Shooting Star™

T h e   O u t c o m e s   S t a r   f o r   s u c c e s s   i n   l i f e

> People really open up and sometimes it leads to whole new conversations

> Service users really enjoyed the interaction – and there were statistical results!

> I could feed back to my head office some really impressive results

> ...as made the ...port plans more ...ginative and more ...ividual

> The Outcomes Star is an invaluable tool for our sector

> Support is more systematic and structured

> ...e to ...l, even ... is ...needed

> We have incorporated it into assessment and three monthly reviews

> It helps identify training needs for staff and volunteers

> We can now assist clients better - we love the Star!

> Some people can't understand written reports, but can understand this

> The Star is collaborative, rather than something that is done to people

> It enables a clear direction for collaborating with a client

> ...olistic approach ...l direction to the ...port

> The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and in some cases life changing

Developed by Sara Burns and Joy MacKeith with Amaragita Pearse of Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise

The Outcomes Star™
This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, User Guide or Quiz and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see **www.outcomesstar.org.uk**.

Contents

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Introduction

Introduction to the Shooting Star™

The Shooting Star is a version of the Outcomes Star, a family of tools for supporting and measuring change when working with students and other people.

The Star is an outcomes tool that enables organisations to measure and summarise change made by a range of people with different needs. It is also a coaching tool that can help people make changes by providing them with a clear picture of the journey to success, enabling them to take manageable steps and plot their progress along the way.

The original version of the Outcomes Star was developed for the homelessness sector and tailored versions are now available for a wide range of client groups including people with a mental health condition, people receiving support to find work and vulnerable families. These can all be viewed and downloaded at **www.outcomesstar.org.uk**.

The Shooting Star has been developed for use with secondary school students to facilitate a focus on holistic achievement primarily, though it can also be used in work with adults in community projects[1].

It covers six key areas:

1. Aspiration

2. Contribution

3. Confidence

4. Learning

5. People and support

6. Communicating.

For each of these core areas, there is a five-point scale that measures where someone is on their journey in that area. These five points are based on an underlying model of change: an understanding of the journey students and other people go on in order to succeed in life. We call this model the Journey of Change:

Stage 1 – not interested
At the beginning of the journey (stage 1) the person is not interested. They see no point in getting involved or making an effort. They probably don't believe that they could get anywhere or achieve something with their life and/or feel there are no opportunities for them locally. It may seem like the person is not open or willing to try but they can get to the next step by reducing their resistance and beginning to consider getting involved.

Stage 2 – considering it
The next stage (stage 2) is when the person starts considering it; they sometimes think about getting involved or trying something new and may observe from the sidelines. They feel it is too hard; they don't know what to do; they lack confidence or are not sure it's for them, but there is an opening to encourage them to have a go.

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[1] The Community Star may be more suitable for community projects working with adults and the Youth Star for community projects working with young people. However, schools engaging adults in their local community and wanting to use the same tool across all their work are encouraged to use the Shooting Star.

Stage 3 – having a go
The next step (stage 3) is having a go. At this stage they will get involved and may have some confidence that they could achieve something if they tried. They tend to give up when things don't go well or feel difficult so their involvement may be erratic, or they may try several different things without sticking to them.

Stage 4 – working on it
Next they start working on it (stage 4). Some things are going well and they are taking responsibility, but they don't always believe in a positive future for themselves or can't overcome problems, so they are not very resilient and may stop when things get difficult or need support to find a positive way forward.

