

# STAR/CSF-Ft. Worth Times

Helping students achieve a choice in education



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## Vision Statement

The Board of Trustees of the STAR Sponsorship Program, Inc./CSF FW is dedicated to increasing educational options for children in Tarrant County whose parents do not have the financial means to provide an education best suited to their children's unique needs.

We believe the well-being of the entire community is enhanced when children are given a quality education that allows them to achieve to their utmost ability. Therefore, we intend wherever possible, to encourage partnerships with schools, parents, community organizations and concerned citizens in supporting its children to achieve the American Dream!

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## How Do STAR Students Shine?



She just graduated from eighth grade and will go on to attend a small college preparatory high school. What sets her apart from other kids her age? Her dedication to dreams for the future. These dreams are to be an engineer and a writer with the help of her family that encourages her to always do her best. She is a student of the STAR Sponsorship Program. She is a student who has been taught that her education is one of the most important things in her life and she continues to show her commitment to this invaluable achievement.

Thalissa Villegas is a 14 year-old girl who is dedicated and smart. She was a STAR student for 8 years during grades 1-8 and recently graduated from St. Rita Catholic School. During her time at St. Rita, she received numerous educational awards and accolades. She was one of the final five students in the Regional Spelling Bee and won first place in her school's Spelling Bee this past year.

When asked what her education means to her, Thalissa stated that it "will take her to new heights." She believes that she will succeed in life because of one aspect that she possesses: her **thirst for learning** and constant desire to know more. Thalissa believes that seeking out an education and wanting to learn is what allows a person to be anything they want to be. This shining student wisely explained that "Knowledge isn't handed to you on a platter. You must get up and find it yourself. When you take the time to learn something new, it will open doors of opportunity to better yourself and challenge your imagination." Thalissa is wise beyond her years and can serve to be a shining example of what is possible when a person gives their all to become the best person they can.

Thalissa's top three favorite subjects in school are English, Math, and Science with English being her all-time favorite. Thalissa enjoys reading, writing short-stories, and writing essays in her spare time. She enjoys using her own personal thoughts and emotions in her

writing so as to create a clear, precise theme for her readers.

**"WHEN YOU TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW, IT WILL OPEN DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER YOURSELF AND CHALLENGE YOUR IMAGINATION."**

This shining STAR student would tell a younger, pre-sixth grade version of herself that these next years are the ones that will matter. She would say that it is important to pay attention in class and do well on her homework. "Get rid of the toxic people in your life; don't let them slow you down. Embrace the good people in your life; your friends, parents, and supporters." She would remind herself that her ultimate goal would be to graduate from St. Rita's. If this ever becomes difficult, set smaller goals that lead to graduation and achieve them. Thalissa says that there are two specific things she would tell the younger version of herself: "First, *READ*. Don't you ever say that there's no time to read in middle school. Read anyway. The second important thing: *Make sure you thank your STAR sponsor as often as you can. Send him letters about how you're doing in school. He's done so much for you, he's watched you grow. He's helped pay for your education. The best thing you can do is thank him for everything he's done by excelling in school. Try your hardest in school. Give your efforts an extra push. There's nothing better than seeing the child you sponsor grow and learn become someone ready to take on all the challenges of life ready to achieve and succeed.*"

Thalissa dreams of traveling to religious sites and foreign countries in the future. She knows "thank you" is not enough to describe the grateful heart she has for her sponsor. Thalissa will be attending St. Ignatius College Preparatory School for high school and is looking forward to the next four exciting and challenging years ahead of her!

Thalissa is also a very talented artist. Here are samples of her beautiful artwork!



## A Sponsor's Perspective

The sponsor of our featured STAR student, Thalissa Villegas, had a lot to say about his dedicated student. Mr. David Porter - co-chair of Children Scholarship Fund, Board Member and child sponsor - explained that Thalissa is one of the most extraordinary students he has sponsored through the STAR program. Mr. Porter recognized Thalissa's dedication to her education through receiving "seemingly all A Honor Roll report cards with positive feedback from all of Thalissa's teachers" during the sponsorship of her education. As a middle-school student, she successfully took college-level classes during her summer in order to increase her knowledge. She has participated in numerous summer enrichment programs to continue her practice outside of the classroom during the break and she has received many academic awards and honors for her achievements in school. Mr. Porter enjoyed receiving Thalissa's letters about her educational journey, which is a requirement for students in the STAR Sponsorship Program. Mr. Porter described her letters as an expression of her love of learning and the letters were often a source of encouragement for Mr. Porter's own children. The STAR Sponsor stated that Thalissa is very well-prepared for the next chapter of her life because of her loving family and the students at St. Rita's. "I am proud to have been her sponsor and look forward to following her continued success in the years to come!" - David Porter



## The Faculty Perspective

Our featured graduate, Thalissa, has received nothing but praise and admiration from her teachers at St. Rita Catholic School. The teachers state that Thalissa's personality is shown through her numerous awards, like the Student of the Month Award, Principal's Honor Roll on multiple occasions, and first place in St. Rita's Spelling Bee. Along with her stellar academic performance, she is involved in athletics and even received the Scholar Athlete Award. Thalissa is a member of the National Junior Honor Society and has competed in academic competitions where she won the state competition. Thalissa is active with church ministry and is constantly reading as many books as she can get her hands on. This paid off when she was recognized as a Duke Scholar due to her high standardized test scores. Thalissa is described by her teachers as a child with a positive attitude. She sets goals for herself and uses determination to achieve those goals. She is said to be a gifted writer and caused her teacher to "be very moved", as the teacher said that she "showed a maturity and gentleness that is rare at her age." Thalissa is seen by many as a very dedicated, hard-working, kind student who stands to be a great encouragement for other students who desire to achieve greatness. Thalissa is an example of what can be accomplished when a person has a dream and sets their mind to achieve that dream. It takes the hard-work, dedication, and dreams that Thalissa has shown to become a skilled student and successful person who is going to do great things in her future!

## 2014 8th Grade STAR Graduates

## The Parents' Corner

What does the STAR Sponsorship Program do for your child? What are your dreams for your child's future? How would you describe your child's sponsor? These are all common questions asked of STAR parents in the program. Thalissa's parents believe that the program serves as an excellent motivator for their bright daughter. "STAR has helped her stay focused and do her best on her academics, as well as her conduct and attendance. The program is overall a positive example for Thalissa and her peers." Mr. and Mrs. Villegas' dream for their daughter is that she grows up to use her God-given talents to their full potential in order to fulfill Thalissa's dreams of being an engineer and a writer. The STAR Program has served the Villegas parents as a great encouragement to be constant motivators for their child. The program has been a wonderful source of financial assistance in order for these two parents to provide their child with a strong Catholic education that will help her succeed in life. Thalissa's parents believe that her sponsor is "a wonderful blessing to our family. He has been extremely generous and gracious to us. He has been a great motivator to Thalissa and we are forever grateful for all he has given of himself." Mr. and Mrs. Villegas express their experience with the STAR Program as a blessing. They are grateful to STAR for helping students realize their God-given potential and teaching them how to use this talent to go out into the world to achieve greatness.



Please introduce us to a friend who may be interested in providing hope and opportunity for a family who values education.

Give a student a chance for a better future. All donations are tax-deductible and make a wonderful year-end gift.

6707 Brentwood Stair Rd. Suite 205 Fort Worth, TX 76112 ★ 817-888-3255 ★ Fax 817-332-8825 ★ starcsf@gmail.com ★ [www.starcsffw.org](http://www.starcsffw.org)