

STAR Sponsorship Times



Merry Christmas

NOEL



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Mission Statement

The Board of Trustees of 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.

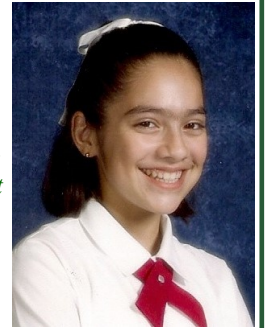
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For STAR alum Maria Barragan, the support of program founder Paul Greenwell and Board Member Peter Philpott is more than an act of generosity. It was literally a life game-changer. We asked Maria to share her thoughts on how STAR changed her life.

"Picture this, a thirteen-year-old young Latina girl sitting at her family's dining room table writing a letter to her sponsor, a gentleman she would grow to care for with esteem after discovering the enormous impact he would have in her life. What could this man have done to impact this little girl? He gave her the best gift a child could ever receive. He gave her the gift of a parochial education, one that her parents wanted, but simply could not afford for her and her two younger brothers. He made their dreams come true!

Now, fast forward 10 years later. She's 23, she's the first in her family to graduate from high school and college. She was able to expand her horizons and study abroad in Malaysia and Singapore only to discover there was so much she wanted to do as a young professional. Upon graduation, she decided to embark on a journey to the Midwest-Omaha, Nebraska to be precise. And why there? Well, beside being known for the infamous Huskers and the home of Warren Buffet, she received a job offer to work for a Fortune 500 company, Union Pacific. That's right ladies and gentlemen, she decided to be a railroader...more or less. Really, she was in the Marketing and Sales team where she served as a market analyst for LPG/Petroleum contracts. This once-13-year-old girl never imagined she would travel outside her city, let alone her home state, and engage on such adventures God presented to her. This girl is Maria Vanessa Barragan (me!), and I am a STAR Student.



Maria with Paul Greenwell & Peter Philpott

The reason why I say I am still a STAR Student is because I am learning new things every day and I live by the motto "Reach for the STARS." Who would have thought that an inner-city girl like me would be able to engage on such adventures. Statistically I am supposed to be another high-school dropout with probably a family of my own, struggling to make ends meet. If it were not for STAR, my sponsor Mr. Greenwell, Mrs. Myers, and my parents, I would not be the person I am today.

You see, STAR not only prepares you as a student. It prepares you as an individual. When we are in the program, we are young. We think if we don't make those A's and B's, it's the end of the world! (If only life's problems were that easy!) What we don't realize is that STAR teaches us at a very early age how to prepare for life's hardships. We are empowered every day by our teachers, parents, and STAR. They teach that whatever desires we have in our heart can be accomplished through hard work and determination.

I will ALWAYS say that the STAR Sponsorship Program is the backbone of who I am. They have given me so much even after graduating the program that they are part of my family. It was because of STAR that I knew I had the potential to accomplish anything. Now that I am older the common question is, 'Where do you see yourself in 10 years?' My answer is this: I want to be an agent of change. Now, how exactly I will come about to do so... Well, that is still what I am navigating. I want to be able to give back to the community that watched me grow and gave me so much. I want to be a community leader that empowers others to reach their potential. I know that I want to be part of that change that is much bigger than myself. This is what STAR has taught me. I have been taught to use my gifts and talents for the greater good and that is exactly what I plan to do with the education I have received."



Maria and her parents at St. Mary's University graduation



STAR Graduates continue to reach for the STARS!

“As an adolescent in the STAR program, I was always told to reach for the stars. I could accomplish anything, all I needed to do was put my mind and hard work into it. As a student at St. George Catholic School I was taught by some of the most dedicated teachers. I struggled the most in math class and when my P.E. teacher heard, she quickly offered her assistance in tutoring me. Because of the STAR Program, I had the privilege of encountering many more teachers like her who helped me to succeed.



Geneva

My experience in school snowballed into a deeper love for education. After high school, I enrolled at a community college and later became an Instructional Assistant. I wanted to help students with disabilities. Just like my teachers before me, I wanted to dedicate myself to helping students overcome the many obstacles they faced while trying to achieve their academic goals. After working as an Instructional Assistant for two years, my passion for higher education grew stronger. I was unsure of what degree I wanted in order to accelerate in my career, so I earned an Associates of Arts degree but I knew I wanted to go further.

I am currently attending Texas Wesleyan University in pursuit of a Bachelors of Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing. I also work for Texas Wesleyan University as an Administrative Assistant for the Office of Collegiate Partnerships. In my position, I help to enroll High School students in Dual Enrollment Courses. Working with our partnered schools to help students get a head start on their academic goals inspires me to keep pushing forward.



Geneva at Texas Wesleyan University

*STAR has helped me gain confidence in myself both in and out of the classroom. My mother wanted to give me the best education and the STAR program made that possible. I had an amazing experience in the classroom, and I had amazing teachers who were ready to jump in and help when I started to doubt myself. Education has played a big part in who I am today. As I get older each year I know that I am not done learning. I've learned that in order to succeed and be a positive driving force in my own life, I must be ready and willing to learn. I take advantage of every learning opportunity given to me, whether it is for school or for my own professional development. Education has opened doors for me and I am grateful to STAR for playing a huge part in helping me become the person that I am today.” **Geneva Castro***

“As a child, I was always encouraged by my parents that all dreams are attainable if you are willing to put in the work. Through their guidance and STAR’s, I continually achieved A/B Honor Roll at both Saint George and Nolan Catholic. When I enrolled at the University of Texas at Arlington, I was unsure of what I wanted to focus on. However, through familial experiences I realized that my calling was in medicine and decided to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing through UTA.



Ana Linda with sponsor David Porter

During the application process for the Nursing program, I realized that I had completed my pre-requisites and had a semester focused entirely on elective courses. I had always wanted to travel and immerse myself in a culture completely foreign to my own, and I took this opportunity to study abroad. Although I had my parents’ support, I was

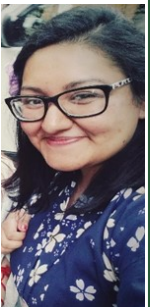
completely responsible for the following: ensuring that I had the correct documentation to travel, ensuring the exchange program I was participating in had classes transferable to my degree plan, ensuring that the financial aid department was aware of the status of my exchange program and the fees were transferable, and completing scholarship paperwork in time. After much work, I was accepted into Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea. There, I made lifelong friends whom I traveled with throughout South Korea and Japan.



Ana Linda

Once I began the nursing program in the Spring of 2017 and started to attend onsite clinicals, I quickly realized that I had made the best decision of my life by pursuing a nursing degree. Not only have I grown as a person but also feel fulfilled spiritually.

I am currently in my last semester in the College of Nursing at the University of Texas at Arlington. During the summer, I began interviewing for graduate nurse residency positions within the Texas Health Resources network. I was offered and accepted a Graduate Nurse Residency position in the Medical Surgical department at Texas Health Resources. Throughout this journey, I have come to realize the importance that the pursuit of education has had in all aspects of my life. I cannot wait for the next chapter of my life to begin.



*STAR has had a tremendous impact in my life, as it had helped build the foundation to my academic success and provided me with myriad opportunities to pursue a higher education. Even though I am no longer in the program, I continue to use the tools that STAR has given me to excel academically, grow spiritually, and mature in my life perspective.” **Anna Linda Castro***



Making A Difference... One Student at a time!

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