

Bridging the Gap, Expanding Possibilities

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Collier County, turning 22 often means falling off the “services cliff.” The supportive programs they relied on in school disappear, leaving them with limited opportunities for personal growth, employment, and social connection.

At STARability Foundation, we refuse to let that be the end of the story. We are transforming what’s possible by providing innovative programs that empower individuals with diverse abilities to lead meaningful, engaged lives. Through life skills development, career training, social enrichment, and community inclusion, we are bridging the gap and ensuring that every STAR has the opportunity to shine.

But the need is growing. With more families choosing Collier County as their home and students with IDD aging out of school, demand for our programs is higher than ever. To meet this need, we must expand our reach, enhance our services, and develop new opportunities that unlock potential at every stage of life.

Together, we can ensure that no STAR is left behind.

6,000+

From the 2023-2024 school year, there were over 6,000 students with disabilities in Collier County Schools’ Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Program.



2023-2024



STARability
FOUNDATION

Shining light on ability, not disability.

Dear STARability Family,

At STARability, we believe that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) deserve more than just support—they deserve opportunities to learn, work, and thrive. But when school ends at age 22, many families are left searching for options. That’s where we come in, developing pioneering programs that break new ground and give our participants the skills, confidence, and experiences they need to lead fulfilling lives.

Last year, thanks to your generosity, we provided over 50,601 hands-on learning experiences for more than 330 participants, including:

- **Trailblazer Academy**, equipping young adults with essential life and job skills so they can contribute meaningfully to their communities.
- **Career Services**, where we have helped 20 participants secure paid jobs with local businesses, boosting their independence and self-worth.
- **The STAR Studio & Artisan Gifts**, a thriving social enterprise where creativity meets real-world experience.

The impact of STARability extends far beyond our participants. Families gain peace of mind knowing their loved ones have purpose and connection. Businesses gain hardworking employees. The dollars invested in our programs multiply—driving innovation, economic contribution, and stronger communities.

In the pages ahead, you’ll meet STARs who found jobs, volunteered almost 4,000 hours, and took exciting steps toward independence. Their achievements remind us why this work matters.

Thank you for being part of this journey. With your support, we’ll continue building bold, innovative solutions that empower every STAR to shine.

Because of you, lives are changing. Families are finding hope. Our community is growing stronger.

Keep shining,
KAREN GOVERN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER



Rock on!
JEFF MACONAGHY
BOARD CHAIR



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STARability empowers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities through lifelong friendships, personal growth, and confidence-building programs.

◆ *Empower. Connect. Include.*

★ Learn more at STARability.org

JR. TRAILBLAZER ACADEMY

A PATH TO INDEPENDENCE

Our Jr. Trailblazer Academy helps high school students successfully transition into adulthood, preparing them for life beyond traditional school programs. Through hands-on experiences in the community, students explore their strengths, build confidence, and develop essential skills for future employment and personal growth.

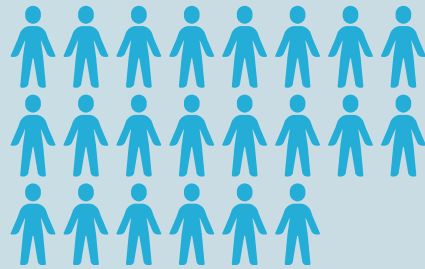


Alexis blazing through challenges in class

75%

School
Collaboration

Ages 14-22



26 active Jr. STARs

ALEXIS' STORY

Through the Jr. Trailblazer Academy, Alexis gained hands-on experience, explored her strengths, and built confidence—preparing her for the transition into adulthood.

In the Trailblazer Academy (TBA), Alexis continued to grow. She deepened her connections with peers, took initiative in conversations, and developed strong teamwork skills. At her job with Winfield Street Coffee, she achieved a major milestone—working independently without a job coach.

Alexis' journey is one of many examples that demonstrate the impact STARability's programs have in participant's lives

TRAILBLAZER ACADEMY

EMPOWERING GROWTH AND CONFIDENCE

STARability's Trailblazer Academy empowers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities through hands-on learning, skill-building, and meaningful connections. This community-based program builds confidence, fosters independence, and helps participants become valued members of the community.

