



NEWSLETTER  
JULY 2020



## STARK CAREER CONNECT

### CREATING QUALITY PLACES

Earlier this year, it was announced that Strengthening Stark was selected for the Paradox Prize, a grant from the Fund for Our Economic Future that focuses on implementing solutions to solve the transportation/workforce paradox: Individuals cannot find employment without transportation and can't afford transportation without employment. With the Paradox Prize dollars, Strengthening is working with community partners including SARTA, Stark State College, Goodwill, Greater Stark County Urban League (GSCUL), Jobs Ohio, and local employers, to pilot a program called Stark Career Connect. This program will connect candidates looking for careers offering a high wage, short trainings, and job sustainability. Community partners such as Goodwill and GSCUL will help candidates through the process from initial interest to job retention.

During the exploration phase of this program, Stark State College's CDL program was highlighted as a solid opportunity to get new drivers into jobs with a starting salary in the range of \$35,000-65,000 with incredible wage increases available as experience is gained.



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**Stark State**  
COLLEGE



Stark State's CDL program is financial aid eligible, and other funding is available to help with training costs, childcare, additional expenses, etc. Candidates interested in the CDL program can contact Goodwill or GSCUL to be guided through the process.



The Greater Stark County  
Urban League



Transportation is being planned by SARTA and plans will be released soon.

Strengthening Stark looks forward to identifying other opportunities in addition to CDL as more community partners come to the table.

CONNECT  
CONNECTION

# VISIT CANTON'S STAY SAFE IN STARK COUNTY PLEDGE

## NURTURING BUSINESS GROWTH



Visit Canton, the Stark County Convention & Visitors' Bureau, is showcasing local travel economy businesses that take a "Stay Safe in Stark County" business pledge. The pledge is a commitment to the Ohio Health Department's Responsible RestartOhio guidelines. In addition to abiding by the guidelines, businesses must also make their health safety protocols available for consumers to find online and agree to the removal of the "Stay Safe in Stark County" designation if found to be non-compliant.



Visit Canton's President and Strengthening Stark Business Growth sub-committee member Allyson Bussey said, "The goal is to help residents and visitors find options for things to do and places to visit where they can be confident that

protocols are being followed to help keep customers and employees healthy and to aid in preventing the spread of COVID-19."

Businesses can sign the Safe in [STARK BUSINESS PLEDGE FORM](#). Residents and visitors can visit the [STAY SAFE IN STARK COUNTY PAGE](#) for a consistently growing list of local businesses who have signed the pledge.

## CONNECTING OUR KIDS

### CREATING QUALITY PLACES

With uncertain days coming next month as the school year begins, Strengthening Stark is working hard with community partners and school districts to do our part, making sure that as many children are connected to the internet for virtual learning as possible. Regardless of how school will be structured, virtual learning will very likely be utilized by all students for the 2020-2021 school year, and the digital divide has never been more apparent.

MCTV, Stark Education Partnership, Stark Library, and many others are working to meet the fast approaching school year start date.





## STARK TANK

### DEVELOPING OUR TALENT

Earlier this year, GlenOak junior Cloee Snyder took first place in Stark Tank with her innovative Christmas tree storage system. You can see the entire event [HERE](#) leading up to her win. Strengthening Stark, Stark Education Partnership, the school districts, and other partners all look forward to discovering what the young entrepreneurs will bring to our sharks for the 2020-2021 Stark Tank. While the format is still being determined with COVID-19 obstacles in mind, we are confident that we will be impressed even more so than this year.

In addition to the middle school and high school competitions, there are plans to implement a college level competition as well. Look for updates in the following months for event plans and dates. Know of a young individual who would be interested? Have them check out what our sharks will be looking for [HERE](#) in the 2020-2021 competitions.



## CHANGES FOR STRENGTHENING STARK

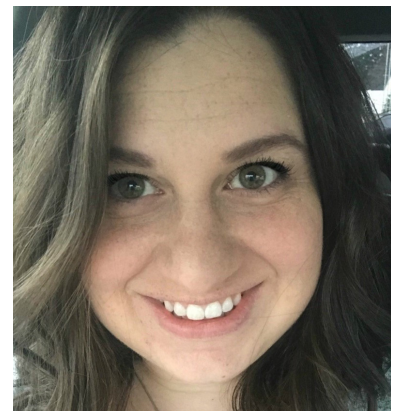
### GROWING THE MOVEMENT

The refreshed logo, new tagline ***Our businesses. Our people. Our home.***, and **[BRAND NEW WEBSITE](#)** aren't the only changes you'll see around Strengthening Stark. Right before the onset of COVID-19, new Chief Operating Officer Rebecca Kuzma and Project Manager Aleisha Stout joined Hrishue Mahalaha on the Strengthening Stark team.

Rebecca and her husband have been in the Avondale neighborhood for over 5 years and have two great dogs, Sam and Winston. "In spite of COVID, it has been great meeting so many leaders in Stark County in my first few months," says Rebecca. "I look forward to working with everyone to get things done and support the great work that is underway! This job is a great blend of my passion for business and heart for the community!" Rebecca and her husband enjoy traveling and look forward to when they can resume their journeys.



Aleisha is Stark County born and raised. She earned her bachelor's degree from Kent State University at Stark in Business Administration and brings marketing, project management, and graphic design experience to Strengthening Stark. "So many people don't reach their potential because they were raised to think that overcoming obstacles to break out of poverty is impossible. I'd like to be part of changing all of that. The Strengthening Stark movement is the perfect vehicle to get the right people at the table and turn theories into opportunities." Aleisha is also owner of Short & Stout Graphics and enjoys spending time with her husband and two young children.





**STRENGTHENING STARK**

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## OUR MISSION

Strengthening Stark is a community-wide movement of residents, business, government, nonprofits and philanthropists who share a vision for a vibrant, growing county. Our goal is to make Stark a great place to start and grow a business, develop one's talent and pursue a career, and live and raise a family.

# STARK SUCCESSES

## ELITE

Thanks to a collaboration between JobsOhio and the Stark County Minority Business Association, 13 minority-owned businesses in Stark County are now participating in ELITE, London Stock Exchange Group's business support and development program. Learn which 13 organizations are participating [HERE](#).

## SCALERATOR NEO

Two Alliance-based companies, Carpenter Metal Solutions and First Choice Electrical Solutions, were recently selected to participate in the 2020 Scalerator NEO program.

## RACIAL EQUITY LETTER

Strengthening Stark released a statement on racial equity to the community along with intentions to act on input from the Black communities here in Stark County. It was revised by our collaborative group made up of businesses, community leaders, organizations, philanthropic organizations, government, nonprofits, and residents. You can read it on our [WEBSITE](#) or on any of our [SOCIAL MEDIA](#) channels.