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**RUBY DIAMOND CONCERT HALL**

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CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS  
& ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



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# HISTORY OF BEST & BRIGHTEST

Thirteen years ago, a group of community leaders worked together to bring to life an idea conceived by Ron Sachs: to honor and recognize some of Leon County's top high school seniors with scholarships for their work in diverse academic and leadership categories. But, a key difference from other scholarships was the overarching focus on students who have demonstrated a genuine heart and commitment for service. And so it began, in 2006, The Best & Brightest Awards — reflecting a positive partnership among Leon County Schools, Leon County Schools Foundation (during the first year), World Class Schools of Leon County, the Tallahassee Democrat, Envision Credit Union and Sachs Media Group.

In that first year of The Best & Brightest Awards, 81 students were selected for such high honors as school-based winners from the public and private high schools in Leon County. Major scholarships were then awarded in each of 15 categories in countywide finals, \$500 Winner, \$250 Runner-up, and \$100 Honorable Mention. Then, and in every year since, the students are evaluated on their academic record of excellence, school and community service and leadership. They also demonstrate personal interview effectiveness with a panel of three community leaders who serve as judges in each of the 15 categories. Through our

sponsors' continued support, the scholarships have significantly grown: \$1,500 Winner; \$750 Runner-up; \$500 Honorable Mention — and \$100 for all other school-based winners.

In 2011, we added an annual 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay contest — to reach down to the middle schools and to encourage a culture of service among those students who have been learning about civics and forming their ultimate interests. Public and private schools select their top three essays to compete for the countywide recognition, with scholarships of \$500 Winner, \$250 Runner-up and \$100 Honorable Mention.

More than \$629,000 has been awarded to 1,815 seniors and 350 eighth graders during those 13 years. We are proud to celebrate The Best & Brightest Awards by inspiring young people in our community to strive for academic excellence — but to also place a priority on service to others as an ethic to be embraced for life. Every year, the stories, examples and achievements of these outstanding senior high school student leaders inspire their peers and younger students to reach higher — and comfort all of us about the future of our community, state, country and world being entrusted to such fine human beings.

BEST & BRIGHTEST LOGOS  
THROUGH THE YEARS

2006



2007–2014



2015





WINNER



### KARSYN FLETCHER SAIL High School

In addition to excelling in art, SAIL senior Karsyn Fletcher has spent her summers volunteering at summer camps at the Tallahassee Museum and LeMoyne Center.

As a counselor, Fletcher served as not only a role model but a friend to her campers. She shared her knowledge on “connecting the arts to the world around us.”

“I made it my own personal goal to help the campers learn how to embrace their creativity with the arts and the nature around them,” Fletcher said. “I became involved with local summer camps because I wanted to work one on one with kids to learn from them and their ways of creating while also wanting to inspire them to create more.”

Sometimes Fletcher runs into her former campers and their parents, who tell her they use aspects of what she shared with them in their everyday lives.

“My main goal is to share with my community what has benefitted me, in hopes that whatever it is can benefit them,” she said.

At school, Fletcher has been very active in the Robotics Club, where she presented the benefits of STEM and art while participating in robotics competitions. She has created

permanent installments of artwork in the SAIL gym and was chosen to design her school’s new banner for after school clubs.

SAIL Art instructor Sheri L. Nilles Marshall said Fletcher has always stood out among her peers not only for her talent and dedication to her pursuits, but for her integrity and selfless nature.

“Karsyn used the last four years as an opportunity to blossom from a talented kid into a renaissance woman graduating with high honors,” Marshall said. “Karsyn is the student who will graciously accept and dole out both praise and criticism and she is always asking for the latter, knowing it will only make her better.”

Fletcher’s art work has been entered into the Winter Festival Art Show as well as the LeMoyne High School Art Gallery, and she was SAIL’s MLK Dreamers and Doers winner in 2016.

In 2017, Fletcher was hired at the local art teaching studio Painting With a Twist.

“I hope to leave my school and classmates feeling like they can express themselves without needing to compete with others when creating,” she said. “In my future endeavors I want to inspire those I meet to pursue their own artistic personal goals, while continuing to pursue my own passion for the arts.”

RUNNER-UP



### JULIA MARTINEZ-MILLER Chiles High School

Over the last four years, performers in Chiles’ plays have been donning costumes designed by Julia Martinez-Miller.

Martinez-Miller has served on the costume crew and makeup crew. She has made costumes from scratch as well as repairing and tailoring the outfits, and as a junior she became Crew Head for both costumes and makeup.

“Before long, I was absolutely hooked on the ‘theatre kid’ life, since I could use my talents as an artist to design costumes, and people appreciated me for it,” Martinez-Miller said. “It was a lot of hard work and long hours after school and on the weekend, but creating beautiful productions was always worth it.”

Shannon O’Bryan, Chiles’ Director of Theatre Arts, said Martinez-Miller is disciplined, persistent and motivated to learn.

“She always strives to do her best and works hard to reach her potential on every project,” O’Bryan said.

Martinez-Miller hopes to leave a legacy inspiring others to take an active role in the arts and to pursue what they truly want to do with their time in high school.

“Individuality is something that is so important to me,” she said. “I want to have taught people the importance of being their own genuine selves.”





## HONORABLE MENTION

### JASMINE BLAKE

**Florida State**

**University School**



When Jasmine Blake sees someone hurting, she won't pass them by.

That's why the Florida High senior spearheaded a relief drive for Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria's devastation last year.

"I noticed how Puerto Rico was hurting and they wouldn't be healed anytime soon," Blake said. "I brought it upon myself to figure out what to donate, where to donate it, and all the expenses that went into it."

When people told her it wasn't worth the stress, she vowed to follow through on her efforts and succeeded in sending supplies to Puerto Rico.

"Helping people is extremely important to me, and this was the perfect opportunity to help those in need," Blake said.

Blake has also worked with the Tallahassee Animal Shelter, Quincy Public Library and has been an active member of her school's Spanish Club.

"She is a determined young woman, a hard worker, very sincere with a good heart and displays all the attributes of a true and caring leader," Florida High Spanish Club sponsor Salvador Guastella said.

Blake hopes to leave a legacy of kindness and empathy. Her artwork has been featured in the 2018 Waging Peace Art Exhibition.

I hope that when I leave people will remember my compassion," she said.

## FINALISTS

### KATHERINE DOWDY

**Maclay School**



**Awards and Honors:** Honor Roll (2014-2016), Second-Place in French Competition, District Swim Meet (2014-2017), Regional Swim Meet (2015-2017), State Swim Meet (2017), First Place in District Cheerleading (2015), Second Place in District for Track for Triple Jump

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society, Varsity Cheerleading, Varsity Swimming, Varsity Track, Varsity Weightlifting

**My Legacy:** "I hope that I will be seen as a role model to other high schoolers. That people will see me as kind and helpful. I hope people will understand the need to be kind and helpful to the community they are in and other communities as well."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Katherine has a range of skills pertaining to art. She enjoys working with traditional materials, including paints and pastels, but also has an eye for design when it comes to digital work. I believe Katherine's skills and determination will make her a success in anything she undertakes."

