

# Texas Association of Specialty Courts

[www.tasctx.org](http://www.tasctx.org)



**Mission:**

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

# The TASC Connection

## 2022 TASC Conference Highlights



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### Texas Association of Specialty Courts

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## TASC Conference Boogie Board Competition



1st Place: Harris County

2nd Place: El Paso County Juvenile Drug Treatment Court

3rd Place: Midland County Adult Felony Drug Court



<http://www.txspecialtycourts.org/>

### Conference Follow-Up

Please be patient as Amber is working on getting CEU certificates sent out to all members and reimbursements processed for stipend recipients.



## TASC Conference Award Recipients

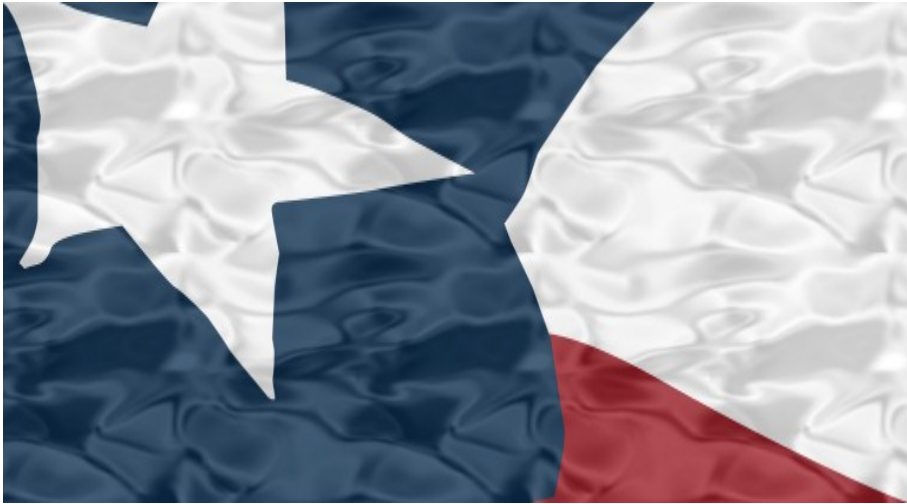
*Joel Bennett Recovery Award:* Patera Warren, Harris County

*Judge John C. Creuzot Award:* Judge Rosie Speedlin Gonzalez, Bexar County

*Judge Ruben G. Reyes Award:* Midland County Adult Felony Drug Court

*Mary Covington Award:* Tania Vargas, Midland County

*Rusty Ladd Scholarship Award:* Sara Michelle Barnett, Harris County



*Check us out on Facebook!*

## 2022-2023 TASC Board of Directors

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT : Shay Rustam, Assistant County Attorney, Montgomery County  
PRESIDENT ELECT: Erin Morgan, Senior Probation Officer, Travis County CSCD  
VICE PRESIDENT: The Honorable Larry Phillips , Grayson County  
TREASURER: Mary Covington, Special Programs Manager, Harris County  
SECRETARY: Keith Liles, Program Manager/Clinical Director, Harris County  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Amber Gregory

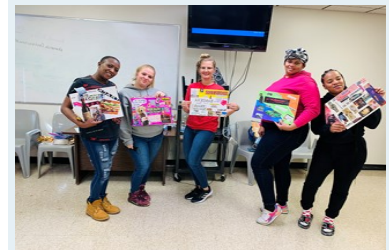
### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

REGION 1: Vacant  
REGION 2: Kimberly Duran, LPC, Program Clinician, Dallas County District Attorney’s Office  
REGION 3: The Honorable Jeff M. Addison, Bowie & Red River Counties  
REGION 4: The Honorable John B. Board, Potter County  
REGION 5: Faustino Lopez, Deputy Director, Hidalgo County  
REGION 6: The Honorable Paul White, Angelina County  
REGION 7: The Honorable Elizabeth N. Rainey, Midland County  
HARRIS COUNTY: The Honorable Kelli Johnson  
BEXAR COUNTY: The Honorable Ernie L. Glenn  
DALLAS COUNTY : The Honorable Hector Garza  
AT LARGE PLACE #1: Rosie Medina , Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, El Paso County  
AT LARGE PLACE #2: Lori Compton, Major/Assistant Jail Administrator, Kaufman County

### Vision Boards for the New Year—Harris County

On January 14, Jessica Lopez, STAR Probation Officer Jessica Lopez and Recovery Coach Tiffany Fountain hosted a Vision Board Brunch where female STAR clients were invited to come together for food and sober fellowship, as well as identifying their visions for 2022.

One of the ongoing goals of the STAR Program is to present opportunities that emphasize sober socialization in the form of events hosted by the STAR Alumni Association or connecting clients to events that happen in the Houston sober community. Each client was able to share what their vision boards depicted and how they hope to achieve them. Each realized in the end that for any level of success, the key ingredient of sobriety would be required.





