that is still a silent teacher to us. ☺



*Mrs. Erwin Mason, long-time treasurer and campus hostess, is one of the former Starr employees interred in Sheseley Park. Mason Supply in Albion and Mason Cottage in Van Wert are both named for her.*

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If you have questions or comments about any Starr historical topics, please contact Amy Reimann, Director of Archives and Alumni Affairs at 800.837.5591.

**we guard your privacy.** Starr Commonwealth does not sell or trade donor contact information. We do recognize and celebrate our donors' contributions by using their names in various publications. If you would like your gift to remain anonymous, please let us know. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Development Office at 800.837.5591, ext. 2436 or [info@starr.org](mailto:info@starr.org).

# Healing through spiritual growth.



The Holiday season  
is the time when  
spiritual connections  
are the strongest.

Help our kids reconnect with their faith.

Our spiritual programs, including our visual  
arts and museums, are funded wholly by  
private contributions and would not  
be offered without your support.



\*Starr Commonwealth does not require  
attendance or participation of any students  
in religious programming practices.

## "What I've learned about

Ministry Arts is it makes me feel good  
because people there make you feel  
welcome. By making art projects, you  
can express your feelings. Since I've  
been involved, it has helped me a lot."

*Bobbie S., 13-year-old Starr Commonwealth student*

## Spiritual Life

- ☐ Bibles (SPR-10).....\$15 each
- ☐ Religious CDs (SPR-11).....\$15 each
- ☐ Inspirational DVDs (SPR-12).....\$17 each
- ☐ Inspirational Books (SPR-13).....\$20 each
- ☐ Choir Robes (SPR-14).....\$50 each
- ☐ Sanctuary Candles (SPR-15).....\$65  
box per year
- ☐ Worship Linens and Napkins (SPR-16).....\$100  
per year
- ☐ Sunday Programs / Bulletins (SPR-17).....\$150  
3-months supply
- ☐ Birthday Cards for Students (SPR-18).....\$250  
6-months supply
- ☐ Chapel Landscaping – Annual Flowers,  
Wood Chips, etc. (SPR-19).....\$300 annually
- ☐ Altar Candles (SPR-20).....\$370  
box per year
- ☐ Spiritual Program – including Residential/  
Educational costs (SPR-21).....\$1,500  
per month

Please send your gift to:

Starr Commonwealth  
Development Office  
13725 Starr Commonwealth Rd.  
Albion, MI 49224



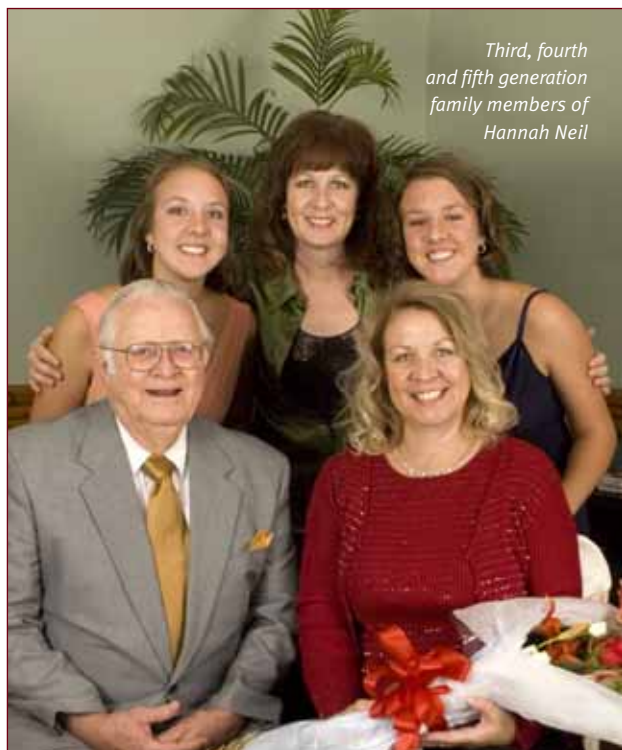


# 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Starr Commonwealth's Hannah Neil Center in Columbus, Ohio celebrated 150 years of serving children and families in Central Ohio with a well-attended anniversary event on September 25 at the Bridgewater Conference Center.