- Kyle Maurey, Maclay Art Instructor

### OLIVIA KERCHEVAL-ROIG

**Leon High School**



**Awards and Honors:** Lion's Pride Award (2015), Leon Swimming and Diving Team Captain (2016, 2017), holds 3 different school swimming records and Eight Time Finalist for FHSAA

**Activity Highlights:** Art Editor for Mosaic Magazine (2017), Pierian National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, Treasurer of Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society, Varsity Swimmer (2015-2017)

**My Legacy:** "I hope to leave behind the ideal that as a person you do not have to conform

into one traditional category. Although I was elected for the art category, my approach of how I will pursue art later in my life will be anything, but traditional, but a blend of all the categories that encompass me."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Olivia is one of the most exceptional students I have encountered and I have enjoyed teaching Olivia as she has matured and grown into an accomplished senior. She has demonstrated excellence in all that she puts her mind to, whether it's in the classroom, collaborating with others, or in the pool."

- Kate Davis, Leon History Teacher

### TRENTON MCCRAY

**Rickards High School**



**Awards and Honors:** Entry for Annual African American History Month Art Contest (2015), "Pieces" displayed at LeMoyne Center for Visual Arts, Chosen by school for Winter Fest Tallahassee (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society Historian (2017), Art and Photography Club (2014-2017), Multicultural Club (2016-2018)

**My Legacy:** "I would like my legacy to be a legacy that is not only impactful to the James S. Rickards High School, but is impactful to the world and the community. I would like my legacy to be focused on using high school as a platform to grow as a person and to have a tangible impact on the world."

**What Others Are Saying:** "I think it is the same consideration of others and the world around him that has made such a strong contributor to the classroom environment. Throughout the past four years, I have watched him reach out to classmates with encouragement and curiosity, often going out of his way to help a student."

- Jeff Distefano, Rickards Art Teacher



## DANIELA SOTO ANGULO Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:** Advanced Placement Scholar Award, AFJROTC Airman, Featured in The Mahaska Whitley Student Art Exhibit at the Lemoyne Center, Athletic Academic Success Award (2016), Homecoming Court (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** Tallahassee Community College President's List, Co-Captain of Varsity Swimming (2016, 2017), Varsity Tennis (2016)

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I hope to leave a legacy of a major art project for the school. I would love to create a beautiful, intricate mural for the school to build a more artistic and creative environment for everyone. I want to be known as the caring painter who wants to inspire all of those around her."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Within the boundaries of the classroom itself, Daniela exhibits an extraordinary blend of leadership, skill, and wisdom. Her willingness to learn, grow, and share is exemplary. Daniela is meticulously groomed to fill tomorrow's leadership positions."

- Liz Whitehead, Godby Fine Arts Teacher

## JACK VO Lincoln High School



### Awards and Honors:

Illustrator of "Charlie and the Honey Bees" by Jackie Danielle (2017), New York Film Academy Summer Program Attendee (2016, 2017), work featured in Art Exhibit (2015, 2016)

**Activity Highlights:** Vice President of Art Honor Society, Gay Straight Alliance Club Member

**My Legacy:** "I hope that after my graduation people of all ages will not be afraid to reach out and try to achieve their goals and ideals, especially LGBT+ and Asian minorities. I want to display that despite any struggles you may face, you can stand out confidently and boldly, achieving things louder than those who looked down on you."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Jack is a very innovative, positive, enthusiastic and well-rounded young man. He is extremely organized, accepts constructive criticism well, and expresses himself in a very professional and articulate manner. I am confident that Jack will meet whatever challenges presented to him along the next leg of his educational journey."

- Marilyn Proctor-Givens, Lincoln Art and Design Teacher

## ZOE WHITTAKER St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Third Place in SakuraNatsu Convention Cosplay Contest, GPA Awards, Coach's Award for Soccer, Volleyball Team Captain (2017), Soccer Team Captain (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society, Thespian Honor Society, Drama Club, Costume Construction

**My Legacy:** "My legacy is to prove to other students that art extends past drawing and painting. Creativity can be expressed through many different ways. I hope to encourage all students to explore their creativity in as many mediums as possible, whether it be making mood boards of their idol or designing and making a costume of your favorite character."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Zoe's creativity and positive demeanor inspires others, including myself to demand excellence in all aspects of academia and the arts. Not only does she possess the skills and talent, but she exhibits the ardor, focus, and exertion necessary to be successful in all of her endeavors."

- Lissette Ruiz, SJPII Music Teacher

## PAST WINNERS

### 2006

Winner - Courtney Asztalos  
Runner-up - Allison Jackson  
Honorable Mention - Keon Hogan

### 2007

Winner - Shannon Groves  
Runner-up - Matthew Cowdery  
Honorable Mention - Ishanna Ible

### 2008

Winner - Erin Harris-Parks  
Runner-up - Chelsea Hill  
Honorable Mention - Hannah Leggoe

### 2009

Winner - Cosby Hayes  
Runner-up - Mary Dunkelberger  
Honorable Mention - Allison Cottle

### 2010

Winner - Taylor Hardee  
Runner-up - Danielle Bishop  
Honorable Mention - Julia Kunberger

### 2011

Winner - Thomas Cooper  
Runner-up - Diana Elsner  
Honorable Mention - Todd Jones

### 2012

Winner - Sara Cox  
Runner-up - Benjamin Kay  
Honorable Mention - Monica Frehn

### 2013

Winner - Kaitlin Duchene  
Runner-up - Caroline Manuel  
Honorable Mention - Aaron Mosley

### 2014

Winner - Yuqing Wu  
Runner-up - Kiara Palmer  
Honorable Mention - Kenya Lloyd

### 2015

Winner - Carina Krehl  
Runner-up - Torrey Kiele  
Honorable Mention - Rhea-Donna Reyes

### 2016

Winner - Akshar Patel  
Runner-up - Clara Molina  
Honorable Mention - Kari Essary

### 2017

Winner - Alexis Campbell  
Runner-up - Abigail Perkins  
Honorable Mention - Jay Wenhold





**WINNER**


## ALEXANDER SOBESKI

### Home School

Helping the homeless in Tallahassee has been a passion of Alexander "Xander" Sobeski's for years.

He became involved in the Homeless Bag Project by gathering supplies like water bottles, snacks, gift cards, hygiene products, blankets and clothes. Any time Sobeski would pass a homeless person he would stop and give them a bag.

"This helped me realize how fortunate I am to grow up the way I did, and seeing the reaction of these people showed me that giving back to the community in this way is a great deed," Sobeski said.

