



# STAR Sponsorship Times

Making a difference...one student at a time!

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## Vision Statement

The Board of Trustees of the STAR Sponsorship Program, Inc. 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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## A Charitable Devotion



At STAR Sponsorship, many individuals have been part of the efforts to benefit the lives of local, unprivileged students. Over the years, these benefactors have left an immeasurable impact on many low-income children and their families in Tarrant County. Since 2000, John Pergande, founder and CEO of InsureZone, Inc., has been a vital contributor to this undertaking.

Before his involvement, Pergande had heard of the incredible impact STAR was having on the local educational landscape. As a big believer in education as an equalizer, he appreciated the value of STAR's mission. He also recognized that for education to create a level playing field: *"Kids have to have access to a beneficial school environment where they can learn and be challenged to succeed. STAR helps its families attain that."*

Over a 15-year period, as a board member Pergande has helped implement the STAR mission in many capacities. When asked to characterize his involvement, Executive Director Patty Myers said: *"John is truly a gift. His passion is engaging. He helps with so many different arenas. He has an enormous heart and we treasure him greatly."* If there is ever an administrative challenge, they are often quickly solved with a call to Pergande. He can often be found helping STAR with technical issues or simply giving astute advice about a situation.

In recent years, attendance at one of the program's annual parent-student meetings reinforced Pergande's resolve. Seeing the depth of the families' dedication, he exclaimed: *"It's very exciting to see this level of commitment by the parents and students. This is an incredible charity of which to be a part!"*

Pergande has not limited his generosity to just STAR's efforts. Over the course of his partnership, he and the team at InsureZone have served as sponsors and mentors. Brittany was in STAR from 2006 to 2014, during which she was sponsored by Pergande. She greatly enjoyed meeting Pergande and said: *"Going to his office has shown me what it is like to be a*



*successful person in the world today."* Being a part of STAR Sponsorship meant so much to Brittany. The combined help of Pergande and the program laid a foundation for her to receive a better education. In turn, it

will present her with a brighter future. Brittany believes that *"Education is important because it plays a major role in becoming what you want to be in life."* This ambitious STAR graduate is now attending Trinity Valley School, where she is preparing for her dream: to become a biomedical engineer.

Pergande and his team at InsureZone began sponsoring Collins in 2008, and Pergande instantly began making a profound impact on this quiet young man. Collins described his first experience meeting Pergande: *"For quite a few moments, my world came to a standstill! I was very excited to meet him and his staff to say thank you for their wonderful contributions to my family and me."*



Collins proved himself to be a hard worker and dedicated STAR student. Pergande and the InsureZone team encouraged him to aim for new plateaus. This encouragement culminated in Collins being sought by numerous, prestigious local high schools upon his graduation from eighth grade. Collins said, *"Mr. Pergande's faith in helping a stranger like me undoubtedly unleashed some amazing opportunities for me. I humbly believe that aided my admission into one of the best local high schools which I am currently attending."*

Outside of sponsoring Collins, Pergande and InsureZone provided another incredible opportunity for Collins and his older brother, a 2011 STAR alumnus. This past summer, they served as interns with InsureZone. This allowed the brothers to learn valuable life lessons while the InsureZone team was able to see the impact of their investment.



*Collins and Brittany meet their sponsors*



## A Charitable Devotion - Continued

Collins elaborated: "Never could I have ever imagined the importance of education had it not been for the support and exposure given to me thus far. Now I know that education is so important because it's a proven gateway to endless opportunities." This confident student is immensely grateful for what his sponsors have done for him. "Thank you, Mr. Pergande and InsureZone, for sacrificing and believing that strangers like me can indeed someday become better citizens," Collins shared.

Pergande and his team are now sponsoring Collins' younger sister, Courtney, who is in the third grade. She appreciates having STAR sponsors because she "enjoys writing them letters and knows they read them." This young student understands sponsorship means she has to study hard and consistently do well in school.

Courtney's dream is to become a Pharmacist when she grows up so she can help those who are sick. Pergande and the team at InsureZone are helping Courtney learn that with hard work, her dreams can come true!



Pergande recalled when another student he sponsored, Jesse, was in the program. "Jesse was in STAR for three years; he began when he was in sixth grade. His first report card included comments from teachers like 'struggling', 'frustrated' and 'not communicating well' and his grades were awful. English was a second language for him. By the seventh grade the following year, the comments I liked best were from his baseball coach. The coach said that he dreamed of having more kids like Jesse on the team because he was a leader who works hard and really motivates others. Jesse's grades were all 85's and greater - incredible! STAR quite simply changed his life and put him on a new and much higher trajectory," Pergande exclaimed. Jesse is currently attending UTA and will graduate in December with a Bachelor's degree in Public Relations. Stories like these are just a small sample of how Pergande and the rest of the STAR Board impact students' lives on a daily basis. Their unwavering support provides a powerful springboard for low-income students to reach for new heights which would otherwise be inaccessible.



## Parents Count Their Blessings



The parents of Pergande's STAR students have many positive things to say about this sponsor. Jametta, the mother of Brittany, described Pergande as "An excellent role model for Brittany." Throughout Brittany's time in STAR, Jametta observed the impact Pergande had on her daughter. Brittany looked forward to writing letters to her sponsor to tell him all about her dreams and academic accomplishments.

Recalling a meeting with Pergande, Jametta said: "When Brittany met him, she really felt that one day she can be a business person like him; to help those in need and not think less of them. That made me smile from ear to ear." Jametta is not the only one grateful for the influence of this dedicated sponsor in their child's life.

Frank and Mary, the parents of Collins and Courtney, said: "Words are not enough to express our thanks to everyone involved in STAR." These parents believe education is necessary to succeed, and it will enable their children to seek better choices. Because of Pergande and InsureZone's generous sponsorship, these children will have enhanced opportunities for success.

Frank and Mary framed their appreciation for Pergande and InsureZone's generosity with this: "We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mr. Pergande and his staff. Without your support, the future of Collins and Courtney would be questionable. Because of you, Collins is a junior at Trinity Valley School and Courtney is a third grader in a wonderful private school. Thank you for all you do!"

**John Pergande is the founder and CEO of InsureZone, Inc. He and his team have sponsored STAR students as a group for several years. Here's what they said when asked how they feel about being STAR sponsors:**

"John has been involved with the STAR Sponsorship Program for many years now. He's given our team here at InsureZone the unique opportunity to be involved as well."

"Our staff writes letters to the students throughout the school year, and we receive updates from the students in return. The handwritten letters about

## A Glimpse Into Sponsorship

*their favorite classes, summer trips, and playground games are displayed in our conference room and break room."*

**In regards to the summer internship for Collins and his brother, one team member said:**

*"I love when the STAR students work here!"*

*"We've had the opportunity to see a handful of these students grow up, graduate, and move on to high school over the years. They are bright and motivated*

*young men and women whom we're proud to support. They never fail to impress us with their achievements and they are always so thankful. To see what a difference STAR made for them is inspiring!"*

*"I love that we're helping these kids and their families and that the students are so excited about their education!"*



**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 through a gift of education. All donations are tax-deductible.**

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