41%
Trailblazers are fully
funded through
scholarship

18+
Age range
served

373
Total STAR participants
enrolled across
STARability's
programming

*Alexis creating Art at
the STAR Studio*

CAREER SERVICES

FROM LEARNER TO LEADER

Through our Career Services, participants learn job skills, explore career opportunities, and find employment with businesses that believe in their abilities, including pre-employment and employment through supported services.

★ Daniella's Journey: Growing Into a Leader

When Daniella joined STARability's Career Services, she was ready to grow—personally and professionally. With hard work and the support of STARability, she has become a leader, mentor, and advocate, not just for herself but for those around her.

★ Stepping Into Leadership

Daniella quickly took on leadership roles in STAR Connections and the Trailblazer Academy, assisting in classes and helping fellow participants develop essential skills. One defining moment came when a STAR Employee became frustrated in the kitchen—before staff could step in, Daniella was already by his side, calmly guiding him through the challenge. Her ability to support and uplift others has made her a role model among her peers.

STAR CONNECTIONS

EMPOWERING GROWTH

Our diverse range of classes and recreational opportunities open doors to a realm of possibilities. Each class is carefully crafted to cater to the unique strengths and abilities of participants, fostering an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

★ Finding Her Voice & Building Connections

Through self-advocacy classes in Career Services, Daniella has learned how to speak up for herself and encourage others to do the same. She has formed strong friendships, built a supportive community and discovered a new sense of confidence and independence.

★ Pursuing Her Goals

Daniella's professional growth has been just as inspiring. After showcasing her dedication in Career Services' vocational training, she secured a job at Germain Toyota. Now, she is taking the next step toward her dream of working with children by pursuing her Child Development Associate Certificate at Florida Gulf Coast University with Career Services' support.

Daniella enjoying her work at Germain Toyota

50

STARs enrolled in Career Services



20 new jobs obtained

10,598

Experiences for STARs & families at monthly social events

MUSIC ACADEMY

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL THROUGH MUSIC

The Music Academy provides a supportive space for participants to explore and develop musical skills while deepening their appreciation for music. Designed for those with low to moderate support needs, it enhances access to music education and helps shift perceptions about each individual's ability to learn, create, and engage through music.

★ Charting a Path for Inclusion

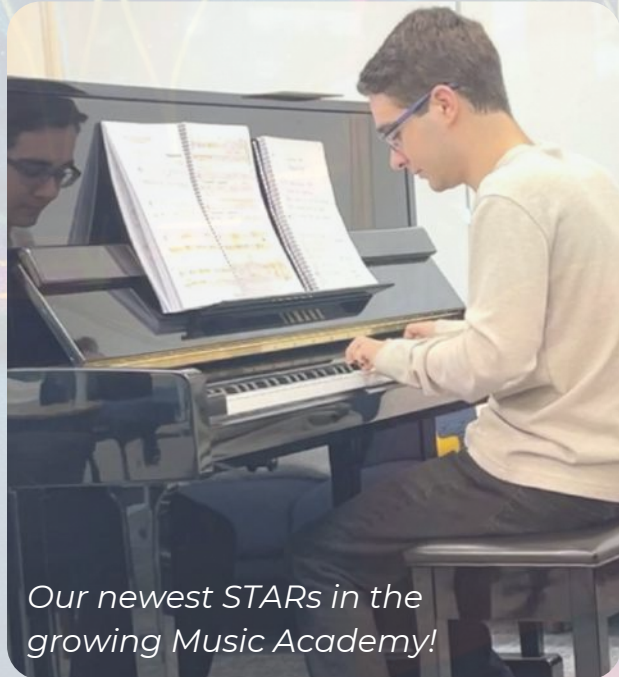
The Music Academy is Florida's only program of its kind, originally founded as the Southwest Florida Music Education Center before merging with STARability in 2024. Designed for neurodiverse adults with a passion for music, it offers individualized education that fosters social integration and personal growth. Through collaboration with families and instructors, each participant follows a customized Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) to access meaningful social, educational, and vocational opportunities.

