



AFP Newsletter | January 2016



FEATURED MEMBER: Peter Saverine and STAR

Though only the Director of Philanthropy for STAR since 2013, Peter has been involved with the nonprofit for 25 years. In 1989, he received the STAR Business Advocate Award. Not only did he employ multiple STAR participants over several decades wherever he worked, but he also engaged developmentally disabled individuals to help with yard clean up. Paid by the job, Peter recalls how he enjoyed watching a few of the young people gleefully jump in piles of leaves while others were hard at work raking. (When completed, the job was well done.) He was smitten with the organization's mission. There has always been a refreshing continuity of employment at the agency. The Executive Director, Katie Banzhaf, and many of the other staff members have been with STAR for over 25 years. And he notes that there is an extraordinarily positive vibe among the staff. Peter says, in the back of his mind, he "always envisioned that he would work at STAR at some point in his life."

Founded in 1952 by parents of kids with developmental disabilities who were looking for an alternative to having their children institutionalized for their entire lives, STAR today, is working towards full societal integration of individuals with developmental disabilities-in school, at home, and in the workplace. The organization offers therapies for children birth to 3 years, day programs with recreation and intellectual stimulation, and job training for youth 18 and older, job and volunteer placement, and

workplace support. They also have group homes, condos, and apartments that provide residential support for people with disabilities. These well-maintained residences look like many other homes in a community but have multiple bedrooms and caretaking staff round the clock. STAR is a large organization and serves over 500 people annually and has over 230 full and part time employees including therapists, residential, vocational, and administrative staff.

Even though several of STAR's fundraising activities such as the annual gala are well established and attended, Peter has raised quite a bit of new money for the organization. His recent capital fundraising efforts, alone, netted: 20 new vans, which are vital in moving the members to and from their volunteer and job sites, doctor visits, and recreational opportunities; a sprinkler system for the headquarters; and, an entirely new computer system and printers for everyone at STAR.

As if it isn't enough to put in long hours to ensure the charity has the funds and resources it needs to operate to its full potential, Peter's off the clock hours are spent with STAR participants, too. Every Wednesday night is Theatre of STAR's rehearsal, which is a program that is similar to America's Got Talent where STAR members sing and dance. Peter's team performed at the Norwalk City Hall Concert Hall in front of almost 1,000 people in December. "It's a lot of fun!" he says.

Peter has abundant energy and lives by the mantra of the book, "The IBM Way," by the late Buck Rogers, which proclaims that there are three types of people in this world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who turn around and ask 'what happened'? Peter, like Buck Rogers, prefers to associate with the first.

It's not just the staff who create the joyful ambiance at the agency. STAR is an active place where participants happily come and go all day long, and, Peter's bright and comfortable office located near the entrance -- with the door wide open-- beckons clients to visit. During our interview, one man, a regular, Peter says, walks in and asks for the sports section of Peter's newspaper. Peter enjoys the daily ritual, greets the man jovially, and offers him the requested reading material. Later, as we pass through the halls on our tour, many of the residents say hello or hug him. He meets their enthusiasm with a return embrace, and always a big smile.

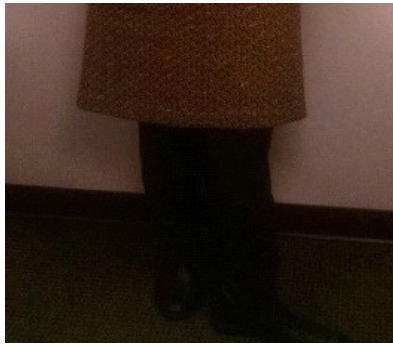
A Renaissance man, Peter has done many things in his life and has had multiple career tracks. He started his work life as a buyer for Lord and Taylor corporate in Manhattan. He also owned and operated a flower shop in Greenwich, was the Director of Sales and Marketing at a family sporting goods store in Darien, authored several popular children's books and is an accomplished landscape painter. Directly before arriving at STAR, he was the Executive Director of the Bartlett Arboretum in Stamford.

In Peter's spare time, he mentors youth at Builders Beyond Borders and accompanies the youth on trips, internationally.

I'm sure you will join with me in wishing Peter well when you see him at a future AFP Fairfield County event. After several years of bachelorhood, following his beloved wife's early passing, Peter got married this past October and looks forward to writing the next chapters of his life with a new soul mate.

She passed the CFRE exam!





