

STAR★



Tree Lighting Celebration

A charming event that won the hearts of many!

A magical evening filled with charm and holiday spirit, Star's Tree Lighting Celebration was enjoyed by hundreds. The entertainment, free food, holiday goodies, and children's activities brought smiles to the faces of those who attended.

The evening began with the glorious sound of Mike Lushbaugh on saxophone, welcoming guests with holiday tunes. Entertainment throughout the evening included the old-time sound of holiday favorites by John Holdway, the rich baritone voice of Maury James, Star Choir singing holiday favorites, the reading of The Christmas Story, lighting of the Christmas Tree, the beautiful voice of one of Star's amazing staff members Harley Thomas, liturgical dancing by Mary Jane Line, and the ultimate duo of Aaron Eckle and staff member Jamie Nicholson. Visitors enjoyed the live Nativity, photos by Southside Photography, and the free horse-drawn sleigh rides were a huge crowd pleaser.

A fantastic celebration in the holiday season!

This wonderful evening would not have been possible without the support from community businesses and residents who believe in Star Community and the amazing services that Star provides.

A very special thanks to - Merkle Response Management and Resley Tire Company for their ongoing and generous premier sponsorship and support. Also thanks to BB&T Bank, JLG, and First Energy for their gracious platinum sponsorships and support, and Funk Electrical Services, Rust-Oleum, and Middletown Bank for their kindness and gold sponsorships and support.

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... *Continued from cover* To all of the amazing businesses, business associates, residents and supporters that believe in Star and help to make Star Community the outstanding place that it is — offering residential, day-habilitation, and therapeutic equestrian and farm animal programs would not be possible without your support. The programs Star provides touch the lives of the incredible participants Star is honored to serve, helping them to live their lives to the best of their abilities!

Always know that each business and every person that supports Star Community helps to make this possible.

Live life to the *BEST* of your *ABILITIES!*

A Note from Dallas - executive director

Within the past week, a professional from the community shared with me a few comments about Star's website. The comments were that Star's website portrays an organization of warmth, of caring, and it being a family. I found that interesting as the person had never visited Star.

My mind pondered how this individual could know Star so well? The answer came. The camera flashed. I realized Star's website is like a camera. It's full of snapshots with smiles, homey looking homes in a rural setting, an environment filled with animals, people engaged in wholesome activities, while supporting and challenging individuals with special needs.

Star's website is a picture of what one calls a "family". My pondering ceased, and thankfulness began to flood my heart as Star is a blessing to our community and friends!

During this Christmas season, may our families be a blessing in giving as well as proclaiming the true meaning of Christmas. Star wishes you and your family blessings from the Lord as we approach a new year.

With a grateful heart,

Dallas Hopkins

Employee of the Year for 2017

Tina Smith Tina began her career at Star Community in 2013 as a Life Skills Mentor at Grace Cottage. When an opening became available for house manager at Smith Farm, Tina applied and was chosen for the position.

Tina has many years of experience in the DDA field and brings a wealth of knowledge, leadership, and advocacy.

Tina has proven herself over and over again, especially with the compassion shown when assisting a family with funeral plans and helping her staff and individuals in the grieving process. Tina played a big role in assisting with the transition of a new resident, providing encouragement to the family, and worked hard to ensure a smooth transition.

Tina is an asset to our residential program and well-deserving of this award. Thank you Tina!



Ventures'

★ day-program

Information provided by Ventures' administrative staff, program coordinators, and/or crew leaders.

Star's Ventures' crews have been on many adventures over the past few months taking care of their normal responsibilities and venturing out on day-trips to visit community attractions. Two of their most favorite destinations were Stoner's Dairy Farm and Pumpkin Patch and their visit to the Charles Brightbill Environmental Center.

Charles Brightbill Environmental Center

In September, a group of 23 participants and staff members from Star Ventures' visited the Charles Brightbill Environmental Center in Mercersburg, PA. The center houses the Tuscarora Wildlife Education Project (TWEPE).

We were greeted by TWEPE's director, Sheila Snider, and several volunteers. Our adventure started in the Africa room where the visitors were surrounded by displays of animals native to the continent. The group was told about the history and mission of the Environmental Center and the TWEPE, as well as some of the basics about taxidermy.



Kris Kelly was all smiles, and loved making his special craft.

Leaving the Africa room we passed through a room full of hands-on activities for all to enjoy. Visitors were able to touch and identify a variety of animal furs as well as admire several of their smaller animal displays. A big surprise was a large room where visitors would find habitat displays for large animals from the oceans, woodlands, mountains, deserts, and arctic regions.

The tour concluded when visitors got to show their creative sides. Participants made an owl craft to take home. After the tour concluded, part of our group decided to stay longer and walk on one of the nature trails, learning about our local birds and flowers.

