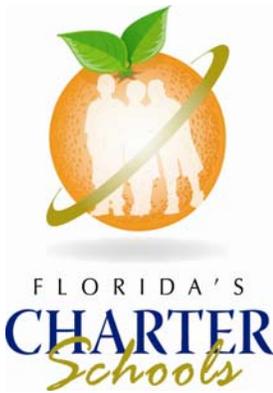


Florida Department of Education

Florida's Charter Schools News

18th Annual *Reach for the Stars* Commemorative Art Contest Dominated by South Tech Academy Students



Boynton Beach, FL – The Young Friends of the Kravis Center hosts the annual Commemorative Student Art Contest as part of Their *Reach for the Stars Benefit* event, with this year's theme being "*Reach for the Stars through the Arts.*" South Tech Academy's Graphic Design students, including Kimberly Bickeroo and Justin Rager, had a strong presence as they held more finalist titles than any other group submissions.

On December 4th, a social mixer was held to show off over 140 submissions by over 100 of the participating schools. True to form, the skills and field expertise that the South Tech Academy students embody were evident as they earned 9 out of approximately 15 finalist titles, won 1st place, and tied for 3rd place.

Both Bickeroo and Rager are first-year students in the Graphic Design Academy. Being one of the most competitive academies to gain acceptance to, these students represent the talent and level of instruction that has carried these students to success in only their first year. We anticipate great achievements for them in the coming years.

Adam Fiveson, Graphic Arts Instructor, has over twenty-five years of field experience and has served as Art/Creative Director at prestigious companies including Norwest/Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Toys'R'Us, IBM and Immersant/Bowne. Fiveson joined South Tech one year ago due to his passion to teach students and use his wealth of expertise, both in their academies and in our strong academic emphasis. Fiveson says, "This achievement... being picked out among so many talented kids both here and at other schools, is a real heartwarming thing. Both kids are "A" students with excellent work ethics. I couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments."

The winning students were given cash rewards along with matching funds for the teacher's classroom. The 1st place artwork will be used on collateral materials and then auctioned off live at the annual event. All proceeds from this event go to the S*T*A*R (Students and Teachers Arts Resource) Series and educational programs at the Kravis Center.

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BKHM Charter School Survey

BKHM CPA, a full-service accounting firm serving the charter school industry for more than 15 years, will be conducting a statewide survey this month designed to measure important benchmarks toward helping advocate for educational choice in Florida. The Winter Park-based firm conducted a similar survey last sum-

mer, focusing on such areas as compensation programs, enrollment and funding sources. This new survey, coming just ahead of the 2011 Florida Legislature's regular session, will seek additional information on best practices and other important insight into the industry. All charter schools are encouraged to par-

ticipate in the survey. Responses will be kept confidential, and will be used in an overall data analysis and presented in a consolidated report. For more information, visit www.bkhamcharterschools.com or e-mail info@bkhamcpa.com.

Chautauqua Learn & Serve Charter School

The students and staff of Chautauqua Learn and Serve Charter School in Panama City, Florida, recently had the unique opportunity to attend and present at the IANYS (International Association for National Youth Service) 9th Global Conference in Alexandria, Egypt. Speaking to a conference of world leaders in Youth Service, the school took a leading role in presenting the values and possibilities of service learning, and the role of the disabled in becoming active and engaged members of their communities.

Chautauqua is no ordinary school. It is a school for disabled students, ages 18-22, that is grounded in the concept of service learning, which at its heart requires an unshakeable belief that all students can learn, and each person has value, worth, and strengths, that can be highlighted through a lifestyle of service learning, where our students practice the necessary life skills and values to become productive and engaged members of society.

The activism and leadership displayed from our students all week allowed me the distinct honor of introducing the conference keynote speaker, Ms. Esther T. Benjamin, Associate Director for Global Operations of the Peace Corps. My aim was to explore how the model of service learning can be employed in my impending service in the Peace Corps, where I have been selected for, and accepted, an invitation to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bulgaria, where I will work with marginalized youth, and specifically, with youth with mental and physical disabilities.