Another passion of Sobeski's is sports. As a triathlete in football, baseball and weightlifting, Sobeski was recognized by the Tallahassee Quarterback Club as the Scholar Athlete of the Year in 2017.

Sobeski earned three varsity letters in football and started every game for Lincoln as a linebacker. He was credited with 124 tackles his senior season, 80 of them solo, and also had three sacks and five forced fumbles. He made First Team All-Big Bend for defense and was elected to play in the Florida/Georgia Battle of the Border All-Star Game.

Sobeski used his athletic skills to assist coaches

in summer baseball camps. Last year he invited two boys to the camp with cerebral palsy, one in a wheelchair and one with a walker. Sobeski and the coaches altered the camp so the boys could participate in the activities.

"At the end of the week, though tired and exhausted, the boys were begging to come back," Sobeski said. "This was one of my greatest feelings knowing that I helped two boys who normally would not have the opportunity to play ball."

After a flood in August of 2016, Sobeski traveled to Baton Rouge, where he distributed donations and met with families.

Science instructor Teri Hall said Sobeski displays model character morally and ethically and "is a young man who will live up to his commitments."

"Alexander is definitely a team player who is able to work together with others on his team but who can also take charge when necessary," Hall said.

Sobeski hopes to leave a legacy showing that home school students are athletic and are not awkward.

"With my accomplishments I believe I have started to show a difference in my community," Sobeski said. "I hope to prove that with a hard work ethic and given the chance you can accomplish anything on and off the field."

**RUNNER-UP**


## ANA WALLACE

### Chiles High School

Running has always been a big part of Chiles senior Ana Wallace's life, as she has attended races since she was a child.

As she grew older, Wallace began to volunteer with the Gulf Winds Track Club, assisting in races.

"Such experiences helped establish a sense of identity and caused me to see volunteering as a way to connect and build relationships while still contributing to good," Wallace said.

Wallace has also participated in Strides for Seizures, running upwards of 800 miles in 2016 and 2017 and donating \$80 to help provide educational services to families and patients experiencing seizures.

As a member of Chiles cross country and track teams, Wallace made the first team for All-Big Bend Cross Country for four straight years and was Runner of the Year in 2017. She won the Scholar Athlete Award as a freshman, sophomore and junior.

"She has a positive attitude and a cheerful disposition," said Chiles science teacher Lynn Schuster. "She is caring towards others and is well regarded by all those who know her."

"Whether it is devoting your life to a passion or being kind to others, your pursuits will inspire others to improve their own lives," Wallace said.



## HONORABLE MENTION

### MARY CATHERINE WADDELL

#### Maclay School



Every Tuesday after school, Maclay senior Mary Catherine Waddell goes to Killearn Lakes Elementary to tutor second graders who struggle to read at their grade level.

"This program means so much to me because I get the chance to provide the same higher-level education I was fortunate to have at their age, free of cost," Waddell said.

"Helping teach these kids the importance of reading is just one way I can serve humanity."

Maclay teacher Lisa Miller Donaldson said Waddell's work with the children is "meaningful and life changing."

"She wants her pal to succeed and takes an active, dedicated role in that success," Donaldson said. "For Mary Catherine, she is not in it for the number of hours or to make herself feel good about her work, it is truly to help another human being succeed."

Waddell, who has excelled in softball, soccer and golf, went on a service trip to the Dominican Republic last year to visit underprivileged villages and deliver supplies.

"Nothing brings me more happiness than making people happy," Waddell said.

"I want to show that this world can be a greater place if you invest in others as you invest in yourself."

## FINALISTS

### PAWAN BADISA

#### Rickards High School



**Awards and Honors:** 1st Place History Fair Group Website (2014), Florida History Day State Sports Heritage Award (2015)

**Activity Highlights:** Varsity Soccer (2014-2017), Varsity Tennis (2014-2017)

**My Legacy:** "Before I graduate, I hope many people hear my story how I overcame an immense amount of adversity. Both academically and athletically, and that perseverance is an essential quality one must have later on in life. I persevered through my struggles and if I can do it, you can do it."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Pawan has embodied all of the qualities that we expect and demand of our volunteers. He is bright, hardworking, and reliable. One of Pawan's greatest abilities is that he is able to connect with the majority of our participants, regardless of age or gender. He is always willing to cultivate good relationships with everyone he encounters."

- Scott Sears, Assistant Recreation Supervisor

### JACKSON BARBER

#### Leon High School



**Awards and Honors:** MVP Spoiler Award, Most Valuable Defensive Player in Soccer, Athletic Scholar Award, Wendy's High School Heisman Scholar Athlete Award

**Activity Highlights:** State Division 2 Championship, Soccer Club Team Captain, French Honor Society

**My Legacy:** I want to leave a legacy of hard work, both in the classroom and on the field. My peers and teachers know me as a student who will do everything asked of them, and more, in the classroom, and the soccer program knows me as one of the group who has worked to make out program into a successful one."

**What Others Are Saying:** "In class, Jackson is a conscious and hard worker. He pushed

himself to succeed academically and preservers in challenging environments. Jackson has more than risen to the challenge, not just in an academic sense, but in his ability to represent his opinions to his peers and to positively contribute to class dialogue. He is a leader in our classroom and has a share in the success of our class."

- Amanda Geiger, Leon Government & Economics Teacher

### JORDAN LATIMER

#### St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Ball Freshman of the Year (2015), Baseball Teammate of the Year (2016), Baseball Jim Cronin Award (2017), American Legion Baseball State Champion (2017), North Florida Top 100 College Prospect Series (2016), NFFC North Division Football Champions (2015-2016)

**Activity Highlights:** American Legion Baseball Post 13 (2017), Varsity Baseball, Varsity Football, National Honor Society, Good Shepherd Life Teen Leadership Council (2015-2017) Student Ambassador (2014-2015)

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I hope to leave the legacy of being both a driven and genuine person. I want people to remember me as a hard worker and as someone who always gave my all in everything I did. In addition, I hope to be remembered as someone who cared for and encouraged my family teammates and friends."

**What Others Are Saying:** "As a catcher for Post 13, Jordan showed his leadership and sportsmanship by his positive, confident, and cheerful disposition. He proved to his teammates and to his coaches his ability to help his team in all circumstances. No doubt, Jordan Latimer will continue to succeed in his studies and future accomplishments to become successful and respected in all that he does."

- H. Val Frailey, Commander Post 13



## SARAH MCCRACKIN Florida State University School



**Awards and Honors:** WTXL Scholar Athlete of the Week (2018), FHSAA State Medalist, Track & Field District Championship (2014, 2016), Varsity Basketball District Championship (2017), Darrielle Copeland Award

**Activity Highlights:** Swimming (2014), Track & Field (2015), Varsity Basketball (2017), Class President, Pearls of Perfection Parliamentarian and Treasurer, FSUS Concert Orchestra (2014- 2017), National Honor Society, Youth Leadership Tallahassee

**My Legacy:** "After graduating, I truly want my legacy to be my radiant spirit when it comes to interacting with people of all sorts. This means in the classroom, on the court, and wherever else. I hope my dynamic of excellence, academically and athletically, can be carried on throughout all of Florida High."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Her ability to adapt and adjust to diverse situations is commendable and demonstrates maturity beyond her years. She is heavily involved in her school and community. I have never met someone who does not think highly of Sarah and I see her contributing much to the student body."

