



CHAMPIONS

YOUR SUPPORT ADVANCES OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

ISSUE 10 • SEPTEMBER 2021



BRANDY L. YOUNG, PHD.

Dr. Young and her husband, Dr. Putuma Gqamana, live in Brighton with their two children, Philani and Khayalam. Dr. Young works at Strong Memorial Hospital in the Department of Toxicology and joined the Starbridge Board in March, 2020.



NAKIA VARGAS

Nakia and her husband, Ulises Vargas, live in Rochester with their three children, Lanae, Lainy, and Ulises Jr. Nakia owns an accounting business, Vargas Financial Services, and joined the Starbridge Board in April, 2021.



HANIF ABDUL-WAHID

Hanif and his wife, Kimberley, live in Greece. They are the parents of 7 adult children, and have 7 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. Hanif is retired after 28 years working for the Monroe County Department of Planning and Development.

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT STARBRIDGE?

Brandy: I needed some help with getting speech & language services for my son and my dear friend Robin Wilt said, "Go to Starbridge. It's a great organization and they will point you in the right direction." She was correct! Starbridge helped me in so many ways.

Nakia: Through COO Nikisha Ridgeway.

Hanif: Starbridge used to partner with RochesterWorks in providing summer programming for young folks, and that's how I heard of them.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO GET INVOLVED AS A BOARD MEMBER?

Brandy: My dear friend Anne Babcock-Stiner told me about the open board position. I had been actively looking for ways to better advocate for my son, who is on the Autism spectrum, and for children like him. Although I have a child with a disability, I don't claim to know everything. So, I've wanted for some time to be a part of educating the community and myself about the

needs of persons that are often overlooked. Being a part of the board was divine timing.

Nakia: I decided to get involved because of their mission and my desire to serve the disabled community. Also, I felt my knowledge of billing and finance would be useful.

Hanif: My son is developmentally delayed. I thought it would be a good fit. I try to advocate for him and his needs, and want to see the same for people in the community

WHAT HAS YOUR ROLE AS A BOARD MEMBER INVOLVED?

Brandy: So far, my role has been to observe, listen and learn. Starbridge is a distinguished organization with many moving parts and I am uncovering where I may best be of service.

Nakia: I recently joined the Audit Committee, and the Cultivation and Development Committee.

Hanif: I joined the Board this June so I'm just getting started. Right now I am using expertise to help the

Nominating Committee in recruiting more board members and using a DEI (Diversity Equity Inclusion) approach.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD OR SAY TO SOMEONE CONSIDERING A GIFT TO STARBRIDGE?

Brandy: A hallmark of a great community is one that cares for its elderly and disabled. I'm happy to actively take part in these endeavors through working with Starbridge.

Nakia: I would tell them that this organization is not only committed to the individuals that they serve, they are also committed to the community as well.

Hanif: I would thank them in advance for considering it. Starbridge is one of the best-known agencies that works to highlight the needs of people with disabilities, and reaches out to make sure that employment and equity are there for people who cannot advocate for themselves. By donating or sitting on the board, you can help to push that mission forward.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

The successes of Starbridge and the people we serve are made possible in part by the gifts we receive from **supporters like you**. We thank you for your support and hope you enjoy reading about **the impact your gift has** in the lives of so many!

THANK YOU TO FARACI LANGE FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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 practicing in Monroe, Erie and the surrounding counties, and they 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 has served on the board of directors since it was formed through the merger of The Advocacy Center and the Learning Disabilities Association. Prior to that, Steve was on The Advocacy Center Board for many years, has served as Board President of The Advocacy Center, and was the first Board Chair of Starbridge. Steve first became involved in The Advocacy Center because of his involvement and friendship with a former client who became disabled after an accident. Steve's friendship with his former client provided the inspiration to support the team at Starbridge and all the amazing work that they do.

Faraci Lange
ATTORNEYS

REAL PEOPLE
REAL INJURIES
REAL RESULTS



EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY: CYNTHIA LYNCH

Cynthia Lynch does not describe herself as frustrated or struggling. Her employment counselor, Kim Schaeffer, agrees:

“Cynthia has a very upbeat and positive outlook about work and is frequently stepping up by volunteering to work extra shifts. She is determined to learn everything she can about her job and is always open to feedback from her supervisors. She has really built confidence over the time I’ve worked with her.”

Cynthia works two jobs, one at Harbor Freight and the other at Speedway. She likes working in a customer service role, and appreciates the way Kim supports her to maintain those skills and work with her managers.

In a retail environment, the fast pace can be challenging for anyone. In Cynthia’s words, Kim has been especially helpful in helping her “cope with different situations, depending on where I’m working.”

When asked whether she had advice for someone else, Cynthia says, “Depending on the situation, I would tell them to go through Office for Persons With Developmental Disabilities and see which way they can get the help they need. They helped me find the right people to work with.”



SUCCESS IN A DIFFICULT YEAR

Barb Maryniak has worked with hundreds of individuals with disabilities during her career. The youth she supports are looking to get back on track with their career goals and usually need to complete certification courses and job training to get there. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic made that very challenging for everyone.

Still, Barb is proud to report that in the last year, a dozen young adults pushed through the obstacles and achieved their certificates for these careers:

- Certified Nurse’s Aide
- Home Health Aide
- Personal Care Aide
- Dental Assistant
- Security Guards
- Hospital Transporter

Two individuals earned the liberal arts degrees needed to continue on their career paths.

