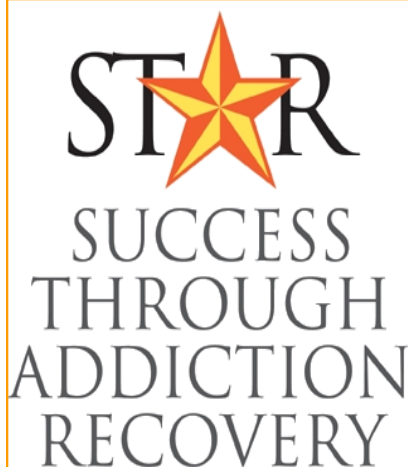


STELLAR SUCCESS

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

December 1, 2009

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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!

Fallen Stars: STAR clients honor those who lost their lives to addictions.



Above STAR Graduate Rebecca H. and her mother MaryAnn attended the Candlelight Vigil.

This October STAR participated in the third annual Candlelight Vigil hosted by Houston Independent School District – Safe Schools Department, Houston Crackdown: Office of the Mayor, Drug Enforcement Administration, MADD, Phoenix House, Texas Association of Addiction Professionals, and Houston Medical Test-

ing Services, Inc.

The Vigil honored people who have lost their lives to addiction. Various city and community members spoke about the faith that families must have to heal after such tragedy. STAR Graduate Rebecca Heil, the Vigil's featured speaker, shared her emotional recovery journey to inspire hope in those affected by addiction.

Vigil attendees called out the names of loved ones who died due to addiction. Two STAR clients' names were called: Nathan Haynes and Lindsay Groom. Nearly forty STAR clients and graduates came to the Vigil to remember their peers.

STAR thanks all the agencies involved for continuing to support recovery efforts like STAR in the Houston community.

Right STAR clients, graduates, and staff at the City Hall Reflection Pool before the Vigil.



STAR SUCCESS THROUGH ADDICTION RECOVERY

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TADCP Conference—Lubbock

The STAR team members and judges attended the Texas Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference in Lubbock, Texas, this September. We learned 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!

STAR would like to say a special thanks to STAR graduate Alex P. who spoke at the conference about drug court alumni organizations.



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. Over 300 tickets were sold to drug court clients and supporters. Many families came out and shared a fun night.

Thank you to all who attended. We love having a big turn out and support for this special event so we can continue to do it in the years to come.

Go 'Stros!

Ecuadorian Judges

This October Harris County hosted several Ecuadorian judges as part of the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative Judicial Exchange. The 35 judges visited several courts, observed a felony trial, visited the jail intake process, and met with many Harris County departments to learn about and understand our justice system.

In addition to all these other meetings, the judges wanted to learn about the drug court process. The STAR Program judges, case managers, and special programs manager explained what drug court does and how STAR achieves success one client at a time.

STAR also invited represen-

tatives from Career and Recovery Resources, Salvation Army Women and Children's Facility, and FACT of MHMRA to describe the multitude of services available to STAR clients.

STAR graduates Linda D. and Alex P. also discussed their experiences in STAR with the Ecuadorian judges. They were excited to share their recovery process and praised the support of STAR for giving them the tools to be successful.

STAR Special Programs Manager Mary Covington said, "Although we don't share many of the same laws regarding drug usage, I think learning about addiction and recovery was a inspiring message to share with our Ecuadorian guests."

Passing of the Gavel



Thank you to all who celebrated Judge Cosper's last day in STAR and first day for Judge Burke! And thank you to Ms. Gatling who brought the most wonderful cake!

"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

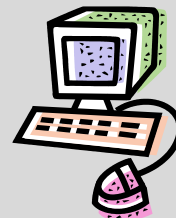
Welcome Ms. Tanika Moore!

STAR would like to welcome Tanika Moore to our team! Ms. Moore will be the new Monday case manager. She most recently worked with the DWI court supervising offenders with misdemeanors.

Ms. Moore is excited to work with the drug court team. She says the weekly staffing helps the team get to know the clients' "personal life history, history of drug use, and their treatment progress and recovery. My prior experience with case management and supervi-

sion did not involve other court-related personnel," but "coming together as a team could be a positive reinforcement to the client to make significant progress in treatment and maintain abstinence in drug use thereafter."

Raymie Hariell-Sweat says, "We are so excited to have Tanika as part of the Drug Court Team. She will be a great asset to the Unit." Please welcome Ms. Moore as she starts a journey in making our program even better!



STAR would like to thank some very special behind-the-scenes staff members. Matt Davis, Gary Seastrunk, Peter Awad, and Chris Wells designed and built a new computer database and reports for the STAR Program.

We truly appreciate your hard work, endless edits, and constant requests for more bells and whistles. Thank you to all who made our new system a great success.

A Texas First: Harris County's Veterans' Court



Above State District Judge Marc Carter announces the new Veterans' Court with Marine Sgt. Marty Gonzales.

This Veterans' Day, Harris County officials announced the opening of the Harris County Veterans' Court Program. Initially, the Harris County Veterans' Court program will be a six-month pilot program in the 228th District Court.

The program will address concerns of Harris County offenders who are honorably discharged

veterans or current members of the United States armed forces, including members of the reserves. The Harris County Veterans' Court Program will be the first of its kind in Texas.

The program will provide participants with a court-ordered individualized treatment plan. The mission of the Veterans' Court Program is to rehabilitate eligible offenders who suffer from mental illness, mental disorder and/or substance use disorders due to military service, which was a contributing factor in their criminal offense.

A unique feature of the Harris County Veterans' Court plan is the development of a dedicated Jail Diversion Team within the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The team will report regularly to the Court, which will closely monitor the offender's progress.

By diverting veterans and service members from the traditional judicial system, the Harris County Veterans' Court Program will reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and improve the quality of life for these offenders who have served their country.

STAR FIC News

The Family Intervention Court sent five team members to the TADCP Conference in Lubbock this September. Anne Okeke, Gene Gundersen, Elizabeth Vereen, Eric McFerren and Monica Williams all attended to expand their knowledge of drug courts and bond as a team.

STAR FIC moved to 201 Caroline, 15th Floor. Despite the move, business is still running as usual.

If you have any questions, please contact Coordinator Anne Okeke by phone, fax or email:

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**STAR Alumni and Staff—
Please join us for the STAR Drug Court
Alumni Christmas Party**

**Thursday, December 10, 2009
7:00 PM**

**HCC Coleman College for Health
Auditorium
1900 Pressler Dr.
Houston, TX 77030**

