

# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## MARSHA GRANDICK RETIRES!

*After five and a half years as the STARS Scholarship Program Director, I officially retired on December 20, 2013. I was hired in October of 2008 to head the expansion of the STARS Program. During my tenure, I developed policies, protocols and procedures for the program. I expanded the coverage of the scholarship to include computer purchases, internet payment, professional dues, auto repairs and professional dress. I instituted seminars and family events to allow scholars the opportunity to learn more about issues they face on a daily basis and to participate in family activities to strengthen the family unit. I also established the STARS Scholarship Alumni Association and created the Leadership Education and Practice (LEaP) Program to help scholars develop strong leadership skills. Finally, I began the STARS mentoring program matching scholars with scholar graduates.*

*While I feel that I've accomplished much, my greatest accomplishment was getting to meet all of you. Your determination and dedication to pursue higher education while overcoming incredible odds truly inspired me. Every time you had a success; every time you kept going under what seemed to be insurmountable odds, you made me want to do better. Thank you for allowing me to become part of your lives. I wish you the best and brightest future!*

*Marsha Grandick*

## STARS 2014 ALUMNI BOARD MEMBERS

- ◇ President -**Glennis Guerrero** is working on her bachelor's degree in Human Service
- ◇ Vice President -**Mary Fisher** is working on her bachelor's degree in Business
- ◇ Secretary -**Hannah Howell** is working on her associate's degree in Dental Hygiene
- ◇ Treasurer -**Tracy Maxwell** is working on her RN in nursing
- ◇ Events -**Beth Vanderpool** is working on her associate in Human Service
- ◇ **Rhonda Silva** is working on her bachelor's degree in accounting
- ◇ **Brandee Steffes** is working on her associate's degree in human service
- ◇ **Matt Monahan** is working on his associate's degree in accounting
- ◇ **Sue McFee** is working on her associate's degree in surgical tech
- ◇ **Dean Sime** is working on his associate's degree in human service
- ◇ **Sherri Johnson** is working on her LPN in nursing
- ◇ **Jessica Ward** is working on her associate's degree as a Physician Assistant



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Donna Hick	2
Janice Farrell	2
Open House	3
Christmas Swap Shop	3
Spring 2014 Scholars	3
Fall 2013 Graduates	4
Upcoming Events	4



*Providing a Foundation  
for Your Future!*



Donna Hick

*“First of all, do not let anyone tell you that you are not good enough because you are!! Do not give up, do not let anything stand in your way of reaching your success!! Reach out for help when you need it.”*



Jan Farrell

*“Focus on the rewards of your educational journey not on the task at hand such as homework, tests and speeches. At the end of your educational journey, flood-gates will open and you will be rewarded with feelings of great achievement, confidence, and a renewed sense of financial independence and pride to be able to provide for yourself and your*

## DONNA HICK

Donna Hick had a dream. For as long as she can remember, Donna has wanted to be a teacher. As a young girl, Donnas’ parents discouraged her from pursuing higher education. They told her she wasn’t good enough to go to college and earn a degree. No one in her family had attended college and Donna wouldn’t either, at least for several years.

After supporting her husband’s dream of attending college, Donna decided that it was time to pursue hers. She graduated with an Associate’s Degree in Medical Assisting from Kaplan University. She excelled in school earning a 4.0 and was the student speaker at her graduation. Donna was employed by the Red Cross while working on her Bachelor’s Degree. She graduated in 2013 with high honors. While doing a blood drive at Wright College, Donna was approached about teaching some classes. She jumped at the chance and is now a full time Medical Assisting instructor. She is also continuing her education by working on her Master’s Degree.

Donna loves teaching. She loves looking at her students’ facial expressions when they understand a concept she is teaching. She also enjoys talking to the single moms giving them encouragement. “I hurt when they hurt, I cry when they cry, and I laugh when they laugh,” says Donna.

Donna has learned that you’re never too old to go to college and with encouragement, hard work and perseverance you can earn a degree. Donna now believes in herself and is teaching her children and grandchildren that they too are capable of receiving a college degree.

## JANICE FARRELL

Jan Farrell once had a job she loved in the medical industry. It paid well and she loved being able to help others. However, with the economic downturn, Jan found herself unemployed and unable to find a job that paid enough for her to pay the mortgage and daycare for her two children. It was at this point she realized she needed to return to school and further her education.

