



THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR HEALTH EQUITY  
IN THE GREATER LA CROSSE AREA

*35,000  
people in our  
community  
face significant  
barriers to  
health.*

*‘Why?’*



## THE NEED

We asked.  
This is what we found:

*1 out of 5 people are unable to improve their health because physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities are lacking.*

### Five years ago

La Crosse area leaders who study community health were stunned to discover that local organizations couldn't keep up with the consequences of that disturbing statistic. In a community known for solving tough problems, one of the toughest still remains: health equity for all populations.

### Three years ago

A larger group envisioned a bold concept to make access to physical activity readily available to people with disabilities and their caregivers. They were joined by educators, aging and disability advocates, architects, health professionals, social organizations and support organizations.

### Today

We're about to implement the vision. But we need your help.



## What **HEALTH EQUITY** means

Everyone has the chance to lead the healthiest and most fulfilling life possible. No one is disadvantaged because of physical limitation, social position or other circumstance.

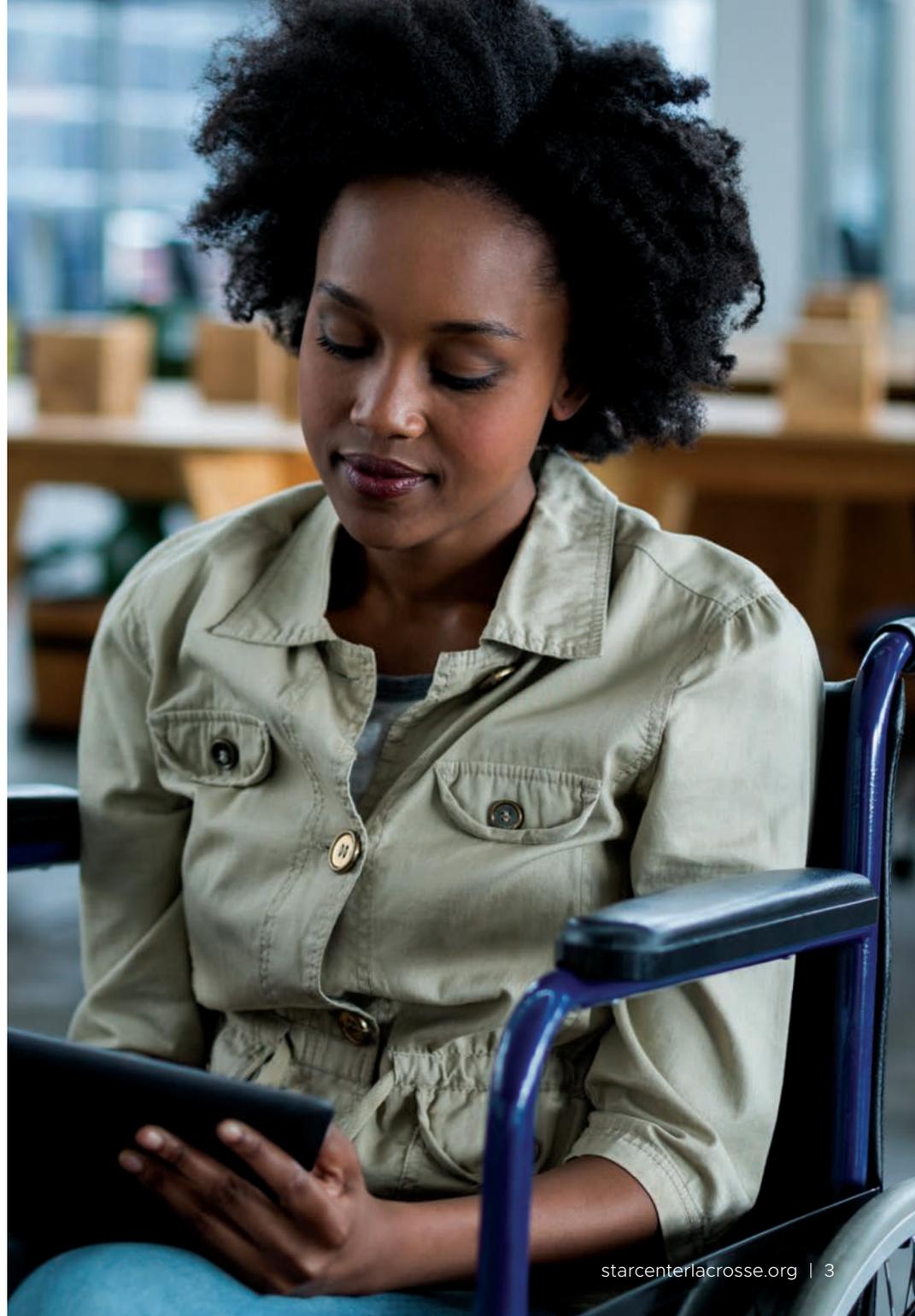
---

### **Barriers are everywhere; opportunities are not**

**HEALTH EQUITY** is the goal of STAR Center, but it's not today's reality.

Some people living with disabilities, those recovering from stroke or injury and those with chronic conditions may be able to arrange transportation and at least get through the front door of an exercise facility. But they can't use training equipment, navigate a track, reach restrooms or shower. If they are lucky enough to find suitable equipment, often no one in the facility can assist them.

