

December 2010

# Florida's Charter Schools News

## Florida Charter School Conference



Left to right: Mike Kooi, Executive Director, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice; T. Willard Fair, Chairman, State Board of Education and Jean Miller, Deputy Executive Director, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

The 2010 Florida Charter School Conference was held November 8-10, 2010, at the DoubleTree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal in Orlando, Florida. **Charters – Rising to the Challenge!** was the theme of the conference. Chairman T. Willard Fair was presented an award for his hard work, dedication, and service to charter schools. There were 631 attendees and 276 representatives from 108 participating companies. Participants had an opportunity to network with other charter school representatives, obtain information on issues affecting charter schools, learn different strategies for helping students, and receive encouragement for the task of educating Florida's students. Students from Manatee School for the Arts, Indian River Charter High School and Dayspring Academy provided entertainment during the welcome reception, opening general session and closing general session. The conference was well attended and diverse as shown in the exciting scenes on page two.

Visit the Florida Charter School Conference Web site for presentations and other information from the conference. The Web address is <http://charterschoolconference.com/2010/sessions.php>.

Thank you to all conference participants!

### Inside this issue:

Scenes from the 2010 Charter School Conference	2
Palm Beach Maritime Academy	3
South Tech Academy Gives Back	3
Clark Advanced Learning Center	4
South Tech Academy helps Epilepsy Foundation	4
Academy of Arts & Minds Charter High	5 & 7
Orlando Science Charter School	6
Reminders	7



FLORIDA'S  
**CHARTER**  
Schools

# Scenes from the 2010 Florida Charter School Conference



**Fabulous Prizes...**



**A Lovely Dinner...**



**Fine Entertainment...**



**And lots of information sharing and interesting people!**





## Palm Beach Maritime Academy Recognized by City of West Palm Beach



On Tuesday, November 16, 2010, the *Palm Beach Daily News* printed an article reporting that a certificate of recognition was presented by Mayor Lois Frankel and the City of West Palm Beach to the Palm Beach Maritime Academy for its performance in achieving an "A" rating and for being one of only 13% of schools in the entire State of Florida to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). "Once again this validates the efficacy and dedicated work on behalf of the faculty and staff in utilizing the marine environment and the physical assets of the Palm Beach Maritime Museum in its curriculum to excel in meeting state academic standards," said John C. Grant, Chairman.

The entire article can be found at the following link: <http://www.palmbeachdailynews.com/news/west-palm-beach-city-commission-mayor-fete-maritime-1049898.html>.

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## South Tech Academy Gives Back During the Holiday Season



Boynton Beach, FL – In continuing its longstanding tradition of community service and outreach, South Tech Academy participated in the Food for Families Food Drive. This worthwhile and critical event for many local families was promoted by WPTV and took place from October 11, 2010 through November 22, 2010.

Generous donations were received from our staff and students, including the National Honor Society and the C.O.R.E. program, which provides career academics and skills training to students who have already earned a high school diploma. This again shows the exemplary character and values that encompass South Tech Academy. While the student population of South Tech is nearly 1,300, we were able to collect almost 3,000 food items! The items collected were donated to those less fortunate who may not have the privileges that can easily be taken advantage of each day.

Thanks to all who participated, we were able to show those in need the care and generosity of our community. All food items will be distributed to the needy through non-profit agencies in Palm Beach County. Once again, South Tech makes a difference!

# # #

South Tech Academy is a high school located in Boynton Beach, Florida. The school prepares its students with college-ready diplomas in addition to offering thirteen academies in which students earn professional certifications to begin their career.

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## Clark Advanced Learning Center Students protect endangered ecosystems

Armed with cameras, measuring sticks and sunscreen, twelve high school students from the Clark Advanced Learning Center gained hands-on experience evaluating Florida's ecosystem through field visits to the DuPuis Management Area in western Martin County. Students from the public charter high school on the Chastain Campus of Indian River State College mapped the area, monitored growth of native vegetation, and documented plant diversity.

