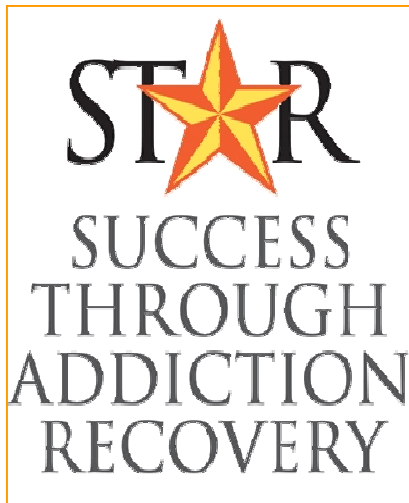


# STELLAR SUCCESS

“When it is darkest, men see the stars.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

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## A Visit from the Drug Czar



*From left to right* STAR Judge Brock Thomas, ONDCP Director John Walters, STAR Judge Caprice Cosper, and Dallas DIVERT Drug Court Judge John Creuzot met to discuss the success of Texas Drug Courts.

system to access transitional housing options of their choice, bus fare, family counseling, and other recovery support services.

Mr. Walters and his staff met with the STAR judges, Assistant District Attorneys, STAR defense attorneys, STAR community supervision officers, and program managers to discuss the success of Harris County’s Drug Court. Judge John Creuzot of the Dallas DIVERT Drug Court also came to meet with the Drug Czar.

Mr. Walters was most interested in the personal accounts from two current STAR clients, Stacy D. and Gayla V., and two STAR graduates, Cassandra B. and Linda D., who attended the meeting. He asked them about their experiences in the drug court, about STAR helped meet non-substance abuse needs like transitional housing, medical issues, and gaining employment.

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*Above* John Walters, Director of ONDCP, talks with Judge Caprice Cosper and STAR Deputy Rick Sumlin in the STAR courtroom.

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### Special Announcement

Congratulations to all of our December graduates: we are incredibly proud of you and all of your accomplishments. Good luck in your new lives; you have worked hard for them!

This October the STAR Program welcomed a very special guest from the White House. John Walters, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Policy, came to the STAR Program to visit with staff and clients. He specifically requested to visit the drug court while in town to present at the Houston-Harris County Drug Summit October 28-29.

Mr. Walters is responsible for coordinating all aspects of federal drug control programs and spending, earning him the title of the “Drug Czar.”

Emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to reducing drug use, Director Walters oversaw the creation and implementation of several key prevention and treatment programs, including the “Access to Recovery” treatment initiative that provides vouchers for thousands of Americans struggling with addiction. STAR Drug Court clients use this voucher

# STAR SUCCESS THROUGH ADDICTION RECOVERY

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## Thank You, and You, and . . .

### Alumni Banquet

Thank you to all those that donated money and services for the 4rd Annual Alumni Holiday Banquet. This year's special dinner is the product of many generous friends of STAR graduates. Thank you all for making a special night for our STAR Alumni!

Also, a special thank you to The Parador. This Houston landmark offered our Alumni the chance of a lifetime to enjoy a lovely holiday event. Thank you to all those who will make such a special night for our Alumni and their families.

### Clean and Green

Thank you again to the Clean and Green Port of Houston Program for hosting another fun day helping out Houston environment. We look forward to many more projects in the future.



**Mission Statement** To build the community's confidence in the criminal justice system through more effective judicial and public intervention based on changed perceptions of addiction. The drug court will seek to more efficiently utilize all available resources to save money and to save lives.

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After the meeting, the Drug Czar visited the STAR Courtroom and conducted a press conference for local media. Judge Thomas introduced Mr. Walters, and the Drug Czar stressed the importance of getting the truth about drugs, recovery, and prevention out to the public.

STAR would like to thank John Walters and his staff for choosing to

visit our program and making such a special connection with our STAR clients.

**From left to right — Gayla V., Stacy D, Linda D, and Cassandra B. show off the White House medallions that John Walters, Director of ONDCP, gave them in appreciation for their representation of the STAR Drug Court.**



# Words of Thanks to our Judges

**Cynthia T.**

**Judge Mike Wilkinson, STAR 1:**

The thing that comes to mind about my judge is his sense of humor above and beyond all else. He also really seems to care about his clients.

I never imagined standing before a judge and answering such personal questions, but he really wants to be involved in our recovery and our progress.