Everyone had a wonderful time and our group highly recommends visiting the Environmental Center. For more information, contact the center at 717-328-2126 or by visiting their website: twepe.org.

Stoner's Dairy Farm and Pumpkin Patch

In October, a Ventures' crew made its first official trip to Stoner's Dairy Farm in Mercersburg, PA. It was a beautiful day filled with lots of new and exciting adventures. The group was greeted by Ms. Jamie who took us on a tour of the farm. She showed where 500 dairy cattle are housed to keep them cool and safe. A demonstration of how they are fed, and watered daily was given, including the opportunity to touch and smell their food.

The next destination on the tour took was the milking parlor where five of the cows were being milked. Ms. Jamie explained how the milking process works, where the milk is stored, and how the tractor-trailer milk truck comes and picks the milk up to take it for processing before it is sent to grocery stores.



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Next was time to visit the birthing barn, where we were introduced to three newborn calves. Everyone had an opportunity to pet, snuggle and take pictures with them.

The visitors then went on a wagon ride around the farm and picked up their pumpkins to round out the day.

It truly was an awesome day for the 57 participants and 16 staff members who went. All learned so much and truly felt blessed by the owners of the farm, who took the time out of their busy schedule to accommodate Star.

It made Dotty's day to meet the adorable baby calf.

believe

Equestrian Center ★ *Therapeutic Farm programs*

Santa Visits the Equestrian Center

by: Rachael Kleinschmidt

Twas the month of December when all through the barn, the horses and riders were ready for Christmas time on the farm.

The stockings were hung in the feed room with care, the wind gusting through the doors bringing in the cool crisp air.

Drawing closer to Christmas, as lessons were ending, the riders were freezing but patiently waiting, knowing Santa's arrival was pending.

All the riders were performing their skills so well; Santa wanted to tell them that they were swell. So he appeared not once but twice to the farm, gracing the horses and riders with his cheery charm.

Wearing his red suit, showing off his jolly belly, that shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly.

Eyes lit up seeing him make his debut, he was watching the lessons and even helping in a few.

The horses, they sniffed him, the riders, they stared, as he had with him his sack full of gifts to be shared.

Christmas music filled the night as Santa was loved by all; he was impressed with the theme lessons and skills that he saw. As he left for his sleigh, finishing his visit each night, he exclaimed for everyone, "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"



Equestrian Center Christmas tree at Charlie Brown Christmas in Williamsport.

Residential ★ program

Information provided by residential administrative staff and house managers.

Star Community's residents have been very busy for the past few months. From venturing out on day or evening excursions, to volunteering and going on vacation.

Residents of Star's Smithfield 707 home enjoyed visiting the Washington County Playhouse where they saw *The Addam's Family*. The playhouse was wonderful and accommodating. Everyone had a great time, humming and singing along with the music.

Tommy, from Star Farm has made great strides and is now comfortable with going grocery shopping. Also from Star Farm, Neil has made a special connection with a cashier at Walmart. The cashier remembers him from previous trips, and he loves to talk to her about his special cup collection and what he likes about Walmart.

The Smith Farm ladies have made a special connection with the owner of Windy Hill Restaurant in Clear Spring. The gentleman has been so good to the ladies. On their next visit they plan on taking a special basket packed full of goodies to show their gratitude.

Cascade American Legion hosted a bingo fundraiser benefiting the Veteran's Administration Hospital. Several Faith residents took part in this fundraiser. They enjoyed eating dinner at the legion. Several of the legion employees took it upon themselves to help and puree food for the residents that needed it. The best part of all, of course, was winning prizes.

While Trinity was enjoying dinner at Supreme Buffet, a woman approached the staff and complimented the entire group. She said " I have been watching them for quite some time, and saw how engaged staff were with the residents. They are having such a great time." The woman also stated that she had 30 years' experience working at the ARC.



A special picture with the owner of Windy Hill Restaurant.

Many of Star residents have been dropping off donations and volunteering at local non-profits and charities helping those in need including —Children in Need, DMP, Needmore Firehall, Amtgard, Salvation Army, Williamsport Fire and EMS. Faith resident, Benny, has started volunteering with the Pediatric Movement Center. He visits with them every other Thursday and assists with their shredding needs.

Many of the residents were very excited when Don Stickley came up with the idea to do a Trunk of Treat event. This event was for Star residents as well as the local community.

Residents from Hope, Faith, and Smith Farm Homes went on a group vacation to Myrtle Beach. While on their vacation they met many new people, one in particular asked if she could give them all a hug. At another restaurant, someone decided to pay for their bill. Whomever it was they chose to stay anonymous, but the bill was \$160! They were often complimented often on the relationship between the residents and staff.



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A very special thank you to all of the amazing businesses, families, community residents, and volunteers that support Star Community and believe in the amazing programs Star provides to people with special needs and developmental disabilities. Your support is a blessing!