

32nd ANNUAL MENTOR/MENTEE

Scholarship Gala & Award Ceremony

Theme: Rising Star's Journey:
From the Past to Present
Saturday, June 6, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Awards:

TIP's 2026 Honoree

Tasha Lowe Mentee of Year Award

Faye Walker Dixon Mentor of Year Award

Judge Mayfield Humanitarian Scholarship Award

Bertha Cline Volunteer of Year Award



Teenage Incentive Program, INC

Location: Sonesta Hotel IAH Airport
425 N Sam Houston Pkwy E
Houston, TX 77060

“Rising Star’s Journey: From the Past to the Present”

Mistress of Ceremony: DR. WHITNEY HOWARD

TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY- PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION

June 6, 2026 – 6:00 PM

Music..... DJ Mark Thomas
Welcome & Introduction of MC Mrs. Kantayeni Chapman
Mistress of Ceremony Dr. Whitney Howard
Opening Prayer.....Mrs. Christine Reid, R.N
Overview & Statistic for TIPMrs. Mattie Mason, R.N.
Recognitions.....Mrs. Shenathra Moore
Presentation of Honoree.....*Mrs. Toni Stephens* Dr. Glynell Billups

Dinner Is Served

Panel: Rising Star’s Journey: From the Past to the Present

Mrs. Shanequar Carter.....Mrs. Gloria Archer.....Mr. Shawn Allison
Poem Ms. Katrena Reese
SAVING OUR BABIES.....Mrs. Mattie Mason, R.N.
The Bertha Cline Volunteer of the Year.....Ms. Edna Griggs .. Mrs. Chanel Montgomery
The Debra Ibarra Mayfield Scholarship.....Mrs. Shenathra Moore
The Mentor & Mentee of the Year Awards.. Mrs. Joanne Ligon, Committee Chair
Tasha Renee Lowe - Mentee of Year Award
Faye Walker Dixon - Mentor of Year Award
Recognition of Partners, Eisenhower Mentors & Vendors..Mrs. Shenathra Moore
Recognition of TIP’S Board Members & STARS Members..... Ms. Yvonne Green
Closing Remarks..... Mrs. Mattie Mason, R.N.
Founder/Administrator-TIP
Closing Prayer..... Mrs. Christine Reid, R.N.

DR. WHITNEY HOWARD

whitney.howard@tsu.edu - 713-240-1298

College Professor/Researcher

TV Talk Show Host of Diva'ONNE Exclusive Ent.

Radio Personality of Klassical Korner Radio Show

Scholar, Media Producer, and Visionary Communicator

Dr. Whitney Howard is a multifaceted professional whose journey bridges beauty, media, and academia. Beginning her career in the cosmetology industry in 1991, she quickly excelled as a hairstylist and spent more than 25 years in the salon business. By 2002, she became a beauty salon owner and later earned her cosmetology instructor's license, teaching the art and science of beauty to countless students throughout Houston, Texas. Before her teaching career, Dr. Howard worked as a makeup artist for Glamour Shots Inc., later expanding into freelance work as a celebrity makeup artist for local musicians, actors, and entertainers. Her entrepreneurial spirit led her to establish a fashion model training school, where she developed aspiring models for professional careers in the fashion and entertainment industries.



Her creative path evolved naturally into television, where she became the host and executive producer of “Diva'ONNE Exclusive”, a local talk show on Houston Media Source that gained nationwide recognition for its focus on empowerment, artistry, and community storytelling. Her presence in front of the camera grew when she joined the cast of OWN Network's reality series “Houston Beauty,” produced under Oprah Winfrey's media brand.

Dr. Howard later transformed her vast professional experience into an academic calling. She earned her Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Southern Mississippi and holds multiple degrees from Texas Southern University, blending scholarly research with her real-world background in media and performance. Her teaching, research, and production work now focuses on representation, diversity, and social advocacy, exploring how communication shapes identity and culture. Her research emphasizes race, culture, and African American studies in media, that focus on the framework of Quantitative and Qualitative (mixed) methods to challenge stereotypes and amplify marginalized voices. As an educator, she empowers students to find their voices through media creation, critical thinking, and digital storytelling.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Howard is an active leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and community engagement. Her achievements have earned her numerous awards for leadership, scholarship, and public service. At her core, Dr. Whitney Howard believes that communication is not just an academic discipline—it is a powerful vehicle for connection, creativity, and change. Through her work, she continues to inspire others to speak boldly, think critically, and lead with authenticity.