Emcee Kurt Ludlow, a local news anchor, led the festivities, which included a historical look back at the Neil family's involvement in Columbus, how Starr Commonwealth and the Hannah Neil Center became one and how the mission remains as vibrant today as when Hannah herself roamed the streets of Columbus to assist those in need. The All Starr Choir also performed with courage and heart bringing the attendants to their feet in a standing ovation.

The event served to not only mark the significance of 150 years of service, but to identify and recognize those individuals who continue Hannah Neil's mission in a way that would make her proud today through awarding the Children's Medal of Honor to four worthy people.



*Third, fourth  
and fifth generation  
family members of  
Hannah Neil*

daughters Danielle and Perrie Bonner as well as her father and Hannah Neil's third great grandson William Dennison Barton.

Starr wishes to thank the many supporters, sponsors and friends of the Hannah Neil Center who helped make this event a tremendous success.

To find out more information on how you can help abused and neglected children please call Starr Commonwealth's Hannah Neil Center at 614.491.5784.

The recipients of the Children's Medal of Honor were volunteer Rita Wilson, Treatment Foster Care Counselor Julie Shea-Gordon and Foster Care Parent Antoinetta "Miss J" Johnson along with Steven Davis, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Bob Evans Farms Inc.

Along with those supporters and friends in attendance there were some very special guests at the event. Mary Lou Bonner, the fourth great-granddaughter of Hannah Neil, came to Ohio from California to be a part of the festivities and to witness the work that Starr Commonwealth continues to do on behalf of her family. Accompanying Ms. Bonner was her sister Barbara Neil McCafferty, her



*Award winners Antoinetta Johnson,  
Julie Shea-Gordon and Rita Wilson*





Students, staff and members of Starr Commonwealth's Board of Trustees gathered October 6, 2008 to honor Margaret Starr Leutheuser, the daughter of founder Floyd Starr, by dedicating a new garden in her name.

Leutheuser was called at her home in Haverford, Pa. to speak about the dedication while a group of current students, staff, Board members and former Starr President Larry Brendtro and wife Janna gathered at Candler Hall, the President's home where Floyd Starr once lived. Also in attendance was Anne Willson Dupré, daughter of Margaret, and Sylvia Starr Richey, niece of Margaret.

"It's not only the 95th anniversary of Starr Commonwealth, but it's also Margaret's 95th birthday this year," said President and CEO Martin L. Mitchell. "We thought a garden at Starr, where Margaret was born, in front of her father's former home, would be a lovely and lasting tribute to her and her support of our mission."

Leutheuser said during the call that she wished she could have been in Albion for the occasion and was truly humbled to have a garden named in her honor.

"Mother, it really is a beautiful garden that you can see right out this large picture window along with all the wonderful trees that your father planted," said Dupré. "It is such a wonderful tribute because you were here for the beginning and it has been such a wonderful part of your life. It's an enduring tribute to you and your contributions to Starr Commonwealth."

Entrance into the garden is through a flat rock walk and a small arbor flanked by two blue junipers. The center of the garden features a copper gazebo, which is beginning to patina, with a sculpture of a mother and young children seated on a bench underneath, all of which is surrounded by mums, clematis, boxwoods, hydrangea trees, pansies and other perennials.

"Oh, I know exactly what it looks like and I can picture the garden right now," Leutheuser said. "What a nice gesture. I love Starr Commonwealth and always will. I feel very honored to have a garden there named after me. What a perfectly lovely thing to have happen in my life."



# *Featured Friends*

## **The Optimist of Bloomfield Hills**

The Optimist of Bloomfield Hills has been organized since 1985. Its mission is to be "the Friend of Youth" and as such, the organization is happy to help the at-risk youth that Starr Commonwealth serves. The Bloomfield Optimist Club has supported the youth at the Detroit Starr Commonwealth program for the past two years in several ways.