- Tyrone McGriff, FSUS Athletic Director

## ABIGAIL POST Community Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** Outstanding Athlete Award (2014, 2015), Golden Volleyball Award (2017), Community Christian School MVP (2016), All Big Bend Girls Sand Volleyball Honorable Mention (2015), WTXL Scholar Athlete of the Week (2017), Honor Award (2016), Headmaster's List (2014-2016), Honors Council Member (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** Varsity Volleyball Captain (2017), All Big Bends Girls Volleyball Second Team (2017)

**My Legacy:** "I want to leave a legacy of what it means to be a great athlete. A great athlete exhibits great character on and off the field by playing with an intense passion for the sport they love, training with enduring strength and determination, and, most of all, respecting their opponents, teammates, coaches, and referees alike."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Amazingly Abbie finds time to serve her community and care for the needs of others all while being a Senior Leader, captain of the Varsity volleyball team, playing varsity soccer and varsity sand volleyball and being on an elite club volleyball team in Tallahassee."

- Lorna Wolfkill, CCS Athletic Director

## ALICIA PRICE North Florida Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** Softball District Championship (2014-2016), USSSAA World Series Finalists (2014), Basketball District Championship (2016) Volleyball District Championship (2017), Lady Eagle Award (2015-2016), Dale Earnhardt Scholar Athlete of the Month (2017), WTXL Scholar Athlete of the Week (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** Softball (2014-2016), Basketball (2016-2017), Volleyball (2014-2017)

**My Legacy:** "I hope to leave a legacy of kindness upon graduating. I want to be remembered not just for my success athletically, but as someone who was kind to others. I want to be remembered as a selfless, hardworking teammate and friend."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Alicia is dependable on the court and field and in the classroom. She is a bright and intuitive and always willing to help her classmates. Her peers look up to her for guidance and advice; they respect her opinions. I feel that her character is what sets her apart from others. She is well-rounded and NFC is blessed to have the leadership she provides."

- Holly Gorham, NFC Math Department Chair

## TYLER PYE Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:** Jonathan Farrell Academic Student Athlete Award, WTXL Student Athlete of the Week, Godby Football Student Athlete Award, Wendy's Heisman Award, Football District Championship, Weightlifting District Championship

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society, National Society of High School Scholars, Godby Football, Godby Weightlifting, Gentleman's Day Planning Committee Member, Summer Bridge Program volunteer

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I want to leave behind a legacy of respect, leadership, and philanthropy in my community. I want athletes to see me as an Alumnus who embodied the true definition of a student athlete; maintaining a 4.0 GPA while playing multiple sports. Ultimately, I want to rise above the statistics of young black males in my community, and change the status quo."

**What Others Are Saying:** "As I have grown to know Tyler over the last four years my appreciation of his academic thirst and natural leadership skill grow immensely. I had had the pleasure of watching him play football and lift on the weightlifting team and in each of these aspects he has strived to be his best and he is the teammate that everyone dreams of having."

- Jackie Burkette, Godby Athletic Director





## LONZETTA SIMPKINS Lincoln High School



**Awards and Honors:** 400 Meter FHSAA State Finalist, Track and Field First Team All Big Bend, Varsity Award, Track and Field Coach's Award

**Activity Highlights:** Varsity Golf, Track and Field, National Honor Society

**My Legacy:** "Once I graduate, I want young black athletes like myself, to know that there are more ways to be successful in this life besides throwing a ball or running across a field. I don't want people to remember me as the best, but I want them to recall me as the best student athlete."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Some people have accomplished so much in such a short amount of time, but constantly seek more as though excellence is the only option. Lonzetta Simpkins is that person. She is more than just a well-rounded student. She has seen success at every level, and will continue too."

- Brent Monroe, Lincoln Guidance Counselor

## PAST WINNERS

### 2006

Winner - Kristen Ledlow  
Runner-up - Denise Frohlich  
Honorable Mention - Daniel Morris, Jr.

### 2007

Winner - Seth Walker  
Runner-up - Rebecca Stott  
Honorable Mention - Kacie McCloud

### 2008

Winner - Laura Hempel  
Runner-up - Maria Harper  
Honorable Mention - Katrina Unglaub

### 2009

Winner - Thomas Strickland III  
Runner-up - Ryan Welke  
Honorable Mention - Kelly Conroy

### 2010

Winner - Sarah Rudder  
Runner-up - Melanese Edwards  
Honorable Mention - Catherine Whiddon

### 2011

Winner - Rosemary Klassen  
Runner-up - Macie Wilkins  
Honorable Mention - Lindsey Duncan

### 2012

Winner - Sarah Harrington  
Runner-up - Johnny Blue Craig  
Honorable Mention - Jennifer Griffith

### 2013

Winner - Stefanie Kurgatt  
Runner-up - Joseph Briggs  
Honorable Mention - Alyssa Yambor-Maul

### 2014

Winner - Darrielle McQueen  
Runner-up - Adrian Hendlin  
Honorable Mention - Phalguna Rupanagudi

### 2015

Winner - Tyson Murray  
Runner-up - Kathryn Crotty  
Honorable Mention - Julian Greene

### 2016

Winner - Claire Kercheval-Roig  
Runner-up - Teresa Conroy  
Honorable Mention - Tanner Adkison

### 2017

Winner - Kelley Breeden  
Runner-up - Morgan Ayers  
Honorable Mention - Johnny Grace



**WINNER**


## ESTELLA WACZEWSKI

### Chiles High School

Throughout her high school career, Chiles senior Estella Waczewski has displayed her penchant for leadership.

"Estella is someone who leads by example and she sets the bar high," said Chiles math teacher Caitlin Ray.

She created a YouTube channel called Study to Success, where she posts content to motivate students to study and succeed at school. A finalist for the 2017 International MIT Launch Entrepreneurship Competition, Waczewski serves as a Global Marketing Specialist for LaunchX. She also founded and served as president of Girl Up Club at Stanford Online School.

In addition, Waczewski was named captain of Chiles' varsity tennis team last school year and has volunteered at the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library northeast branch since 2012.

But Waczewski feels that her most impactful endeavor has been her involvement with the nonprofit organization Boys Town. She was secretary of the Boys Town Youth Leaders Board, and after it dissolved Waczewski was instrumental in bringing it back.

The older sister of a disabled brother, one of her main goals is to help disadvantaged children.

