

November 2010

Florida's Charter Schools News

January is School Choice Month

The School Choice Office is pleased to announce that Governor Crist has proclaimed January as Florida School Choice Month!

During the month of January, School Choice Awareness events will be held throughout the state, culminating in our very first **School Choice Expo** on January 22, 2011, at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa, Florida. Parents, kids, students, educators, and other stakeholders will enjoy this day-long celebration, featuring choice presentations, school performances, celebrity speakers, food, music and more!

To learn more about the School Choice Expo and to **reserve your booth**, go to www.floridaschoolchoiceexpo.com.

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FLORIDA'S
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Schools

River City Science Academy at Florida State University for PeaceJam Slam

River City Science Academy (RCSA) students along with their teachers attended PeaceJam Slam on Saturday, October 23, 2010 on the campus of Florida State University. Mrs. Rose, Mr. Rose, Mr. Steinhardt and 34 RCSA students participated. PeaceJam Slam is a celebration and a learning experience where students have the opportunity to learn about PeaceJam, the work that Nobel Peace Prize Laureates have done, and even how they can make a similar impact on the world in which we live. While at PeaceJam Slam, RCSA students participated in a festival as well as the "Step Up for Uganda Walkathon" to benefit Invisible Children. RCSA took home several awards for being the largest fundraising team for the event and for being the group that raised the most money. Kristen Hamm also won an award for being the most successful individual fundraiser. It was announced at PeaceJam Slam that the Nobel Peace Laureate for the 2011 PeaceJam Southeast Conference will be Shirin Ebadi, winner of the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize. Students that attend the PeaceJam Southeast Conference in April will have the opportunity to meet her and to learn from her experiences.



*Article submitted by Dr. Dogan Tozoglu, Principal, River City Science Academy
7565 Beach Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL 32216
904-565-0065*

SWBA Red Ribbon Week Celebration and Visit from the Mayor of Gainesville

Sweetwater Branch Academy (SWBA) was honored to have the Honorable Mayor Lowe visit with our school on October 26, 2010. He came in honor of Red Ribbon Week and to participate in our Red Ribbon ceremony. Students were assigned an art and essay contest that expressed their thoughts concerning drug safety. Three winners were chosen from both the Middle/High school and the Elementary school and presented with cash prizes. The winners were presented their checks by the Mayor and Principal Goktepe. The Mayor also gave an inspiring speech that discussed the Gainesville community and how our school represents the diverse community in which we live. He stated that we are not a "cookie cutter" school, but are a school that is an example to the community. Mayor Lowe was presented with a decorative Kutahya plate in honor of the visit and also signed the school's guestbook. He wrote, "This is such an impressive school. Best wishes for the future. Thanks so much for your warm hospitality" – Mayor Lowe. This visit will be another great addition to the Sweetwater Branch Academy history and hopefully one of many great visits from our local leaders to our school.



*Submitted by Fethi Goktepe, M.S., Principal, Sweetwater Branch Academy
1000 NE 16 Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601
352-375-8838*

Arts & Minds Charter High School ~ on the Plaza

In line with the government's educational priority *Race to the Top*, the Academy of Arts & Minds (A&M) Charter High School's creative math instructor **Victoria Seawall** is using rap music to teach geometrical concepts. Teams compete *on the plaza* after studying several math chapters and writing their original rap lyrics which must include each math topic studied. The recent winning team for the #1 Rap is class members **Joey El-Amin, Dareg Morenza, Mauro Mendez, Camille Sauberer** and **Zachary Auslander**. Taking 2nd place are **Adora Wynter, Melany Rosario, Eduardo A. López, Lourdes Garcia** and **Rolando Alvarez**.



Who says science can't be fun? Just ask the lively students in A&M Instructor **Tricia Vold Alvarez's** class about their current lab projects! Making sweet, sweet ice cream on a very HOT day was quite a delicious class experience. The purpose of the hands-on lab according to Mrs. Alvarez was "to observe a phase change in matter." Not only was the day deemed "Science Rock Star Day" with some future scientists decked out in costume, but also the class got to eat their experiments after they diligently observed a phase change from the liquid to solid state utilizing the steps of the famous Scientific Method. Ingredients were simple and outlandishly tempting: real cream, the whiteness of sugar, decadent thick chocolate syrup and ice. Wonder what Mrs. Alvarez has planned for her next class *on the plaza*?

In the true spirit of reaching out and giving back, The *Academy of Arts & Minds Environmental Club* spent an entire Saturday recently walking the shoreline and bagging the garbage found among the rocks and mangroves in the Coconut Grove community. The hard-working Environmental Club has given a green status to A&M by helping to clean our surroundings, recycling cans, plastic bottles and paper products. The Environmental Club is about not only saving the world but also building leadership skills, critical thinking and the ability to work in groups. Its co-sponsors A&M physical education instructor **Joselyn Garcia Rodriguez** and Language Arts/Creative Writing Master Teacher **Andrea DeHaan** encourage students to participate and develop a new, healthier environment.

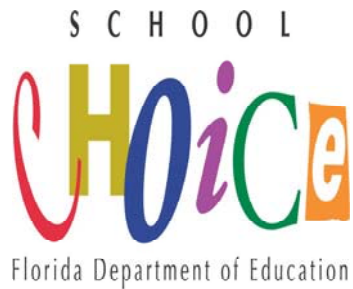


Director **William Machado** and Assistant Director **Ileana Valdes** proudly announce the Academy's nominees for the prestigious Silver Knight Awards for 2010-2011. The nominees and the categories follow:

Emilio Blanco, Art
Nichole Alissee Acosta, Business
Stephanie Marie Garcia, Drama
Andrew Florez Chaliotis, English
Chelsea Rochelle Brandon, General Scholarship
Isabella Margot Diaz, Journalism
Amanda Isabel Cancio, Music
Sloane Camila Garcia, Science
Stella Dominique Herard, Social Science
Julia Erica Roos, World Language

A&M congratulates its fine nominees.

Submitted by: *Robin L. Sarantos, Ph.D., Arts & Minds Charter High School*
 3138 Commodore Plaza, Miami, FL 33133
 305-448-1100



**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

Reminders

Verify Your Information

Each charter school is encouraged to update its contact information on the charter school database as soon as changes occur. Paperless communication is our way of getting pertinent information to you in a timely fashion. Please help us to help you in keeping abreast of events and information vital to the success of each charter school. You can access the Web site at https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/login/login_charter_school.asp.

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.

Charter Schools on Par or Ahead in Pay, Budgets

BKHM, CPA conducted a survey from June 2, 2010 to July 2, 2010 regarding the pay and budget of charter schools throughout Florida. Sixty-five schools provided complete responses. An article related to the survey was published in dBusinessNews and can be found at the following link: http://orlando.dbusinessnews.com/shownews.php?articletitle=New%20Survey%20Finds%20Florida%20Charter%20Schools%20on%20Par%20or%20Ahead%20of%20Public%20Schools%20in%20Pay.%20Budgets&newsid=220236&type_news=latest&s=sbcn. If you would like a copy of the survey results, please send an e-mail to info@bkhmcpa.com.

Information submitted by Sheridan Smith, BKHM, PA

Charter Schools Good News Stories



The Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice is highlighting Good News stories from charter schools. All charter schools are encouraged to share their successes with the charter schools community. Please send your stories and pictures to Charterschools@fldoe.org.