"For the past two years we bought holiday gifts for 50 young people in the Detroit Treatment Foster Care program," said Tamara Tazzia of the Bloomfield Optimists. "The Detroit region has been particularly hard hit by the downturn in the economy and we know that many children in our local foster care system will go without presents unless we help. This year, some of the older youth from Starr have volunteered to help wrap and distribute the presents. We look forward to having these young volunteers help us in some of our other programs in the future."



In 1989 the Bloomfield Optimist Club began the Holiday Wish Program with the idea of providing gifts for disadvantaged and at-risk children who might otherwise not have a happy holiday. The program started with 150 children and has grown to 2,700 under Brian MacKenzie's leadership.



The program's goal for this year is to purchase, wrap and distribute gifts to more than 2,700 local youth, including children from Starr Commonwealth's programs. The Oakland-Livingston Human Services Agency works with the Optimist to identify disadvantaged children (150% below poverty level) who can benefit from this program.

The Bloomfield Hills Club also has sponsored Kimberly Kasner from Empowered Mind Company to facilitate her program for the high school children at Starr Detroit. These youngsters who participated in the program were challenged in school and many had significant learning disabilities. Ms. Kasner's session helped the students identify their strengths and weakness and learn effective remedial skills to work with their unique skills to overcome their deficits. They learned better study skills, how to get better grades, and how to prepare better for tests. This program was so successful that several of the students have asked for a follow-up program.

"We believe that all children deserve the best we can provide," said Tazzia. "We are trying in our own small way to make a difference and we'll continue to support the Starr Commonwealth in any way we can."

If your business, civic group or organization would like to learn how to contribute toward the needs of children and families in Starr's care, please contact our Development Office at 800.837.5591.



I am deeply thankful for many wonderful things in my life. I am most thankful for the ability to communicate and relate to others on an emotional level. This ability is absolutely essential to my existence and it is so important to me to use this ability. The ability to feel and express feelings is something I also cherish deeply, as well as things in which I can find inspiration in natural beauties like the sun, the ocean, and so on.

Of course, my friends and my family are also something I have a deep gratitude for. Without them, I can honestly say I do not know where I would be. It is so nice to have people behind you supporting you in everything you do. I am so thankful to have these things in my life.

I show how grateful I am in a number of different ways; however, I admit this is something I would like to work on while at Montcalm School for Girls. I show I am grateful by trying to pursue my unique potential as a human being or using my strengths and skills to give back to the world. I also try to use my communication skills to help my friends and family. By doing this, not only am I using something I am grateful for, but I am also showing my friends and family how grateful I am for their companionship. I try to take time to appreciate simple beauties to show how thankful I am for them as well, rather than simply overlook or take advantage of them.

When someone shows their appreciation toward me, it is one of the most uplifting feelings I have experienced. I feel proud, as though what I am doing really does matter to others or even that I really can make a difference. I also feel content with myself because I feel like I am actually capable of accomplishing something worth appreciating. These are feelings I can honestly say I do not experience often, so when I do, I feel radiant.



– As written by Emily, a Montcalm School for Girls student

Giving  
Thanks this  
Holiday  
Season



# SERVICE WITH A SMILE

*Excerpts of a story published by the Battle Creek Enquirer – Reprinted with permission*

*Story by Lori Holcomb /Photos by Kevin Hare*

Every other Saturday, weather permitting, young men from the Wilcox cottage at Starr Commonwealth come to Battle Creek's Quaker Park to weed, mow grass, plant trees and learn about horticulture in the memorial garden they're making for a friend who died earlier this summer.

Some of the boys linger a few yards away while several others circle around the reporter, eager to answer and be asked questions before the gardening chores are doled out. A car pulls up and a middle aged woman dressed in a vibrant blue T-shirt and 1950s-style movie star sunglasses bounces out. The boys visibly relax at the sight of Dorothy Height, and a few more shuffle closer to the group.



