



Challenging Limits...Changing Lives

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sertoma Centre and New Star to Merge

The merger will create a large alliance for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and those living with mental illness.

The Boards of Sertoma Centre, Inc. and New Star, Inc. announced today that they will merge the two organizations, effective October 3, 2023. After completing a thorough assessment of the organizations and receiving approval from state agencies, both boards agreed that combining resources will have a greater impact in serving individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and those living with mental illness.

The merged organization will be renamed Sertoma Star Services.

Both Dan Strick and Gus van den Brink will continue in leadership roles in the merged organization. Dan will be the President/CEO of the agency and Gus will remain as Executive Director until his eventual retirement. The new Sertoma Star Services board will consist of seven members from each agency's board. The new Leadership Team has been chosen and is finalizing other staff positions for the new organization.

Strick praised the boards and staff of both organizations for thoughtfully managing the merger discussions and for keeping the needs of the individuals the two agencies serve top of mind.

“Combining Sertoma Centre and New Star, Inc. into one organization allows us to deliver the best practices of each organization and share them across all of our services,” Strick said. “Together, we will have a stronger impact on people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and those living with mental illness throughout much of northeast Illinois and northwest Indiana by providing individuals with a full array of comprehensive services, choices, and opportunities.”

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The move is expected to create more innovative programs for people with disabilities, improve the organization's position for securing grants, save administrative costs, and expand service areas across northeast Illinois and into northwest Indiana, providing services to more people.

"This alliance will better position us to continue investing in our incredible staff and the quality programs we have created and fostered these past 70-plus years," Strick said.

"The two agencies share complementary services and a common mission to enrich the lives of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. By combining the two agencies, we are able to be a more powerful voice in the state and have a greater impact," he added.

Sertoma Centre and New Star have a collective 120-plus years of supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Each organization provides unique services that will benefit the consumers/members. Sertoma Centre has strong mental health services, providing opportunities that empower individuals living with mental illness to achieve personal success throughout the south suburbs. New Star provides unique recreation services, supports people in Indiana, and has a strong person-centered model. Both organizations are committed to community-integrated employment and smaller facility-based day services.

Gus van den Brink commented, "Sertoma Centre is excited to be a part of an effort which both strengthens and expands critical services and supports to the community of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and those living with mental illness. The staff of Sertoma Star Services will ensure the delivery of state-of-the-art services by the very best professionals this field has to offer.

"Additionally, the new and improved organization will be directed by a dynamic team of leaders in the field with a focus on delivering the best services today, and a constant eye on the future and how to improve and guarantee services for generations to come," he added.

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