



Champions

Transforming lives, transforming communities

Determination and Caring: The Com Hab Way

Community Habilitation (or Com Hab) is a Medicaid-funded service that provides one-on-one coaching to adults looking to increase their independence — either at home or in the community.

Starbridge Com Hab Counselors go all out to help each person they support reach their goals.



Last year, Diane moved from her apartment on Park Ave out to the west side of Rochester. While she likes her new home, Diane missed the social opportunities that came with living in a walkable neighborhood like Park Ave.

One of Diane's new neighbors mentioned the local Senior Center. Linda Looney, Diane's Com Hab Counselor, went with Diane to see if it might be a good fit.

Linda says, "I see from the faces and words of people I work with... without this assistance it would be harder for people to enjoy the community the way they want to."

Fortunately, Diane loved the Center's social program: "I meet a lot of nice people. We have lunch and then we socialize. After that we play bingo, sometimes Jeopardy."

Recently someone at the Senior Center tried to help Diane play bingo. Not only did Diane turn down the help, she proceeded to win that game.

"People should not judge people with disabilities. I'm not just a disability. And everyone has a disability, even if they show it or not," says Diane.

Earlier this year, Gary was looking forward to a new apartment downtown. However, months went by with no progress. His Com Hab Counselor, Katherine Cummings, contacted the apartment manager and found out Gary was actually on a waiting list, and it might take two years for him to move.

Katherine and Gary agreed that was too long to wait, so Katherine swung into action. She located a new complex in Irondequoit. Gary wanted his brother Fred to see the new apartment, so Katherine brought Fred over so he could give his seal of approval.



Gary enjoys his new home—especially relaxing on the balcony. He has made new friends and is able to both walk and ride his bicycle around his neighborhood.

Gary is a man of few words, but when asked what he likes about Katherine, he says, "her can-do attitude—she gets things done."

Katie Cannan, Director, Community Habilitation, praises both Linda and Katherine for their "dedication, determination and caring. Gary and Diane are living more fulfilled and independent lives. I appreciate our Counselors for all they do!"

Com Hab is open to adults and young adults with disabilities and OPWDD eligibility. To learn more, contact Katie Cannan at 585-224-7211 or kcannan@starbridgeinc.org.

Message from the President/CEO

Greetings!

I hope you and your loved ones are doing well. 2022 has been quite a year on many fronts:

Together we said thank you and best wishes to Colin Garwood as he retired in June. Taking the helm as the newly appointed President & CEO has been exciting and a bit scary. Although it has been part of my career goals and aspirations, it's a completely different experience actually sitting in the seat, navigating the organization to continued success. It is a great honor to be at the service of Starbridge and the community as we amplify the voices of individuals with disabilities.

We have also welcomed Elissa Burke as Chief Program Officer. Elissa has been an excellent addition to the Starbridge team. She joined us at the end of September, jumping in to

help guide our Program leaders through budget season – which she loves!

What began as a shift to keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 lockdown has proven to be a smart way to do business. For services where a hybrid or remote work setting is possible, staff appreciate the flexibility and ease of working from home. The consensus has been that people feel more balanced and efficient with their routines.

We also know that many of us are missing the feelings of connection and fellowship from being in-person. I am grateful that conditions permitted us to gather for our annual fundraising celebration in-person at Comedy @ The Carlson. During the event, we celebrated our 2022 Community Champions for their partnership and the positive difference they make.



Congratulations once again to:

Antwan Williams, Director of Youth System Services at RochesterWorks!

Elisa DeJesus, Director of Health Literacy & Language Services at Ibero-American Action League

Brennon Thompson, Analyst for Fair Housing Policy & Programs at the National Association of REALTORS®

The team from The Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities at the University of Rochester

If you missed this year's event, we hope you will join us in 2023.

Thank you for allowing Starbridge into your life. It is a privilege to partner with you and your loved ones in connecting to the resources, supports, and services you need.

Kind regards,

Nikisha Ridgeway

Nikisha Ridgeway, President/CEO



2022 Community Champions



Taking the Fear and Mystery out of Self-Direction

“What is Self-Direction?”

“How do I launch my budget?”

“How do I hire staff to assist me?”

“Will I have to pay for everything upfront?”

“Can I hear from real people who use Self-Direction?”

Have you heard of Self-Direction? Do you have questions about how it works and whether it might work for you and your loved ones?

You are not alone.

Self-Direction is a newer model of service delivery for individuals with disabilities and their families. It is similar to the Traditional model of services in that it is funded through the NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).

The Traditional model is one where you or your loved one work through a Care Manager to set plans and coordinate needed services.

