Starfish Initiative Receives $400,000 to Expand Workforce Initiative

Grants from the Arthur Dean Family Foundation and the Lilly Foundation will create more opportunities for first-generation students

INDIANAPOLIS — Starfish Initiative has received $400,000 in foundation support to expand its workforce initiative, creating more opportunities for first-generation students to develop career skills, connect with employers, and prepare for success after high school.

The Arthur Dean Family Foundation has committed $250,000 over two years to expand the number of Starfish Initiative scholars in mentoring relationships and to increase connections to college, career, and character development opportunities.

The Eli Lilly and Company Foundation (Lilly Foundation) has awarded a grant of $150,000 to Starfish Initiative in support of its workforce initiative, expanding access to career exploration, workforce readiness, and employer connections. The Lilly Foundation is a separate tax-exempt organization established in 1968 and supported by donations from Eli Lilly and Company.

"These grants reflect a shared belief in the potential of Indiana students," said Crystal Givens, President & CEO of Starfish Initiative. "With the support of the Arthur Dean Family Foundation and the Lilly Foundation, we can equip more scholars with the confidence, experiences, and connections they need to thrive in college, careers, and beyond."

Starfish Initiative pairs first-generation, low-income students with volunteer mentors who provide guidance throughout high school while connecting scholars to career exploration, workforce readiness programming, and professional development opportunities.

"Preparing students for meaningful careers takes a community," Givens added. "We're grateful for this support and the opportunity to help more young people build bright futures while strengthening Indiana's workforce."

About the Starfish Initiative

Founded in 2003, Starfish Initiative empowers first-generation students to achieve lifelong success through one-on-one and group mentoring, college and career readiness, and workforce development opportunities. By pairing students with volunteer mentors, Starfish Initiative helps young people graduate from high school, pursue post-secondary education, and build meaningful careers. Since its founding, the organization has helped thousands of Indiana students unlock their potential and create brighter futures. Learn more at **www.starfishinitiative.org**.