Dr. Howard is not just teaching communication; she is living it, amplifying voices, and shaping futures.

HONOREE TONI STEPHENS

Toni Stephens is a dedicated educator, counselor, mentor, and community leader whose passion for helping others has positively impacted countless students, families, and organizations throughout her career. With a heart for service and a commitment to empowering others, she has devoted her professional and personal life to supporting the emotional, social, and academic success of children and families.



A retired counselor from Aldine Independent School District, Toni faithfully served students and families for 29 years at Hall Success Academy. Throughout her career, she became known for her compassion, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to helping students overcome challenges and reach their full potential.

During her years in education, Toni also served as Team Lead for Pregnancy Related Services Coordinators, where she played an instrumental role in helping secure matching grant funds for childcare services. Her leadership and advocacy helped provide critical support and resources for students and families in need, reflecting her continued dedication to removing barriers to educational success.

As a Licensed Professional Counselor and Director of School Engagement for Chosen Behavioral, Toni continues to advocate for students and provide meaningful support to schools and communities. Her ability to connect with others through compassion, leadership, and encouragement has made her a respected professional and trusted mentor.

Toni's commitment to excellence was recognized while attending Sam Houston State University, where she received the Outstanding Counseling Student Award two years in a row for her academic achievement, leadership, and dedication to the counseling profession.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Toni has remained deeply involved in community service and youth development. Her service includes involvement with Girl Scouts of the USA, serving as a Youth Director, Mission Program Director, mentor to young ladies, and Basketball Booster Volunteer. Through these roles, she has inspired young people to develop confidence, leadership skills, faith, and a sense of purpose.

Toni is also a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Above all, Toni values her family and the role they play in her life. She is married to Bradford Stephens and is the proud mother of Emerson Stephens, a college sophomore, and Addison Stephens, a senior in high school. Her devotion to her family, faith, and community reflects the values she strives to model each day.

Known for her servant leadership, positive spirit, and unwavering dedication to others, Toni Stephens continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of those she serves. Her life's work stands as a testament to compassion, perseverance, and the power of uplifting others.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

EDNA GRIGGS

Edna Griggs is a dedicated community leader, political advocate, and servant of the people who has spent her life uplifting and rebuilding communities through service, empowerment, and outreach. As the Chief Executive Officer of Acres of Angels, Edna channels her lifelong passion for community development into tangible initiatives that support and empower the vulnerable, creating a legacy of lasting impact.



Born and raised in Acres Homes—one of the largest and earliest Houston neighborhoods homesteaded by African Americans—Edna is deeply rooted in the community that shaped her. Her commitment to service is a generational calling. Her grandmother was a local business owner known for providing food and housing to individuals experiencing homelessness, and her mother was a registered nurse and political activist who helped community members secure meaningful employment within Harris County.

Before dedicating herself fully to full-time community leadership, Edna enjoyed a distinguished 42-year career with AT&T, where she regularly assumed leadership roles in both employee and community organizations. Her extensive background in labor and civic advocacy includes serving as Chief Steward and a Legislative Committee Member for the Communication Workers of America, as well as contributing her expertise to the City of Houston Commission Board and the Coalition of Labor Women.

Through Acres of Angels and her personal advocacy, Edna's initiatives touch thousands of lives annually. Senior Advocacy supporting over 2,000 seniors across five dedicated locations, providing resources, engagement, and consistent care.

Edna's tireless work in Acres Homes has earned her widespread admiration and formal recognition from former Houston mayors, local city council members, and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.

Her extensive civic and organizational involvement includes leadership and membership roles across numerous impactful groups, the City of Houston Commission Board, the Houston Black American Democrats (H-BAD), and the Texas Democratic Women Metro, where she serves as an Executive Advisor. She has also contributed to initiatives with the American Heart Association and served as a board member for Project Power with the American Diabetes Association, where she advocates for education and awareness while personally living with diabetes. Also, she serves as an advisor to Lone Star College's Council for Adult Education and continues her family's legacy of service through Edna's Social and Charity Club (The Rebirth), originally founded by her grandmother in the 1950s.

Above all her public achievements, Edna is a devoted mother of three and a proud grandmother of three. Her life's work stands as a powerful testament to resilience, compassion, and an unwavering dedication to the upliftment of her community.

