

# The TASC Connection



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## TASC 2022 Conference – Corpus Christi

April 11 – 13, 2022

Please check the TASC website for the most up-to-date information.

<http://www.tasctx.org/conference.html>

### Important Dates:

Regular Registration Opens: Due January 3, 2022

Reservations can be made at the following link:

<https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/corpus-christi/meetings/tasc-2022-annual-training-conference-04102022>

Stipend Registration Deadline: Due February 1, 2022

Late Registration Opens March 15, 2022

Conference Begins at 1:00 PM April 11, 2022

Conference Ends at 12:30 PM April 13, 2022

Late Registration Opens: Due March 15, 2022

Seeking conference **PLENARY & BREAKOUT SESSION** Speakers: After reviewing the 2021



*conference evaluations and in an effort to provide more variety and Texas Specific information we would like to ask our members to submit recommendations for local speakers for plenaries and breakout sessions. Please email Amber Gregory [agregory@shsu.edu](mailto:agregory@shsu.edu) with speaker name, topic, and contact information.*

Stipend Recipients: This year reimbursement will change. You will have to pay for hotel expense up front and submit for reimbursement after the conference. *Please refer to the below link for grant info:* <http://www.txspecialtycourts.org/training-grant.html>

## PRSS in the Adult Treatment Court Model Survey

Dr. Kristen Devall and Dr. Christina Lanier from the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and Dr. Jacqueline van Wormer of Washington State University, are conducting a study of the addition of peer recovery support specialists (PRSS) in the adult treatment court model. A key component of this research includes conducting an on-line survey of adult treatment courts to assess the role of the PRSS within programs. This survey will provide information on how courts are using peers in their programs.

*The Texas Association of Specialty Courts asks that you please set aside some time to take the survey, if you have not already done so. It should only take 5-8 minutes to complete.*

[https://uncw.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9WTSOI15we9S01U](https://uncw.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9WTSOI15we9S01U)

## Update from the Harris County STAR Drug Court

### THANKSGIVING IN ABUNDANCE

Food was cooked and meals were prepared for Houston's homeless community. Alumni members came together to prepare hearty meal plates that were then distributed to some of Houston's most needy who live on the streets. Some STAR clients were able to remember when their own lives were much the same and how important it was to receive the generosity of strangers. Such a project is a win-win for all.



### BABY ITS COLD OUTSIDE

A subcommittee of the STAR Alumni rallied to collect warm garments for the area homeless in the form of coats, gloves, scarves, sweaters, and socks plus an abundance of blankets. These were passed out to the residents who live in Downtown Houston under the bridges and behind buildings. The teams also provided information as to shelters where there people could go when the temperatures dropped and to get out of the inclement weather.



### YULETIDE CELEBRATION

For the first time in over two years, the STAR Drug Court Alumni Association was able to come together in person for their monthly meeting and holiday meal. Meetings have been held via zoom and proved to be very successful. But the recovery camaraderie that comes with being together in one central location was painfully missing and did impact the deeper connections that can be made. All that changed on December 8 when members of the Alumni Association met at the Houston Recovery Campus for their traditionally potluck dinner, they played holiday games, enjoyed a year-end slideshow that highlighted their many activities of 2021, and more. Leftover food was donated to area shelters.



### FINAL GRADUATION OF 2021

The fourth quarter graduation ceremonies were held on December 6 with 10 clients completing the STAR Program and three alumni being awarded early termination. Special end-of-year appreciation gifts were presented to the four STAR Judges along with a special tribute to Defense Attorney Deborah Keyser who was retiring from STAR after 13 years of volunteer service. The quarterly Shining STAR Award was presented to Pablo Villa, the Court Liaison Officer from Criminal District Court 178 for his tireless support of STAR Court, his timely and precise paperwork and his spirit for recovery.



**Mission:**  
The Texas Association of Specialty Courts (TASC) builds and strengthens Texas specialty courts through collaboration, advocacy and education.

## Update from the Harris County STAR Drug Court Cont.

### STAR SHINES AT ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Justice Forward, a Houston non-profit that raises money for the various Harris County Specialty Courts of which one is the STAR Program, held its annual fundraiser in November. While all of the Specialty programs were acknowledged, it was the STAR Drug Program that took center stage. Alumni Ned Evans was the keynote speaker and shared his tearful and poignant story of loss and recovery, noting that today he owns a barber college where he can mentor others as he has been mentored in sobriety. Patera Warren, another STAR alumni, was on hand to receive the 2021 Caprice Cosper Specialty Court Alumni of the Year. She currently works for Santa Maria Hostel as a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor, and is working on her next educational degree.



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## New OCA Administrative Director

The Supreme Court selected Megan LaVoie to serve as OCA's next Administrative Director. She assumed her new position effective December 1, 2021.

Megan was OCA's Director of Public Affairs and Special Counsel and has been with OCA since 2016. She also worked at OCA from 2013-2015. Megan is a graduate of Texas Tech and St. Mary's Law School. She has worked as a new anchor/reporter, served as general counsel for Sen. Duncan, and as Director of Advocacy for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

**We're on the Web!**  
<http://www.tasctx.org>

**Check us out on Facebook!**

## Quarterly Newsletters

We have moved to quarterly newsletters. Please continue to send us information, photos, testimonials, and news about your court programs, teams, and staff.

Please send your submissions to Kimberly Duran at [Kimberly.Duran@dallascounty.org](mailto:Kimberly.Duran@dallascounty.org)