***Adaptive or assistive  
equipment that fits—  
with assistance in using it—  
is rarely available***



## THE URGENCY



*40% of health outcomes depend on community-based opportunities to stay healthy, not on medical care*



### The multiplier effect that shortens lives

Having a disability but little access to healthy activity dramatically increases the likelihood of developing a secondary condition—not from the disability itself, but from a lack of healthy movement.

**4 times the depression**

**4.5 times the COPD**

**2.5 times the cancer**

**2.5 times the asthma**

**3 times the arthritis**

**2.5 times the diabetes**

**4.2 times stroke risk**

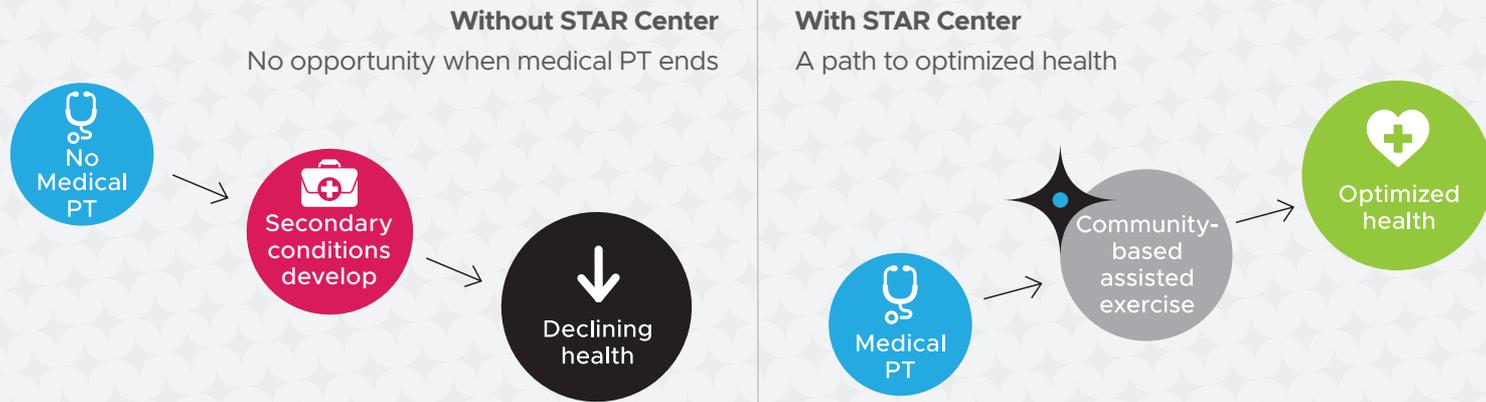
**2 times the heart disease**

**57% more adult obesity**

**50% more hypertension**

**40% more elevated cholesterol**

# STAR Center fills a void that no other facility can



## Without physical activity, secondary conditions are inevitable

- ✦ A rural stroke patient makes good progress during rehab. But when medical treatment ends, there are no accessible, non-medical options to continue her recovery.  
**The effects of her stroke become debilitating.**
- ✦ An Onalaska caregiver is overwhelmed. She can't find accessible exercise options for herself and her father, who lives with a serious disability.  
**His health gradually declines. So does hers.**
- ✦ A La Crosse veteran has an injury that affects his mobility. Living alone, he lacks social interaction and support, becoming more sedentary and isolated.  
**His Parkinson's disease progresses faster.**
- ✦ A group home resident in La Crosse is happy to have his basic needs met but has no access to physical conditioning or social opportunities.  
**He becomes obese and develops hypertension.**

