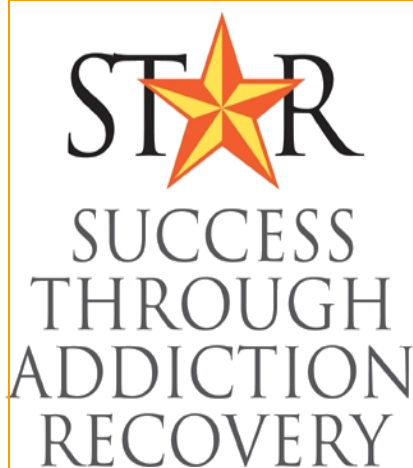


# STELLAR SUCCESS

“Obstacles are the things we see when we take our eyes off our goals.” — Zig Ziglar

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## Inside this issue:

STAR Gets Moving	1
STAR Contact Info.	2
Announcements	2
New Team Members	3
Candlelight Vigil	3
Quarter in Pictures	4

## Graduate's Corner

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!

## STAR Gets Moving: Harris County STAR Program Kicks Off A New Wellness Program for Recovery Month



**Left to Right:**  
*Judge Denise Bradley celebrates a successful run for recovery with STAR client, Brian W, his son, and Judge Bradley's daughter, Marlon*

In celebration of National Recovery Month this September, the Harris County Success Through Addiction Recovery (STAR) Adult Drug Court hosted a Wellness Walk in downtown Houston. Clients, graduates and staff walked or ran a three mile route from the Courthouse and down the Houston bayou. The Wellness Walk encouraged all to get out and move for their recovery.

STAR Judge Denise Bradley spearheaded the movement as a way to enhance the lifestyle choices of her clients in her court. After seeing that many clients, though sober, rarely exercised and practiced other healthy choices, she decided to get the whole group moving. Judge Bradley thought the walk was “a wonderful way to get together outside of the courtroom in a fun and healthy way.” She said, “I have personally found that exercise is a great way to relieve stress, boost energy levels and improve your mood. As the STAR Court clients commit to recovery, they

are also making huge lifestyle changes.”

Clients who attended the Wellness Walk got credit for their required community service project as well as a reduction in their fee payments. Over 50 active clients and graduates gathered bright and early on a Saturday morning to jog alongside their judges. In addition to Judge Bradley, STAR Judge Bill Burke attended as well, corralling clients on his bicycle. Case Managers, defense attorneys, and the Special Programs Manager also participated in cheerleading the efforts of our clients. The STAR Wellness Walk was not only a big hit with clients, but also with their children, sponsors, and parents. Many others came out to support the wellness efforts of the STAR Drug Court Clients and encourage them to practice healthy living in all aspects of their recovery.

Many clients now say they exercise regularly in anticipation of the next STAR Wellness Event.

*Continued on page 2*

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# Announcements

**New TADCP President**

We are pleased to announce that our very own Mary Covington has been elected President Elect of the Texas Association of Drug Court Professionals (TADCP). We are looking forward to the next TADCP Conference which will be held in Houston.

**Join STAR on Facebook**

Be a fan of the STAR Drug Court Facebook page. Our graduates and clients use it to keep in touch and easily communicate with each other about upcoming events. By “liking” our page, you will receive updates on STAR events and important messages.

**NADCP Conference**

Several of the STAR team members and judges attended the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) Conference in Washington, DC July 17-20 to discuss drug court issues and learn new methods in treatment recovery.

**TADCP Conference**

STAR administrators attended the Texas Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference in Dallas, TX on October 12-15. Attendees learned to identify variables in the drug court environment and distinguish team dynamics and individual roles.

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

*-Friedrich Nietzsche*

## ***STAR Gets Moving*** *continued from page 1*

STAR plans to host three or four Wellness Events throughout the year, motivating clients and graduates to engage in healthy living year-round. STAR is hopeful that this first Wellness Walk is the

beginning of a renewed commitment to recovery and health in all our clients. Judge Bradley hopes that “the STAR Court walk will be a regular tribute to all that STAR court clients have overcome and all that they have accomplished and will accomplish 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.

## A New Shining STAR: Justice Jeff Brown



**Above STAR 1 Justice Jeff Brown**

STAR is glad to have Justice Jeff Brown presiding over the Monday STAR 1 docket. A former Civil District Court judge, Justice Brown is

currently a justice for the 14th Court of Appeals. He presides over both civil and criminal cases.

Justice Brown learned of the STAR court while attending a Drug Court Foundation breakfast. He was both pleased and delighted with the life-changing effects STAR has on its participants, as well as the level of dedication that the judges and staff have for the program.

Justice Brown's interest in STAR increased when Judge Bill Burke, judge of the Wednesday STAR 3 docket, suggested that Justice Brown work as a substitute judge in the STAR program. Shortly thereafter, Justice Brown became the regular judge on the Monday STAR 1 docket. Since his first day with STAR, Justice Brown admits that he fell in love with the program, insisting that, "The knowledge and devotion of the staff and the courage and determination of the participants are truly inspiring."

He also adds that serving as a judge in the STAR Drug Court allowed him to, once again, sit on a trial bench—an opportunity he has truly missed.

When asked of his motivation for wanting to become a part of STAR and what he has learned as a result of working with this program, Justice Brown said, "It's nice to be part of something that's really making a difference. So much of what happens in courthouses is sad. And when there is a victory in a courthouse, it's usually accompanied by a defeat on the other side. But in STAR Court, the victories are at the expense of common enemies—addiction and despair—and they are celebrated by all involved." From the members of STAR, Justice Brown, welcome and thank you for your enthusiastic service. We certainly look forward to reaching many milestones with you on our team.

## Judges Support STAR

Even with four regular, dedicated judges, the STAR program often seeks other judges to help out with a docket or two. Several judges volunteered their time this quarter to keep our dockets running smoothly. Thank you to all those for helping out the STAR Program in a pinch.



Judge Caroline Baker  
295th Civil Court



Judge Belinda Hill  
230th Criminal Court



Judge Susan Brown  
185th Criminal Court

We would also like to recognize our regular judges, who preside over their designated docket each week: Judges Vanessa Velasquez, Denise Bradley, Jeff Brown, and Bill Burke. Operating the STAR Drug Court is truly a team effort and we are pleased to have such a wonderful team.

## STAR Attends the Candlelight Vigil

Harris County held its fifth annual city-wide candlelight vigil Thursday, October 20, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. The vigil occurred on the steps of City Hall at the Reflection Pool. The event remembered individuals who lost their lives due to substance use and abuse.

STAR graduates attended this vigil to demonstrate their pro-social behavior. Attendance in recovery-related events is considered when reviewing cases for early termination of probation.



**Left** STAR clients Ivy and Tosha, outside City Hall



# STAR Wellness Walk 2011



# Candlelight Vigil 2011

