



# 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 Treasured Gift

Since 1993, STAR Sponsorship has awarded several thousand scholarships to disadvantaged children in Tarrant County. Time and again, these students and their families have demonstrated themselves to be leaders inside and outside the classroom. These efforts have positioned STAR students to excel and be an inspiration to the academic community around them.

This unique quality isn't limited to just the students. Over the years, dedicated community leaders have been generous donors to the program. But their impact has extended beyond steadfast giving. Through active philanthropy and hands-on efforts, they have inspired STAR families to rise above their circumstances. Brian Crumley, Partner and Co-Founder of Vortus Investments, is one such individual.

Crumley's involvement began in 1998 when he agreed to help with a daunting task: having to contact 1,200 families in just three days. Recalling this situation, Executive Director Patty Myers said: *"From the start, Brian jumped in wholeheartedly. He is such a gift. With his and other board members' help, the effort went from being seemingly impossible to an enjoyable, unforgettable experience. Since then, Brian has been an instrumental partner in STAR's mission."*

From there, Crumley deepened his involvement, becoming a donor in 2006 and a board member in 2007. Recalling why he took on these roles, Crumley said: *"From personal experience (including being the son of a school teacher and married to one), I have tremendous respect for the transcendent power of education. Paul Greenwell introduced me to STAR many years ago, and I immediately bought into the vision he and his co-founders used to drive STAR's mission."*

As a proponent of education, Crumley believes *"access to a strong educational foundation and a reliable support system for kids helps level the playing field across socio-economic divides. This enables those willing to apply themselves a chance to fulfill their potential and achieve their dreams."*

These circumstances create an environment for the children to excel, as Crumley noted: *"The students are more than just high-achieving academics. They're outstanding*

*citizens and active participants in their respective school communities. It's immensely gratifying to see the tangible benefit provided to this continually growing community of local students. They're truly an inspiration to watch as they mature through the STAR Program and continue that success in future endeavors."* He added, *"It is also very encouraging to see the broad support of the local community which has generously provided the resources to enable STAR's growth."*

Crumley also said that STAR provides a vehicle for connecting low-income families with opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable. *"The program breaks down traditional 'glass ceilings' by providing opportunity to pursue a quality education to local students. It inherently accrues significant benefit to the overall community by providing a path for our youth – regardless of background – to achieve success and contribute back to the community."*

Aside from being a board member, Crumley has sponsored children throughout his involvement. In turn, this has translated into a passion not only for Crumley, but his entire family. One student, Nhi, met the Crumley family at the Fort Worth Museum of Science & History. Nhi's father was incredibly grateful for the experience: *"You have blessed not only my daughter, but my family. Your support means everything."* This interconnectivity between the Crumley family and Nhi is seen in how Nhi writes everyone individually-addressed letters.

When asked what he would say to a prospective donor, Crumley responded: *"STAR is unique in its track record of success driven by its long-tenured leadership, efficient utilization of donations, maximizing dollars to the benefit of the students, and opportunity to witness firsthand the benefit of your participation through direct student assignment."*

He continued, *"Given the direct interaction as a mentor to students we have sponsored over the years, it has truly become a family affair. My wife and I share it together with our four children through regular correspondence and direct interaction with the students we help mentor. We sincerely believe that our family gets back much more than we give to the program!"*



## A Rising Star

Greetings: My name is Roderick Demmings Jr. I am 21 years old and am a rising senior studying in the organ program of the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University.

Ever since I was very young, I have always wanted to travel the world performing. So far, I've made it to ten countries, three continents with performances in Italy and France. Most recently, I teamed up with concert pianist, Karl Van Richards to create *Double Treble*, a national concert tour that features both of us on the piano, "battling" against each other. I'd like to think that through my efforts, I am making better the lives of my concertgoers through exciting, enriching performances.

Because I spend so much time performing, any chance I get in school to focus on academics, I seize it! Ergo, Humanities/Lit. is my favorite course in Conservatory, ha! My love of learning comes from my boyhood experience at St. Mark's School of Texas where I excelled tremendously due to the love and care of my teachers and administrators. Looking back on myself at that time, I would have strongly urged my former self to work very hard. I have come to know that all things worth having come at an extremely high price; time, energy, and effort.

I am very grateful for having been chosen as a STAR/CSF student as it has provided me with opportunities I might not have otherwise received. Opening the door to education for me was like opening a treasure chest. Through reading/writing,

the study of languages, religions, and philosophies; the emersion in cultures around the globe...I am an informed, well-rounded, and enlightened citizen of society.

It is my hope and wish to travel to the University of Sankore one day. During a time not long ago, this was the education mecca of the entire world. As it was founded, established, sustained, and extended through the work of Africans, I would like to make a journey to learn more about this institution. It has been through reading and understanding that I've come to know a different history of my ancestors, contrary to the one taught in most schools. To that end, I would like to discover more about the actual triumphs of my people.

As aforementioned, it is my hope to give meaningful concerts around the globe. Although it takes long hours, loss of sleep, and lots of sacrifice, I am willing and able to make this goal a reality. I like to think that as music needs no translation, I am working to aid the world through the universal language of music. This is my greatest goal.

Many thanks,  
Roderick C. Demmings Jr.

**Roderick was featured on "From the Top at Carnegie Hall," he performed for the Pope in Rome last summer, as well as at numerous other incredible events. He is sharing his talents with the world now on his international tour.**



## The Love of a Mother

Roderick Demmings (featured to the left) is a talented young man who is rising to success because of an incredible gift - his mother's love.

Cheryl Demmings was a constant source of love and encouragement for her two boys, Roderick and Andrew. She chose to ask STAR/CSF (Children's Scholarship Fund FW) for financial assistance because she was a single parent with high aspirations for her boys. She said, "I understood the increased benefits of a private school education. CSF gave me initial access to private schooling for both of my sons." She desired a private education for her children because they would receive more one-on-one attention. Cheryl believed this would address their individual learning styles as well as their innate talents, which she believes all children possess.

Cheryl dreams of an independent lifestyle for her boys. She wants them to be able to freely create whatever dreams they desire and achieve those dreams. There are limitless opportunities for children and Cheryl loves to see the birth of new dreams in the lives of her own sons. She encourages her children to always strive for new heights in their education, as she knows the importance of a firm educational background. "Education makes the difference in every life," Cheryl said.

Being a part of the STAR/CSF program made a huge impact on Cheryl and her boys. "The program provided access to a different orientation to learning during the lower grade-years. This provided a platform for

Roderick's success at his college preparatory school and continued to drive and motivate him as a conservatory member and international performer."

Cheryl cherished being a part of the program. Her encouragement to other families would be this: "STAR Sponsorship can help make the difference, but you must also possess your own will-power to use the resources the sponsorship provides. Be consistent. Seek help in designing a long-term education for your child. Value education above all else. Insist that your child applies himself daily and find creative ways to inspire a love of learning."

The devotion this mother has to her children is evident in the achievements of Roderick and Andrew. Roderick is a gifted international musician who is humbly sharing his talents with the world. His younger brother, Andrew, continued after STAR to excel in high school at a top-notch public school.

This family has been deeply touched by a gift of sponsorship and it will continue to impact them for the remainder of their lives. The philanthropy that was bestowed upon them is a beautiful representation of the lives that have been changed by STAR Sponsorship. To learn more about STAR, please see below for our contact information. We wish you and yours a very

**Merry Christmas!**

**Would you like to receive more newsletters similar to this one? Sign up for our eNewsletter featuring additional STAR stories at the bottom of our webpage at [www.starcsffw.org](http://www.starcsffw.org). Thank you for your support - we hope to see you there!**

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