



# STAR Sponsorship Times

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

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 1

SPRING 2016

## 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!

## Board of Directors

- Brian Crumley
- Paul Greenwell  
Co-founder, President
- Lyndsay Hoover
- Bryan King
- John Pergande
- Peter Philpott
- David Porter
- Frost Prioleau
- Diego Semper
- Aaron Scow
- Andy Sullivan
- Michael Williams  
Advisory
- Patty Myers  
Executive Director

## From Surviving to Thriving

STAR Sponsorship has been a powerful vehicle for sweeping transformation in the fortunes of many underprivileged, local children. Since 1993, the program has been a wellspring of empowerment and inspiration for these at-risk students and their families. Over the years, numerous individuals have gone from being high-risk prospects to stand-out leaders inside and outside the classroom.

For some families, STAR has been more than a source-point of positive change. Rather, it has served as a critical lifeline for their children's future. Sonie Saygbay - mother of four, STAR parent, and a victim of war-borne displacement - says STAR has helped give her children a future she herself would have never known.



A native of Liberia, Saygbay recounts her experiences in her home country before relocation to the United States: "I was attending high school in Liberia when civil war broke out in 1990. Many people lost their lives, and my mother and I were forced to flee. We took refuge in the bush for two years, oftentimes going for days without food."

Saygbay recalls how these events disrupted her life trajectory. "As a high school student in Liberia, I was supposed to graduate in 1990. But with all that happened, my education was something about which I didn't even think. Survival was our only concern. Graduation wasn't even an afterthought."

Growing up, Saygbay says her parents promoted the value of education. "When she was growing up, my mother was able to attend boarding school. Therefore, she knew she wanted the best education for me. However, in Liberia government schools were not that great."

Saygbay mentions how this would translate into day-to-day events in the

classroom. "Many times you would go to school, sit in the classroom, and wait for the teacher. Oftentimes no one would show up. If you wanted a good education, the best option was a Catholic education." Many years before Liberia's descent into civil war, Saygbay's parents had divorced. Despite the financial hardship, her mother was able to send her to a Catholic institution for her education.

Having relocated to America, Saygbay's father returned to Liberia in 1990 for Saygbay and her mother, but these efforts were unsuccessful. Three years later, he returned and this time brought Saygbay with him to the United States. However, they were forced to leave Saygbay's baby girl and mother behind in Liberia's demanding conditions.

The passing years eventually brought better fortune. In 2001, Saygbay was able to relocate her daughter to the United States. Later in 2009, her mother left Liberia for America. Today they live together, in Saygbay's words, "as a big, happy family."

In the United States, life became much better. Saygbay attended Haltom High School, graduated, and attended Tarrant County College where she met her future husband. Over the years, they had three children. Having benefited from a Catholic education herself, Saygbay desired for her children to receive the advantages of a private education themselves.

Saygbay recounts: "During those years, we struggled with paying tuition. We cleaned the school to cover the expenses of the children's education." Unfortunately, Saygbay and her husband divorced, and it was difficult to continue providing a private education for the children. "The following year I took them to Our Mother of Mercy, and the secretary told me about STAR... (Continued on back)"



## From Surviving to Thriving (Continued)

...I met with STAR and then our journey began." When asked about how STAR helped her family, Saygbay says it played a comprehensive role. "If it weren't for STAR, the children wouldn't be where they are today. My oldest daughter from Liberia graduated from Utah State University. Currently my next two kids, Korto and Sonie, are in college. Julius is graduating from the STAR Program in May."



**Sonie's youngest, Julius**

Looking back, Saygbay says STAR has bolstered her children with a strong foundation. "My dream is for my children to have a bright future. I want for them to be independent and not have to rely on others, to

go and carve out their own dreams."

In turn, Saygbay's understanding of the value of education prompted her to reach greater heights. She earned a bachelor's degree and now works at JPMorgan Chase.

When asked about what she would say to a potential donor, Saygbay reinforces: "This program is such a powerful vehicle for support and encouragement. STAR provided the opportunity for our family to succeed. We have a better future with a strong educational foundation, and we couldn't be more thankful for everything the program has done. Any donation will truly have a life-changing impact."

## A Message from STAR Student, Sonie



The STAR Program has been an amazing experience for me. It has pushed me to achieve the highest goals. With the help of STAR I have come a very long way and I have set myself up for a bright future.

I have set my goals high and I have challenged myself more. At school, I felt there was nothing I couldn't accomplish.

STAR has definitely taught me self-perseverance. During my years of being a STAR student I have learned responsibility. I have learned to take my work seriously and chosen which things were more important. To me, being a STAR student means being the best. I have learned to be just that. I wouldn't change that for the world.

Something that that really touched me about the STAR Program was that an absolute stranger would give their time and money to help an absolute stranger like me. This gracious act of kindness has made me more grateful for the things in life, because I know my sponsor didn't have to be so generous. I thank him tremendously for all he has done.

After all the hard work I've done, I can say it was beyond a doubt worth it. Studying and working hard has shaped me and prepared me for further learning. Because of all that I know now I will definitely be successful later. Anywhere I go I know I will flourish.

After finishing college, my biggest dream is to be a music producer. I love music and I want to be able to share my dream with the world, while helping others achieve their dreams. After I have accomplished that I want to have my own business. The business will either be an architecture company, shoe company, or electronic company. I plan on having my own scholarship program kind of like STAR, to help other brilliant kids have the chance that I did. I want to travel to many places; helping children, exploring, and finding ways to help other people. My ambition is to help others because there have been so many people in my life who have helped me so much. Everybody needs somebody to believe in them.

STAR has changed my life in a great way. Without STAR I don't know what I would have done. Words cannot explain how grateful I am to have people who care about me so much. I will continue to do my best, not only for me, but for everyone who has helped me. I hope STAR and my sponsor continue to help students strive for their best. Once again, thank you so much to my sponsors and the STAR Program! You've been so great to me!

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

## A Message from Julius & Korto

The STAR Program is a great organization! It has helped me attain some of my greatest accomplishments. STAR has had a very strong impact on my educational life as well as my everyday life. With the tremendous assistance my sponsor has given, I believe I have set myself up for a very successful future.

STAR has encouraged me to always strive for the highest goals and be the best person I can be. Sometimes in our educational journey we run into hardships and the sponsors are there to motivate you to push through.

Now that I am in eighth grade and soon moving toward higher-level education, I would like to thank my sponsor. Without their immense generosity and willingness to always help, I wouldn't have the strength and mindset to be the best I can be right now. They have made many opportunities available to me by helping fund my education. I promise to continue investing in my future. You never know what you are capable of until you push every



limit, and I have proven myself to be capable of many things. STAR is truly an amazing program and has changed my life for the better. *Julius, Sonie's Son - May 2016*

There are many people in my life who inspire me. The people who inspire me the most are my father, my sister, and my sponsors. They have encouraged me to always reach for the stars, and because of them, I have been able to attend one of the best schools in my area.

I take my education very seriously because I want to be among the best. I am dedicated to my education, and my desire to learn is very strong. Life has shown me that knowledge equals power. I can achieve anything I put my mind to if I obtain knowledge. I can then use my knowledge to help people who are just like me.

Being a STAR Student has taught me to stay focused and to be eager to learn. As George Washington Carver once said, "Education is the key to unlocking the golden door of freedom."

*Korto, Sonie's Daughter - May 2009*



**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.**

"Like" us on  STAR Sponsorship



Follow us on  @starsponsorship