★ Expert Instruction

Led by experienced music educators trained in behavioral and educational strategies, the Music Academy provides specialized instruction tailored to diverse learning needs. Participants benefit from the expertise of Music Program Director Lisa Barnett, MT-BC, a Board-Certified Music Therapist, and Dr. Teresa Herrero Taylor, a Licensed Psychologist and Board-Certified Behavior Analyst with extensive experience in inclusive music education.

★ Measurable Impact

The Music Academy is committed to delivering real results. With a custom assessment process, it tracks participant progress in key musical skills, demonstrating the program's transformative impact on confidence, creativity, and social engagement.



Our newest STARs in the growing Music Academy!

VIRTUAL STAR

EMPOWERING GROWTH FROM ANYWHERE

Our virtual program mirrors the in-person Trailblazer Academy, prioritizing essential life skills while customizing support to individual goals. Our dedicated virtual team of specialized instructors attentively track progress, showcasing the profound impact this innovative and comprehensive program can have on transforming lives.

★ Success Story: Mike Mitchell's Virtual Triumph

Mike Mitchell has overcome numerous challenges, including autism, a seizure disorder, and celiac disease, which demands careful dietary management. Rather than allowing these hurdles to define him, he focused on his strengths and became his own advocate.

When Mike transitioned from in-person programs to STARability's Virtual STAR Connections, he didn't just adapt—he thrived. The virtual platform became more than just a way to participate; it allowed him to grow as a leader, connect with others worldwide, and share his passion for learning.

Today, Mike is an engaged and inspiring presence in the virtual community, proving that challenges don't limit potential. His story is a testament to perseverance, self-advocacy, and the power of finding the right support system to succeed.



Mike connecting with Virtual STARs from accross the nation!

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES BUILDING SKILLS, CREATING OPPORTUNITIES



Creativity and craftsmanship come to life at STAR Studio, where participants handcraft soy candles, jewelry, illustrated cards, and more. These artisan-made products, sold in the STAR Store, online, and at local retailers, help STARs build valuable skills while creating meaningful gifts and home accents that bring joy to the community.



80
Participants
served

10
Week paid
internships

5
Part-time
team
members

STAR participants at
STAR Studio class



STAR Apparel

Show your support in style with STARability apparel! From hats to sun-protection shirts, our online and in-store collection has something for everyone. 100% of proceeds go toward funding life-changing programs for STAR participants.



Now in a larger space, the STARability Home Collection, which opened in late 2024, offers an expanded selection of upscale resale items, from designer furniture to statement décor. Located in the Naples Design District, just steps from STAR Studio & Artisan Gifts, the store provides both a unique shopping experience and vocational opportunities for STAR participants through training and paid employment. Every purchase supports STARability's mission.



Purchase
your
original
gifts now



SPECIAL EVENTS

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY, CREATING IMPACT



The starting line runners are off!

Record-Breaking Attendance at Our 6th Annual 5K!

STARability Foundation’s 6th Annual Run, Walk & Roll 5K was a record-breaking success, raising over \$100,000 to support life-changing programs for individuals with disabilities. With 430 enthusiastic participants at Paradise Coast Sports Complex, the event was filled with energy, inclusivity, and community spirit. A generous \$10,000 pledge from event co-chairs Jeff and Maureen Maconaghy helped push the total to new heights.

From heartfelt speeches to high-fives at the finish line, the morning was a celebration of all abilities. Sponsors like Inspired Closets SWFL played a key role in making the event possible, demonstrating the community’s dedication to creating a more inclusive world.

Here’s to keeping the momentum rolling—see you at the next race at Baker Park, **Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025, 8-10:30 a.m!**

STARability Foundation thrives through year-round special events and community activities. The funds raised directly fuel our life-changing programs and services, empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Collier County.



STAR Gala bidders raising their paddle high!



2024 Event — An Inspiring Success! STARability’s 6th Annual STAR Gala:

The Adventure Begins raised over \$2.8 million to support innovative, life-changing programs for individuals with IDD in Collier County. More than 600 guests filled the sold-out Ritz-Carlton Naples, Tiburón for an unforgettable evening celebrating the journeys of STAR participants, their families, and friends.

