

AZ Giving Spotlight: Toby Amir Fox of STARS

Written by Lindsey Clinkingbeard

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Scottsdale Training & Rehabilitation Services (STARS) is a nonprofit organization that focuses on improving the lives of individuals with disabilities all around Arizona. They provide services for people who have developed with physical or cognitive disabilities. Here we chatted with director of development, Toby Amir Fox.



AFM: What motivated the creation of STARS?

TAF: Formerly known as the Scottsdale Foundation for the Handicapped, Scottsdale Training & Rehabilitation Services (STARS) was founded in 1973 by a group of parents concerned with the lack of resources for their disabled adult children. Back then there were no programs or activities for these young adults. They simply graduated from high school and had no options for what to do next, other than sit at home. Our mission is the same as it was 40 years ago: to improve the lives of individuals with developmental/cognitive disabilities. Our vision is to be the leader in creating quality opportunities for life-long empowerment and success.

AFM: How does STARS improve the lives of those who are disabled?

TAF: All of our participants have an Individual Service Plan team, consisting of the participant, his or her family, advocates and other service providers. Together, the participant identifies their goals and the team will work together to develop a strategy for helping meet those goals. Everything we do is driven by the participant's goals!

AFM: In what ways is STARS getting the message out there that this program is here for disabled people?

TAF: We are working to spread the word about STARS in any way we can! STARS board and staff participate in a myriad of community events and fairs; we speak at conferences, build relationships with referral entities and participate in a variety of professional development organizations. Our reputation was steadily built by consistently providing high-quality services to adults and their families. And the word-of-mouth referrals we receive are (and will continue to be!) critical to our success. We have so many wonderful stories to share for those who are willing to listen.

AFM: Does STARS do any special events for the people in their programs?

TAF: Yes! STARS hosts two events annually: Fashion STARS and Fiesta. Fashion STARS (Sunday, November 24, 2013) uses fashion to build awareness of STARS' mission and includes a champagne brunch and a professionally-styled runway. As is tradition, a select group of STARS' participants are fashionably featured in the "grand finale" curtain call. Fiesta (May 17, 2014) is our signature, annual fundraising event and includes a sunset reception, a fantastic multi-course dinner, an elegant silent and live auction, musical entertainment and dancing.

AFM: What makes STARS stand out from other organizations?

TAF: STARS is committed to meeting the individual needs of our participants through the usage of innovative best practice models and by providing high-quality services above and beyond the industry norm. For example, our award winning Drawn Together provides a creative outlet for those participants in our day programs. STARS partners with local school districts to offer Transitions, which helps participants and their families prepare for life after high school. Additionally, STARS and Gompers Habilitation Center recently formed Tandem Document Professionals, a full-service document scanning and file management enterprise that will provide additional employment opportunities for

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participants from both organizations.

To learn more about STARS, click [here](#).