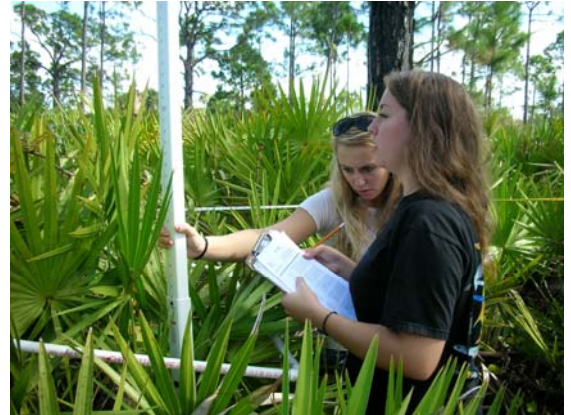
Squatting in a patch of saw palmetto, Clark junior Shailah Steck found Caesar weed, chalky bluestem and rusty lyonia, and left the patch with an important lesson, "There is actually more to what you see; you just have to get down and experience what's going on around you."

The students learned about the ecosystem with the assistance of staff from the South Florida Water Management District through the Legacy Project and Florida Center for Environmental Studies, which is run by Florida Atlantic University. It was their second visit to the 22,000 acre site as part of a dual enrollment class with Indian River State College, enabling the students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. As part of the course, the students survey a section of the pine flatwoods ecosystem before the district shreds the growth and razes it in a controlled burn. The goal is to convert the property to its natural state by controlling vegetation growth and encouraging species diversity. The students will return twice after the burn to document how the land regenerates.

"Through this experience, our students understand the connections between science and nature," said Susan Roark, Assistant Director of the Clark Advanced Learning Center. "This is a unique opportunity for high school students to conduct real research which will be utilized by the South Florida Water Management District."

The Clark Advanced Learning Center, a national model public charter high school, serves about 220 high school sophomores, juniors and seniors with enriched learning opportunities, including internships, and personal attention in a small school setting. Clark students are able to earn college credits at no charge while still in high school through dual enrollment, and each student is assigned a laptop computer to assist with research. The Clark Advanced Learning Center is located at the Indian River State College Chastain Campus in Stuart, FL. For more information, contact the Clark Advanced Learning Center at (772) 419-5750 or visit [www.clarkadvancedlearningcenter.org](http://www.clarkadvancedlearningcenter.org).

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*Clark Advanced Learning Center students gained hands-on experience evaluating Florida's ecosystem through field visits to the DuPuis Management Area in western Martin County.*

## South Tech Academy participates in funding Epilepsy Foundation



November was National Epilepsy Awareness Month. Once again South Tech Academy in Boynton Beach utilized its resources with the help of Sysco and Gordon Food Services, who donated the flour and eggs, to provide community awareness for the 360,000 Floridians diagnosed with this seizure disorder. The goal was for the Epilepsy Foundation to sell 360,000 cupcakes in November. The money provides those living with epilepsy the opportunity to receive the medical and support services they may need to live productive lives. South Tech's Culinary Academy baked 300 cupcakes as donations that sold at the Salsa Fest in Greenacres on November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

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## The Academy of Arts & Minds Charter High School ~ On the Plaza in December

An *Evening of Memorable Melodies* proved to be a magnificent occasion with the performance of the **Academy of Arts & Minds** (A&M) own string orchestra, jazz combo and concert band at the South Miami Area Stage. Under the astute leadership of A&M's impressive and acclaimed instrumental musical director **Dr. Sam Lussier**, the group opened the program with an evocative expression of "Fanfare/The Star Spangled Banner" followed by arrangements of "Armed Forces Medley," and "Popo." In addition, Dr. Lussier's own arrangement of "Irish Tune from County Derry" was artistically adventurous and dedicated to **Margaret Dianne Machado**, wife of A&M **Director William Machado**. Tenth grader **Alejandro Veiga** – an A&M ESOL student displayed his command of the piano in his rendition of "Claire De Lune". The first part of the program closed with "Hungarian Dance #5" and a hardy appreciative clapping from the energetic audience.

The second half of concert saw a brilliant performance of "Bruch Violin Concerto" by Concert Mistress **Hayley Marks**. Leroy Anderson's "Plink, Plank, Plunk" was artfully amusing and enjoyed tremendously by the audience and **Michael Rodiles'** piano and vocal presentation was delivered with classy technique. The program closed with Dr. Lussier's arrangement of "America Medley."

A special thank you went out to A&M's very distinctive Instrumental Music Booster Club parents who are an invaluable part of the Academy's music program.



Working diligently with **Arts & Minds Class of 2011**, *Florida International University* Admission Coordinator of Enrollment Services Mr. **Gerardo Suarez** spoke with highly charged seniors during lunch. Talking one on one and in small groups, Mr. Suarez explained the various colleges and schools within FIU's umbrella and stressed that "FIU's global emphasis and real-world curricula are designed to give . . .students a competitive edge." A&M students appreciated Mr. Suarez coming on the plaza and introducing them to a vibrant university in an incredible city. He reflected that students at FIU "enjoy a dynamic atmosphere that is worlds ahead in its diversity -- not just cultural and ethnic diversity, but a mixture of experience, ideas, opportunities and programs."