Inspired by Emily Perl Kingsley’s poem *Welcome to Holland*, which reflects the unexpected journey of raising a child with a disability, the gala’s theme took guests on a surprise voyage—from the landmarks of Italy to the vibrant landscapes of Holland—revealed in a breathtaking moment during the event.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

As of March 2024

Air Bar Blowouts & Extensions
Arthrex
Artis—Naples
BCB Homes
Coastland Center
Cosmos Ristorante & Pizzeria
Driftwood Garden Center
Germain Lincoln of Naples
Germain Toyota of Naples
Golden PAWS Assistance Dogs
Golisano Children's Museum of Naples (CMON)
Greater Naples Officials Association
Humane Society Naples
Inspired Closets
Laces of Love
Meals of Hope
Mister O1 Extraordinary Pizza
Naples Art Institute
Naples Picasso Flowers
Naples Senior Center
Naples Therapeutic Riding Center
Naples Zoo
Outback Steakhouse
Pampered Pet Resorts
Paradise Coast Sports Complex
Paragon Theaters
Publix
Sandpiper Clothiers
Seed to Table
St. Matthew's House - Boutique and Pantry
STARability Foundation / STAR Store & Studio / THRIVEability
Stofft Cooney Architects
Structure Medical
Tacos & Tequila Cantina
The Collective
The Hangout by Two Guys
The Naples Players
The Ritz-Carlton Naples, Tiburón
Twice as Nice Consignment Shop
Winfield Street Coffee - Naples North and South

3,773

Volunteer hours provided by Trailblazer and Jr. Trailblazer Academy participants

7 Number of STAR Awards presented to Community Partners

- Structure Medical
- Paragon Theaters
- Outback Steakhouse
- Arthrex
- Winfield Street Coffee
- Germain Toyota of Naples
- Germain Toyota of Lincoln

Joe working on this vocational skills at Germain Toyota

THE BOARD

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Jeffrey Maconaghy

Past Board Chair
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Meg Hardt
Andy Krone
Tony McClure
Michael Rubenstein
Joe Smallwood
Jerry Starkey

CEO
Karen Govern

MISSION

To transform the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

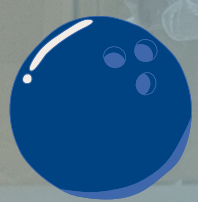
VISION

To create an inclusive community that shines light on ability, not disability.

CORE VALUES

- Support
- Teamwork
- Awareness
- Respect

We refer to the people in our programs as STARs because they brighten our lives, our community and our world. STARs show us again and again the achievements and milestones they can accomplish—reaching new goals each day, developing essential life skills, and laying the foundation for a positive future.



Did you know? What started as six families meeting weekly at a local bowling alley has grown into three STARability bowling league opportunities for hundreds STAR participants. Our bowling leagues have become a great place for STARs and their families to network and form lifelong friendships, in addition to enjoying physical and mental benefits.