*Dorothy Height  
boosts the self-esteem  
of two boys from  
Wilcox Cottage.*

*The boys learn while they  
help with weeding.*



Height, a former Starr educator and volunteer of 10 years, is quick to refract the spotlight off herself and onto the kids. At the first meeting with a reporter, she asked the boys to recite their interests – poetry, singing, art, rapping, sports – as each proudly boasted their talent and held their heads a bit higher.

“They can be anything they want to be,” Height said. “I tell them their mistakes of the past can’t be corrected, but they can correct themselves and become a better person in the future.”

The garden is a site of laughter, learning, counseling, and even consoling. While working with the boys earlier this summer, Height learned that Sheldon, a student whom she had worked with and recently graduated from Starr’s residential program, died after returning home to Detroit.

“I knew it affected me, but I didn’t know I took it so hard,” Height said. “After they told me that, I went home, didn’t want to do anything, got really lethargic, depressed, and then my heart started slowing down.”

Height was diagnosed in 1989 with lupus, a disease that attacks every organ of the body and has especially taken a toll on her heart lately.

“The prognosis is that I can’t have a lot of stress,” she said. “I can’t have a lot of worries, pressures, negativity.”

The illness makes her sore, robs her of her energy, bone mass and, at times, cognitive thinking. Yet, she still meets the boys on Saturdays, teaching them about gardening and always supplying heaping bags of chicken, pizza and too much food, said Starr youth specialist Richard Thurman. But the giving goes both ways.

When the duties of coordinating her ex-husband’s funeral recently fell into Height’s lap, she said the boys sent food. When a neighbor was evicted and his belongings were thrown out in the street, the boys and their counselors came with a trailer to help save the furniture from scavengers.



In October, several of the boys will participate in a lupus walk at Leila Arboretum that Height helped organize. When asked why he helps Height, Derrick, 17, of Grand Rapids, looked at the ground and smiled.

"Mrs. Dorothy's a very nice lady," he said, bashfully. "She helps us out so we want to be there with her." Height has developed a unique relationship with the boys and a trust that was amplified when they found out she was there on her own time.

"They were like, 'What? You're not getting paid for this?'" she said, laughing. "I told them, 'No. It's about volunteerism, giving back and making a place better than what you found.'"

In addition to the garden, the kids are able to volunteer through a variety of area organizations. Students like Kevin and Wendell, both 17, said it's helping them slowly put the past behind them and become the people they want to be.



"When our students engage in service learning projects, they reap the rewards of giving," said Martin Mitchell, President and Chief Executive Officer of Starr Commonwealth. "They learn the principles of mutual respect, gain problem-solving skills and connect with others, including adults like Dorothy, who help boost these youngsters' esteem and confidence. Another benefit is that the community now sees these children through a different light and recognizes, like we do at Starr, the good in every child."

It's a matter of treating them with respect, making them feel appreciated for their work, and most importantly, Height said, listening to them. Now, the students call Height and ask to come work in the garden.

"For a lot of these kids, this is the first time an adult ever paid attention to them and treated them like they matter," she said. "I'm not going to be able to touch every one of them, but in 10 years, I haven't ran into a bad kid yet. There is nothing those kids won't do for me. I'm not saying we're perfect, but they try and give me the courage to go on."