Stage 5 – actively enjoying it
The end point of the Journey of Change (stage 5) is when the person is actively enjoying what they are doing. They are engaged, enthusiastic and determined, and even when things go wrong they know they can find a way through – alone or with others. This is not the end of their journey to success and they have the rest of their life ahead of them but they are on track, feel positive about their future and feel supported and connected. They may also encourage others.
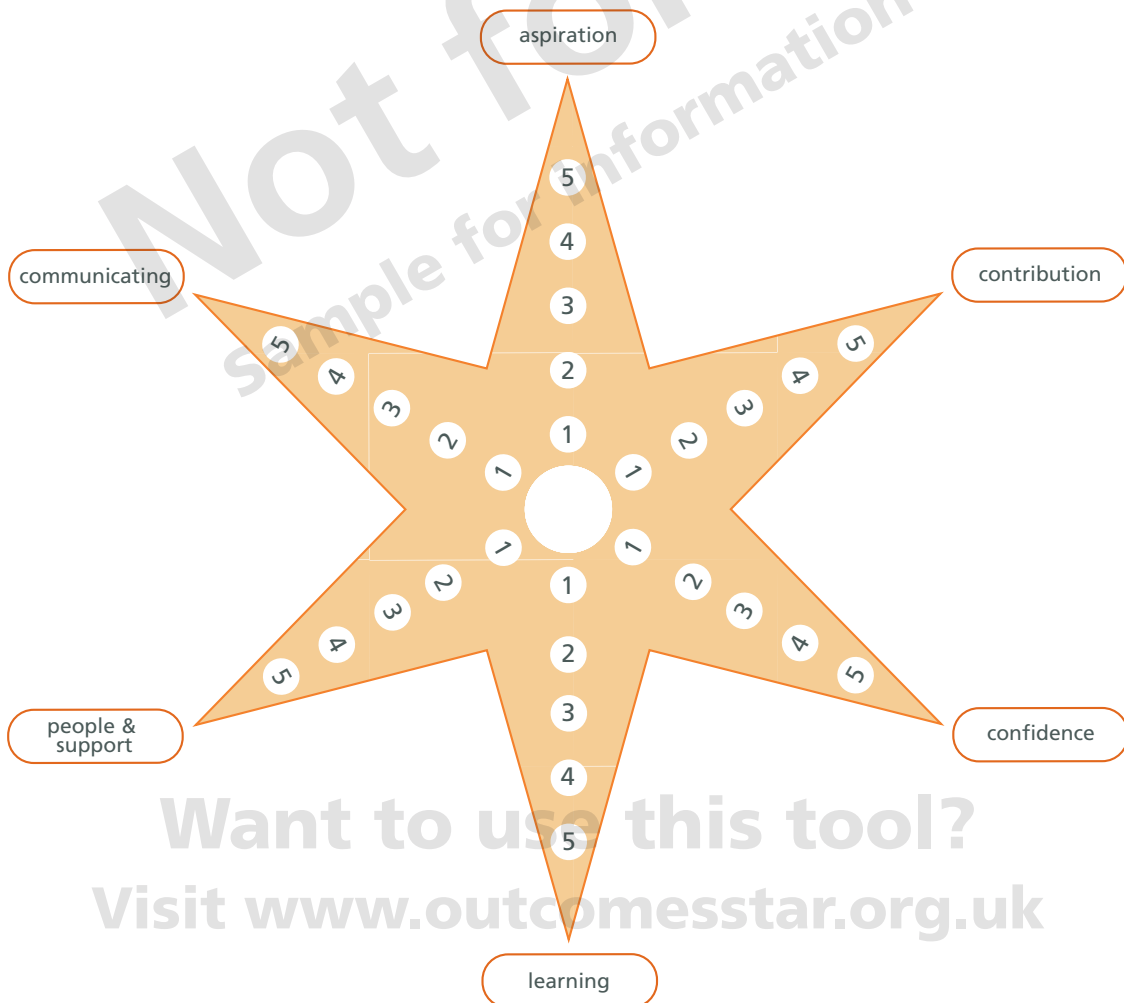
Figure 1: The Shooting Star

Shooting Star™ resources

There is a range of resources available to help schools and community projects use the Shooting Star effectively.

Shooting Star™ Chart and Action Plan

The Star Chart and Action Plan is a four-page document including the Star Chart, on which the Star reading is marked, space for notes and a simple action plan for students. It is completed with students when using the Shooting Star as a paper-based system.

Shooting Star™ Quiz

The Shooting Star Quiz provides concise, user-friendly scales in an accessible quiz format. The quiz will usually be the main resource for students choosing where they are on their journey.