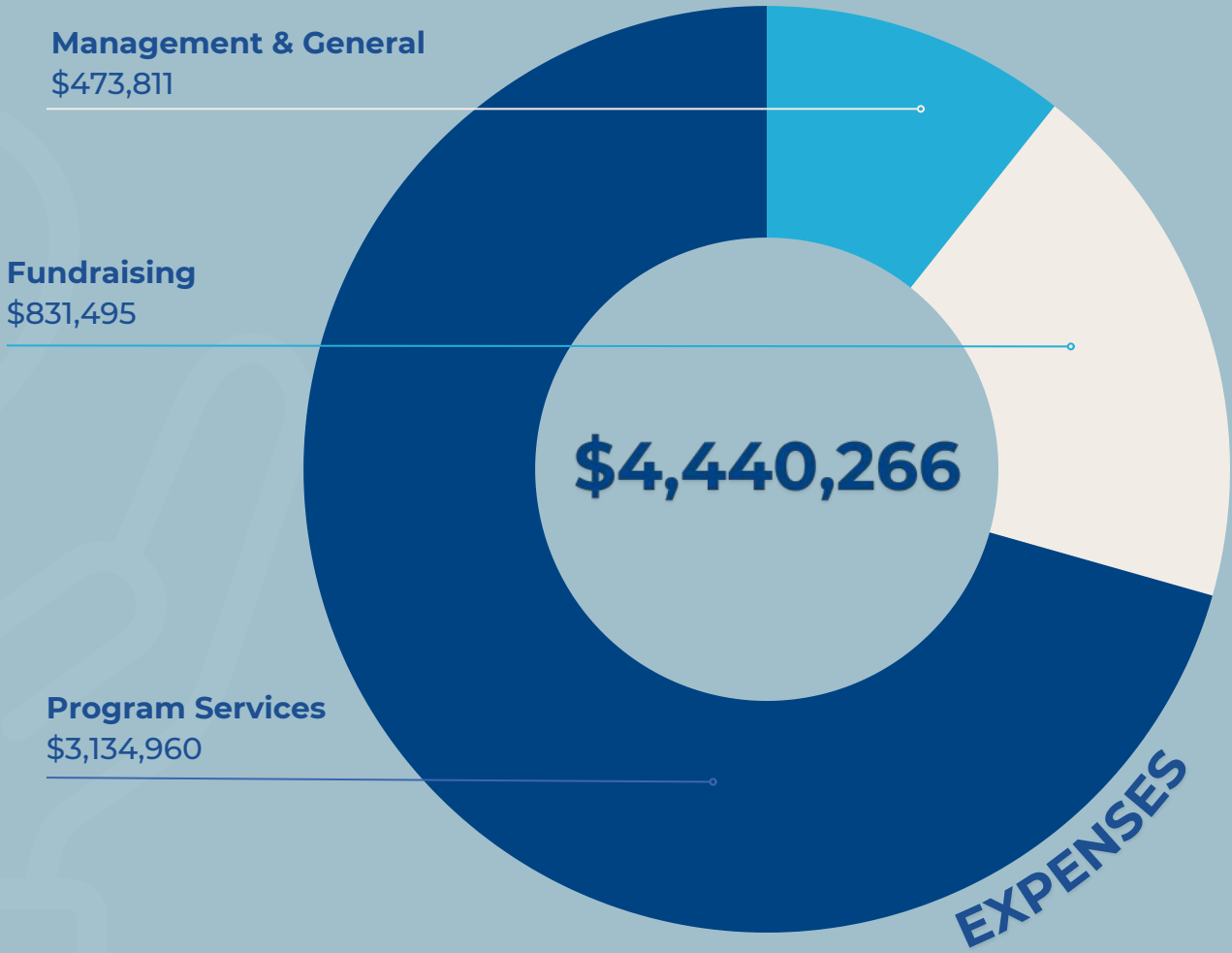
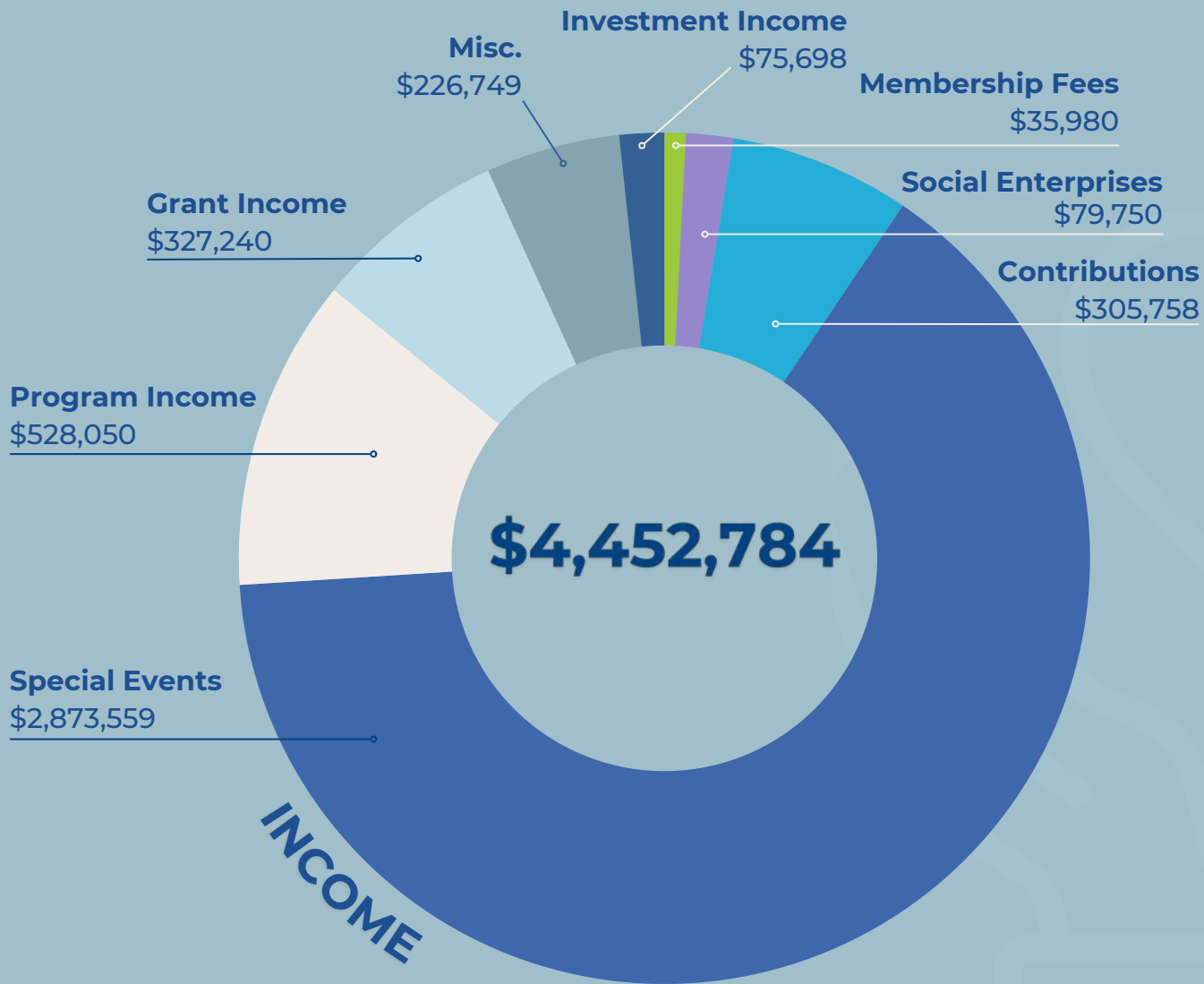
FINANCIALS