## THE OPPORTUNITY

*STAR Center programming closes the gap so that physical activity is available equally to people of all abilities*

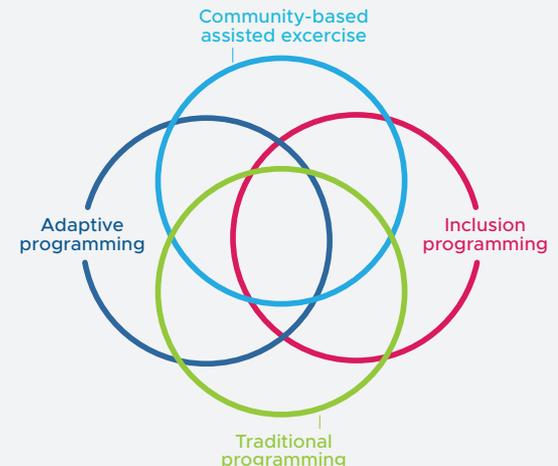
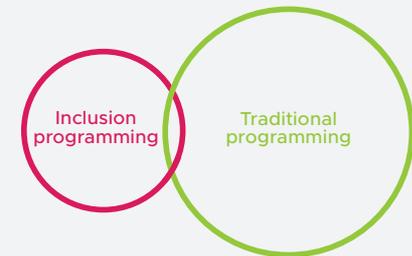
With STAR Center, people with physical or cognitive disabilities, limited mobility or issues related to aging will have their needs met with equipment and programming designed specifically for them. They'll be among people who share similar challenges in a facility built specifically for them. Trained and certified staff will be available to help participants achieve their goals safely and maximize all the unique equipment and features STAR Center offers.

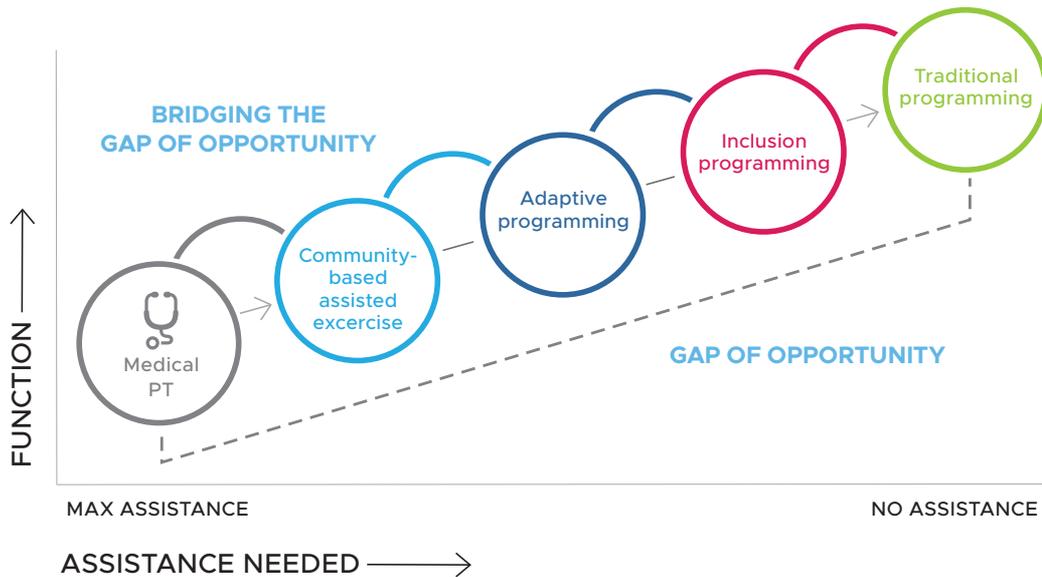
### Community-based assisted exercise

The STAR Center will let individuals needing physical therapy or occupational therapy continue their activities in a welcoming recreational facility. Through the STAR Center, individuals will gain access to a variety of equipment commonly used in clinics and rehab centers, and can rely on assistance from staff members and students studying to become physical and occupational therapists. Most importantly, community-based assistive exercise lets individuals continue to enhance their health through exercise **even after insurance coverage ends.**

### Adaptive programming

Through specialized adaptations in equipment and approach, adaptive programming addresses the specific needs of individuals with disabilities and allows them to participate and enjoy the highest levels of recreation, exercise and fun. Certified staff will be available to do individual assessments and modifications for participants. Adaptive recreation and exercise programming at the STAR Center will include archery, swimming, tennis, track and field, yoga and more. The STAR Center will also offer wheelchair basketball, football, lacrosse, soccer and sled hockey.