"I visited Boys Town homes in Tallahassee and was deeply saddened by the children's

plights," Waczewski said.

In her second go-around with the board, Waczewski took the approach of targeting Chiles students only, running successful fundraisers on campus. Now she is working to expand it to other schools in Leon County.

"I have learned an immeasurable amount from this experience, ranging from leadership skills to knowledge of how to run a successful fundraiser," she said. "The children's lives we've impacted, and the potential the Board has to continue to help Boys Town in the future, drives me to continue growing and leading the Board until I graduate and to bring my love of service with me to college and beyond."

Chiles Principal Joseph Burgess said Waczewski has helped in the front office during her free period even though she doesn't earn credit or volunteer hours for it.

"She feels that those who have the gift of knowledge need to serve the public and provide opportunities to better every life within our community," Burgess said.

Waczewski hopes to bring her love of service with her to college and beyond.

"I hope to leave a legacy of putting others first and that I will be remembered as someone who worked hard and positively contributed to both the Chiles community and Tallahassee as a whole," she said.

**RUNNER-UP**


## ELIZABETH ZHANG

### Lincoln High School

During the past two summers, Elizabeth "Liz" Zhang has brightened the days of patients at Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare through her volunteer work in the hospital and its gift shop.

Zhang said her interest in healthcare organization led to her involvement with TMH's teen volunteer program. To her, the gift shop was "a center of hope" that taught her the power of teamwork.

"I enjoyed all aspects of working in the gift shop, but having a role in the gift delivery service was incredibly eye-opening," Zhang said. "The gift shop infused a spirit of vitality in everyone's day and it was rewarding having the opportunity to help cultivate this impact."

Zhang has also volunteered with the Guardian Ad Litem program, and at school she is a member of the National Honor Society, Green Club and Key Club. She is the Student Life Editor at the Lincoln Legend publication.

"Her fervent commitment to excellence in the classroom and in her various co-curricular activities truly speak to her well-roundedness," said Lincoln English department chair Jonathan Herrera.

Zhang hopes to inspire others to pursue their visions, set goals and take risks.

"No matter who you are or where you come from," she said, "everyone has something unique to offer."



## HONORABLE MENTION

### MALLORY MORGAN

**Leon High School**



Since 2017, Mallory Morgan has served as a volunteer youth board member for the Epilepsy Association of the Big Bend.

Besides attending meetings, Morgan has helped coordinate volunteers, voted on budgets and donated cakes from her business, Mallory's Cakes.

"It has been such an amazing opportunity to really see my volunteer work directly make a difference for the hundreds of people receiving help from the EABB as well as being able to use my passion, Mallory's Cakes, to help raise money for such an amazing association," she said.

Mallory's Cakes has business cards and a website, and she sold more than 150 cakes in a year. One of her customers is Leon math teacher Cesar Kothe.

"Mallory has an outstanding cake business," Kothe said. "It is rare for a high school student to be so industrious with their gifts and turn their hobbies into a business they can share with others."

Morgan has also volunteered at City Church and is a graduate of Youth Leadership Tallahassee.

"I hope to leave the legacy that no matter your age you can accomplish anything, and that I have inspired my peers to step out of their comfort zone and achieve goals that seem impossible," she said.

## FINALISTS

### JORDAN BROWN

**Florida State University School**



**Awards and Honors:** National Retail Federation Customer Service and Sales Certificate, National Restaurant Association ServSafe Certified

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society President, Spanish Club President, Tallahassee Future Leaders Academy Member, WFSU Voices of the Classroom

**My Legacy:** "Once I graduate high school, I will leave behind my clubs and mentees. I played a vital role in transforming my clubs into community service based organizations by hosting several drives and volunteering at shelters. Also, I worked with younger students and provided them with academic and personal advice. I believe that my legacy will continue to grow as I enter into my post-secondary education."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Jordan has been more than the ideal student. In addition to achieving high grades and respect among her peers and teachers, she has demonstrated outstanding leadership and maintained a clear sense of purpose. In addition to Jordan's strong academic focus, she also participates in extracurricular activities at FSUS and in her community."

- Jennifer Kinney, FSUS Secondary School Counselor

### LINDSAY MAGAR

**SAIL High School**



**Awards and Honors:** SAIL Pirate Medallion Award (2017), LeMoyné General Artist Award (2017), Sidewalk Chalk People's Choice Award (2018)

**Activity Highlights:** owner of her own photography business "Light Image Photography", emotional growth course P3.

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy upon graduation is that I prevailed even through difficult times. I have faced many unusual challenges for someone my age and I have always maintained high grades and a positive mindset."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Our first shoot ran extremely smooth due to the amount of time that went into her preparation. The desired amount of work that was agreed upon was meticulously detailed in her photography contract. Her flexibility and creativeness not only produced a happy set of toddlers, but beautiful pictures!"

- Melissa Doback, Light Image Photography Client

### KYLE MORAN

**St. John Paul II Catholic School**



**Awards and Honors:** Florida Junior Classical League Regionals, Honors Award of Academic Distinction (2015-2017)

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society (2017), Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society (2017), Youth Leadership Tallahassee (2016), Soccer Coach Assistant (2015), Cross Country Team Leader (2016), Rho Kappa National Social Studies Honor Society (2017)

**My Legacy:** "My legacy upon graduation from John Paul is to be confident and happy going forward in my life through college and in the working world. I already have a taste of what the real world holds and though it looks rough, when the time comes I will be ready."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Kyle is one of the most diligent and hardworking students I have had in my classroom, and he is well-rounded in his endeavors beyond the classroom as well. Kyle has a mind for business and what it takes to be successful. He is willing to do the difficult tasks that are required for greatness."

- Emily Serpico, SJPII Statistics Teacher





## PAST WINNERS

### EAN SCANAMEO

#### Rickards High School

**Awards and Honors:** Eagle Scout Ranking

**Activity Highlights:** Cell Phone Repair Business Founder, Royal Rangers volunteer, created a Film Club, Robotics Club, Trousdell Gymnastics Center volunteer

**My Legacy:** "My goal upon graduating is to revive the Rickards reputation. It is no secret that Rickards is seen as the "ghetto" school. I want to change this and help Rickards achieve the reputation they deserve. I plan on doing this by making a name for myself and bringing Rickards to light."

**What Others Are Saying:** "In addition to Ean's excellent academic involvement, he is extremely involved in his local and school community. Ean is a living example of what it means to be the best and the brightest at everything you do. He has not only motivate students, but he has motivated me to the best teacher I can possibly be."

