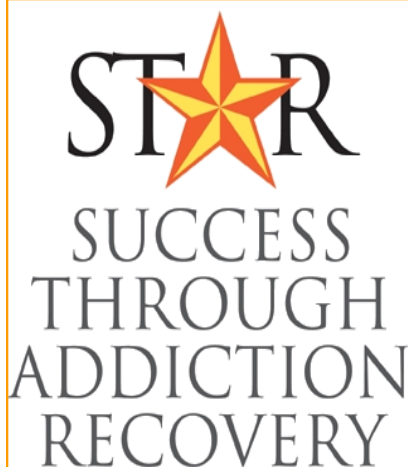


# STELLAR SUCCESS

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

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## Special Announcement

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

## National Recovery Month: STAR Clients Join the Voices for Recovery



*Above STAR Graduate Gayla V. shares her experiences about her addiction recovery process.*

National Drug and Alcohol Addiction Recovery Month asks those affected by substance abuse to raise their voices in support of recovery. In September, Recovery Month efforts encourage drug court clients and graduates to share their stories so that families, friends, and communities can “better support those struggling with substance use disorders as they embark on a successful journey of sustained recovery.”

STAR drug court clients and graduates often share their stories, 12-Step work, and words of support to encourage each other on the often difficult road to recovery. Gayla V., who graduated in June 2009, told this inspirational tale during her graduation speech.

“Imagine, if you would, a 48 year old woman being rushed to the emergency

room unconscious. She becomes conscious and tries to rise up off of the operating table. She sees a physician and he says, “Keep still and know that I am God.” He gathers other doctors to the room.

The first is Ms. Debbie Drake, and He tells Debbie Drake, “Make an incision in the woman’s heart because I want you to empower her.” Next, the second physician, Kay Knapper, enters, and she must make an incision in the woman’s stomach in order to purge her. Then Ms. Pat Webber, the third physician, enters and she must hold the woman’s hand and guide her to build her confidence. And the last physician is Krista Klein, who must raise the woman by building her self-esteem.

Then the woman tries to get up, but the physician says, “Keep still— I am not through with you yet.” You all are still on that operating table—he is not done with you yet. But he will give you new life.”

The doctors in Gayla’s story are the supportive staff at the Women’s Home. Gayla went to the Women’s Home in February 2008, and she credits their hopeful, healing program for giving her back her life. STAR would also like to thank the fabulous Women’s Home staff for their tireless efforts to help women like Gayla in the Houston Area.

This month the Stellar Success dedicated its last page to a STAR client’s relapse plan. The tools listed there are important for all people in recovery to remember. Thanks to Tanya B. for sharing her work with us.

# STAR SUCCESS THROUGH ADDICTION RECOVERY

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## NADCP Conference—Anaheim

Several of the STAR team members and judges attended the National Association of Drug Court Professionals in Anaheim in June. We learn lots of innovative ideas for drug courts from experts around the country. Thanks to all the presenters and agencies that made the conference a great learning experience!



**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.

### Recovery Month Astros' Game

For the past three years, STAR Drug Court has celebrated National Addiction Recovery Month at the Astros' ballpark. Please join us September 22, 2009 for a night game to support the recovery efforts of drug court clients and their families.

Tickets can be purchased for \$1!

If you are interested in attending, please email

Laura McCarty at

[Laura\\_McCarty@justex.net](mailto:Laura_McCarty@justex.net).

### TADCP Conference

Several of the STAR team members and judges will attend the Texas Association of Drug Court Professionals in Lubbock later this month to learn new methods in treatment recovery.

In addition to STAR staff, STAR graduate Alex P. will be speaking about his experience in recovery graduate panel. STAR thanks Alex for offering to represent drug court and fearlessly sharing his story.

## STAR Alumni Take CA Convention by Storm

This year the STAR Alumni voted to attend the Cocaine Anonymous Convention. The Marriot Westchase hosted the event during the July 31- August 2, 2009 weekend. During that time hundreds of Houston-area recovering addicts and families came to share their support in powerful recovery stories.

