

Elsen, Nikki

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Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 9:05 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: STAR Center

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Dear Members of City Council,

My name is Marlis O'Brien. My son Erik is special needs. We live on the North Side of La Crosse. I am also one of the STAR Center Board members. I would like to thank you for your time and consideration related to the STAR Center project. I would challenge any person to spend a week in a wheelchair and try to find access to exercising anywhere in our region. We have many wonderful facilities, but they do not have weight machines, pools, or fitness machines that allow for access with wheelchairs. They don't have suspension tracks to aid those trying to strengthen muscles for walking that have had strokes, ALS, muscular dystrophies, or accidents causing paralysis. We donated several adaptive bikes to one of the local facilities and they gave them all back because they don't have any staff trained to use them.

We will have people using the STAR Center from all over the coulee region. People will bring their family members and friends to the STAR Center 2-3 times per week. While their loved one is exercising, they will shop, buy gas, buy coffee, and buy meals in our beautiful city. I realize that the taxpayers have spent money to clean up this land and they want something in return for their investment. I can't imagine a better return on our investment then creating a center that will be one-of-a-kind and draw people from all over the region to spend their money in our town. Not to mention the fact that it is the right thing to do for those individuals that have health issues. Through population management, we can ensure that our loved ones are able to lead healthy lifestyles involving something we all take for granted: the ability to exercise if we want to.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Marlis and Erik O'Brien