I believe that exporting the service learning model of Chautauqua to disabled youth in Bulgaria is a model that hints in the right direction. Our students at Chautauqua are great because they believe they can be, and follow the ideal that "Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve." Such a concept and global partnership is needed now today, more than ever. The effects of the global economic recession have led to governmental measures of austerity across the globe as rich and poor nations alike implement measures of restraint to combat rising national debt, economic instability, and joblessness. The era of big government, financial safety nets, and government subsidies are over, and the need to foster among our most vulnerable measures of independence, life skills, marketable experience, and personal prosperity will increasingly fall on the individual, rather than the State.

The UN Millennium Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is particularly relevant to the disabled community. Statistics show around 10 percent of the world's population, or roughly 650 million people, live with a disability. According to the UN Development Program, 80 percent of people with disabilities live in developing countries. The World Bank estimates that 20 percent of the world's poorest people have some kind of disability. The two-way link between poverty and disability creates a vicious cycle. Impoverished people are more at risk of acquiring a disability because of lack of access to good nutrition, health care, sanitation, and safe living and working conditions. Once this occurs, people face barriers to the education, employment, and public services that could help them escape poverty.

It is my ambitious hope to fill this void, and the relationship between the Chautauquan model of service learning, the work of the Peace Corps, and the United Nations Millennium Goals, offers a challenging but exciting opportunity for me, and all of us, to do some good in this world. Economist and Professor Jeffrey Sachs said that "Eradicating extreme poverty continues to be one of the main challenges of our time, and is a major concern of the international community. Ending this scourge will require the combined efforts of all: governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, in the context of a stronger and more effective global partnership for development." The hope and vision for my impending Peace Corps assignment is to play some small role in meeting this generational challenge. This notion addresses the UN Millennium Development Inclusion Goals that seek to break down the boundaries of the disabled, to foster a public understanding of the disabled as the servers, and not the served, of the international community, and to promote and advance the disabled in the developed world to organize and inspire their community to reach out to the disabled in the developing world through service and action.

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Click link below to watch the Chautauqua video Egypt
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTem_Z7vMnI

Our students at Chautauqua are great because they believe they can be, and follow the ideal that "Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve."

Click link below to watch Chautauqua speaking at the United Nations
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/detail/108591.html>

Rising Star Award

Each year, the Rising Star Award is given to one to two service-learning teachers or administrators who have had significant accomplishment in the field in a short period of time. He or she has engaged a large number of students, had a wide impact in her/his school or community, and has great potential for further growth or achievement. The winner receives \$500 to use toward advancing knowledge and skills in service-learning—to attend conferences or trainings, purchase materials, or use the funds for remuneration for help provided to others.



Leah Rose displaying her "Rising Star" Award.

Leah Rose, an English teacher at [River City Science Academy](#), received the "Rising Star" Award along with \$500 at the 17th Annual Florida Service-Learning Institute in Orlando, Florida. She and another service-learning coordinator from Florida were the only recipients of the 2010 award.

Twelve students and two teachers from River City Science Academy attended the 17th annual Florida Service-Learning Institute in Orlando, Florida. Students stayed at the Disney World Hilton Hotel and attended the conference. The goal of the Institute was to help students initiate, expand, improve, and work to sustain quality service-learning in their school, school district, and community. Students attended trainings, workshops, meetings, and created networking opportunities.

River City Science Academy students attended 17th Annual Florida Service-Learning Institute in Orlando, Florida.



Local, state-, and national-level service-learning experts were there to share their ideas and in-sights. Trainings and workshops provided the background, practical ideas, examples, expertise, and time to think, plan, share, and get feedback about how to initiate, improve, expand, replicate, and institutionalize high-quality service-learning. River City Science Academy students presented a conference workshop on "Shining the Light on Invisible Children" that discussed the plight of child soldiering and the night commuting occurring in Uganda.

Service-learning students at River City Science Academy are involved in raising money for the Schools for Schools Challenge, complete after-school tutoring for younger students, and will design and implement a Global Call of Action Project that addresses the problem of violence in Jacksonville. Students on the Service-Learning Council oversee \$4,000 in mini-grant funds for the school and community.



