

May 2009

Florida's Charter Schools News

Charter North Chess Team gets Trophy at National Tournament



The ASPIRA North Chess Team participated in the IV Supernational Chess Tournament held in Nashville, Tennessee from April 2-5, 2009. The team obtained the fifth place in the K-9 Unrated category bringing back a beautiful trophy for the ASPIRA of Florida organization. We are very proud of this accomplishment and hope to see more participation in the future. ASPIRA was also commended for being the third charter school in the nation to participate in this important event.

More than 5,000 students from all over the United States participated in this event. They were able to hear, watch, play and meet important individuals from the world of chess such as Gary Kasparov and Greg Chamitoff, the astronaut who played chess from the International space station with a team of kindergarten through third grade chess players of Stevenson Elementary School in Bellevue, Washington.

The names of the players who attended the competition are: Jemaxon Adrien, Alexander Barnes, Luis de la Cruz, Alexis Herrera, Daniel Julien, Hector Peña, Dominick Pierre, David Remilien, Jonathan Trujillo, and Steven Valera. The event was an exciting experience for the ASPIRANTES who participated, and at one point during the tournament the team was in second place but ended up in 5th place tied with third and fourth place winners with 15.5 games won. The principal, Iliana Peña and the chess coaches, Mr. Núñez and Mr. Trujillo, are very proud of the players. They tried very hard and did their best and got good results.

Everyone at ASPIRA North, parents, teachers, students and the rest of the staff, is very excited about the team's performance and are looking forward to more wins. The Charter North Chess Team participated in the Miami-Dade School District Title I Chess tournament that was held on May 2, 2009. Once again, we wish them the best.

As Submitted By: Jorge L. Trujillo, Chess Coach of ASPIRA Youth Leadership Charter Middle School

Inside this issue:

Staff Spotlight	2
Gulf Coast Academy of Science & Technology	2
Mater Academy East High School	3
Congratulations	3
National Charter School Week	4
KCCCS—110 Students on Honor Roll	5
Conferences/Workshops	6



FLORIDA'S
CHARTER
Schools

Staff Spotlight

William Fontaine currently administers the allocation of capital outlay funds for the Department of Education's Office of Educational Facilities (OEF). Mr. Fontaine has worked in the budgeting section of the OEF for nearly four years. Prior to this position, he worked for the Education Unit in the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget as a budget analyst overseeing state-funded student aid programs, Florida's private colleges and universities, and education capital outlay programs. Mr. Fontaine

obtained a graduate degree in public policy and communications from Florida State University and has nearly 10 years experience in education and public administration.

His personal interests include: Jack Russell Terriers, music, traveling, college football, and cooking.



Gulf Coast Academy of Science & Technology's Summer Training Schedule

Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (a charter school in Spring Hill) applied for and received a federal "Dissemination Grant" to share some of their innovative ideas with the charter school community. This summer they will host seminars at their Spring Hill campus and invite a representative from your school to attend one of the summer seminars. The person(s) you send would be entitled to a participation stipend, lodging (if geographically necessary), and a kit with administrative and educational resources.

The seminar topics include:

- * Curriculum Integration
- * Experiential Education
- * Charter School Legal Issues
- * School Administration and Management
- * Financial Accounting
- * Charter School Governance

After completing the two-day seminar, participants will be able to bring efficient, cost-saving management ideas and research-based instructional strategies back to their respective schools. The presenters are char-

ter school founders and have promised to make the presentations lively, interactive, and informative.

Dates:

All sessions span from Monday to Tuesday so you may arrive on Sunday if staying over. Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) is located on the Nature Coast so you can extend your stay into a mini-vacation and snorkel or kayak the clear area springs.

- Session 1 – June 29 - 30
- Session 2 – July 6 - 7
- Session 3 – July 13 - 14
- Session 4 – July 20 - 21
- Session 5 – July 27 - 28

Seminar Details:

Location: GCA, 10444 Tillery Road, Spring Hill, Florida, 34608

- You only need to attend one two-day session.
- 8:30 AM until 3:30 PM EST each day.

A light lunch will be provided each day.

Travel:

One hour drive north of Tampa on the Veterans Expressway - use the Spring Hill Drive.