He is amazingly tolerant and patient, with me especially! I am so grateful that he and STAR tough-loved me and tolerated me to get to this point.

**Michelle W.**

**Judge Devon Anderson, STAR 4:**

Judge, I don't know what I'm going to do without seeing you on the bench. I will miss you. I will miss the warmth that I feel when I'm telling you how well I'm doing. I promise you I will complete the STAR Drug Court Program! May God bless you and your family.

**Troyton D.**

**Judge Caprice Cosper, STAR 3:**

Judge Cosper has been a godsend to me. I had some struggles early on in the program, but she encouraged me to fight through it. This program has changed my life. We should get more coverage of the program to spread the message that not all addicts are criminals, and we can treat this disease.

**David B.**

**Judge Brock Thomas, STAR 2:**

First of all Judge, I want to thank you for your service, dedication, and commitment to this program. Being part of this program has helped men and women who are just like me, addicts and alcoholics who have successfully completed this program.

I never knew I had a disease and that there wasn't a cure for my addiction. But being educated and understanding my addiction, I know why things didn't work out, why I did things I did, why I always ended up in jail.

But with the help of this program and Pathway, I have hope and a vision that I can have a good life.

**“A life lived with integrity—  
even if it lacks the trappings of fame and fortune—  
is a shining star in whose light others may follow for year to come.”  
~Denis Waitley**

## Clean and Green 365

Clean and Greened turned one year old this November, and the STAR Program helped celebrate with the Clean and Green 365. STAR joined with Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Port of Houston Authority, Port Commissioner Elyse Lanier, attorney Kim Ogg, Shell Oil, Greater East end Management, and several local area schools to help beautify our Houston bayous.

To honor Clean and Green's first birthday, the program and its partners wanted to demonstrate how it takes 365 days a year to change attitudes and behaviors about the environment, littering, and thinking green. Clients in the STAR Program know a lot

about changing attitudes and behaviors in their addiction recovery, and make a valuable addition to this partnership.

Instead of just collecting trash, debris, and recyclables, STAR helped Clean and Green and its partners to plant 365 new trees on a stretch of bayou that was destroyed by Hurricane Ike. The site is adjacent to Tony Morron Park, a recreational area with a pavilion, playground, and sport fields.

STAR clients made up a large part of the 365 volunteers that planted the saplings and picked up trash in record time. Thank you to all of the clients who attended, especially the ladies



**Above** Port Commissioner Elyse Lanier (left) joins STAR Judge Mike Wilkinson, Judge Caprice Cosper, and Judge Brock Thomas pose beside the 365 new trees along Buffalo Bayou.

## The Quarter In Review

### Drug Summit

This October the Houston-Harris County Office of Drug Policy and the James A Baker III Institute of Public Policy at Rice University in presenting the Houston-Harris County Regional Drug Summit. The summit brought together key community stakeholders as well as elected and appointed officials to develop a comprehensive five-year strategic action plan that will address substance abuse and related issues throughout the Houston-Harris County region.

STAR Special Programs Manger Mary Covington was instrumental in the Summit's development and execution, sharing her expertise in how alternative sentencing programs can make an impact in communities.

STAR would also like to acknowledge Ray Andrews with Houston Crackdown and Dr. Peter Messiah with HISD for their efforts in coordinating this event.



*Above* Community Supervision Officer Alisa Bishop, Debbie S., and her daughter Loyce at the Astros's game.

### Spectrum 2008

This October, STAR Special Programs Manger Mary Covington presented at the SPECTRUM conference hosted by the Houston Chapter of the Texas Association of Addiction Professionals. Tailoring her slideshow to this year's Homecoming theme, she taught attendees about the role drug courts play in the criminal justice system to the tune of Big Twelve Fight Songs.

### St. Philip's Presbyterian Mission Fair

This October, STAR Special Programs Manger Mary Covington and Drug Court Foundation Director George Pope hosted a booth this year the St. Philip's Presbyterian Mission Fair, educating many local agencies and individuals about the importance and success of drug courts.

### Astros Game

This September, the STAR Program clients and staff attended a Houston Astros's game in honor of National Recovery Month. This event has become a yearly tradition to celebrate the success of our clients and honoring recovery efforts throughout our community.



*Above* Judge Caprice Cosper, STAR graduate Cynthia E., and Cynthia's grandchildren enjoy the ballgame.