Illustrated Journey of Change

This is an optional, one-page resource summarising the five stages on the Journey of Change using the visual imagery of the Star. It is recommended as an additional resource for all students and can be used instead of the quiz with students who have difficulty with or resistance to reading the quiz.

The Shooting Star™ Online

This is an intuitive, online version of the Shooting Star. It has a feature that allows users to complete the Star Chart with students on screen. It incorporates the scales from the quiz and guidance for workers and students. Alternatively, the Star Online can be used in conjunction with paper versions of the Star. Workers and students can complete the Star on paper and then input the readings on the Star Online later.

The Star Online web application is secure and provides a wide range of features allowing organisations to analyse and report on the outcomes data that workers and managers have added to the system and to compare their outcomes with averages for similar services and client groups. The Star Online is available to organisations using the Shooting Star for an annual licence fee, based on the number of workers using the Star.

For more information, or to sign up to the Shooting Star Online, go to **www.staronline.org.uk**.

This Organisation Guide

The remainder of the introduction to this guide presents the theoretical foundations and development process of the Shooting Star. The following two parts are intended to support the implementation and use of the Shooting Star. Part one is for those in a management role and provides guidance and good practice examples in implementing the Shooting Star across a school or community project. Part two presents guidance for teachers, mentors or other relevant workers in using the Shooting Star with students or other people.

Outcomes Star™ website

The Outcomes Star website – **www.outcomesstar.org.uk** – contains all versions of the Stars along with supporting information. Specific areas covered by the website include:

- How the Star was developed

- Research and validation material about the Star

- What students and other people say about using the Star

- Good practice on implementation

- Use of Outcomes Star data for outcome measurement

- Use of the Star as a keywork tool

- Information for commissioners on using the Star.

Training

Training is extremely valuable before using the Shooting Star. Triangle provides in-house training and runs a licensed trainer scheme for those wanting to cascade training within their school. For further details, see **www.outcomesstar.org.uk** or email **training@triangleconsulting.co.uk**.

Theoretical foundations
Values and assumptions underpinning the Outcomes Star™

New approach

The approach underpinning the Outcomes Star family of tools is, we believe, an original approach to assessment and outcomes measurement. The Star approach can be described as Participatory Assessment and Measurement (PAM) because it draws on and extends Action Research and Participatory Action Research (PAR), both of which place empowerment, collaboration and integration at the core of research methods[2]. In the same way, the Outcomes Star seeks to empower students and other people within a collaborative process of assessment and measurement that is integrated with support work, rather than a separate activity.

Empowerment

Underpinning the Outcomes Star is an understanding that, in order for change to take place in people's lives, schools and other service providers need to help students and other people to understand the motivation, beliefs and skills that are needed for them to create that change for themselves.

While practical changes in a person's circumstances, like a work experience placement, may be important, these things do not bring about lasting change. It is the change that takes place within the individual that is the key active ingredient in achieving a more permanent, self-sustained independence and happiness. This is why the primary focus in most versions of the Outcomes Star, including the Shooting Star, is the relationship of the individual to the challenges that they face.

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[2] O'Brien, R. (2001) "An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research" in Roberto Richardson (ed.) Theory and Practice of Action Research, Joao Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraiba (English version)

This contrasts with other assessment and outcomes measurement tools that focus on the severity of a defined problem, such as the number of units of alcohol consumed in the case of substance misuse, or on external circumstances, such as examination results or getting a job. The Outcomes Star approach assumes that these things are important and should be measured but that the picture they give on their own is limited.

Those using the Outcomes Star report that it provides a much more empowering context for their work where students and other people are able to be active participants in the process rather than having assessment done to them. Being involved in their own process of change – and in the validation of their experience and perceptions – is often critical to helping them make the changes they seek[3] . Even for those not able to participate actively, because they are too young or have other needs, the Shooting Star is compatible with person-centred planning.

Collaboration

When using the Outcomes Star, the worker[4] and student[5] assess the student's needs together. Students base their assessment on their knowledge and understanding of themselves and workers utilise their experience of working with other students generally and their observations and reflections on this student's behaviour in particular. The intention is that the assessment emerges through a dialogue between student and worker and this may include both students and workers shifting their views. Thus the Shooting Star is neither a student self-completion tool nor a worker-only completion tool.

