



WE LEAD
WITH COURAGE
TO CREATE
POSITIVE EXPERIENCES
SO THAT ALL
CHILDREN,
FAMILIES,
AND COMMUNITIES
FLOURISH.

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July 1, 2020

Statement from the Starr CEO

To the Starr family:

Our Board of Directors has unanimously agreed to end our contract with Sequel Youth & Family Services effective immediately. We now begin the process of doing our best to find an alternative solution to meet the individual needs of each of the 135 children in our care.

Like so many others, we were shocked and saddened to hear the details that have emerged over the death at Lakeside Academy. Such treatment is unacceptable. Those of us working with children have a duty, first and foremost, to love and protect those in our care. We can and must do better.

After this death, some might ask why we waited so long to sever our relationship with Sequel. The fact is this was not an easy decision. For many youth on our campus, we are their last best hope. Absent Starr, they may be forced to return to environments not equipped to meet their needs. Additionally, our relationship with Sequel is unlike that of Lakeside. Since 2015, we have run our campus as a partnership with Sequel, using many longtime Starr Commonwealth team members who know our philosophy, our protocols and the children we serve. Our residential program is currently being run by a team member who has been on our campus for more than three decades. Three-quarters of the current leadership team are former Starr employees who have been with us for years.

It pains us deeply to have reached this point. We have a 107-year history of providing community-based programs, residential treatment, education and behavioral health services that work to heal trauma and build resilience in children and teens. We are proud to serve as a link between children at risk and their families, caregivers and communities – an extensive network of dedicated professionals who specialize in medical, psychological, rehabilitative, therapeutic, legal and ancillary services. We have positively changed the lives of tens of thousands of children and their families – and we have the stories to prove it.

Over the past century-plus, we have changed and adapted as treatment modalities and best practices have evolved. We are now seeing a shift away from large residential campuses like Starr to smaller settings. We want to be part of that solution. We want to work with the State of Michigan on addressing the root causes that induce trauma in the lives of children and teens.

In the coming weeks, Starr employees will be fully involved to ensure the continued safety of the youth in our care. Simultaneously, our leadership team will begin to explore what residential treatment may look like on our campus in the future. As always, we remain committed to providing the best care for the children and teens we serve, now and going forward. You have my word on it, backed by support from our entire leadership team and the strength and determination of our entire Board of Directors.

In Service,

Elizabeth Carey

