



IndyBar: 2017 'Suited Up' a Resounding Success

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The Indianapolis Bar Association, partnering with Starfish Initiative, hosted the second annual Suited Up “Senior Send-Off” event on Wednesday, May 10. Students not only received college and career development tips, but also newly tailored suits, thanks to generous donations from IndyBar members.

This year, we were fortunate to have Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill in attendance. Attorney General Hill shared his story and advice on career development and professionalism. It was a fitting celebration recognizing the countless hours these outstanding high school seniors have put into their academic and extracurricular endeavors.

As high school freshmen, the Starfish Initiative Scholars are matched with college-educated adult mentors who help prepare them for college. These volunteer mentors serve as a “life or college coach” to keep students working toward achieving their goals, whether it be graduation from high school, college or beyond. Thanks to this one-on-one guidance, 100 percent of the Starfish Scholars who completed the four-year program have graduated from high school and 98 percent have been accepted by colleges or universities.



Suited Up students, IndyBar volunteers and Attorney General Curtis Hill smile for a photo following the “Senior Send-Off” event on Wednesday, May 10.

“Starfish Initiative is so thankful for the partnership with the Indianapolis Bar Association and the Suited Up program. One-hundred percent of the students in our program are low income, so the opportunity for them to own nice dress clothes like this would not be possible if it weren’t for Suited Up. Watching our students try on their new suits and seeing not only their excitement, but also the change in their overall self-confidence was priceless,” said Starfish Initiative Match Specialist Jordan Byrd.

Looking to the Future

The students will be attending college in the fall at universities all over the state of Indiana, pursuing majors in everything from architecture, biology, computer science, engineering, neuroscience and pre-dentistry. “The students have incredibly bright futures and we can’t wait to see the impact they will have. We are excited that Suited Up has been so successful in only year two and hope to continue growing to support more and more kids around the community,” said Suited Up Co-Founder Alex Blackwell.

Suited Up year two was a resounding success and we could not have done it without our partners, sponsors, and volunteers around the community. A special thank you to the Indianapolis Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and Law Student Division, Starfish Initiative, Lewis Wagner LLP, Classic Cleaners, Men's Wearhouse, Hogan Transfer & Storage Corp. and the Indianapolis legal community for making all of this possible!

About Suited Up

The Suited Up program is a partnership between the Indianapolis Bar Association and Starfish Initiative. In collaboration with Classic Cleaners, Men's Wearhouse, Hogan Transfer & Storage Corp. and the Indianapolis legal community, the program provides at-risk, economically disadvantaged college-bound students with dress attire and professional development support.

Suited Up was created two years ago by Barath Raman, an attorney at Lewis Wagner LLP and Alexandra (Alex) Blackwell, a law clerk for the Indiana Court of Appeals. Raman and Blackwell realized that attorneys, many of whom have suits that have gone unworn for years, could fill a void for talented young men and women who need dress clothes but don't have the resources to obtain them. "These kids have overcome many hardships to go to college and their talent and achievements should be recognized. They will need suits in college for career fairs, interviews, internships, or even for formal dances; and we're going to provide them their professional attire," Suited Up Co-Founder Barath Raman said when asked to describe the impact of the Suited Up program.

Starfish Initiative is a mentoring program that works to inspire, encourage, and prepare academically promising, economically disadvantaged high school students for college and career success. Starfish is currently recruiting volunteer mentors to match with incoming freshmen scholars this summer, for more information on Starfish and how you can help, visit starfishinitiative.org.



One-on-one help can make all the difference! Here, IndyBar volunteers, including Attorney General Curtis Hill, show students how to master the art of the tying a necktie.