River City Science Academy students presenting at a conference workshop regarding Uganda.

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Arts & Minds Charter High School - Makes the A+ Grade



Arts & Minds Co-Founder **Manuel Alonso-Poch, Esq.** congratulating A&M Director **William Machado** for a job well-done -- raising the Academy to A+ status in the state's elite!

Congratulations came throughout the day on Tuesday, December 7, 2010 to Arts and Minds (A&M) Charter High School Director **William Machado**, Assistant Director **Ileana Valdes**, staff and A&M co-founders **Lili Renteria** and **Manuel Alonso-Poch**. All of the hard work has paid off.

With Director Machado in his third year at A&M, he and his staff have worked tirelessly to implement new goals and objectives. Mr. Machado increased the intensity of high academic requirements in addition to the outstanding fine arts program. The Academy received notice that its **Florida School Grade is an A for the 2009-2010 academic year**. Based on points for FCAT as well as non-FCAT components, the academy worked diligently with students and stakeholders in order to attain the highly coveted rating.

For more information on Coconut Grove's Academy of Arts & Minds Charter High School go to the website: www.aandm.net or visit on the plaza if you are in the Miami area. See what's happening in public school academy education -- your tax dollars in action for the next generation!

Submitted by *Robin L. Sarantos, Ph.D., Arts & Minds Charter High School, 3138 Commodore Plaza, Coconut Grove, Florida, Phone: 305-448-1100*

*Congratulations
Director Machado, staff
and students!*



G-Star Gets an "A"!



G-Star is rated an "A" school by the State of Florida. The news came out this week. We are very proud of the accomplishments of our Principal, Mrs. Kim Collins, and her entire staff - and, of course, our wonderful students. G-Star's graduation rate is 99% with 97% going on to college, most on scholarships. We have honors

classes and Advanced Placement classes which allow our high-achieving students to enter into the second year of college right out of high school. Watch for a major announcement in January as we step up into the highest level of academic achievement any high school in the world can attain. It is going to be another great year at G-Star!

Submitted by *Greg Hauptner, Founder/CEO/CFO*
G-Star School of the Arts for Motion Pictures and Broadcasting
Honored as the Number One High School for Film in the World by the Raindance Film Festival in London, UK
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School website: www.gstarschool.org, Studios website: www.gstarstudios.com
Foundation website: www.gstarfoundation.org, X-Scream website: www.xscreamhalloween.com

*Congratulations
Principal Collins, staff
and students!*

Local student to compete in WorldSkills International Competition

Leesburg, Va., December 13, 2010 – Matthew Vicari of West Palm Beach, Florida, a graduate of South Tech Academy, and a current student at Florida Atlantic University, will represent the United States in London, England in the IT/PC Networking competition in the WorldSkills Competition. Vicari will compete as a member of the United States “WorldTeam.” The 41st international event will be held October 5-8, 2011.

“Matt’s selection to WorldSkills is a testimonial to the capability of Palm Beach County students as well as the caliber of opportunities provided them by our local public education system. I am both honored that Matt chose to attend South Tech Academy and humbled that this school had a part in preparing him to be a world-class leader in his chosen field. I also extend congratulations to Clarence Vaughn, Matt’s Computer Technology Instructor, who will further assist him in final preparations for the competition, and to all of you who contributed to Matt’s success. He is, indeed, a Success Story!” said Jim Kidd, Chief Administrative Officer of South Tech Academy.

Every two years, hundreds of young people from 53 member countries or regions compete in the prestigious WorldSkills Competition. Member countries include: Japan, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Canada, Australia, Brazil and many others. Considered “the best of the best,” these contestants compete for four days in 45 occupational skill areas from economic sectors including manufacturing, information technology, transportation, construction and services. Accompanied by their teachers, trainers and industry technical committee experts, these young people compete before the public in contests that are run and judged by industry using demanding international standards.

“I want to compete in the WorldSkills competition because I enjoy the challenge, and I want to see how I well I perform compared to the other competitors in my field,” said Mr. Vicari.