Use the Spring Hill Drive Exit and Proceed west (left) and make a left onto Mariner Boulevard, proceed to the lighted intersection of Mariner and Northcliffe and left after the Hess station then make your first left onto Lamson and finally a right onto Tillery Road. GCA is the first driveway on the left.

Registration:

Online at www.smartercharter.org.

Cost:

The cost is covered by the Dissemination Grant, there is no cost to the participants.

As Submitted By: Joseph Gatti,
Director of Curriculum & Instruction for
Gulf Coast Academy

FIRST CHARTER SCHOOL TO BE AWARDED NATIONAL HONOR



Miami-Dade County, FL – April 23, 2009 – Mater Academy East Charter High School in Little Havana just became a member of the National Academy Foundation (NAF), an acclaimed national network of high school career-academies-within-schools with rigorous, career-themed curricula. Created with current industry and educational expertise, this

cutting edge program offers America's youth challenges that provide them with teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills vital to their future careers.

Through its NAF/Finance Academy, Mater Academy East Charter High School students will be exposed to business courses and earn an additional certificate in Finance upon graduation. They will gain tremendous experience and make long-term connections as they are given the opportunity to intern with some of the top companies in America. Finally, as members of the National Academy Foundation, students achieve automatic membership in two organizations dedicated to students with career interests in the field of marketing, management, hospitality, finance and business administration: Delta Chi Epsilon Association (DECA) and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), which will assist them in creating solid academic re-

sumes for postsecondary studies.

Opened in August 2008, Mater Academy East Charter High School serves a predominantly minority population and is the first charter school in the nation to be accepted in this prestigious program. The school is located at 990 SW 1st Street in Miami.

"Our goal is to expose students to a variety of career options," explains Alex Tamargo, Principal. "Ninety-two percent of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch, and many are first generation high school graduates. They are looking for an opportunity to continue their studies, and being affiliated with NAF will help them qualify for scholarships and resources through the organization."

As Submitted By: Lynn Norman-Teck,
Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools



Mater Academy Charter High in Hialeah Gardens, Somerset Academy Middle in Miramar and the City of Pembroke Pines Elementary West have each been named a recipient of a Gold Seal of Excellence.

"The new initiative from the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools puts charter schools under a thorough review process," said consortium President Robert Haag.

The three South Florida schools were the first – and only – to be reviewed, Haag said. Other charter schools will be able to apply soon.

"We're hoping to recognize the higher quality schools and in doing so, push the other schools to work even harder," Haag said.

The three charter schools being recognized with a gold seal each received an A from the State last year.

Mr. Haag said the gold seal program will go beyond state accountability measures. It will also look at factors unique to charter schools, such as financial management and governing board performance.

"This goes beyond being an "A" school," Mr. Haag said. "This makes sure your operational part is also functioning and you are delivering the best educational product to your students."

Excerpts taken from The Miami Herald Article posted Thursday, April 30, 2009 by Kathleen McGroty



National Charter School Week Celebrated May 3-9, 2009



Students from CARE Charter School of Excellence



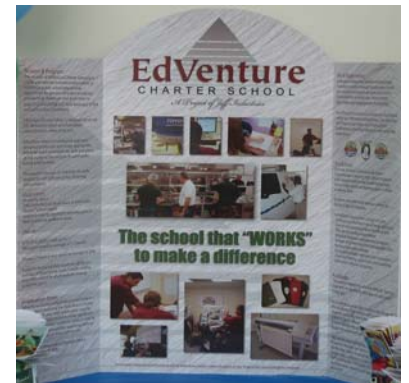
Left to right: Harriett Cuyler, Adam Miller, Suezan Turknett



Students from Imagine School at Evening Rose

May 3-9, 2009 was National Charter Schools Week. The theme for this year's celebration was Promoting Excellence & Innovation. Commissioner of Education Eric Smith was joined by CARE Charter School of Excellence, Imagine School at Evening Rose, and Rebecca Katz with the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools for the kick-off celebration which took place on Monday, May 4, in the Lobby of the Turlington Building.

A special thanks goes to Bright Futures Learning Academy, Ed Venture Charter School, Learning Gate Community School, and Terrace Community Middle School for submitting display boards showcasing their schools during National Charter Schools Week.



