

TEAM VALOR, IRWINS PRESENT JOHN R. VELAZQUEZ SCHOLARSHIP IN NY RECIPIENT MERCEDES HERNANDEZ IS THE DAUGHTER OF A GROOM TEAM VALOR PARTNERS AND IRWINS COMBINE FOR \$20,000 SCHOLARSHIP

Team Valor International racing partners and Barry and Kathleen Irwin presented Mercedes Hernandez with the John R. Velazquez Scholarship on Saturday at Belmont Park.



Mercedes Hernandez with John Velazquez, Barry and Kathleen Irwin, The Race For Education President Elisabeth Jensen and NYTHA Executive Director Jim Gallagher.

Belmont for trainer John Terranova II.

Velazquez, of course, combined with Team Valor's Animal Kingdom to win the 2011 Kentucky Derby. The scholarship in his name is designed for students of Hispanic descent.

The other Team Valor-endowed scholarship is named for the late jockey Isaac Murphy and is awarded to an African-American student.

The Race for Education provides educational programs and college scholarships to young people in the equine and agriculture industries with significant financial need. The majority of their students come from high need, low income backgrounds. The Race for Education not only offers financial support for these students, but also mentoring, tutoring, and partnership support to ensure students are receiving the support and educational skills they need to be successful. The Starting Gate, an afterschool college readiness and literacy program was also established by The Race for Education in 2009 in New York and has expanded to five locations in Kentucky.



Hernandez (above) participated in The Starting Gate afterschool program at Belmont Park's Anna House for two years.