



STAR
SUCCESS
THROUGH
ADDICTION
RECOVERY

STELLAR SUCCESS

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Shooting STAR: Graduate Profile

Last December, Julie B. stood before the STAR II docket and was honored as one of the first STAR program graduates. After over a year of adhering to treatment guidelines and attending courtroom sessions, Julie took on the responsibility of leading an independent and sober life.

Julie began the program in October of 2003, soon after the program started taking clients. She began to think of STAR drug court team as a “family,” a group that supports clients. Upon graduation, she felt both excited and scared. She feared losing this guidance, and immersed herself in all the aftercare opportunities that STAR offered. She joined the STAR Alumni Association, and

was elected president. She says that staying active with alumni helps her stay connected to the program’s support.

Today, Julie strives in all aspects of her recovery. She not only remains active in the Alumni Association, but she also diligently works as a gymnastics coach, a position that she lost temporarily because of her substance abuse. During treatment with the STAR program, Julie began working at a large coffee chain and remains “very passionate in everything” that involves her company. Julie excitedly awaits a promotion to Management in January.

Julie also focuses on her treatment, attending group and individual counseling three times a month. The most rewarding



part of counseling is the sessions with her husband where together they “learn to grow up together.” She plans to travel and focus on “achieving my personal life dreams outside of a career.”

Julie thanks Judge Cospers and Mary Covington, both of whom were incredible role models, her counselor Colleen, and Suzy, her AA sponsor. Finally, she thanks her “very patient and tolerant husband, Mike,” for supporting her recovery.

Drug Court Support Foundation

Before STAR enrolled its first client, Emerson Unitarian Church formed a Drug Court Task Force to study and support a drug court in Harris County. After meeting with members of the drug court planning team, the Task Force incorporated the

Drug Court Support Foundation of Harris County and applied for 501c (3) non-profit status with the Internal Revenue Services.

Among the Foundation’s initial directors are Dr. Maximillian Buja, Executive

Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston; James N.E. Williams, Retired administrator, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church; and Richard D. Steele, Religious Society of Friends. (Continued on Page 3)

STAR III Docket—Judge Cosper finds new home

In June of 2005, the STAR court proudly began a new drug court docket. Judge Caprice Cosper, of the 339th District court and formerly of the STAR II docket, took the helm of STAR III, which meets at 3PM on Wednesdays.

Access To Recovery funding is now available to all STAR clients.

Judge Brock Thomas of the 338th District Court joined the drug court team and took over the STAR II docket.

Initially, STAR III was established to utilize the Access to Recovery (ATR) funding. ATR is a federal initiative to increase access to substance abuse services through independent assessment, offer participants a choice of service providers, promote partnerships with faith-based and community-based organizations, and provide an electronic voucher method of payment.

Originally, the money was only available to increase the number of Texas drug court participants. Recently, the ATR funding was made available to all STAR clients, and to date STAR has over thirty clients

benefiting from the recovery support services and substance abuse treatment offered through ATR.

Like the original dockets, STAR III offers an intensive, individualized approach to supervision and treatment. Clients participate in group and individual chemical dependency counseling, attend 12-step or support groups, submit to frequent random drug testing and appear frequently before the judge.

In addition, they receive recovery support services that assist in resolving the underlying issues of their dependency and have been barriers to recovery in the past.

Stellar Support Program

In an effort to foster a supportive and preventive parenting environment, Career and Recovery Resources offers the Strengthening Families Program (SFP). All STAR Program clients attending C&R participate in this comprehensive program.

SFP is based on three skills courses: Parenting, Children's Life Skills, and Family Skills. SFP skills are not special skills designed for deficient families only, but they are designed for

high-stress families who need another layer of therapy.

SFP was initially developed to prevent substance abuse by children in drug and alcohol-stressed families. It draws on research and practice in many professions which have shown that by strengthening the family the risk of many adverse behaviors developing in children is greatly reduced.

Certain family risk factors addressed during the courses are conflict, low expectations, poor

management and communication, abuse, lack of care, supervision, appropriate discipline and family rituals. A typical weekly class meeting consists of dinner, where the families eat together with Group Leaders. The Parent's Group and Children's Group meet separately during the first hour and in the second hour families rejoin and separate into the two family groups prior to adjourning.

Foundation—Continued from Page 1

The Task Force envisioned the Foundation as an interdenominational effort to inform other faith communities about the alternative sentencing program and to provide broad-based community support for the STAR Drug Court Program. The

Foundation will provide both financial and volunteer assistance to the STAR program and clients.

To date, the Foundation has donated over \$26,000.00 to the STAR program and is currently recruiting volunteers to assist drug court clients learn the skills

necessary to lead a sober and law abiding life.

To learn more about Drug Court Support Foundation, please contact Gabe Gelb at 713-526-5711, ext.14.

STAR Court Announcements

STAR Program's Holiday Open House

Every year we honor our STAR Partners and all the hard work they do. Please join us on November 30th at 2 pm in the STAR Courtroom. You are invited for refreshments and may attend the STAR III docket beginning at 3 pm.

STAR Alumni Holiday Party

Attention all STAR clients, staff and Alumni: Please join us at the First Annual Holiday Party hosted by the Alumni at the Houston Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse on December 14th at 6:30 pm. The Alumni will provide potluck-style food and holiday cheer.

Alumni Ladies Holiday Pampering Party

Linda Cunningham and Mary Covington invite the Alumni women to a special event featuring makeovers by Debbie Damon and Mary Kay Cosmetics. Please join us at B'Dazzled Boutique, 1945 West Gray on December 4th at 5 pm.

Acknowledgements—A Message of Thanks

I want to thank personally all of our STAR Partners and the continuing efforts that make our program possible. This holiday season reminds us all about that for which we are thankful.

On behalf of the STAR clients, thank you for giving our program the opportunity to change lives and create a positive force in our community.

A special thanks to the following:

Councilman Elect Peter Brown for the donation of school supplies.

Rev. Robert Jefferson, who paid the dental bill for a STAR III client.

Houston Bar Association for again donating money to purchase program incentives.

Palmer Drug Abuse Program for the donation of sobriety chips.

Emerson Unitarian Church, for their major financial contributions, establishment of the Drug Court foundation, and creation of the foundation website.

Ray Andrews with Houston Crackdown, for the donation of eight baseball tickets to Celebrate

Recovery Night at the Astros game on September 15th.

Also a special congratulations to this December's STAR graduates: Kristy A., Alfredo B., Ryan C., Sandra C., David H., Allen L., Michael P., Lajuna P., Carrie R., and Lauren T.

Thank you again, and have a pleasant holiday.

Mary Covington
STAR Program Manager

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