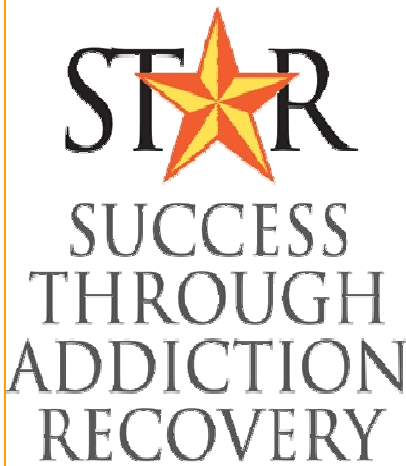


STELLAR SUCCESS

“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!

New Stars on the Horizon



Above District Judge Mike Anderson started the first week of January presiding over the STAR 4 Docket on Tuesday afternoons.

New Year's is a time for resolutions, and this year STAR Drug Court's resolution was to embrace change. Who new it would be so easy and rewarding?

The STAR Program has two new judges who joined the drug court team. District Judge Vanessa Velasquez joined the STAR 2 Thursday docket, and District Judge Mike Anderson joined the STAR 4 docket on Tuesday afternoons.

We are delighted to have both of them as new team members. These judges share the enthusiasm for drug court's mission, and value the sentencing alternatives that save lives from repeating the cycle of addiction and incarceration.

Judge Velasquez wants her clients to know "I am happy to be one of the new STAR court judges. I look forward to working with each of you and guiding you on your way to future success." Judge Velasquez volunteers her time from her home court, the 183rd District Court. She has already brought STAR's message to the Houston community by appearing on *Great Day Houston!* and sharing her excitement about being a part of the drug court process.

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Below District Judge Vanessa Velasquez volunteers her Thursday afternoons to preside over the STAR 2 Docket.



STAR SUCCESS THROUGH ADDICTION RECOVERY

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Gary Valenzuela

DCA Interns

Mary Martin
Drew Darnell

Thank You, and You, and . . .

Clean and Green

Thank you again to the Clean and Green Port of Houston Program and Buffalo Bayou Partnership for hosting another fun day helping out the Houston environment on February 28, 2009. We look forward to many more projects in the future.

Alumni Banquet

Thank you to all those that donated money and services for the 4th Annual Alumni Holiday Banquet. Last 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!

Harbor Lights Choir

Also, a special thank you to the Salvation Army Harbor Lights Choir who made a guest appearance at the Alumni Banquet. They really know how to get the crowd moving!



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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Judge Anderson became interested in STAR since his wife, Judge Devon Anderson, volunteered as a Drug Court Judge. He says, "I saw how important the program is to each client, their families and the community. The program is one that we can point to with pride. It is an opportunity to break the heartbreaking cycle

of addiction and give people back their lives." Judge Anderson also presides over the 262nd District Court.

STAR wants to thank both judges for dedicating their time and energy to Drug Court and its clients. We hope they continue to impart their wisdom and enthusiasm to our clients and the entire Drug Court team.



Above Judge Anderson, STAR graduate Kathryn Griffin, and Judge Caprice Cosper at the Alumni Banquet.

Texas School of Business

The STAR program aims to provide the tools and resources necessary to foster success over addiction and in life. Critical components to meet this goal are education and long term employment.

The Texas School of Business caters to people who want to invest in the benefits of education and job placement but struggle to do so because of time commitments and prohibitive costs. Admissions Representative Nate Moore understands the needs of his potential students and works one on one

with them to devise an affordable way to pay for the Texas School of Business through scholarships, grants, and loans. He also provides invaluable support and guidance.

The Texas School of Business specializes in professional skill development and training for a medical or dental assistant, a medical office specialist, or a computer support technician. There are multiple locations throughout the Houston, Texas area, which makes commuting convenient.

Most importantly, students participate in an externship in their field as part of their classes. The school continues to work with students after graduation to find permanent jobs—that is, if the externship employer does not hire them first!

The Texas School of Business is an opportunity in seeking education and employment. Their staff shares the same goals as the STAR Program—to invest in the future of our community one person at a time.

“You must have chaos within you to give birth to a dancing star.”
~Friedrick Nietzsche

Welcome Ms. Pam Thomas!

In the beginning of February, Ms. Pamela Thomas started as the new case manager of the STAR 4 Docket. Ms. Thomas worked for Harris County Corrections and Supervision for three years before she found what she calls her “calling.”

“I love being a part of STAR because clients genuinely want to be here,” says Ms. Thomas. “Most of my clients expressed that they asked for Drug Court because they wanted help, and they feel blessed by the opportunity to make a change in their lives.”

STAR is excited that you are here, Pam, and we thank you for choosing our program!



**Above STAR 4 Case Manager
Pam Thomas**



Great Day Houston!

On January 22, 2009, Judge Vanessa Velasquez and two STAR graduates spoke with Deborah Duncan on her live TV show *Great Day Houston*! STAR Alumni Vice President Steward G. and STAR graduate Kevin R. were asked to share their personal stories of addiction recovery.

Each graduate brought their family and children with them to highlight the success of their new sober lives. Thank you to all the staff at Great Day Houston for promoting the success of STAR and our graduates.

The STAR Alumni Christmas Party