Coconut Grove's beautiful fall weather brought out the classes on the plaza. Creative Writing instructor Master Teacher **Andrea DeHaan** had her students and budding journalists read their own works aloud for all to enjoy and critique. **Mary Abreu** and her young art students studied *Dimensions and Proportions* during a typical advanced art session being taught outside on the plaza while Professor **Nathalie Milian** reviewed Advanced Placement English Language, enjoying the glory of being on Commodore Plaza and the fabulous environment in "The Grove".



Early Friday morning Creative Writing Class and Instructor Andrea L. Dehaan



Art teacher Mary M. Abreu and A&M 9th grader Charlottee Yelamos



A&M 9th grade student Darcy Morenza honing in on her proportions

Continued on page 7

## Orlando Science Charter School

### Celebrating Veterans Day with City of Orlando

Orlando Science School (OSS) in Orlando, Florida understands the importance of supporting its community.

Recently, OSS had the opportunity to take part in the City of Orlando's Veterans Day Parade! The children rallied around the idea of honoring the men and women of the armed forces who have served our country so courageously. Among the attendees were a Revolutionary Fife and Drum brigade, a Native American brigade, and a Vietnamese brigade.

All branches of our Armed Forces were represented along with many schools from the area. "I was really happy to be there supporting those who risked their lives for us. "It was very fun and exciting having people cheer for you and being on TV!" said Helwah Kadur, 8<sup>th</sup> grade student.

The students, wearing their red OSS shirts, cheered and waved their American flags as they recited "The Pledge of Allegiance", "U.S.A." and "We thank the troops who served our country!"

"Being part of this momentous occasion made my heart fill with joy and pride as I stood among the brave men and women who have given so much to our country." said Administrative Assistant Becc Lester-Rodel.

OSS hopes that being part of the Veteran's Day Parade will be one of many new traditions that all future students of OSS will take part in.



### Hosting Florida Lego League Tournament

Orlando Science School (OSS) hosted the Science School Storm Florida Lego League (FLL) Tournament on November 13, 2010. Fourteen FLL teams participated in the tournament. More than 300 people showed up at the Orlando Science Charter School to watch the tournament.

Teams consisting of 3 to 10 children, ages 9 - 14, worked together to build and program robots to complete 18 tasks on the competition table. The excited teams competed as spectators cheered on their successes. In the end, teams met with several judges in order to be evaluated and achieve their robots' final rankings. The Robot Design Judges analyzed the robots' designs, programming, and problem-solving strategies. The Project Judges reviewed the teams' research projects, which were tied to the Body Forward theme. Finally, the Teamwork Judges assessed how well each group functioned as a team.

Besides competing, each team was recognized with an award for their efforts; however, only three teams won the golden ticket for the regional FLL competition.

The winning teams follow:

- 1st Place - Robo Chicas las Latinas
- 2nd Place - Girls' Army of Engineers
- 3rd Place - Dystopian Revolts

A big thank-you to all our parents who helped to organize and run the Science School Storm tournament!



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For more information visit, <http://www.floridaschoolchoiceexpo.com>

**Academy of Arts & Minds *continued***



“Willy” Schalaudek and Stephanie Marie Garcia swept the awards for their outstanding performance in *On the Way to Canterbury* in the category “All Star Cast.” Traveling to Lakeland, Florida for the competition at the Florida Theater Conference Festival, the awards were announced Saturday evening at the Awards Ceremony. This exceptional state festival is recognized each year by the Southeastern Theatre Conference and introduces up and coming artists. Stephanie is also A&M’s nominee for The Miami Herald’s prestigious Silver Knight in drama.

The John Lennon Educational Bus Tour was a huge success on the plaza with all of A&M’s talented music students getting a chance to view the high tech equipment, meet with the “stars,” get tips on honing in on their performances and do some quality recording themselves.



A&M students manning the John Lennon booth On the Plaza



A&M Founder **Manuel Alonso-Poch, Esq.** with A&M instructors **Dr. Sam Lussier** and **Christina Bernal** at the John Lennon Educational Bus workshop



A&M students **Deandre Holton, Alexandra Arana, Michael Rodiles & Luke Sims** before entering The Bus



Listening to the recordings in The Bus

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