*To all staff at Montcalm,*

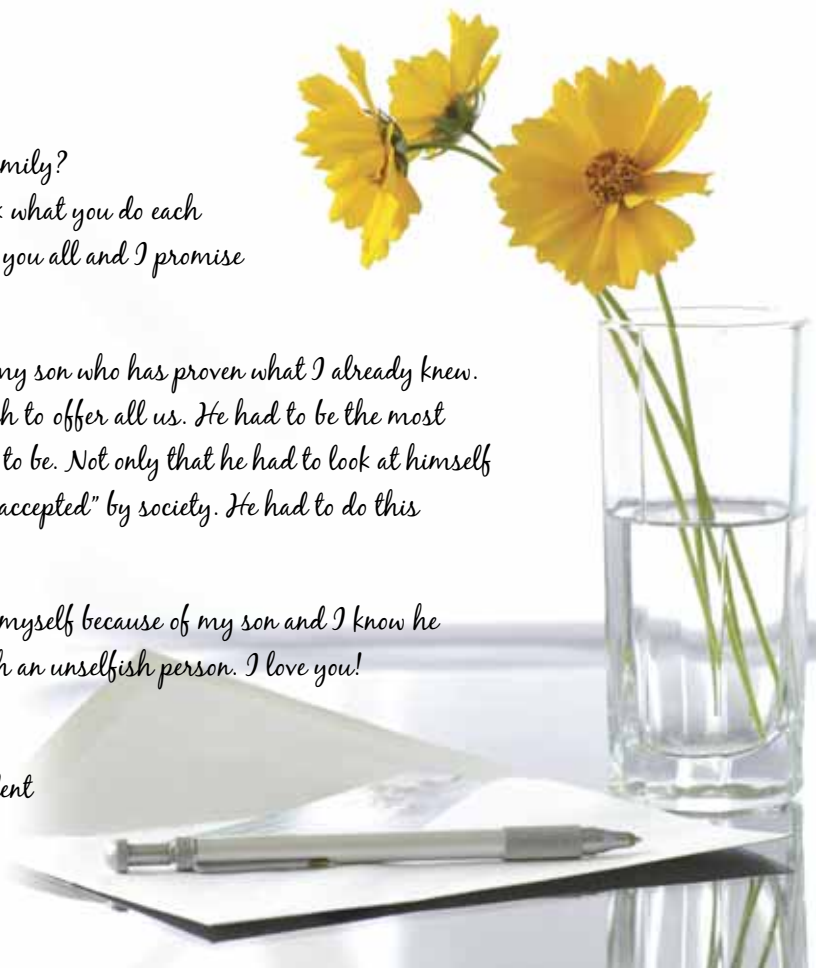
*How do we ever repay you for how you helped our family?  
You became part of our family and do not ever think what you do each  
and everyday does not go unnoticed. Our son misses you all and I promise  
I will be back out with him for visits.*

*Lastly but most importantly, I would like to thank my son who has proven what I already knew.  
That he is an awesome individual who has so much to offer all us. He had to be the most  
brave out of all of us during this time and continues to be. Not only that he had to look at himself  
and want to change certain behaviors in order to be "accepted" by society. He had to do this  
in an environment away from his home and family.*

*He is truly my hero. I have learned so much about myself because of my son and I know he  
is my gift from God. Thank you, son, for being such an unselfish person. I love you!*

*Britta Hogue*

*Mother of a former Montcalm School for Boys student*



# "IRA Charitable Rollover"

Your IRA can  
help protect  
someone  
else.



The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 offers new, time-limited opportunities for tax-free charitable giving.

If you're 70½ or older, you can now donate up to \$100,000 to Starr Commonwealth directly from a Traditional or Roth IRA with no adverse tax consequences.

It's a great opportunity but you'll need to act soon – the Act only covers charitable giving for 2008 and 2009. We'll be glad to tell you more. Just give us a call in the Development Office at 800.837.5591.

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*If you would like a copy of the 2008 Starr Commonwealth Annual Report, please call 800.837.5591. You also may read the Annual Report online by visiting our website, [starr.org](http://starr.org).*

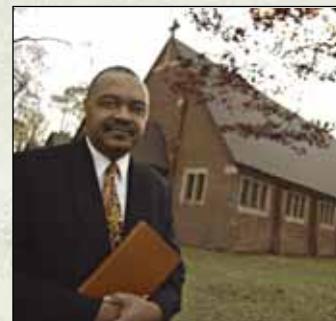




## Chaplain's Message

As an employee of Starr Commonwealth, I've had the wonderful opportunity of participating in our annual Founder's Day. Each year the auto show, Kids Alley, luncheon, cottage visits, returning alumni, and the afternoon program have contributed to many smiles, insights and warm feelings.

