

STELLAR SUCCESS

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

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Special Announcement

Congratulations to all of our March graduates! We are incredibly proud of you and all of your accomplishments. Good luck in your new lives—you have worked hard for them!

Harris County Drug Court Foundation Hosts Second Annual STAR Breakfast



Above: Former Drug Court judges celebrate the recovery of two remarkable STAR graduates who were honored at this year's Morning STAR Breakfast. Left to right — Caprice Cosper, Connie T, Brock Thomas, and Linda D.

The Harris County Drug Court Foundation hosted its second annual STAR Breakfast this February. The Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)3 dedicated to supporting the Harris County STAR Program by raising money, seeking community resources, and educating the public about the need for drug courts.

This year the STAR Breakfast welcomed Texas State Senator John Whitmire as the keynote speaker. Senator Whitmire spoke emphatically about the need for criminal justice to not only be tough on crime, but smart on crime. Drug courts, he said, are a great resource that save lives, save money, and stops the revolving door of the jail.

The Foundation also honored two STAR graduates who spoke at the Breakfast. Connie T. shared her testimonial that

moved guests with her amazing story of recovery and spiritual growth despite immense personal loss. The Foundation honored Linda D. as the first recipient of the Caprice Cosper Distinguished STAR Alumni Award. Linda inspired guests with her seven years of continuous sobriety, dedication to her daughter, and her pledge to make her own donation to the Foundation to support future STAR clients.

The STAR Program would like to thank the Foundation for its ceaseless efforts to get the word out about drug courts. Also, we are very thankful for the hard work of Foundation President Brock Thomas, former STAR judge, and Deborah Keyser, STAR defense attorney and board member, who secured the Parador as a peerless event space for the Breakfast. Thank you to all attendees for your support of the STAR Program.



Above: Harris County Drug Court Foundation Board member and STAR defense attorney Deborah Keyser and Texas State Senator John Whitmire.



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Announcements

NADCP Conference

Several of the STAR team members and judges will attend the National Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference in Nashville, TN this May to discuss drug court issues and learn new methods in treatment recovery.

Governor's Criminal Justice Advisory Council

Congratulations to Special Programs Manager Mary Covington and ADA Tara George who were recently appointed to the Governor's Criminal Justice Advisory Council. The council will advise the governor on the creation, staffing, operations and performance of specialty courts to ensure the rights of participants are protected.

STAR Picnic

Get ready for this year's STAR Picnic hosted by the STAR Alumni. The tentative date for picnic is May 12, 2012 at MacGregor Park. Each year the Alumni host this fun event so all STAR clients can celebrate their recovery with their families and friends.

STAR Welcomes Keisha Smith

STAR is excited to introduce Keisha Smith as the new defense attorney on the Wednesday STAR III docket. Keisha is a former prosecutor who now serves as defense counsel since 2007. We are so excited to have such a new team member dedicated to helping our clients.

You must have chaos within you to give birth to a dancing star.

~Friedrich Nietzsche

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.

STAR Staff Visits Our Providers



Above Pathway to Recovery's residential treatment facility for men in La Marque, Texas.

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, this year our STAR team is dedicated to visiting the treatment providers and community service centers where STAR clients attend rigorous

counseling and training. In January, several STAR team members including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and case managers toured just a few of the providers that partner with STAR.

The first stop of the day was Pathway to Recovery whose men's residential treatment facility in La Marque, Texas has been a starting point for many male STAR clients. STAR graduate David Stone, the Administrative Director, started our tour, and Dennis McColgin, CEO, joined us to describe the intense programming at the facility. Though our team members have worked with Pathway staff for years, it was different getting to

the see the facility's serene grounds and hear from staff that knows what it is like to be a client, too.

After Pathway, our team journeyed to Volunteers of America, a women's residential facility. Another STAR graduate, Monica G., helped us with our tour as she is currently working as a counseling intern. STAR also visited Extended Aftercare Incorporated and Houston Area Community Services.

Out STAR staff was extremely impressed by visiting the providers. Seeing the people and places allows our staff to see what's a client's journey looks like through his or her own eyes.

Thank you again to all our providers—we look forward to seeing you on our next day to tour facilities.

Thank you, Michelle!

Since 2006 Michelle Beck was the defense attorney for the Wednesday, STAR docket. As a former prosecutor, Michelle brought a lot of experience to her role on the Drug Court team. She not only advocated for clients in the Program, but also attended many outside STAR functions like the STAR Picnics, Alumni Christmas Parties, and community events. Michelle always brought her two daughters with her, and both girls helped to provide water to STAR participants in last year's Wellness Walk.

Michelle made the hard decision not to continue to work with STAR and allow another defense attorney to take her space and learn so much from a program that she feels that "has enriched [her] life by allowing [her] to participate and help others as they begin their journey to sustained recovery." She says, "I have learned to count all blessings and to not take anything for granted. I celebrate each cli-



Above STAR defense attorney Michelle Beck and her daughter, Katherine, at last years STAR wellness Walk.

ent whether they succeed and graduate or relapse and fail, because at least they tried."

Thank you, Michelle, for all your love and compassion to the STAR Program and our clients.

STAR Wellness Walk



Mark your calendars for this spring's Wellness Walk. Please join us Saturday March 24, 2012 on the Houston Bayou.

Clients and graduates will receive credit for this event toward their community service requirement. Contact Laura McCarty for more details.

STAR Alumni Holiday Party

