

July,  
2011

# S.T.A.R.S. International Newsletter

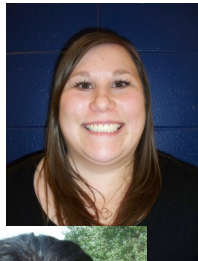


## Underwater Competition Highlights

The second annual **S.T.A.R.S.** International Underwater Competition was held on June 29th in Kenosha, WI with a new twist this year. Two additional teams were invited to join the Kenosha program participants to make this year's event more competitive than ever. One invitational team was comprised of 2010 **S.T.A.R.S.** graduates from Larkin High School and a second invited team was 2005-06 **S.T.A.R.S.** graduates from Elgin, IL who made the event exciting and set the stage for a summer of shared diving experiences. All event activities helped to reinforce the divers' confidence, skill mastery, stamina, and overall enjoyment of the sport. Some of the 8 events held included; Snorkel Relay Race, Men-of-Honor Underwater Pipe Puzzle, Underwater Obstacle Course, and the 3-minute Safety Stop Golf Ball Round-Up. We look forward to including some of these skilled divers in the next Illinois Scuba Council Underwater Competition in March, 2012.



## A Change in Leadership for the Board



**S.T.A.R.S.** has had a mid-year change in Board leadership to increase our focus on a sound financial future for the organization. New to the Board of Directors is Mitch Brandt (Divemaster Candidate), Stephanie Bedolla (Advanced Open Water Diver), and Nicole Boyer (Project Manager Extraordinaire).

Leaving the former 5 member Board was David Hood and Allison Johnson (rumored to return in 2012 in the area of Fitness Development). The Board is currently looking into Jr. Advisory members who can be groomed to join the Board after turning 18 years of age. Welcome new members. We look forward to your willingness and enthusiasm.

## What 2012 Holds for S.T.A.R.S. in the USVI

**S.T.A.R.S.** is on the cusp of a precedent setting agreement in 2012 involving the University of the US Virgin Islands (St. Thomas & St. Croix). Following an approved schedule for the next year which includes a June 2012 trip, the University is interested in a broad multi-year collaboration involving their college mentoring initiative known as "Brothers with a Cause". Tentative events would include a comprehensive engagement with the college including joint diving, accommodations on-campus, community service, and a multi-island week long trip.



## Featured Staff Member—Ismael Torres

Hi, my name is Ismael Torres and I was born and raised in East Los Angeles, CA. I lived in Texas for a couple of years before moving to Kenosha, WI. I presently work for Kenosha Unified School District as the “Truancy Reduction Specialist” for the middle schools. I have 3 children, 2 boys and my little princess. While growing up, I played a variety of sports which carried over into coaching in Texas and later in Kenosha. I now coach football at one of the local high schools also during the season I coach my children’s basket ball teams.

I lead a school district group called

HERMANOS where I serve as a mentor for several district kids. During my sparse free time when I’m not all over the place, I actually try to sit and relax.

Growing up and facing many difficult situations in my past has shown me what a significant difference I personally can make in someone’s life. Whether giving advice or simply listening to understand a situation faced by kids every day has made me realize how I can help them overcome their problems. During the time I spend with **S.T.A.R.S.**, I hope I can make a difference in the lives of

many children and help them see the true scope of what they can accomplish and reach goals that they believe to be beyond their grasp.



## Instructor Training Update



We owe all of you an update on **S.T.A.R.S.** graduate Ana Medina who had been on the doorstep of kicking off her SDI Instructor program this summer.

Ana had been juggling many educational, physical, family, and financial challenges as she set her sights on this long-time goal of instructor certification. Showing her usual level of mature decision making, Ana opted to delay her pursuit of this goal in order to meet the financial obligation of completing her college studies this fall. Don’t write Ana off. She still has her sights set on Kevin’s position when he is ready to leave. Ana has never come up short on any venture and we applaud her personal and collegiate achievements.

## Satrio Legowo - Fond Farewell or S.T.A.R.S. Expansion to Asia?

**S.T.A.R.S.** International sends best wishes to Satrio for his support and volunteer hours over the past 2 years. Satrio, an Indonesian native and temporary resident of Chicago, stepped in to help kick-off a Chicago Girls N Boys Club program in 2010. Despite not having a car, he reached out to the suburbs to help scattered program sessions in Elgin, IL.

As his Grand Finale appearance, Satrio managed one of the youth teams and timing during the June 25th Underwater Competition. He will be returning to Indonesia shortly to resume his life. We wish him much success in his homeland. In his parting remarks, Satrio offered an opportunity for some precedent setting boat diving if we could make it for breakfast someday with him. I truly expect that Satrio will unearth any at-risk youth in Indonesia and call us in for support.



## Open Water Week

At the conclusion of the day 5th day of Open Water diving, it was obviously clear that **S.T.A.R.S.** has encouraged positive change in many facets of our participants. Comments from them during our 5-day, 20-dive event reinforced that the program makes impacts. Hyper activity was replaced by calm, rambling and talkative behavior was replaced with quiet, inattentiveness

was replaced by focus on each individual goal of the week.  
The annual, week-long diving event truly sorts out those who lack personal commitment and this week was by no means an exception. Most of our participants completed 5 certifications while a few who did not compete their reading and exams fell short for the time being. The next dives are slated for

July 30th at Haigh Quarry or Pearl Lake with a greater focus on buoyancy control. Future leaders are emerging quickly. All the boys are to be commended for their perseverance in the near 100 degree heat each day.  
  
Good luck to our divers as they prepare to become Rescue Divers in September!



**Dual Divemaster**


**S.T.A.R.S.** is pleased to congratulate staff Divemaster Irene Bach for obtaining her PADI Divemaster certification which is in addition to her current SDI Divemaster certification that she achieved last year. Irene has come a very long way in her knowledge, skills, and ability and is now one of our lead dive Pros further ensuring both dive safety and fun!

Nice work Irene,,,,,but don't stop climbing yet as you have a lot to offer in the coming years

**Combating Bullying with S.T.A.R.S.**

**S.T.A.R.S.** Board members attended an AT&T event in Milwaukee, WI on July 13th to learn more about one aspect of bullying within the public schools through a presentation of the Trevor Project. Following the presentation there was an interest in discussing the potential of another expansion of **S.T.A.R.S.** in the Milwaukee area that would be a collaboration with the "Alliance School". Further discussions are warranted.

Watch for updates.


 "Do not wish to be anything but what you are, and try to be that perfectly."  
 St. Frances De Sales

## 5 Point Star Challenge

A new **S.T.A.R.S.** participant challenge will be introduced in August of 2011. Our participants have proven to be skilled underwater navigators.....but are they ready for the 5-point STAR challenge? In August and September, participants will be offered chance to co-navigate a complete 5 legged STAR pattern of 25-30 kick strokes per leg with the goal to return within 10 feet of the starting point. Successful participants could earn the **S.T.A.R.S.** STAR-Challenge medallion! More to come.