Jan, whose youngest daughter was born with Down’s Syndrome, decided to get a Bachelor’s Degree in Behavioral Sciences so that she could help people who are unable to help themselves. She graduated with a perfect 4.0 in 2013 from Bellevue University. In October she was hired by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services as a service coordinator and advocate for people with developmental disabilities.

“The most rewarding part of my job is that I’m able to help people who are unable to communicate or understand their rights as adults and are given the same chance to develop and enjoy their lives like the rest of us!”

Jan, who has faced several barriers, has learned that there are agencies and services to assist those in need. She credits STARS with helping her while in school. She also credits her Mom who died before she graduated for believing in and encouraging her. “Thank you mom for telling me I could do it and you wouldn’t accept anything less than A’s. Thank you for telling me not to quit when I missed the last month of finals to care for you while you were in hospice. I went back and finished! I am the first person in my family to obtain a bachelor’s degree and I received all A’s in the Bachelor’s program! Love you mom.”

## STARS ALUMNI NETWORKING OPEN HOUSE OCTOBER 29, 2013



### 2014 Spring Scholars

Jeffrey Fauble

Cheryl Mahan

Carroll Hinchion

Stephanie Hughes

Ashley Fricke

Kirstin Graalfs

Taylor Gochenour

Connie Utley

Katrina Rodgers

Kara Smolinski

Jessica Whitney

## STARS Christmas Swap Shop Event December 6, 2013



The STARS Alumni Association sponsored and planned the Christmas Swap Shop Event. STARS Scholars donated gently used clothing and toys to the Swap Shop and participated in the event by picking out gifts for their children and volunteering. STARS invited Connections AAA Grandparent Program to participate in the event so they could pick out gifts for their grandchildren. Wrapping paper, boxes, ribbons and gift tags were available to participants for gift wrapping. Several STARS Scholar volunteered at the event helping the grandparents pick out gifts as well as helping with gift wrapping. Upon leaving the event participants received a Christmas stocking for each of their children plus a fruit basket and box of cookies. Over 100 children benefited from the event. The STARS Alumni Board plans to have the event again in December 2014.

---

## Congratulations Fall 2013 Graduates



### **Bachelor's Degree**

#### **Buena Vista University**

Erik Christensen: Human Service Behavioral Science

KC Fouts: Elementary Education

Larissa Stogdill: Elementary Education

#### **Kaplan University**

Jennifer Mendoza: Human Service Behavioral Science

### **Associate's Degree or License**

#### **EQ School of Hair Design**

Denise Arad: Cosmetology

#### **Iowa Western Community College**

Dena Greelis: LPN

Jamie Kindred: LPN

Mistie Martin: Sign Language Interpreting

Christina McAtee: LPN

Carlos Smith: Sports Marketing



---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Like us on Facebook:

[STARS-Scholarship-Alumni-Association](https://www.facebook.com/STARS-Scholarship-Alumni-Association)



STARS Scholarship  
CB Community Education  
Foundation  
300 W. Broadway, Ste. 212  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Phone: 712-322-8800  
Fax: 712-322-8941  
E-mail: [mgrandick@cb-cef.org](mailto:mgrandick@cb-cef.org)

**May: Celebrate CB Parade:** Don't miss this Council Bluffs traditional parade that brings the Downtown area to life. STARS Scholars and their families will participate in the annual parade on May 17, 2014. This year's theme is Celebrate CB! Better Together!

**May: STARS Spring Recognition Dinner:** This event is acknowledge and honor the 2014-2015 Scholars and 2014 Spring Graduates for what has been accomplished through the spring semester. Date is yet to be decided.

**June Family Event: Family Game Night:** Making time for your family to focus on fun with each other contributes to family bonding and healthy family functioning. Research has shown that parent-child play has positive impacts on many aspects of child development. It helps to develop language skills, attachment among family members, understanding of how to engage effectively in social relationships, exploratory behaviors that kids need to become problem solvers, and much more. This STARS family event is a one night event for families to enjoy board games, food, and prizes. More information later.

To find out more about STARS Events, contact Alumni Event Coordinator, Beth Vanderpool at [beth.vanderpool@hotmail.com](mailto:beth.vanderpool@hotmail.com).

We're On The Web  
[www.commedfoundation.org](http://www.commedfoundation.org)