



## 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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# STAR Sponsorship Times

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

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## Dreams Come True

According to Executive Director Patty Myers, a defining hallmark for STAR families is their commitment to education. For STAR parents Filberto and Blanca Ibarra, education is far more than a bridge to success – it is a lifeline. In their own words: *"Education is everything. It's what begins everything and anything for someone who wants a future."*

As immigrants from a small village in Mexico, the Ibarras appreciated what education could do for their four children. They dreamt of giving their children a better future than their own. To that end, their sons and daughters would need to finish elementary school, graduate from high school, and attain a college degree. This would put them on a positive life trajectory and give them opportunities to pursue careers of their choice.

Their oldest child, Janet, was enrolled in a Catholic elementary school. Here, Mr. and Mrs. Ibarra saw first-hand the joy, community, commitment, and support which this school championed. However, with three other children who were close in age, the benefit of private education didn't seem to be financially attainable. When the Ibarras were introduced to the

## Meet the Ibarra Students

For Edgar, Alma, and Jesus Ibarra, education has been a powerful springboard for reaching personalized career goals. Looking back, these superstars attribute their success to hard work, a dedication to academic achievement, and their parents' steadfast commitment. All of the Ibarra children say STAR Sponsorship and their donors were powerful catalysts in their personal development.

Edgar Ibarra is a graduate of the University of Dallas. He holds a Bachelor



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STAR Sponsorship Program, their prayers were answered. *"STAR helped us to keep our children in the environment that was motivating them to do well and pushing them to aspire for more,"* they explained.

According to the parents, communication with STAR and the high standards were motivational in their children's success. *"We knew what was needed for our kids to get assistance and it was always made evident to us by the program that our kids were special. We only did the same to help them understand why they needed to do well and maintain [good] grades."*

The support from STAR Sponsorship and the Ibarras' commitment paid off. Janet graduated from the University of Notre Dame. Edgar, their second child, graduated from the University of Dallas. Alma, the third child, graduated from St. Mary's University, and the youngest, Jesus, just graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington in December 2015. Mr. and Mrs. Ibarra's dream of their children's educational success came to fruition. The Ibarras said, *"STAR helped us keep our kids on track in private education, where more attention could be given to our kids. Donors need to know that they are helping students who really would value their assistance in so many ways. We are so grateful to have all our children graduate; it was a dream come true."*



of Science degree in Biochemistry. Post-college, his career path has been a unique journey. Edgar works as the Technical Director for Latin America for a global chemical company. In this capacity, he manages chemists and oversees product and program stewardship in the company's Latin American businesses, which are in nine countries.

When asked what education means to him, Edgar answered, *"Given our family situation, coming from an immigrant family, and being first-generation in this country, education is our only path forward. (Continued on back)*



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## Meet the Ibarra Students (continued)

From an early age our parents instilled in us the idea that everything they did was for us to get an education, it is what they would be able to give their children. My being able to graduate from college marked one of their goals as complete. To be able to do that for them, while also accomplishing something for myself was incredible."

Reflecting on what was the best part of being a STAR student, Edgar said the knowledge that someone was looking out for him was life-changing. "Someone noticed my efforts. For all the teasing and hard time my peers at the time gave me, someone saw that I could really go somewhere. It didn't matter what school I attended, my background, they saw potential and for that I will forever be grateful."

Alma, the second STAR alumnus, is a big believer in the power of education and what it does for personal enrichment. She acknowledged the role that education has played in helping her forge her own path forward. "My education has been the largest reward for hard work, but not just my hard work, but my parents. How my parents managed to send us to a private school and keep us at the top of our class, speaks so much to their values instilled in us. I know that in building and raising my future children, these lessons are what I too will foster within my family."

Looking back, Alma recounted, "My parents did not allow for their children to take STAR's help for granted. I remember my older brother explaining it to me and then later explaining it to my younger brother. It became something we believed in, bought into, and really tried to make everyone proud in our classes."

Alma related the career path which STAR Sponsorship has helped her achieve. "I just received my Master's degree in International Studies (MA) in December 2015 from Texas State University. I received my BA in Sociology from St. Mary's University in May 2010. I currently work for a state grant in Texas by FEMA to assist flood victims throughout central Texas. I supervise a team of 13 staff members that work in six counties."

"STAR set the tone for my academic career. When I joined the STAR program in elementary school, I became a good student and wanted good grades. Since elementary I have

continued to pursue good grades, ask for help when I needed it, and kept being an A student. I kept that motivation and attitude about grades throughout high school and college. I loved school and continue to enjoy it so much."



Having received this support, Alma now wishes to give back to her community. "I would like to continue to help others in the community. Regardless of the population, I just want to help them in being successful in their bigger picture of life."

The youngest Ibarra STAR student, Jesus, is a recent college graduate. He graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington in December 2015 with a Bachelor's degree in Public Relations. Now he foresees himself pursuing career opportunities within the field of communications.

When asked what education means to him, Jesus explained, "Education means everything to me and I am proud to say that my parents have always instilled these types of values in me and my siblings. With an education anything is possible and it enables one to help others."

Reflecting on his time in the STAR program, he recalled, "I learned the importance of a good education and the importance of taking it all seriously and striving to be the best student possible." Jesus attributes much of where he is now to STAR: "I think STAR has helped me because it made me realize that no matter how young you are, there are people who are willing to help you achieve what you want to do. They will go out of their way to make sure you stay on track."

In reference to the program's impact on his life, Jesus mentioned how it gave him a sense of purpose. "STAR was important because it made me feel like I was part of a special group of people that was really setting out to do something special in life. It helped me realize that I was making a lot of people proud of the way I did things."

When asked what he would say to his STAR sponsor, Jesus reinforced, "I would say 'thank you' for being so vested in my academic performance and for being someone who motivated me to do better. It's a great feeling to have someone care about how you are doing."

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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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