*“The STAR Center bridges the medical model to the community model. That bridge doesn’t exist to the extent it should, because most health clubs aren’t set up to accommodate the health and wellness needs of individuals with disabilities.”*

*Jeff Legler, PT, MHA*

*Director of Rehabilitation Services  
Mayo Clinic Health System*

### **Inclusion programming**

Inclusion programming at the STAR Center will allow everyone, regardless of ability, to participate in activities together. While other facilities’ inclusion programming may not address an individual’s physical challenges, individual assessment available at the STAR Center, adaptations of activities and specialized equipment will allow all community members to participate at optimum levels together.

### **Caregiver programming**

Being a caregiver can be physically demanding and emotionally draining. Caregivers are at risk for developing chronic conditions such as heart disease, depression and stroke. At the STAR Center, caregivers will have an opportunity for self-care and to pursue their own health goals.

## THE PLAN

*The enormity of the problem requires a new solution that's practical, thoughtful and bold*

Community partners will offer much-needed programs in this innovative, universal-access complex. The facility will include:

### **Activity Center**

Adaptive equipment, therapeutic pools and a specially equipped perimeter track, with personal instruction and assistance

### **Life Center**

Supports all wellness domains with education and targeted programming, job training and clinical teaching

### **Disability Referral Center**

Provides referrals to community resources, funding and service providers in our area

### **Veteran Center**

Support, recreation and community for veterans with convenient access to services

The STAR Center is planned for the location adjacent to the former rubber mill property at Red Cloud and George Streets in La Crosse. It is centrally located, accessible to the La Crosse-area public, served by public transit and near university and technical college students. All facilities—building and grounds—will be accessible.

*Designed by River Architects and KPF  
Artist rendition*



“This project is an opportunity to improve the health of our citizens, lower the overall cost of delivering healthcare and distinguish our community. It is another great example of our region collaborating to solve a problem that all communities face but few have the courage and determination to address. This effort will help serve a portion of our community that is in great need, which from all indicators will greatly benefit and improve the well-being of individuals, families and their communities at the same time.”

**Jeff Thompson, MD**  
CEO Emeritus,  
Gundersen Health System



## IMPACT

### STAR Center's impact on community resources

The STAR Center closes the access gap and enables existing resources to be used more effectively, reducing budget strain for public and private organizations.

*We can elevate quality of life for thousands of people, with a dramatic effect on individual and social cost*

### Physical activity reduces healthcare spending

- ✦ Fewer secondary illnesses
- ✦ Fewer medical interventions
- ✦ Less hospitalization
- ✦ Fewer emergency room visits
- ✦ Lower spending on direct healthcare
- ✦ Lower social service costs

*"These resources are needed to maintain strength and independence. If people don't continue to work on strengthening, you lose it as you age."*

*Cheryl Neubauer*

*Supervisor at the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)*

# STAR Center's impact on diverse needs

It's incalculable.



*Moving together, we can expand opportunities for healthy movement and a more fulfilling life. For all.*

## THE VISION

### A one-of-a kind, community-based assisted exercise facility that fills a gap

The STAR Center features leading-edge adaptive and assistive equipment. The 80,000-square-foot center's therapy pools, gyms and educational spaces will offer innovative, targeted programming and collaboration. Expert assistance includes assessment of individual modifications required to use equipment, instruction prior to use, support while in use and disease-specific programming. Under the guidance of specially certified staff, university health science students will provide assistance as part of their clinical experience.

