

Barbara Bush Speaks Before 400 at STAR Inc. Luncheon in Darien

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Barbara Pierce Bush drew a capacity crowd of 400 people to the Woodway Country Club in Darien on Thursday, April 4 at a luncheon fundraiser for STAR Inc., *Lighting the Way*.

Bush, the keynote speaker, discussed her book, *Sisters First*, a New York Times best seller written with her twin sister, and shared stories about life in the White House and attending Yale with the secret service trying to blend in as a college student.

— *an announcement from* [STAR Inc., Lighting the Way](#)

She shared memories of her famous grandparents and parents, describing their family life and the lessons that passed through generations.

Bush also answered questions in a segment of the program moderated by Fox News anchor and Emmy-winning journalist Sharon Crowley.

Before the lunch, Bush greeted VIP guests and some STAR families with younger children in a special reception.

One of the young women Barbara met was Caitlyn Vitulich and her mom, Michelle, from Westport. Caitlyn, now a kindergartener, was featured in a photo with Barbara's sister Jenna Bush Hager when Jenna spoke at STAR's first luncheon seven years ago.

Barbara Bush is the CEO and co-founder of Global Health Initiatives that mobilizes a global community of

young leaders to build the movement for health equality.

Since its inception in 2013, STAR's spring luncheon event has raised over \$260,000 to benefit the organization's services for infants, children, and adults impacted by intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Westport, Wilton, and Stamford.

Guests were welcomed by STAR Executive Director, Katie Banzhaf and heard Susie Mysogland, a STAR parent and New Canaan resident, talk about her 11 children, eight of whom were adopted at different ages from infancy to age 9, who had experienced some of life's most unfortunate circumstances before finding their forever family.

Guests enjoyed an assortment of passed croustades, grilled chicken with a miso honey glaze over greens and quinoa followed by petite cupcakes by Palmer's Bakery in Darien.

Once seated, guests enjoyed a colorful lunch table set with handmade paper flowers created by STAR clients with assistance from New Canaan resident Bridget O'Leary and large glass terrarium centerpieces made especially for the event by Nielsen's Florist in Darien.

All guests received a goody bag courtesy of Andrew Stefanou Salon & Spa and a signed copy of Sisters First, co-authored by Barbara Pierce Bush and her twin sister Jenna Bush Hager courtesy of the Levy Family.

There were over \$10,000 worth of donated prizes, including two adult folding BMW bicycles, a diamond necklace, High Tea Party for eight by Palmer's Market and Michael Buble concert tickets.

This year's luncheon featured a hand-selected vendor boutique showcasing eighteen local vendors including 203, Helen Ainson, Denise Franzino Portraits, Good Threads Needlepoint, India Hicks, Jean Forte Vintage Silver, For Wolf Grace by Kate Bagnati, Keep Collective, KVO Collections, Nylastar, Patrice, Second Self, Sole Baby, Shoes 'N' More, More 'N' More, Sweet Pierre's and The Lady Ming.

STAR thanks all who attended as well as the sponsors, table sponsors, donors, volunteers and boutique vendors who helped make the day a springtime success.

Memories of the event were captured by professional photographer Miggs Burroughs of Westport, and can be viewed on [STAR's website](#).

About STAR

[STAR](#) was established in 1952 by parents who believed that children with intellectual and developmental disabilities were entitled to the same basic opportunities as other children.

Today, STAR is a not-for-profit organization that has grown to include a full array of services for over 600

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individuals with disabilities, from birth to their senior years, and their families. STAR's mission is to create opportunities for individuals to live full lives with independence, freedom of choice and personal growth by providing support, services and advocacy.

They inform and encourage the community to recognize and appreciate the value of all individuals. Services include early intervention services for infants and preschoolers; family support services; job assessment and training; recreation and leisure activities; and residential support to adults in group homes and apartments.