The Outcomes Star makes the model of change explicit and the information that is collected (the Star reading) is immediately presented back to the student, in the form of a completed Star. This makes it possible for the student and worker to take an overview together and to reflect on the completed Star as a basis for deciding what action to take.

This contrasts with extractive approaches to assessment and measurement in which the worker, in the role of expert, collects data from the student and takes that data away to make an assessment on their own. The expert may then decide what course of action is most appropriate and try to persuade the student that this is the best way forward for them.

Integration

The process of completing the Outcomes Star is an integral aspect of the worker (or team) working with the student, and it is intended to support, as well as measure, change. The process of completing the Star, engaging with the model of change and reflecting on the data as presented on the Star can result in a change of attitude within the student in and of itself. It can have a similar impact on the staff working with the person. As a result, the assessment is a part of the intervention. In addition, discussions about where a student is on the Outcomes Star scales and Journey of Change naturally leads to thinking about next steps and action planning. This is why it is recommended that the Outcomes Star is used as an integral part of coaching, mentoring or other support techniques.

This contrasts with traditional approaches in which the collection of data is seen as a separate process to the intervention and may be regarded as intrusive by workers and students.

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[3] Burns, S., MacKeith, J. and Graham, K. (2008) Using the Outcomes Star: Impact and Good Practice, London: Homeless Link

[4] We use the term 'worker' in this document to refer to the teacher, mentor or other school staff using the Shooting Star with a student and also to ensure the terminology is broad enough to accommodate projects run by schools with parents or other adults in their local community.

[5] We use the term 'student' for brevity throughout this document as the guidance is for workers only, but this should be understood to include both school and sixth form college students and parents or other adults completing the Star in the community, as appropriate.

Values and assumptions underpinning the Shooting Star™

The Shooting Star is underpinned by the assumption that positive growth is both possible and a realistic goal for all and is designed to focus on people's potential not problems. The teachers and students that collaborated in the development of the Shooting Star said that they hoped the Star would:

- Be an **awakener** – encouraging students to recognise and reflect on their strengths, where they are on their journey now and where they want to be in the future

- Be a **relationship builder** – a powerful guide to building trust with a supportive adult, such as a tutor or link teacher, and peers

- Record the journey of **personal development**, encompassing emotional evolution, skill sets and value-driven behaviour

- Be a **confidence builder** – as students see how they change, this can build motivation and confidence

- Help schools and community projects provide **evidence** that students have abilities beyond exam results to employers and further education colleges

- Help make the case to **government** that focusing on students' holistic development contributes to people leaving education better equipped to be successful in their chosen area as well as helping them achieve better academic results.

How the Shooting Star™ was developed

The Shooting Star was developed in collaboration with the Aldridge Foundation, whose work has an explicit focus on enabling and encouraging students to develop entrepreneurial attributes, and Learning to Lead CIC, an initiative to enhance student engagement in schools. It was developed with teachers and students at the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (DACA) and was piloted in the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) with additional material, input and feedback from Learning to Lead and from the Darwen Creates community project.

Like other versions of the Outcomes Star, the methodology was based on Action Research[6] and the Existential Phenomenological (PE) research method[7]. Action Research is a collaborative process of identifying issues, trying out solutions and assessing what works. This phenomenological method places a strong emphasis on understanding the subjective experience of the person being researched and the meaning of the experience for them.

The Shooting Star development process consisted of three main stages, and these are described below.

1) Data gathering

An initial one-day workshop was held in July 2011 with a working group comprising managers and teachers from DACA, plus representatives from the Aldridge Foundation and BACA. A group of students – four girls and four boys from years 8 and 9 – actively participated in the morning sessions.