RUTH J. SIMMONS

Ruth J. Simmons is a Distinguished Presidential Fellow at Rice University and Adviser to the President of Harvard University on HBCU Initiatives. She served as President of Prairie View A&M University until March 2023. Prior to joining Prairie View, she was President of Brown University from 2001-2012 and President of Smith College from 1995-2001. Under her leadership, Prairie View was reclassified as an R-2 Research University and Brown made significant strides in improving its standing as one of the world's finest research universities.



A French professor before entering university administration, President Simmons held an appointment as a Professor of Comparative Literature and Africana Studies at Brown. After completing her Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard, she served in various faculty and administrative roles at the University of Southern California, Princeton University, and Spelman College before becoming president of Smith College, the largest women's college in the United States. At Smith, she launched a number of important academic initiatives, including an engineering program, the first at an American women's college.

Simmons is the recipient of many honors, including a Fulbright Fellowship to France, the 2001 President's Award from the United Negro College Fund, the 2002 Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, the 2004 Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal, the Foreign Policy Association Medal, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, and the Centennial Medal from Harvard University. She has received over forty honorary degrees from universities around the world, including Oxford University, Ewha Women's University in South Korea and The American College in Greece. Simmons is a member of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the Council on Foreign Relations, and serves on a number of boards including The MacArthur Foundation, Morehouse College, the Holdsworth Center, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation, the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, and Hines Global Income Trust. She received the Brown faculty's highest honor: the Susan Colver Rosenberger Medal in 2011 and was honored by the Prairie View faculty in 2022. In 2012, she was named a 'Chevalier' of the French Legion of Honor and, in 2024 was promoted to "Officier" by the President of France. In 2024, she received the National Humanities Medal from President Joe Biden.

The author of numerous publications, her most recent memoir, Up Home, was a 2023 New York Times bestseller.

THE PANELISTS



Gloria Archer is the founder of an organizational change management company, but her understanding of transformation began long before her 25+ year career did. Her journey was shaped by becoming pregnant at 15 and a single mother at 16 — a season marked by uncertainty, responsibility, and the weight of societal expectations. Through faith, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to growth, she overcame socioeconomic barriers and the fear of rejection, emerging with a deep conviction that change is not only possible, but powerful.

Today, Gloria is a respected wife, mother, business owner, mentor, and passionate advocate for teenage parents. She gives GOD all the glory for using her story as a living example of what is possible when you choose to evolve, rise, and thrive against the odds. Her life's work reflects her belief that transformation is both personal and organizational — and that every challenge can become a catalyst for purpose.

Her favorite scripture is Romans 8:28 - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[a] have been called according to his purpose.



Shawn Allison is an author, speaker, mentor, and Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor dedicated to healing boys and restoring healthy manhood. Founder of D.A.W.N. Ministries, he equips young men with emotional intelligence, purpose, and leadership skills through schools, churches, communities, and correctional facilities.

He is the author of *Boys Cry Too: Healing the Heart of Manhood—One Boy at a Time* and was honored by the Texas House of Representatives with an official resolution recognizing April 27, 2026, as Boys Cry Too Day.

Shawn's powerful journey from incarceration to impact makes him a sought-after voice on youth mentorship, emotional wellness, fatherhood, resilience, and transformational leadership.



Shaneqar "Nikki" Carter is a dedicated healthcare professional, entrepreneur, worship leader, and motivational voice passionate about inspiring others to overcome adversity and pursue purpose driven success. A proud graduate of Eisenhower High School, Class of 2005, she has built a career rooted in resilience, faith, leadership, and service.

With more than six years of experience in the healthcare industry, Ms. Carter currently works for Harris Health System, formerly known as the Harris County Hospital District. She is also pursuing a degree in Business Healthcare Management while working toward her goal of advancing into management and ultimately becoming a Director within the Revenue Cycle Patient Financial Services (PFS) Department.

In addition to her healthcare career, she is a full-time entrepreneur and the owner of a Christian based beauty brand specializing in makeup application, makeup education, and product knowledge training. A cosmetology graduate, she previously owned and operated her own spa before the COVID-19 pandemic forced its closure. She is now preparing to relaunch her makeup studio and spa in the Houston, Texas area with a vision of creating generational wealth and multiple streams of income for her family.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Ms. Carter is a proud mother of three and is joyfully preparing to welcome her first grandchild. She is also an active member of Image Church, where she serves on the worship team and leads worship periodically.

Her passion is to be a living example that circumstances, statistics, and difficult beginnings do not define a person's future. Through faith, perseverance, and determination, she strives to encourage women and families to rise above every obstacle and walk confidently in their God-given purpose.

Teenage Incentive Program, Inc.