Jeannine Egdorf Phelan, Development Director of the Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut, located in Stamford



December's Luncheon with Watts Wacker, the Futurist



National Philanthropy Day® Recognized Local Heroes

On November 6th, AFP's Best in the State Connecticut Philanthropy Awards Breakfast honored all those who have helped change lives in our community through their philanthropic efforts. Six different awards were presented.

Bank of America was named the Outstanding Corporation, 2015. Since 2004, Bank of America's signature philanthropic program, the Neighborhood Builder, has helped to strengthen communities by awarding non-profits more than \$170 million for their various causes. Recently, in 2014, the Bank partnered with the Fairfield County Community Foundation to broaden their giving capacity to non-profits during the 2nd Annual Fairfield County Giving Day, which helped 386 non-profits raise some \$1,066,091 on March 5, 2015. As a philanthropic company, Bank of America saw the opportunity to not just be the lead sponsor, but to strategically help non-profits raise funds for their various causes. Bank Of America's Student Leader Program is another innovative approach in which the organization provides students with an 8-week paid internship at a charity, a week long educational trip to Washington, DC to meet their state senator and representatives, to learn about current issues and solutions, meet/network with other student leaders throughout the US, and to volunteer at a non-profit in DC. With its gifts, the organization has strengthened organizations such as Smilow Cancer Hospital, The Cardinal Sheehan Center, Inspirica, the Community Economic Development Fund, and the Bridgeport Rescue Mission.

Mary Grace Henry of Greenwich won the Award for Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy 2015. When she was just 12, Mary Grace founded Reverse The Course in order to fund the education of one girl in Uganda. She made reversible headbands, hoping that they would reverse the course of a girl's life. Following this endeavor, Mary Grace designed several hundred accessories and sold over 16,000 products at retail sites in six states throughout the Tri-State area. Since then, her commitment to providing education for marginalized girls has grown. She funds their tuition as well as their textbook and testing fees, pays for uniforms and shoes, and also pays to place as many as possible into boarding schools, where they are safe from pressures for early marriage. Finally, she makes sure that each girl who is not in boarding school receives food at least twice each day because she knows that they cannot learn if they are hungry. Currently, Mary Grace has funded 160 years of education for 66 girls. Mary Grace's also provides funding for student and adult workshops that have helped reduce the incidence of female genital mutilation among Maasai girls by 25% within the Kibera region. She's also provided Kindles that can be charged at school and then used by students who live in the slums of Kibera and who lack electricity so they are able to do their homework at night. Furthermore, she's paid for the salary of a teacher at another school in the slums of Kibera. Mary Grace headed to college for the first time this fall and plans to continue her philanthropic efforts far into the future. What she has done is truly exceptional for a student of her age and serves as a mentor and inspiration to her own students as well as teens here in the U.S.

[To read more, click here...](#)

Upcoming Events - *Save the Date!*

February 10

Networking (with drinks) and an Evening Panel Presentation

5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Inn and Conference Center, Norwalk

Title: Millennials: Revolutionizing Philanthropy

Panel:

- Daniel Trust, Founder, Daniel Trust Foundation
- RJ Mercede, Fairfield County Community Foundation
- Alexandra Cooley, Greenworks Lending

1.5 CFRE credits

\$25 for members, \$45 for non-members. All are welcome.

New Members

Kim Carter
Development Officer
Keystone House, Inc.

Shannon Coakley
Executive Director
EQUUS Foundation, Inc.

Gillian Clark
Director of Rider Recruitment
CT Challenge

Mr. Edwin Evarts
Principal
Evarts Consulting, LLC

Renewed Members

Joanne Boyer
Director of Development
Waveny Care Network

Carey S. Dougherty
Director of Development
Recovery Network of Programs

Sabra Gallo

Susan Ludwig
Regional Director of Philanthropy
Coast Guard Foundation

Peter C. Saverine
Director of Philanthropy
STAR, Inc.

Contact Information

For more information on AFP Fairfield County, visit our website at:
<http://www.afpfairfield.org>.

For questions related to events, please contact our Chapter Administrator, Marianne Hickey at
mariannehickey@afpfairfield.org.

For questions related to membership or to get involved with an AFP Board Committee, email board member, Lorraine Gibbons at
lgibbons@shehancenter.org.

For questions or comments about the newsletter, please contact AFP board member, Anne Tack
ATack@Tackwriters.com.

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Rick Reichert