## It's Getting Hot in Here...

Who says BBQ is Texas' state food? Think again especially when the award winning Sober Chili Cookoff teams hail from the Harris County STAR DRUG COURT Program.

On February 29, the Party Sober Organization and the Sober Recreation Committee hosted a citywide gathering that featured some of the city's finest chili and cornbread offerings. Dozens of teams representing sober clubs, treatment centers, transitional housing and addiction educational vendors competed in four categories and the STAR Teams

brought home four of six awards including BEST OVERALL Entry.

What started out as a way to continue to involve our clients with having fun in recovery quickly became a competition between the four STAR dockets and the Alumni Association.

All of this was made possible by the generous financial underwriting by members of the STAR staff.

*We want to hear from your treatment courts! Please submit articles, stories, and all other information about your court programs to Kimberly Duran at [kimberly.duran@dallascounty.org](mailto:kimberly.duran@dallascounty.org) for our quarterly newsletters. **Send us what your court did for May Drug Court Month!!***

## New SCAC Appointments

Congratulations to TASC Region 7 Director, Judge Elizabeth Rainey, from Midland County Drug Court and attorney Leslie Robnett of Duane Morris, LLP (Fort Worth) for appointments on the Specialty Court Advisory Counsel (SCAC) of the Office of the Texas Governor.

## Operation Optimism

In early January, Harris County Specialty Court Managers came together to discuss their thoughts about department morale. At the end of 2021, team members appeared stressed due to staffing and job tasks, compounded by the ongoing fallout of the COVID epidemic. While the spirit wasn't bad, it was clear that it could be boosted. This brought forth the birth of OPERATION OPTIMISM!



Managers Drug Gaines, Desiree Gonzales and Keith Liles kicked off this campaign that joined forces with members from the SOBER Court, Veterans Court, STAR Drug Court, and Felony Mental Health Court. Guests gathered for breakfast and a pep talk on the importance of optimism and positivity despite any barriers that are in front of us, and how a negative approach takes us out of the solution and we need to push one another up during these times.

The department's floor was decorated with inspirational words of motivation, and staff office doors featured posters emblazoned with "Optimism Lives Here" where stickers from their peers are placed when an expression of optimism was observed. A "banner of commitment" adorns a main corridor wall and each member of Specialty Courts signed it as a pledge to strive toward optimism.



A second breakfast held with a Mardi Gras theme. A motivational video was shared and staff were given their own personal cutout with their face and challenged to decorate it with words that inspire them be motivated and spread optimism. Once all cutouts were completed, they were joined together to represent how powerful combined optimism could be when working together as a team.

## Resources

Check out NDCI and the Specialty Court Resource Center for tons of information and resources for specialty courts!

<http://www.txspecialtycourts.org/>

<https://www.ndci.org/>



**NDCI**  
NATIONAL DRUG  
COURT INSTITUTE

## Pomp and Circumstance

The first quarter of 2022 featured a variety of client celebrations among the Harris County Specialty Courts.



emphasize that the light at the end of the tunnel can in fact be quite bright, as evidenced by the poignant speeches. Shown below in the photo are (left to right): Judge Josh Hill, Program Manager Keith Liles, CSO Edward Murray Jr., and a special graduate.

### VETERANS COURT

Felony Veterans Treatment Court celebrated four graduates on March 2, 2022. Shannon

Bowdoin, Lieutenant, Chaplain, Harris County Sheriff's Office and U.S. Army Veteran was present to lead the invocation. The guest speaker was Geoffrey S. Corn, Gary A. Kuiper

Distinguished Professor of National Security Law, South Texas College of Law Houston and

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired). Pictured below are (left to right): Program

Coordinator Sara Barnett, CSO Matthew Coates, Judge Jason Luong, and graduates.



### SOBER COURT

In the photo below: (Left to Right): Judge Salgado, Judge Walker, Judge Draper, CSO Jessie Stubblefield, Program Supervisor Desiree Gonzales, CSO Luis Moreno, and Deputy Estrada. Graduation was held on March 7, 2022 with a total of 12 graduates. Retired Deputy Lawson, a beloved member of the team for many years, made a special appearance virtually.

### STAR DRUG COURT

STAR had six graduates from the two male dockets. Because the smaller than usual number, a hybrid graduation was done, combining the celebration with actual docket. Since fewer clients were able to be seen due to the holidays, this was the perfect opportunity to bring together clients and graduates to



### FELONY MENTAL HEALTH COURT

The next graduation for FMHC will be May 5 and a celebration will be by Judge Brock Thomas. Clinician Giuliana Lozana recently took her Licensed Clinical Social Work exam and PASSED! Stellar achievement!