This year's Founder's Day was no exception with the highlight for me being the speaker, Marlee Matlin. Ms. Matlin is an Academy Award winning actress who, according to our advertisement for Founder's Day, "Never heard the word 'No!'" As you may or may not know, Ms. Matlin is "hearing impaired" so hearing the word "No" would have been difficult for her as she pursued her dreams of acting and becoming a beacon of light to others who are challenged in some way. Ms. Matlin has achieved great success, overcoming many obstacles along the way. While many around her saw her "impairment" as a problem, she saw it as an opportunity to open doors, not only for herself, but for others.



Chaplain Kenneth T. Ponds



Marlee Matlin

**This is what Floyd Starr was all about, making sure that not one of his kids heard the word "no."**

Here at Starr we work with young people who, unfortunately, have heard the word, "No" most of their lives. They have heard "No" from their families, their schools, their communities and a society which says "No" so strongly that most of our young people have garnered the tags of "at-risk youth," "troubled" and "emotionally impaired" just to name a few. "No!" "No!" "No!" You're not good enough, smart enough, safe enough, valued enough, loved enough, wanted enough, or respected enough – "No!"

There is a song which we use to teach during the campus worship services entitled, "And God Said Yes!" God says

"Yes!" "Yes, I love you; Yes, I want you; Yes, I value you so much that I'm willing to sacrifice all so that you can have it all – strength for the day; guidance along the way; a cup packed down and overflowing with love." God says "Yes" to our young people, and to all of us.

My hope is that whenever a young person comes to us here at Starr, they hear "Yes" over and over again. After all, this is what Floyd Starr was all about, making sure that not one of his kids heard the word "No," but out of love and concern for them and what they could become, they only heard the word, "Yes."

**Watch your gift grow.** Do you work for a company that offers a matching gifts program? Or, are you retired from a matching gifts company? If so, you could double – maybe even triple – your gifts to Starr Commonwealth children simply by letting us know. Just ask your employer or former employer to provide you with the paperwork you need. Fill it out and send it to Attention: Development Office, Starr Commonwealth, 13725 Starr Commonwealth Road, Albion, MI 49224-9910

**Thank you for caring!**



## David's success

David was the kid in the back of the class, eyes a million miles away, drumming his fingers to a tune only he could hear. He had no friends and didn't appear to want any, either. Because if he did, his classmates wondered, why on earth would he say the things he does? David was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome as a young teen. His family wasn't quite sure what to do. When his grades became worse and his outbursts more frightening, they decided residential treatment was the best answer. David's first placement was a program that gave Asperger's students a "script" to follow when interacting with others. "I was staring too hard at people, trying to make eye contact and when someone didn't answer the right way on the script I didn't know what to say or do," says the teen. "I think I was freaking people out." At Montcalm, David has relationships, not scripts. He's learned that his "Asperger's moments" (as he calls them) don't define him as a person. "I know when I'm cycling," says David who says he still feels frustrated sometimes. "But you know what? Everybody feels frustrated sometimes. It's what you do about it that matters."

**At Montcalm,  
David has  
relationships,  
not scripts.**

"For David, group meetings have been a lifesaver. "If we have a problem, we label it and talk about what we were thinking at the time. Then we figure out what was wrong in our thinking. Sometimes it's a real surprise!"



## KUTSCHE STUDENTS GO TO COLLEGE



This past summer, students and staff of Starr Albion's Kutsche Cottage took a field trip to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

The purpose of the trip was to give students an opportunity to see a big campus as well as expose them to the many educational avenues that college can offer. Their tour guide was Erin Burch, the daughter of teacher Mrs. Carol Burch.

During their tour, Kutsche students were able to sit in a chemistry lecture hall, walk through one of the many campus libraries, observe students using the "fish bowl" computer lab, eat lunch in the Michigan Union and see the athletic facilities.

"It inspired us to work hard in school so we can attend a great college like U of M and become successful in life," said Jon.





*A Starr scholarship recipient receives congratulations from Representative Mark Schauer*

## STARR SUPPORTS COLLEGE DREAMS

As is the tradition at Founder's Day, Starr Commonwealth recently awarded scholarships to several alumni in support of their educational endeavors. This year, 32 awards were granted for a total of \$183,000 in scholarship commitments.