The STAR Alumni chose to host a hospitality room stocked with food, coffee, and friends over the three day convention. STAR Graduate Sydrena R. was in charge of shopping for the event, setting up the room, and monitoring other clients, family, and friends. She worked to ensure that all participants had a fun and safe time while attending the convention's many workshops, testimonials, meetings, and parties.

The CA Convention also offered several fun events including a banquet, a dance, a comedy show, and a play.

STAR Graduate LaKeisha B. even danced in a Steppers' show. Nearly all the STAR alumni attended as well as several current STAR clients who were granted scholarships by STAR to cover registration costs.

Sydrena said she enjoyed the whole convention, but particularly benefited from the fellowship of those in recovery. She said the event "was a spiritual experience."

Twelve Step home groups from all over Houston came out make the most of a fun-packed weekend to share the joy of new life in recovery. STAR believes that staying connected to special events like this help clients and family have long-lasting sobriety and healthy lifestyles. Thank you to Texas Area Services and all the STAR Alumni who made this opportunity possible. We hope that this event becomes a tradition for STAR clients and graduates.

**"It was a spiritual experience."**

**"To us also, through every star, through every blade of grass, is not God made visible if we will open our minds and our eyes."**

**Thomas Carlyle**

## Judge Burke Joins STAR Drug Court



*Above* State District Judge Bill Burke will preside over the STAR 3 docket on

State District Judge Burke is excited to become a member of the STAR Drug Court team. He will be presiding over the Wednesday STAR 3 docket, a spot previously held by

Judge Caprice Cosper.

Judge Burke, who presided over several drug court dockets over the years, feels he will bring "firsthand experience in recovery." He says, "Being in recovery myself, I know that one of the best principles to sustain recovery is to try to help others as I was helped."

Judge also understands that assuming this bench has its own set of challenges. He says, "[I will] be living up to the high standard set by Judge Cosper and the other former and present judges who have preceded me on the drug court benches." But the rewards will be well worth it, as he will watch clients "get a life back (or get a life for the first time) and gain self-respect about how they are living in sobriety."

Judge Burke has been on the Civil bench of the 189th District Court since 2003. He is active in the recovery community, and supports many

Houston-area recovery programs, including the Star of Hope where he donates his time as a volunteer. The STAR Drug Court is excited to have Judge Burke and his unique perspective contributing to our program and the lives of our clients.

Judge Burke says, "I will do all in my power to support their recovery, but the hard work of sustained recovery must be done by each participant on his own with the support of a recovery group. I am very excited about this new job and I can hardly wait to watch our clients start changing their lives right before our eyes!"

Judge Cosper now has an exciting new position as the Director of the Office of Criminal Justice Coordination. While she is longer a STAR Court judge, she is certainly serving our community with her never-ending energy and determination. We wish her much success in this new venture!



## Tools for Recovery Month!

### *Tanya B's Relapse Prevention Plan*



#### **Attitudes to Avoid:**

- That I can drink alcohol without eventually getting high
- That "I got this", already recovered
- It's okay to skip meetings
- Work is more important than my recovery
- It's okay to start a relationship in the first year



#### **Feelings to Avoid:**

- Depression, loneliness, sadness
- Being too sensitive, taking things personally
- Getting angry easily, holding resentments
- Frustrations, letting people irritate me
- Love, Lust (Got to love myself first)



#### **Behaviors to Avoid:**

- Gossiping
- Assuming
- Acting on impulse
- Speaking before thinking
- Street behavior and street mentality
- Intolerance to corrective criticism

**Tools:**

**Don't look for excuses!**

*Try to keep a steady schedule*

**EXPECT CRAVINGS, THEY WILL HAPPEN**

**HALT—never get too  
Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired**

**DON'T USE BEING AN ADDICT AS  
AN EXCUSE NOT TO SUCCEED!**

**Minimize your problems (Could be worse)**