

## ON THE TOWN

### Great Expectations

**JUSTINE STAMEN ARRILLAGA** made it her life's work to give children a chance at successful futures after two of the people closest to her were robbed of theirs. In 1988, when she was a senior in high school and preparing to go to Brown University, her best friend, Teak Dyer, was kidnapped, raped and murdered. As if the incident weren't horrific enough, Dyer's killing happened on the eve of her graduation. Unthinkably, tragedy struck close to home again, in 1997, while Arrillaga was director of an academic program for underprivileged students in the Bronx. One of her star pupils, DeWitt White, was found shot to death on Staten Island. It was then that Arrillaga decided she had to do more.

Named for her slain childhood friend, the Teak Fellowship provides academic and financial support to promising low-income middle-school students in New York City. What started as a one-person project ten years ago has grown into a team of 250 volunteers and paid staff and has helped more than 200 youngsters obtain the skills and the funds they needed to attend top high schools and, ultimately, colleges, with nearly a third of them going to Ivies. In all, \$28 million has been donated to cover tuition costs. "Our mission is to deliver on the American ideal of a meritocracy," explains Arrillaga. "We want to reward kids who have talent, ability and drive." 212-288-6678; [teakfellowship.org](http://teakfellowship.org). ERIK D. PRICE



Justine Stamen Arrillaga, pregnant with her third child, due this month.