Many of this year's recipients are attending institutions more than 100 miles away and were not able to make the trip to Albion, Michigan. We were, however, able to recognize the following students who were in attendance during the Founder's Day program. Listed is the name of the student and the educational institution they are attending:

- Jessica Kellerman, Jackson Community College
- Quentin Hines, University of Cincinnati
- Garrett Treese, West Nottingham Academy
- Bethami Moore, DePaul University
- Paul Wokuluk, Macomb Community College
- Andrew Stapleton, Eastern Michigan University
- Keith Cullinan, Western Michigan University
- Jeffrey Weinthal, Kellogg Community College
- Michael Sutmiller, Lake Michigan College

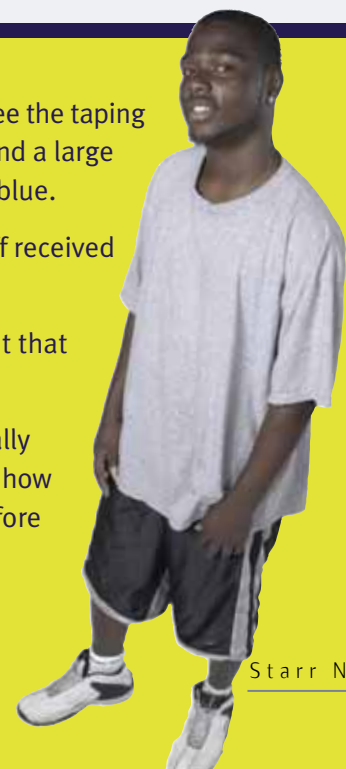
If you are interested in establishing a named scholarship fund, contributing to one of our already created funds or finding out other ways to help both current Starr students and alumni with their educational needs, contact Director of Alumni Affairs and Scholarship Office Coordinator Amy Reimann at 800.837.5591.

Students and staff were also pleasantly surprised that they were able to see the taping of ESPN's Title Town. At this event the Michigan Marching Band played and a large cheering section of current Michigan students supported the maize and blue.

To add additional excitement to their tour, some of the students and staff received autographs and photos with Heisman trophy winner Desmond Howard.

"It was a good experience for me," voiced Shawn, who was one student that posed for a picture with Mr. Howard.

Youth specialist Le Bronze Bristow of Kutsche reported that "the kids really enjoyed seeing the ESPN Sports Center TV experience; they were amazed how many takes it took. They all are still talking about going to college and before this trip they didn't even enjoy high school."



## SPECIAL REMEMBRANCES

### Honor and Memorial Gifts

HONOR GIFTS are thoughtful ways to remember a special person and/or a special occasion, such as a new birth, birthday, anniversary, graduation, Mother's Day, or Father's Day, while also helping Starr children. When sending an honor gift, please provide the

address of the honoree. We will send an acknowledgement card to let them know of your thoughtfulness, but we won't mention the gift amount. You may call in your honor gift for faster acknowledgement at: 800.837.5591. Honor gifts also may be made online at: [www.starr.org](http://www.starr.org).

MEMORIAL GIFTS offer an enduring tribute to the memory of a friend or loved one, while extending a helping hand to the children of Starr Commonwealth. When sending a memorial gift, please provide the address of a family member of the deceased to whom we can send an acknowledgement card. We will let them know of your thoughtfulness, but won't mention the gift amount. You may call in your memorial gift for faster acknowledgement at: 800.837.5591. Memorial donations also may be made online at: [www.starr.org](http://www.starr.org).

Here is a listing of Honor and Memorial gifts received from 7/25/08 to 10/25/08. Givers are listed below the name of the person in whose memory or honor they contributed. Gifts not listed here will appear in a future issue of *Starr News*.

*If we missed your name or an error has occurred with your listing, please forgive us and contact us so we may correct it in the next issue.*

#### PASSINGS:

*Starr Commonwealth wishes to recognize the following friends of Starr Commonwealth who recently passed away:*

JOHN A. SPEICHER (*former Trustee*)

August 26, 2008

HELEN HERNANDEZ (*former employee*)

September 29, 2008

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