- Stanley Fontaine, Rickards Psychology Teacher



### DEBORAH WILLET

#### Godby High School

**Awards and Honors:** Finance Student of the Year (2014), Junior Class Art Student of the Year (2016), FSU's Center of Academic Retention and Enhancement Pre-Collegiate Leon County Student of the Year (2016)

**Activity Highlights:** Godby National Honor Society (2015-2017), Junior Varsity Volleyball (2014), President of FBLA (2018)

**My Legacy:** "My legacy after graduating will be my dedication, not only to better myself with my experience and education, but also my peers, as I love to help those around me. I pride myself in changing other's assumptions about Amos P. Godby with my high school resume. I will be known for my determination to complete my Associates in Arts degree."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Deborah is extremely well organized and determined to excel in her classes. She strives to do the best work possible and she is not afraid to ask for help if she needs it. As she does all of this work, she keeps an exceptionally positive attitude, and never lets the workload overwhelm her."

-Kathy Barfield, Godby English Teacher



2006

Winner - Ricquel Jackson  
Runner-up - Kolanda Lewis  
Honorable Mention - Heidi Dhein

2007

Winner - Brittany Pace  
Runner-up - Ashley Carter  
Honorable Mention - Romain Benjamin

2008

Winner - Lauren Rudd  
Runner-up - Brittany Folsom  
Honorable Mention - Sheneka Faison

2009

Winner - Thierry Kayiranga  
Runner-up - Adrian Trautmann  
Honorable Mention - Darius Hands

2010

Winner - Kevin Hill  
Runner-up - Kevy Moore  
Honorable Mention - Charles Cox

2011

Winner - Samuel Cook  
Runner-up - Katie Pullen  
Honorable Mention - William Baldock

2012

Winner - Zemoria Johnson  
Runner-up - William McQuade  
Honorable Mention - Morrie Kim

2013

Winner - Parth Patel  
Runner-up - Jill Smith  
Honorable Mention - Brooke Hunter

2014

Winner - Deanne Roberts  
Runner-up - Brian Leichus  
Honorable Mention - Haley Ashlin

2015

Winner - Emily Schwartz  
Runner-up - Anna Rushin  
Honorable Mention - Irj Tajdar

2016

Winner - Camille Okonkwo  
Runner-up - Taylor Bickett  
Honorable Mention - Andrew Inman

2017

Winner - Craig Mitchell  
Runner-up - James Maguire, Jr.  
Honorable Mention - Kathleen Kelly



**WINNER**


## ANVITHA MANDAPATI

### Rickards High School

Anvitha Mandapati has always wanted to be a doctor to save lives, and as a founder of Rickards' Dance Marathon club she has found a way to raise thousands of dollars for research for pediatric illnesses.

Serving as the hospitality chair last year, Mandapati oversaw fundraising efforts, raising awareness and registering people. As a senior, Mandapati was chosen to be the club's Executive Director and has made it her goal to make the club more inclusive.

"I believe this has united Rickards and the community," Mandapati said. "There is more awareness as people feel this club is a fun way to help support kids with illnesses and help improve their childhood."

Mandapati has raised more than \$1,000 on her own and has learned that there's always more to do.

"Dance Marathon has also shown me how the main reason why I wanted to be a doctor in the first place, to save lives all over the world and be a part of the groundbreaking research to cure cancer," she said.

Mandapati has volunteered at Capital Regional Medical Center and Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare, where she has helped transport patients

after their surgeries. She helps the Hindu Temple of Tallahassee raise money each year at the Diwali fundraiser, and every week she teaches middle school students at the Leon County Main Library.

Since her junior year, Mandapati has been involved with the National Honor Society. Through the club she has volunteered with recycling as well as the Rickards Invitational, Pangaea and canning and toiletry drives. She has also been active in Mu Alpha Theta and Science Olympiad.

"Anvitha has demonstrated excellence in everything she desires to pursue," said Rickards IB calculus teacher Bruce Fraser. "She always is willing to try her best and put forth the effort necessary to accomplish her task. She is also viewed as a leader who guides her peers to excellence and has gained club leadership experiences along the way."

From Dance Marathon to the National Honor Society, Mandapati has left her mark on Rickards for years to come.

"I hope that I will leave the impact of the importance of helping our community, being more inclusive and appreciative of our lives, and how the smallest action can make the most significant difference in someone else's life," she said. "I encourage people to realize the importance of supporting research to help enhance our lives and others."

**RUNNER-UP**


## SETH KEMENY

### St. John Paul II Catholic School

Last school year, Seth Kemeny founded the Automotive Club, a club unlike any other in Leon County.

After recruiting members, he found a mentor to lend the club garage space to get hands-on experience.

"I founded it to inspire and expose students to opportunities for learning practical skills in a unique manner," Kemeny said.

Almost every weekend was spent working to make a 1966 Ford Thunderbird ride again. Once they met their goal, Kemeny then coordinated fundraising to enter the car in the Hemmings' Great Race, collecting business sponsorships and personal donations. He even secured a grant from the Antique Automobile Club of America.

SJPII math teacher Emily Serpico said Kemeny is someone his peers can learn from every day.

"He often has a different way of thinking about or solving a certain problem and that type of discourse is incredibly valuable to the classroom community," Serpico said.

Kemeny is also a member of the Aerospace Engineering Club in addition to his tireless work with the Automotive Club.

"I am proud of what the club has accomplished for the school and done in the community," he said. "I look forward to applying what I have learned in the future as a mechanical engineer."





## HONORABLE MENTION

### MARTINE FREDERICKSON

#### Leon High School



When she's not singing in chorus or performing at local theatres, Martine Frederickson has taken an interest in helping local law enforcement serve the community.

In the summer of 2016, Frederickson joined the Tallahassee Police Cadet Program. After attending the basic cadet academy, she used her knowledge to educate her peers.

"By gaining information from actual law enforcement, I've been able to make people feel safer in their communities and explain protocols that might confuse citizens," she said.

Frederickson then helped the police department with traffic control at parades and celebrations.

A major passion of Frederickson's is the performing arts, and she has graced several community stages through the years.

At Leon, she's active in Thespians and chorus, where she is Student Director of Madrigal Singers. Chorus teacher Peter Pursino said Frederickson is always eager to help him as well as her peers.

"Everyone knew she would be perfect for the position," Pursino said.

Frederickson hopes to leave a legacy of passion and hard work.

"I want other students to embrace the activities and services they love and believe they matter, and then encourage them to give all the time and talents they have to letting that show," she said.

## FINALISTS

### AUSTIN BUSBEE

#### North Florida Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** Top 10 Student (2014-2018)

**Activity Highlights:** Camp Amigo Children Burn Clinic, Hilaman Golf Course volunteer

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I plan to attend college at FSU for mechanical engineering and lead my life in a path of opportunities for occupations involving building, constructing, and/or designing automotive and mechanical applications. I am currently dual-enrolled in college to further my education for the mechanical engineering degree. If this fails, I plan to attend technical school for metal fabrication."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Austin has always put forth his best effort in the classes he has taken. He is bright and intuitive, and genuinely wants to learn concepts being taught. He is easy to get along with, and his classmates enjoy his company. He has been a good role model for the underclassmen of NFC, and I look forward to all he will accomplish."