Where some people feel like Traditional services are a one-size-fits-all approach, people who use Self-Direction feel they have greater choice and flexibility.

In Self-Direction, you work with a team to plan a budget that pays for the services and staff you need. You are in charge of where you live, how you spend your days, what you do to stay healthy and active in your community, and who you hire to assist you.

Because Self-Direction is still fairly new, our Fiscal Intermediary and Family Advocacy staff partnered to create a series of videos to help answer many of the questions people have.

Starbridge now offers videos such as:

- *What is Self-Direction?*
- *Myths about Self-Direction*
- *Common Questions about Staffing*
- *Launching Your Self-Directed Budget*



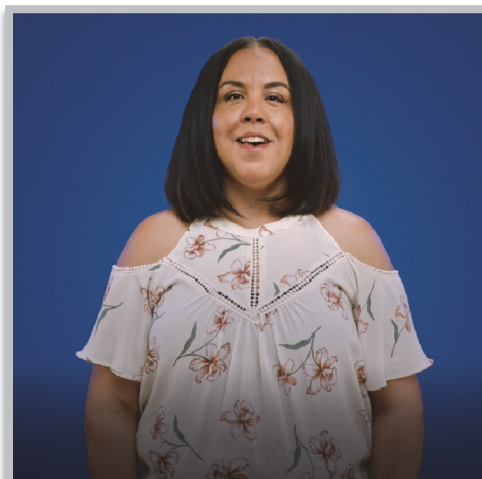
FI Specialist April Dixon was a key part of the team in preparing content and being the primary presenter. **Thank you, April!**

We also know that people want to hear from those who are already using Self-Direction. **Thank you to Cloria and Jordan, Mandy and Annabelle, and Marsché for sharing your personal experiences with Self-Direction!**



While all of the videos have closed captions in English and Spanish subtitles, we also created a Spanish-language version of the first video:

Auto dirección 101: Una Introducción



Family Support Services Manager Maritza Cubi was a key part of the team in preparing and presenting the Spanish-language version. **Thank you, Maritza!**

Starbridge was the first agency to provide Fiscal Intermediary (FI) Services in the Finger Lakes region. In the last six years, **our FI Services have grown by 400%**. We support individuals and families all the way from neighborhoods in Rochester out to rural towns throughout the Finger Lakes, Southern Tier, and Western New York.

To keep up with demand and to offer more inclusive services, our FI Team is growing and includes Specialists fluent in Spanish and ASL!

Our Self-Direction Video Series is available on our website, YouTube channel, and Facebook. **To learn more about Self-Direction, check out our socials or view the videos anytime at starbridgeinc.org/self-direction/!**

DSPs Make a Difference Daily

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) work directly with individuals with disabilities at home, at work, and out and about in the community. At Starbridge, we are fortunate to have so many passionate, talented DSPs living out our brand every day.

Jeneen Miller
Assistant Manager,
Residential

"My passion is to support and encourage people with different abilities to live their best lives, out loud and as vibrant as they choose."



Matt Dunham
Employment &
Com Hab

"The greatest reward of this job is the success once each person secures employment that works for them."



Stacey Daly, LMSW
Employment

"I like helping people with disabilities discover what their career interests are and how to be successful in employment."



Debbie-Lee Eskildsen
Senior Manager,
Residential

"What the individuals give me is so much greater than what I give them each day. I love that each day brings something new whether it is a hurdle to cross or a success we celebrate."

Katherine Cummings
Com Hab

"I enjoy seeing the joy on individuals' faces when they are happy and getting the opportunity to do something new."



Eveliz Pagan
Residential

"I love the relationships that I build and the time spent with each individual."



Thank you to our 2022 Visionary Sponsor!



Faraci Lange

ATTORNEYS

**REAL PEOPLE
REAL INJURIES
REAL RESULTS**

Since 1968, Faraci Lange has been serving injured individuals and families in Western NY. With headquarters in Rochester and a second office in Buffalo, the personal injury attorneys at Faraci Lange have extensive experience and have built a solid reputation with judges and other attorneys in the area.

Faraci Lange handles all areas of personal injury law including but not limited to motor vehicle accidents, medical malpractice, defective drugs and medical devices, and vaccine claims. The

attorneys at Faraci Lange are fierce advocates for their clients and have received awards from Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers, the Rochester Business Journal, and the Daily Record.

Faraci Lange has been a longtime supporter of Starbridge. The firm's Managing Partner, Stephen Schwarz, first became involved in The Advocacy Center because of his friendship with a former client who had become disabled after an accident.