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[6] O'Brien, R. (2001) "An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research" in Roberto Richardson (ed.) Theory and Practice of Action Research, Joao Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraiba (English)

[7] McCall, R. (1983), "Phenomenological Psychology", Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin'

The workshop explored the following key questions that are common to all versions of the Outcomes Star:

- What are the main areas in which the school and community projects are seeking to create change? *These areas become the points of the Star*

- What is the desired end point of the change process? *This becomes the end point on the model of change that underpins all the scales*

- What model of change describes the steps that students take on the journey towards that end point? *This is described in a series of steps showing a clearly discernible, qualitative difference between each step of the journey.*

A range of techniques were used to draw out participants' experience and knowledge including:

- Using the Outcome Triangle tool to identify the overall aim of services, the specific changes they are trying to bring about and the activities they carry out to achieve these changes

- Bringing to mind an individual student who has undergone a substantial change and identifying the key areas of change for that person. Students were also asked to do this exercise, thinking about themselves over the past year and the changes they had made

- Structured questioning exercises to draw out the steps, one by one, in each outcome area. The focus with this session is on concreteness, drawing out information about the signs of change in detail.

2) Data analysis and the development of the draft Shooting Star™

Triangle compiled all the material gathered at the workshop and reviewed it to allow meaning and common strands to emerge. Material used within the participating schools was borne in mind, along with other versions of the Outcomes Star; however, the raw data was allowed to speak for itself rather than organised according to existing models or frameworks. On the basis of this material, a draft version of the Shooting Star was developed.

3) Consultation and piloting

Through an iterative process of sharing, listening, refining and sharing again, the outcome areas, the Journey of Change and descriptions of the steps towards change in each outcome area were honed until they resonated with the students, support workers and managers participating in the development process. This process had four main steps:

- A second workshop in late September 2011. Here, the first draft of the Shooting Star was presented to workshop participants and feedback gathered. In the light of this feedback, improvements were made

- Workers and students tested the pilot Shooting Star during the second half of the 2011 autumn term and the first half of the 2012 spring term, gathering feedback questionnaires and Star data for analysis by Triangle

- A final workshop in March 2012 where the results of the pilot were reviewed and participants shared their experiences of using the Star with students and adults in the community and the value and meaning of the data generated

- Further revisions were subsequently made to the Shooting Star and the final stage involved editing and design to further ensure the tool is clear, accessible and user-friendly in advance of the first edition being published.

The pilot process and findings

The Shooting Star was tested in a wide range of contexts and using a range of approaches, including the following:

- A sample of year 11 students used the Star in one-to-one sessions with their mentors

- Year 7 students used the Star in a group setting and years 8 and 10 used it during business studies classes, also as a group

- A sample of year 8 and 9 students used the Star in one-to-one sessions with their tutors

- A sixth-form tutor completed the Star with a group, and a sample of sixth formers completed it in one-to-one sessions with their mentors

- A small sample of adults at the Darwen Creates community project completed the tool in one-to-one sessions with the DACA member of staff running the project.

The pilot Shooting Star was used with well over 100 students and 94 students completed two readings – one in the second half of the autumn term and the second in the first half of the spring term. Star data for the 94 students was analysed using a simple spreadsheet.

Highlights from the pilot

Of the total of 94 students who completed two Shooting Stars during the pilot period:

- 54 students (57%) showed an increase in their overall Star reading, of which nine showed a substantial change (over one-point shift on the scale of 1-5)

- 37 (39%) of students showed no change in their overall reading and three showed a decrease

- The overall mean average increased from 3.76 to 4.08 during the pilot period

- The average start and review positions on the different scales on the Star were very consistent between the six Star areas; the initial readings were 3.7-3.9 on average and in the average second reading were all between 4.0 and 4.2

- Within this, the greatest changes were in Aspiration, Contribution and People and Support, all with an average increase of 0.5 out of a maximum of four points that could be increased (a 12.5% increase)

- The least change was recorded in relation to Learning, with 39% of students showing an improvement and an average increase of 0.3 on the scale.