Teenage Incentive Program, Inc. (TIP) is a non-profit organization established in 1995 with a primary focus on dropout prevention. TIP provides motivational, educational, and intervention services to teens experiencing challenges such as disciplinary issues, substance abuse, low self-esteem, poor academic performance, pregnancy/parenting responsibilities, and other social concerns.

The motto of the Teenage Incentive Program is:

“You Can — It’s Not How Smart You Are, But How Determined!”

Since its inception, TIP has provided services to more than 15 high schools, 5 middle schools, 2 elementary schools, and collaborated with 8 Crisis Pregnancy Centers throughout the Houston community.

During the 2024–2025 school year, TIP continued its focus within the Acres Homes Community, targeting Aldine ISD schools and working closely with at-risk youth. Special emphasis has been placed on supporting pregnant and parenting teens through mentoring, educational support, and life-skills development.

To strengthen community impact, TIP organized a coalition of churches, community leaders, and organizations known as the **Acres Homes Community Alliance Team (AHCAT)**. The mission of AHCAT is to empower the next generation to become men and women of integrity and excellence.

Through mentoring programs, community activities, support groups, case management services, and one-on-one healthcare assessments, TIP and AHCAT have achieved meaningful success in supporting youth and families throughout the community.

Board Members

Kantayeni (Kat) Chapman	President
Dr. Glynell Billups	1st Vice-President
Shenathra Moore	2nd Vice-President
Mattie Mason	Secretary
Joann Ligon	Treasurer
Members at Large	Asa Johnson
	Matthew Mason
	Nicholas Rollings

Special Thanks

Dr. Whitney Howard Mistress of Ceremony
Mrs. Toni Stephens..... Honoree
Dr. Ruth J. Simmons..... Special Guest
Senator Molly Cook Proclamation
Mrs. Christine Reid, R.N..... Invocation
Mrs. Shanequar (Nikki) Carter..... Panelist
Mrs. Gloria Archer Panelist
Mr. Shawn Allison Panelist
Ms. Natalie Mares Marketing Strategist
Mrs. Hanyiah Thomas Photographer
Mr. Mark Terre Saxophonist
Mr. Mark Thomas DJ T-Mix
Mrs. Cathy Werner..... C&S Graphics
Tiffany Lowe-Williams, Brooke Lewis, & Angela Holmes.... Decorations
Mrs. Batsheba Ondari Vendors
Mattie Teague Middle School Jewels Program Volunteers
TIP Board and Staff..... Dedication & Contributions
Ms. Dana Railey & Mr. TaQurius Glynn..... Sonesta Hotel IAH Airport

Your tax-deductible 501C3 donations
can be made by Cash App, Zelle or Mail:

Teenage Incentive Program, Inc.

525 N Sam Houston Pkwy E, Ste 680, Houston, TX 77060

Zelle-teenageincentive@gmail.com

Cash App-\$teenageincentive

Contact office questions-832.903.1272

MARK TERRE SAXOPHONIST

Meet Mark Terre, a saxophonist with a heart for worship and a passion for using music to glorify God. Through every note played, his goal is to inspire, uplift, and create an atmosphere where peace, joy, and the presence of God can be felt. Blending soulful melodies with faith, this musician believes music is more than entertainment — it's ministry.



DJ T-Mix – Mark Thomas
Nfx2222@yahoo.com

VENDORS

Kindred Stories
info@kindredstories.tx.com

Teenage Incentive Program, Inc. – Mattie Mason
admin@teenageincentive.com

New Life Perinatal Healthcare Services, Inc. – Mattie Mason
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AG Crafty Creations – Angela Holmes
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Call Me Mother Project – Deborah Mouton
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And Yet She Thrived – Toya Mares
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Dress to Thrill – Aretha Hill
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Lue's Jewelry Box – Lue Sims
simsluella@yahoo.com

Dawn's Arrival Pregnancy Support – Stacey Thompson
dawnsarrivalhtx@gmail.com

BECOME A MENTOR



Adrianna Velasquez teen mom at 14yo



Adrianna's son graduated May
19, 2026



Adrianna Velasquez Mentor for 13yo Mentor &
Mentee of Year Winners 2023



Adrianna Velasquez, Jessica
Lopez, and Mattie (her daughter)
Jessica attending her 1st
Mentor/Mentee of Banquet at the
Taste of Texas
on May 1, 2022



Adrianna Velasquez Mentor for Jessica
Lopez Freshman
MacArthur High School
Jessica Lopez graduated from
MacArthur High School May 28, 2026