Barb praises each and every one:

“Despite the pandemic, these awesome young men and women donned their PPE, overcame their obstacles, and are now serving in the community!”



SELF-DIRECTION OPENS UP CHOICES AND FREEDOM

Julie Larson first connected with Starbridge when she began the self-direction services process for her now 7-year-old son Beau. She then signed up for Starbridge's Family Empowerment Series, a multi-week program to prepare families to be better advocates for their children with disabilities.

We asked Julie to tell us about her experience with Starbridge so far. Here is what she shared with us:

"My goal is always to be the best advocate for Beau and make sure he has the supports he needs to thrive and reach his utmost potential. I am always willing to learn and make new connections in the community if it will benefit my son.

"Beau is an energetic, sweet, and handsome boy. He likes to jump, climb and swing his day away. He enjoys biking on his adaptive tricycle, equine therapy, and riding in his aunt's utility vehicle on her farm. Beau loves to give hugs and enjoys the company of his family. He is learning how to communicate his needs and express himself.

"I don't know what he wants to do when he is older, but whatever it is I will help him reach his goals! Right now, Beau would like a farm with a donkey. Maybe a llama. Definitely a goat!

"Many parents create businesses for their children and I think that's a strong possibility when Beau has completed school.

"I want my son to be happy and to live a purposeful life. I want him to set goals and to work on becoming the best possible version of himself, regardless of his disability. I hope that he can live independently and advocate for himself. I pray that the people who support him are kind, patient, and trustworthy. I wish for him to find love and companionship. Finally, I hope he maintains strong ties with his siblings.

"My dream is to know I made the best choices for my children and to leave this world a little better than I found it."

People tell us that self-direction makes them feel they are living the lives that so many of us take for granted: with choice and freedom. 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. To learn more, to find out whether you are eligible and what steps you would need to take, contact our FI Department at 585-224-7232 or fisupport@starbridgeinc.org.



THANK YOU TO O'CONNELL ELECTRIC FOR YOUR SUPPORT

O'Connell Electric Company is a full service regional electrical, power line, and communications contractor headquartered in Victor, New York. Founded in 1911, the company has steadily grown to become the 29th largest electrical contractor in the United States. As a diversified full-service contractor, we provide comprehensive design-build, construction, service, maintenance, and emergency response services.

At O'Connell, we are proud to be a committed partner of Starbridge and the organization's vision to support

people with disabilities, their families, and others who support them. It's safe to say that every one of us is somehow connected to an individual with a disability. Knowing our community has an organization built with the purpose and passion to support these people is important to us.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to all the great employees and volunteers who work tirelessly to make Starbridge a successful support network in our communities.



O'CONNELL ELECTRIC COMPANY

STARBRIDGE PRESENTS: 2021 EDUCATION CONFERENCE

12:30-3:30pm • Online • \$75/Session or \$125/Both

For more information go to starbridgeinc.org/education-conference

DECEMBER 2ND "ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL" FITS NO ONE

Presenter Katie Novak, Ed. D.
Founder and Executive Director of Novak Educational Consulting

DECEMBER 9TH MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE WHOLE CHILD

Presenter Lisa Bosio
Educational Consultant, Novak Educational Consulting

THINGS CHANGE!

So should your estate plan...

Do your will, insurance, and retirement accounts still provide maximum benefit to the people and organizations you care about most?

Take the time – soon – to update your plans. And when you do, please take advantage of the ease and tax advantages of including an estate gift to Starbridge.

You can have the satisfaction now of providing a lasting legacy for Starbridge in the future.



Discover the benefits of giving wisely. To get started:

Call: 585-224-7247

Email: legacygiving@starbridgeinc.org

Visit: www.starbridgeinc.org/legacygiving

Join our Champions Circle giving society today!

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STARBRIDGE IS NOW A MEMBER AGENCY OF AL SIGL COMMUNITY OF AGENCIES

Al Sigl Community of Agencies is a collaborative community network of nonprofit organizations that serve children and adults with disabilities® and special needs. This year, Al Sigl Community of Agencies enthusiastically welcomed Starbridge as a Member Agency.

Starbridge's work helping people of all abilities achieve success in education, employment, and healthy living

complements the important programs and services offered by the agencies serving thousands across the community each year on Al Sigl's six campuses.

Thank you for celebrating abilities and inclusion with us.



Achieving More Together

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(585) 442-4100

alsigl.org

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

We are proud to support Starbridge!



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sstokesscpa@svcpas.com

We join Starbridge in honoring the
2021 Community Champions



120 Office Park Way, Pittsford, NY 14534
(585) 586-0970



*"Raising a Glass to Those
Who Raise the Bar"*

MMB is proud to
support Starbridge!

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INSIDE THIS EDITION:

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- Success in a Difficult Year
- Self-Direction Opens Up Choices and Freedom
- 2021 Education Conference
- ... and more!

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Bloomfield, NY 14469-9394



Among the Stars Virtual Celebration

& Silent Auction

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, at 6:30 PM

*Join us to salute the
2021 Community Champions
&
individuals who are supported by*



Silent Auction with mobile bidding opens at noon on Wednesday, October 13th. Register at www.Starbridgeinc.org/gala to receive a link to start bidding. All registrants will be entered in raffle prize drawings.

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Proceeds to benefit children and adults who have disabilities.