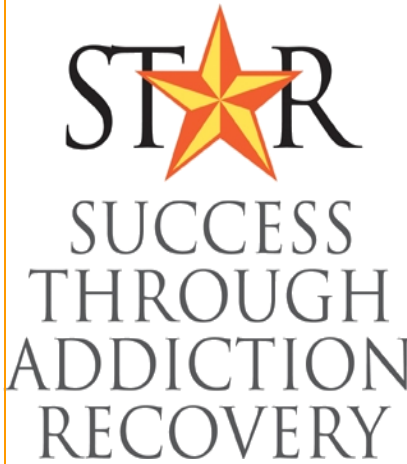


# STELLAR SUCCESS

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

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## Special Announcement

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

## Changing Women's Lives: Innovative Treatment for Drug Court Women



**Above: STAR Clients Robin M. and Sara P. practice role playing as part of their substance abuse curriculum in the Changing Women's Lives Program at Houston Area Community Services.**

In the spring of 2010, STAR Drug Court started sending female clients to a new program at Houston Area Communities Services (HACS). The program, called Changing Women's Lives (CWL), combines newly developed curriculum designed to address the needs of our women who not only abuse drugs and alcohol, but also have a variety of trauma, grief, and health issues that can inhibit successful recovery.

This outpatient treatment program is considerably more intense than other programs in the Houston Area. The intensive component is four days a week for sixteen weeks. It has a set curriculum that includes tracks on Time Out for Me (Assertiveness and Sexuality), and Helping Women Recover (Sexuality, Trauma Recovery, and Drug Addiction). Educa-

tion about HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (SDIs) is also provided.

Despite the intensity of this curriculum, the women love their groups. They feel that HACS and their main counselor, Ms. Orfelinda Coronado, LMSW, provide a safe environment where they do not have to worry about criticism or negativity. STAR client Sara P. says that she feels comfortable “sharing openly and getting feedback in a respectful way.” STAR client Robin M. adds that the groups are “informative, and the people here really care about you.” The women not only enjoy the consistency of the CWL program, but also the variety of assignments and projects, including role playing, collages, videos, journaling, discussion, meditation, relaxation, and practicing new skills regularly.

Once a woman completes IOP, she attends an aftercare groups once a week for 6 months, facilitated by Dori Badillo, M.Ed., LPC. Underlying every group is the importance of integrity and rigorous honesty in maintaining sobriety. Discharge planning stresses securing permanent housing and employment or education.

STAR is very thankful for HACS and the CWL counselors for providing these innovative treatment services. Our first client was admitted on April 21, 2010 and graduated on March 25, 2011, and we have six women graduating on June 24, 2011.

HACS is a Federally Qualified Health Center providing primary medical care at affordable

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## Announcements

**STAR's 300th Graduate**

This graduation marks our 300th graduate from the STAR Program! We are so proud of each and every former graduate who helped us make this goal. STAR's success is directly linked to the success of our graduates.

**STAR Links Up with 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 will attend the National Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference in Washington, DC next month to discuss drug court issues and learn new methods in treatment recovery.

**Cocaine Anonymous Convention**

Get ready for this year's CA Convention on August 5-7. The conference will be at Marriot Westchase off Briar Park. Clients who attend the conference will receive credit for their required community service project. Please see Laura McCarty for more details.

**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.

*Continued from Page 1* prices including pediatric, psychiatric, OB/GYN, mental health therapy, and substance abuse treatment services. They also provide referrals for Gold Card to the Harris County Hospital District for medical care, and MHMRA and NPC for mental health services, and other services as needed.

Andrea Sanchez, LCSW, is HACS's Behavioral Health Program Manager and Sandy Jones, LCSW, is the Chief Behavioral

Health Services Officer. Juan Garza, M.D., is the Chief Medical Officer and Joe C. Fuentes, Jr. MBA, is the Chief Executive Officer.

HACS staff members wanted to express that they are all extremely proud of the work these women are doing to reconstruct their lives and we appreciate the opportunity that STAR Court has given HACS to help them accomplish their goals and maintain a lifestyle of recovery.

**A STAR Court Memorial**

The STAR Program would like to offer a special remembrance of a former STAR client. Brandon Thornton passed away on January 23, 2011.

During tragedies like his, we are reminded that addiction is a deadly disease. We hope that STAR clients use Brandon's passing as a reminder to remain strong in their recovery efforts and focus on their futures.

Please keep Brandon Thornton's family and friends in your thoughts and prayers.

## A New Shining STAR: Judge Denise Bradley



**Above 262nd District Court and STAR 3 Judge Denise Bradley**

This January STAR excitedly welcomed newly elected Judge Denise Bradley of the 262nd District Court as the new judge of the Tuesday STAR 4 docket. While we were sad to see Judge Mike Anderson retire, we knew he left us in good hands with Judge Bradley, who has a lot of enthusiasm and passion for the Harris County Drug Court.

Before she was a judge, Judge Bradley also worked with the STAR 3 docket as our prosecutor. She says that STAR was her first experience getting to know the people who continuously cycle through the criminal justice system. She says, "It was my first opportunity to witness success through rehabilitation. As a prosecutor, it opened my eyes to the issues of addiction. It changed my approach to drug offenses and offenders. I finally realized that it takes more than fear of jail time to break the cycle of addic-

tion and that was a game changer for me."

After being elected as a State District judge, Judge Bradley wanted to work with STAR because the program can change "people's lives for the better." She says, "I am even more invested in STAR court as a Judge and I feel like I really have the ability to help change people's lives. I look forward meeting with my STAR court clients every week. It is the one day of the week that I get to see people making their own way. I am constantly amazed by the transformation I see from the day someone is welcomed into STAR court and then the day they ultimately graduate."

Judge Bradley initially started working with STAR because "after 25 years as a prosecutor [she] wanted the opportunity to be part of a happy ending." She adds "Like many people,

I have family members who struggled with addiction. Some of them were fortunate enough to hit bottom and begin recovery. It was my first experience with the 12 step program. I volunteered to fill in a couple of times and after that I was hooked."

STAR is lucky to have another dedicated member of our drug court team. Judge Bradley says, "I love seeing the transformation that results from hard work and a true desire to change. I love the happy endings that STAR court creates—the families that are reunited, the diplomas, the new jobs, new houses and healthy relationships that result from participating in STAR court. I get the most satisfaction knowing that STAR court keeps people from going back to jail."

## Welcome Ms. Kenyatta Anderson!

This spring Ms. Kenyatta Anderson started as the new case manager of the STAR 2 Docket. Ms. Anderson previously worked for Harris County Corrections and Supervision at the East Region.

"I wanted to work with STAR Drug Court because it allows me the opportunity to help individuals who are amongst the Houston communities," says Ms. Anderson.

She adds that "helping provide a structured program for the individuals who struggle with substance abuse issues will allow the STAR client's to help provide awareness regarding the detrimental effective that substance abuse has throughout Houston communities."

Ms. Anderson is eager to help clients



**Above STAR 2 Case Manager Kenyatta Anderson**

"reach and maintain their goal to sobriety."

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



# STAR Alumni Picnic 2011