- Holly Gorham, NFC Math Department Chair

### GABRIELLE CANNELLA

#### Chiles High School



**Awards and Honors:** Capital Chalk Walk Nominee, FHSA Scholar Athlete, History Fair School and District Winner, Anchor of the Year Award

**Activity Highlights:** Anchor Club President, Florida of Christian Association Publicist

**My Legacy:** "After transferring to Chiles from a small private school, I remember feeling anxious and overwhelmed about the idea of finding my place within the walls of such a large student body. The transition, however, has allowed me to express myself through outlets like community service.

By serving in the community and encouraging others to do the same I hope to have shown others how they too can find a place to belong."

**What Others Are Saying:** "The first words that come to mind when I think of Gabby are creative, self-directed, responsible, and original in thought. Her strength is her creative thinking, technical skills, and discipline. Gabby is one of the few students that I have had that exemplify a high level of skill and creative problem solving ability along with leadership capacity."

- Julie Childrens, Chiles Graphics Teacher

### EZEKIEL COLEMAN

#### SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** Pirate Medallion Award

**Activity Highlights:** Lively Technical Center's Commercial Foods and Culinary Arts program, volunteer at the School of Arts and Sciences (2016-2017)

**My Legacy:** "In a word, I hope my legacy is faith. To me, faith and belief are different; belief means you think one thing or another is real, but faith has power. I have faith that life can get better, I have faith I can make life better, and I have faith in myself. That's what I want to leave behind."

**What others are saying:** "Ezekiel has always stood out as one of SAIL's best and brightest. As a student it was obvious he was able to think critically and generate germane feedback during classroom discussions as well as in his formal writings and essays."

- Rob Pell, SAIL English Teacher



## LINLEE FRANKLIN Maclay School



**Awards and Honors:** Junior Classical League Regionals Competition (2017), Junior Classical League State Competition (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** ASCENDERS (All Summer Campers Exploring Nature's Delights & Experiencing Recreation), Unitarian Church of Tallahassee Senior Counselor, Maclay School Junior Counselor and Art Assistant

**My Legacy:** "When I graduate, I hope my legacy will be that people always remember others in need and that they work hard and strive to take care of those in any way, shape, or form. I also hope that future grades remember to look past their own needs and into the needs of others."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Linlee has volunteered countless hours of her time to help me with bulletin boards, organizing classroom materials, copies, and working with children. She is always confident but eager for new challenges and experiences that provide opportunities to grow in confidence and expertise. I look forward to seeing her spread this passion in her future career as an educator."

- Allison Ruff, Maclay Second Grade Teacher

## CHELSIE HIMMER Florida State University School



**Awards and Honors:** Swim Ironman Award, Varsity Swimming Districts and Regionals Qualifier, Swim Team Captain

**Activity Highlights:** Varsity Swimming, Varsity Wrestling, CrossFit Club, Cross Country (2014-2018) Student Government Association, National Honor Society, Zoo World animal care internship

**My Legacy:** "I hope that when I leave Florida High, that students don't really remember me,

but that they remember some of the ideas I stood for, such as being kind to each other and having a servant leadership kind of mind."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Chelsie is a capable and earnest student who is well-liked and respected by her peers. Her work ethic is exemplary; she shows maturity and reasoning, willingness to assume responsibility, and determination to complete all that she undertakes."

- Jennifer Underhill, FSUS Librarian

## RAVEN KIELE Lincoln High School



**Awards and Honors:** Junior Achievement Be Entrepreneurial Certification (2016-2017), Junior Achievement Program Winner, Student Academic Award Winner, ServSafe Certification

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society, Operation Enhance Culinary, founded Raven's Puppy Love, Rock The Pink Lip Sync

**My Legacy:** "I hope that, when I leave, I am remembered for my constant strives towards a better school and a better community, and my efforts to help those around me, both in the kitchen and out of it."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Raven is one of the brightest students of our school. She is always appreciated for her sincerity and dedication towards studies for her helping nature towards the teachers and peers. Raven's selfless nature has truly been an asset to the Culinary Arts program."

- Patricia Woods, Lincoln Culinary Teacher

## JEVON PRICE Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:**

Autodesk AutoCAD Certification, Autodesk Inventor Certification, Honor Roll, Kappa League President

**Activity Highlights:** National Youth Leadership Forum, National Honor Society, National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists, Future Business Leaders of America, Kappa League

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I hope to leave a legacy of service. I want everyone in my community to understand that community service benefits them and the community simultaneously. Improving the community, in turn, improves those helping. After I graduate, I want others to see me as a role model for dedication to helping others."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Jevon has proven to me that he is a hard-working and self-motivated individual. He is very intelligent, attentive, and thoughtful and makes good use of his class time by asking quality questions. He completes each assignment to the best of his abilities and is able to eloquently demonstrate his projects to his peers, teachers, judges, and others."

- Wendy Chan, Godby IT Academy Teacher





# PAST WINNERS

2006

Winner - Ann Sheddan  
Runner-up - Princess Warren  
Honorable Mention - Amanda Lorenz

2007

Winner - Jennifer Salib  
Runner-up - Vivek Pal  
Honorable Mention - Charlotte Homme

2008

Winner - Candace Rosier  
Runner-up - Sapphire Hinson  
Honorable Mention - Michael Schwarz

2009

Winner - Jordan Rodriguez  
Runner-up - Luka Sharron  
Honorable Mention - Justis Mills

2010

Winner - Michael Ethridge  
Runner-up - Bianca Medina  
Honorable Mention - Michelle Hudson

2011

Winner - Jenna Perlman  
Runner-up - Alexander Schroepfer  
Honorable Mention - Joshua Kaplan

2012

Winner - Kelsey McWilliams  
Runner-up - Kaci Boylan  
Honorable Mention - Chambre' Maclin

2013

Winner - Chassidy Ferrell  
Runner-up - Gabriela Brown  
Honorable Mention - Michelle Kelley

2014

Winner - Sarah Gurley  
Runner-up - Kayla Parker  
Honorable Mention - Alayna Sibille