### The STAR Center model of therapeutic and adaptive recreation

- ◆ Create unprecedented, universal access to physical activity
- ◆ Reduce health risks from lack of movement
- ◆ Interrupt the cycle of physical and mental decline
- ◆ Achieve health equity

*"It's distressing how many patients ask me to extend their physical therapy...because when it ends, they have no other options."*

*Christine M. Brose, MD*

*Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Gundersen Health System*

*For the first time, people with disabilities can have access to fitness equipment previously available only in a medical setting.*

## STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT

### **“The Therapeutic Recreation program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse**

wholeheartedly supports the STAR Center of La Crosse, Wisconsin. The Center will offer needed adaptive recreation and sports programs in addition to therapeutic service to children and adults living in the Coulee Region. People with disabilities will have the opportunity to enhance function, develop skills, make friends and improve health and well-being. Finally, students majoring in Therapeutic Recreation will have opportunities to practice clinical skills in a community setting. These clinical skills are essential to their practice as Therapeutic Recreation Specialists.”

**Nancy Richeson PhD, CTRS, FDRT**

Therapeutic Recreation Program Director,  
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse  
Editor-in-Chief, American Therapeutic  
Recreation Journal

*“There’s a cost associated with not providing opportunities for physical activity for people with disabilities and that cost is unhealthy outcomes, furthering of disabilities, more healthcare-related costs in terms of dollars and cents but more important, missed opportunities for people with disabilities to reach their full potential.”*

**Paul Mueller, MD, MPH**

Regional Vice President  
Mayo Clinic Health System



## STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT

*“The vision is exciting. I think the vision is the future of health. It’s a beautiful vision, and I think that we can all dare to make it happen.”*

*Eileen McKenzie, FSPA, RN  
President, Franciscan Sisters of  
Perpetual Adoration*

*“There’s no way that you’d get me to roll into the YMCA right now. There are too many barriers.”*

*Richard Chrz  
Individual who uses  
a wheelchair*

*“Someone who sustains a serious injury requiring a stay on the rehab unit, may be fortunate enough to receive outpatient therapy after discharge, but not always. The STAR Center would enable a person to continue on their rehabilitation journey in a supportive environment working toward making gains in their functional abilities.”*

*Cheryl Neubauer  
Supervisor at the Aging and  
Disability Resource Center  
(ADRC)*

*“From my perspective, the STAR Center is a very important initiative, and one that the community needs.”*

*Jeff Legler, PT, MHA  
Director of Rehabilitation Services  
Mayo Clinic Health System*

*“This is an exciting project for an underserved population in our community.”*

*Tanner Holst  
Vice President, Medical Specialties  
Mayo Clinic Health System*

# The STAR Center's goal is to complement existing facilities so that everyone is served

Val Schute, AIA  
Principal and Founder  
River Architects

*"As architects, we usually address the needs of people who don't have physical challenges. With the STAR Center, we're really changing the paradigm. Instead of it being mainly people without physical challenges and a few with, which is how a facility like the Y is designed, the majority are people with physical challenges. It's exciting to be a part of the project."*

Tom Koster  
Children's Miracle Network Steering Committee  
Gundersen Medical Foundation Board  
STAR Association Board of Directors

*"I know first-hand how difficult it is to maintain quality of life in a wheelchair. I believe the STAR Center will become a template for other communities."*

## Mission convergence

People with disabilities  
**NEED** help using equipment

Students **NEED** opportunities  
for clinical experience

## Join us as we move together

Our communities are fortunate to have so many committed individuals and organizations working hard to elevate people, especially those who need help to thrive. This ambitious project inspires me each day—seeing common interests form, missions intersect, overlap, then converge into a powerful wave in support of shared community interests. We welcome you to become a part of this exciting development, one that will further enhance our exceptional quality of life.

Virginia Wintersteen, MD, STAR Association Board of Directors



PO Box 1024  
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54602

608-788-7597  
[info@starcenterlacrosse.org](mailto:info@starcenterlacrosse.org)  
[starcenterlacrosse.org](http://starcenterlacrosse.org)

## ***PARTNERS MOVING TOGETHER***

The vision and commitment of experienced community leaders, educational institutions, healthcare providers, social services and local government are creating a transformative opportunity for La Crosse area residents—and a new community health model.

The STAR Center will be owned and operated by the STAR (Sports, Therapeutic and Adaptive Recreation) Association of La Crosse, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

### **Collaborative programming partners**

Gundersen Health System  
Mayo Clinic Health System  
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse  
Viterbo University  
Western Technical College

The text "JOIN US" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A thin, dark blue diagonal line is positioned to the left of the text, starting from the top left and extending towards the bottom right, partially overlapping the text.