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Feedback from students and workers on the pilot Star™

Analysis of the 101 feedback forms completed by students showed that around two-thirds found the Star helpful. Students agreed with the statements below in the following percentages:

- 66% – My Star helps me see my strengths and what needs to change
- 41% – It helped me see what I need to do next
- 38% – I enjoyed completing my Shooting Star
- 32% – I will like seeing how I progress on my Star
- 22% – There was no point doing the Star
- 21% – It took too long

Analysis of feedback forms from 14 tutors and mentors showed that when asked whether completing the Shooting Star helped them and students have a useful discussion:

- 45% said: "Yes, often"
- 55% said: "Yes, a bit"

In addition, tutors and mentors were asked to agree or disagree with five statements about the process of using the Shooting Star with students. Their responses are summarised in the table below.

	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Using the Star helped me to get an overall picture of my students' strengths and needs	92%	0	8%
Using the Star helped students to see where they needed to focus and make progress	92%	8%	0%
The quiz helped me to understand where to focus next with students	85%	7%	8%
I found it encouraging to see the progress that students had made between Star readings	70%	14%	16%
I found the process of completing the Star with students too long	8%	15%	77%

The quality of conversation as a result of the process is most valuable.

Sixth form tutor, DACA

My relationship with my mentee has definitely developed as a result of doing the Star

Teacher, DACA

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Key points that were fed back at the end-of-pilot workshop about the experience of tutors and mentors using the tool:

- The Shooting Star is an excellent mentoring and pastoral tool

- The areas that the Shooting Star covers are exactly the areas on which schools should be focusing attention, helping balance a more narrow focus on exam results

- It works best within a one-to-one interaction as it supports quality conversations

- It takes time to complete a Star reading and it is difficult to find the one-to-one time

- A group setting is useful for explaining and unpacking the underlying concepts of the Star and the Journey of Change. However, during the pilot, workers concluded that students were more thoughtful when they completed the Star in one-to-one sessions than when completing it in a group setting

- Even when the Star is not completed in the best context it still gives rise to better action plans.

General conclusions about the pilot were:

- The focus of the Shooting Star is appropriate

- Tutors and mentors like the Star very much and find it helps students to take a more active part in discussions about their progress and in action planning

- The majority of students found the Shooting Star helpful but most did not say they liked completing it. Overall, those completing it in one-to-one sessions with a tutor or mentor appreciated the process more while those completing it in a class or other group context were less engaged with it

- The Shooting Star shows change for some students, even during the relatively short pilot period, but is probably most useful when completed once in an academic year to allow more change to take place.

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Part 1: Implementing the Shooting Star™ in your school or community project

Implementing the Shooting Star can affect an organisation's approach in a number of ways, for instance, it can help:

- Move towards more holistic outcomes for students and away from a narrow focus on academic achievement and exam results. This can place greater emphasis on the skills and attributes people need to be successful in their lives in whatever way is right for them

- Provide a shared language for the aims underlying a holistic approach, clarifying the skills, attributes and support needed and the steps along the way

- Help to change the culture of a school from one in which students are passive recipients of learning and support to one that empowers students to take control of their own development

- Highlight the value of one-to-one time spent with students discussing their strengths and needs, and developing goals

- Highlight the difficulty of finding one-to-one time with students and add to the pressure on the number of things that need to be done in the time that is available

- Demonstrate effectiveness and highlight the areas where improvement is needed and with which workers and managers need to engage.

Implementing the Star effectively, and achieving the full benefits of using it, takes time, continuous attention, and a commitment to follow the process through and address issues as they arise. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that the implementation of the Shooting Star is led from the top. Only in this way will the Star receive the profile and backing it requires for developments to be co-ordinated across a school. We also recommend nominating a Star champion and possibly also setting up an implementation group to oversee the introduction of the Star.

The rest of this section covers a checklist of eight steps to introducing the Star. Many organisations find it helpful to have support with the implementation process. Triangle can help with specific aspects of this process and provide background support or mentoring to those leading the implementation. We also provide implementation packages that include Outcomes Star training and a licence to use the Star Online web application.

> My advice is to see the implementation of the Outcomes Star as a change management process. It is vital to communicate to keyworkers how it will help them to do their job and that it will help the organisation as a whole to make its case to the outside world. It is also vital to integrate the Star fully into keywork processes and training.
>
> **Manager, St Mungo's**
> **(Refers to the Outcomes Star for Homelessness)**