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Recognizing the growing community need, STARability acquired a 5-acre campus with a 42,000 sq. ft. facility in North Naples, we fast-tracked our Capital Campaign and secured **over \$10,000,000 by April 2024.**

Grantors that supported STARability in FY 2023-24

Arthrex, Inc., Collier Community Foundation, Golisano Foundation, Naples Children & Education Foundation, Naples United Church of Christ, Regions Private Wealth Management, Red Sox Foundation Giving, Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, Suncoast Foundation.



307

Total number of volunteers

5,064

Total number of hours given

\$169,593

\$\$ saved from volunteer hours
During fiscal year 23-24 the estimated national value of each volunteer hour was \$33.49



Funding comes primarily from independent philanthropy and program fees, with limited support from government sources.



83% of our operational budget is sourced from philanthropy

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Our dedicated team is the heart of our STARs’ journey, guiding and empowering them every step of the way. STARability simply couldn’t exist without their passion, commitment, and expertise. Each team member plays a vital role in creating an inclusive and enriching environment, tailoring individualized curricula that help our participants grow, achieve their goals, and thrive. Their dedication transforms possibilities into realities, making a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.



STAFF STORY

Berenice brings a passion for nutrition to the Trailblazer Academy, helping participants build lifelong healthy eating habits. Through hands-on activities and meal planning, she makes wellness a daily practice, empowering Trailblazers to make mindful choices.

We're people helping people.

DONATE TODAY!



Go **green!** Scan the QR code to donate **today** and transform lives!

STARability.org
239.594.9007
@starabilityfdn

STARability is a 501(c)(3) organization; Registration number: CH172.

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll free 800.435.7352 within the State. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State.

Tax ID# 59-2516162

Charity Navigator
FOUR-STAR

Platinum Transparency 2023
Candid.

STARability received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and the Platinum 2023 Candid Seal of Transparency for our commitment to transparency.