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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STAR, Inc., Lighting the Way...
Announces Two Workshops on Sibling Support:
One for Adults, Parents & Professionals, One for Siblings-Children 8-13
years old SIBSHOPS with Don Meyer**

January 22, 2010: STAR, Inc., Lighting the Way... announces a workshop for siblings of children with special needs, called Sibshops. Taking place on Friday, February 5, 2010 and Saturday, February 6, 2010, Sibshops will be facilitated by Don Meyer, nationally-recognized founder of the Sibling Support Project. Registration is \$35 for STAR members and \$50 for non-members.

Friday's workshop will take place at Chatham Manor at 493 Connecticut Avenue in Norwalk, Connecticut. Facilitated by national expert on Sibling Support, Don Meyer, attendees will review best practices, research and literature and what adult siblings of children with disabilities are teaching us. The workshop includes three separate programs: Brothers and Sisters of People With Special Needs; A Panel of Brothers and Sisters; and "Starting Your Own Sibshop". Parents of children with special needs, adult siblings and professional are invited to attend. Registration fee includes lunch. The workshop provides education and

training for parents, professionals and relatives of individuals with special needs.

On Saturday, February 6, a “Demonstration Sibshop With the Kids” will be held at STAR Inc., Lighting the Way, 182 Norwalk CT from 10 am -2 pm. The workshop provides peer support through a spirited mix of games and activities for the child participants (ages 8-13) in a recreational atmosphere. This will be the first Sibshop provided by STAR Inc. STAR staff, parents and siblings will be trained by Don Meyer and STAR will then continue to offer Sibshops for children 8-13 years old on a quarterly basis.

Don Meyer is director of the Sibling Support Project and creator of Sibshops. Currently there are over 200 Sibshops in eight countries. Don founded the SEFAM (Supporting Extended Family Members) program at the University of Washington, which pioneered services for fathers, siblings and grandparents of children with special needs. He is the nation’s leading trainer and educator on sibling support. His humor, warmth and vast experience make him a favorite with audiences and a memorable speaker.

The workshops are part of The Sibling Support Project, a national effort dedicated to the life-long concerns of brothers and sisters of people who have special health, developmental or mental health concerns. It was founded on the premise that brothers and sisters of those with special needs are too important to ignore. Especially since their relationship with the individual is typically the longest-lasting relationship in the family. Sibshops acknowledge that being a brother or sister of a person with special needs is for some a good thing, others a not-so-good thing and for many, somewhere in between.

The program of Sibshops is made possible through a generous grant from Deloitte through The STAR Foundation Education and Leadership Fund. STAR, Inc., Lighting the Way is a not-for-profit organization serving individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities, as well as providing support services to their families. STAR provides a wide range of programs and services to more than 500 children and adults with developmental disabilities, including recreational programs, day programs, job training and placement, social services and advocacy. STAR creates opportunities for individuals to live full lives with independence, freedom of choice and personal growth by providing support, services and advocacy. We inform and encourage the community to recognize and appreciate the value of all individuals.

For information about SIBSHOPS, please contact Terriann Walker-Dick at STAR by phone at (203) 846-9581 ext 360. Or visit STAR's website at <http://www.starinc-lightingtheway.org>.

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