Steve joined the Board of The Advocacy Center and served for many years, including as Board President. Once The Advocacy Center merged with LDA Life and Learning Services to become Starbridge, Steve continued on as a dedicated member of the Starbridge Board. Steve and the team at Faraci Lange are proud to support the amazing work that Starbridge does with and for individuals with disabilities in our community.

Thank You, 2022 Sponsors!

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Beacon is very grateful for our professional service relationship with the Starbridge team. We are equally grateful for the wonderful services Starbridge provides to the community. We are in awe of the sacrifices each team member makes to serve clients and their circles of support. Thank you all for making a difference!



BEACON
Solutions Group

Andrea Hagen, COO
Beacon Solutions Group
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Starbridge is proud to be a Member Agency of the AI Sigl Community of Agencies



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Giving Teachers a Head Start in Understanding Challenging Behaviors

When a child gets upset, shuts down, or acts out, their behavior is a signal to adults nearby that they are having a hard time — not a sign that the child is bad. For adults, it is common to feel challenged or frustrated by those behaviors.

At Starbridge, our Family Education team developed and has presented a workshop called “Understanding Challenging Behaviors” to family, school, and community groups.

In September, we were asked to present the Behaviors workshop to teachers and teaching assistants in Action for a Better Community’s Head Start program. Over two days, presenters Laura Arrington, Christa Knaak, and Celina Antonetti presented to 80 staff members.

Anthony Costa, North Street Center Director, praised the Starbridge team, saying:

“My hope was for staff to learn how to address behaviors in the classroom in a positive and functional way, where children learn stronger social skills through positive modeling.

“The feedback I got was VERY positive. Our teachers liked the small group sizes and said the trainers kept it engaging and FUN.”

Laura Arrington, Family Advocacy and Education Manager, has a favorite quote from expert Ross Greene:

“Your explanation of a behavior leads directly to how you respond to it.”

Our trainers encourage people to respond with curiosity first, asking ourselves why the child may be having a hard time. For example:

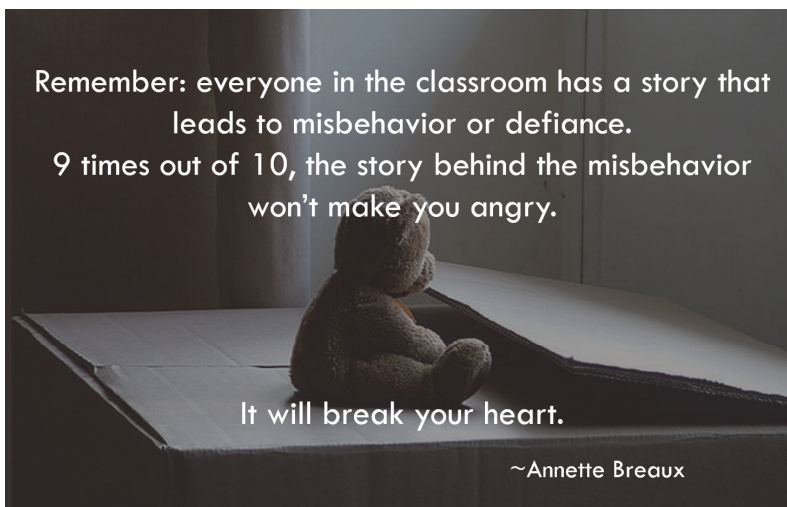
What if you had a student that kept falling asleep during the lesson you

spent hours working on last night? How would you respond if the student said, “I didn’t get enough sleep”? Would you tell them to try harder to get to bed on time? Make an example of them to their peers?

What if you found out that the student didn’t get enough sleep because they were kicked out of their house and had to sleep in a shelter last night?

It would change your response.

To arrange a presentation of this workshop to your team, contact Laura Arrington at 585-224-7332 or email LArrington@starbridgeinc.org.



You don't have to be rich to make a big gift — and a big difference!



As you make your financial plans, legacy gifts are an option to consider. Talk to your financial planner about the tax benefits that could be available through

- * A gift of appreciated assets instead of cash
- * Designating Starbridge as a beneficiary of your will or trust
- * A gift of life insurance you no longer need

Your gift may return tax benefits to you while you help individuals with disabilities and families connect with the HOPE and the HOW for years to come!

Learn more at

www.starbridgeinc.org/LegacyGiving

Our 2022 Annual Appeal is
still underway.

If you haven't made a gift yet,
please make one today!

Simply scan this code with your
smartphone camera to donate
via PayPal.



The successes of Starbridge and
the people we serve
are made possible, in part,
by the support and partnership
of people like you.

Thank you!



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**Sending you and your loved ones warmest wishes for a
healthy, happy, and peaceful**

2023

Nikisha Ridgway

Elaine Burke

Sam O'Hare

Jeff

Kristyna Stueb