Kids Community College Charter School Has 110 Principal Honor Roll Students



Lights, Camera, Action! Kids Community College® Charter School (KCCCS) in Riverview, Florida is in the spotlight with a remarkable goal. During the third quarter of this school year, KCCCS had 110 students achieve Principal's Honor Roll. This school of only 224 children came on the mark just a short time ago starting with a small amount of students that were willing to work hard. Showcasing their exceptional talent with the challenging coursework in accelerated subjects of math and reading, these students have proven that they have the ability and skills to get the grades and stay focused.

Kids Community College® Charter School, a non-profit organization, opened its doors during the 2004-2005 school year and initially served 54 students in kindergarten through second grade. KCCCS has begun its fourth academic year as a School District of Hillsborough County elementary school of choice, serving a diverse student population of 224 kindergarten through fifth grade students and student families with plans to extend our educational offerings through to middle school in the academic year 2009-2010.

Kids Community College® Charter School had over 92% of its students passing FCAT reading and math at Level 3 or higher for the 2007-08 school year. This was accomplished through the influence of the dedicated and committed KCCCS Governing Board, professional teaching and administrative staff, adherence to Florida's small class size initiative, our Campus Advisory Board, parental involvement, and strong community support. Each KCCCS student family faithfully volunteers a minimum of twenty hours annually to support the mission and goals of our school. Kids Community College® Charter School is very active in the Riverview community with Locks of Love, Salvation Army Angel Tree, and many other organizations that work collaboratively with this school. In addition to the high academic marks, KCCCS was recently recognized as a Best Place To Work by the Tampa Business Journal.

Our faculty and staff are very excited about having so many students maintain a straight "A" report card for a grading period. This great feat also requires our students to have excellent conduct. Each student is held accountable at the highest level to ensure they are on their best behavior every day of the marking period.

So, please help us in congratulating our students for making this wonderful accomplishment! And be on the lookout for the KCCCS students in the future to become famous for their ability to learn! Keep your eyes open for more great news from the Cougar Pride. Go KCC Cougars! Let us hear you roar!

As Submitted By: Nicole Williams,
Director of Charter School Operations



2009 Conferences/Workshops

Date(s)	Conference/Workshop	Location	Contact Information
June 21-24	9th Annual National Charter Schools Conference	Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC	http://www.publiccharters.org/node/436
November 16-18	2009 Florida Charter Schools Conference	Orlando, Florida	http://charterschoolconference.com/



Governance Training

The deadline for board members to receive training is August 1, 2009 for the 2009-2010 school year.

Technical Assistance is Available

Charter school staff is available to provide technical assistance or assist with any questions you may have. If you need assistance, please contact staff via telephone at 850-245-0502 or via e-mail at Charterschools@fldoe.org.

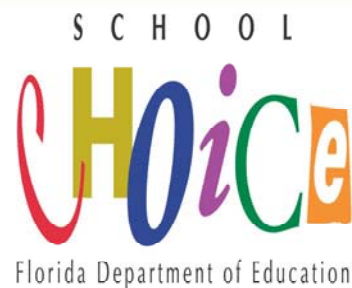
Additional Conferences

2009 SACS CASI Summer Conference
June 15-16, 2009
The Florida Hotel & Conference Center
Orlando, FL

The 2009 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) Summer Conference will be held June 15-16, 2009 at the Florida Hotel & Conference Center in Orlando. Participants will have an opportunity to learn more about school improvement, accreditation processes, preparation for the SACS CASI Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team visit, and qualifying for a QAR team. To register or to learn more, visit www.advanc-ed.org/florida.

Florida School Counselor Association 2009 Annual Convention
Oct. 29 - 31, 2009
Renaissance Orlando Resort at Sea-World
Orlando, FL

The most focused program in school counseling in Florida, the 2009 Florida School Counselor Association Convention will be delivered by thoughtful leaders from Florida and throughout the United States. The hottest and most relevant topics will be explored by leading industry advocates, state officials, counselor educators and, most importantly, professional school counselors. To learn more or to reserve your hotel, visit <http://www.flaschoolcounselor.org/>.



Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Phone: 850-245-0502
 Fax: 850-245-0875

School Choice Hotline:
 1-800-447-1636

www.floridaschoolchoice.org