Over its 60-year history, WorldSkills International (formerly known as the “Skill Olympics”) has come to symbolize the pinnacle of excellence in vocational training. It provides a unique means of exchange and comparison of world-class competency standards in the industrial trades and service sectors of the global economy. The continued growth of WorldSkills International attests to the fact that traditional trade and craft skills along with the newer technology multi-skilled occupations makes an essential contribution to the economic and social well being of peoples everywhere. This year in London, more than 1,000 competitors will test their skills. Five thousand international experts, delegates and judges will gather from around the world, and 3,000 volunteers will be recruited to assist in the event. A total of 150,000 students and public spectators will attend the competition ExCeL London. For more information about the competition, go to: <http://www.worldskills.org>.

Matthew Vicari is a member of SkillsUSA, the organization that represents the United States in the WorldSkills Competition. Vicari earned the right to be a member of WorldTeam by winning local, district and national contests in Internetworking in the SkillsUSA Championships. Competitors in WorldSkills must be under the age of 23. There will be a total of 22 members of WorldTeam. Other occupational areas in which the United States will compete include: Autobody Repair, Automotive Service, Beauty Therapy, Bricklaying, Cabinetmaking, Car Painting, CNC Milling, CNC Turning, Cooking, Graphic Design, Hairdressing, Mechatronics, Mobile Robotics, Offset Printing, Plumbing, Refrigeration, Restaurant Service, Web Design and Welding.

About SkillsUSA

SkillsUSA is a national partnership of students, teachers and industry, working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA chapters help students preparing for careers in technical, skilled and service occupations to excel. SkillsUSA is an applied method of instruction for preparing America’s high performance workers in public career and technical programs. It provides quality education experiences for students in leadership, teamwork, citizenship and character development. It builds and reinforces self-confidence, work attitudes and communications skills. It emphasizes total quality at work—high ethical standards, superior work skills, life-long education, and pride in the dignity of work. SkillsUSA also promotes understanding of the free-enterprise system and involvement in community service.

For more information about the upcoming WorldSkills International competition or about SkillsUSA, contact Tom Holdsworth at 703-737-0607, tholdsworth@skillsusa.org or Jane Short at 703-737-0612, jshort@skillsusa.org.



Matthew Vicari

“Matt’s selection to WorldSkills is a testimonial to the capability of Palm Beach County students as well as the caliber of opportunities provided them by our local public education system,” said Jim Kidd.





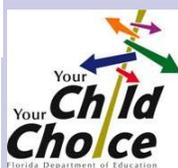
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www.floridaschoolchoice.org



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Additional information can be found at
<http://www.floridaschoolchoiceexpo.com/>

South Tech Academy Earns a “B” for School Grade



Boynton Beach, FL – It’s clear that South Tech Academy worked tremendously hard last year to improve their overall academic performance as they proudly received a highly deserved school grade of a “B” for the first time in the school’s history! A remarkable effort from the entire South Tech team contributed to their success including hard work and preparation from both students and staff. The school prides itself on a school-wide team approach where everyone is responsible

for the education and wellbeing of each student who attends.

Dr. Jimenez, the school's principal stated, “With last year being my first year as a principal, I was given the perfect opportunity to make many positive changes for the school. With a high level of accountability, an increasingly strong work ethic displayed by students, faculty, and staff, plus strategic planning, we have moved the school in a positive direction. When that “B” was announced it brought tears of joy to my eyes.”

Many things have greatly contributed to the academic achievements that encompass South Tech Academy. The school incorporated FCAT and SAT/ACT tutoring from their highly qualified instructional staff, subject area tutoring in Reading, Math, and Science, plus increased district and parental support, all of which have made a positive impact on their students.

South Tech has also made many other constructive changes during the past year, including new administration team members, support staff, and teachers. The school had also received substantial support from the community, business partners, and their remarkable Governing Board. Dr. Jimenez stated, “At South Tech we believe that all students can be successful. With the support in career training from our highly established career academies, to our strong academic emphasis, and our individualized, nurturing environment, we truly are ‘Creating Success Stories, One Student at a Time’.”

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