2015

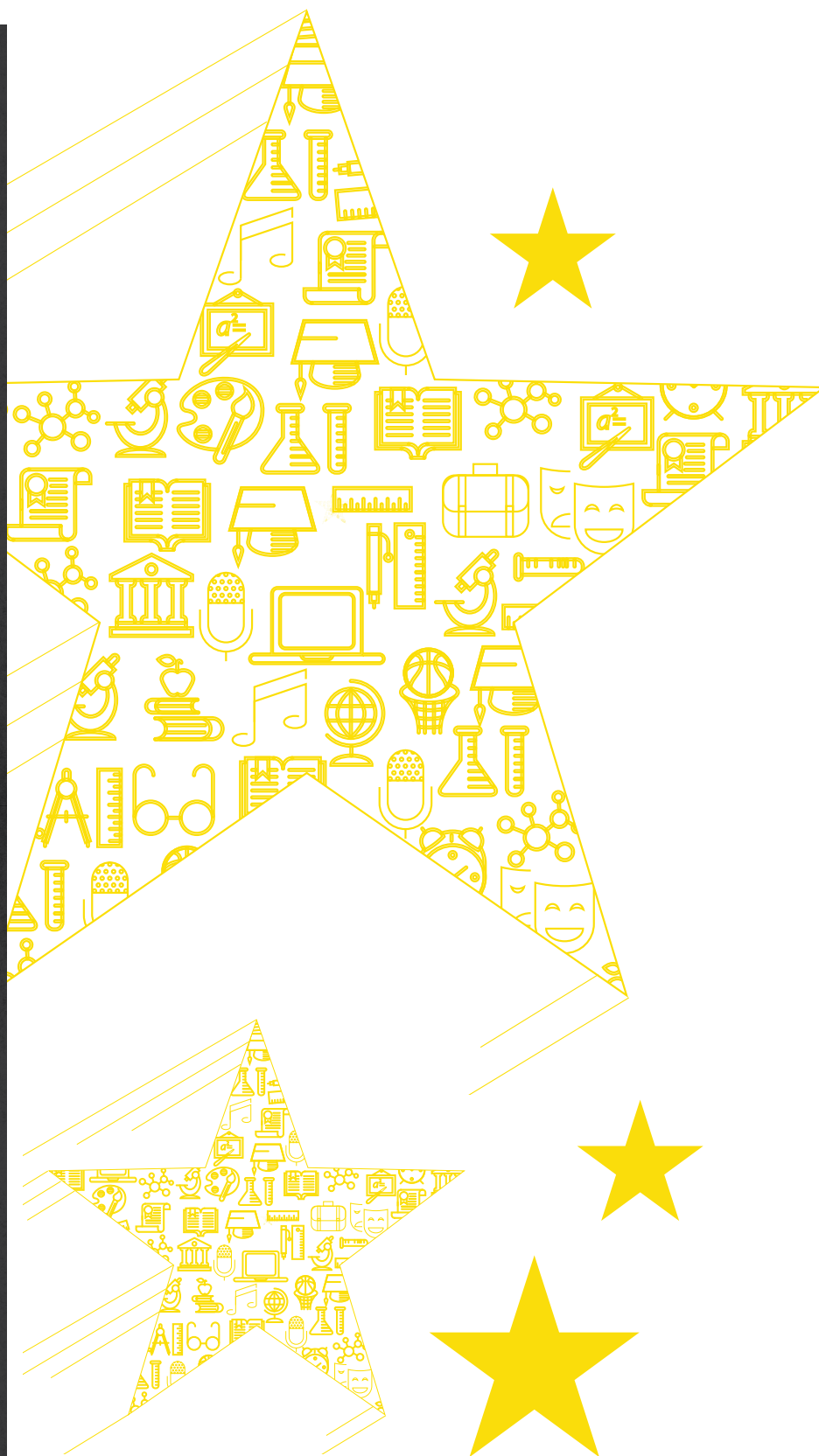
Winner - Porter Crapps, IV  
Runner-up - Jada Rose  
Honorable Mention - Katherine Grubbs

2016

Winner - Anunoy Dussa  
Runner-up - Megan Hayes  
Honorable Mention - Rebecca Prater

2017

Winner - Rachel Rumana  
Runner-up - Robert Skrob  
Honorable Mention - Emily Fiorini





WINNER



### CAMILA CALDERON Chiles High School

Theatre has been a part of Camila Calderon's life since she was in the sixth grade, and the stage has become a second home for the Chiles senior.

Throughout her high school career, Calderon has graced the stage in several productions at Young Actors Theatre.

"As soon as I joined YAT, I knew this was where I would be able to not only grow as a performer, but spread my love of theatre to others," she said.

Each show Calderon has been a part of since her freshman year had her perform multiple school matinees for elementary school students, an experience she said has been rewarding.

"This is also a special program to me because I attended a school matinee when I was 10 years old, and the memory of that performance still sticks with me to this day," Calderon said. "If I made that impact on even one student in my four years at YAT, I would be thrilled."

At Young Actors, Calderon has starred in Cinderella, 42nd Street, Into the Woods, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Shrek the Musical and Footloose. She won a Zoli Award for her role as Ursula in The Little Mermaid in 2017.

Young Actors teacher and director Robert Stuart said Calderon has impressed him with her poise and love of theatre. He shared the stage with her in a 2015 production of A Christmas Carol: The Musical.

"She makes the stage a better place," Stuart said. "She is such a giving actress, filling the space with exuberance! Each one of Camila's performances has been breathtaking to watch, for she hones and perfects her characters with every turn."

Calderon has also starred in productions at Chiles and has been active in the International Thespian Society and Drama Club. She is also a member of the National Honor Society. Last year she became editor of the school newspaper and has served as a copy editor on the yearbook staff.

"Camila is one of the most talented, scholarly and mature students I've come across," said Chiles counselor Natalie Garner.

Calderon wants to leave a lasting impression at Chiles and Young Actors.

"I hope my legacy will be one of a hard worker and a motivated, creative mind," she said. "I hope to leave my deep love of performing arts in those younger than me and a drive to never settle for anything less than the best version of themselves."

RUNNER-UP



### ABIGAIL LEAMAN Lincoln High School

Using her love of theatre and sciences, Lincoln senior Abigail Leaman has worked tirelessly off stage to help with the production of shows at Lincoln and in community theatre.

From lighting to sound equipment, Leaman has contributed her talents to several productions.

Leaman said she believes the technical aspect of drama is just as important as being onstage and has found that one cannot exist without the other.

"Technical theatre isn't just about plugging things in and pushing buttons absentmindedly," she said. "Designing lights is about using colors and shadows to create a stage picture."

Leaman has helped teach her classmates through the A/V Club and Theatre Tech class. As president of the National Honor Society, she organized Cabaret for a Cause, a dinner theatre event with benefits going to different charities every year.

She has also interned at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory and represented Lincoln on the Student District Advisory Council.

"If I taught someone to read music or set up equipment and they can perform that skill, that's a piece of my work living on and therefore a success on my behalf," Leaman said. "You don't have to be physically remembered to have left your mark."





## HONORABLE MENTION

### MERCY BICKELL

#### Maclay School



Mercy Bickell transformed from a shy freshman to a senior who takes charge through her work with the National Youth Leadership Training camp.

As a troop guide, Bickell helped teach leadership skills and did the same as an assistant senior patrol leader as well as help plan the course and manage the cleanliness of the camp.

On the last day of camp last year, Bickell could barely hold back tears as participants thanked her for guiding them.

"These were the fruits of my labor," she said. "I realized that the meaning of service and teaching leadership was not only helping myself grow as a leader, but also helping create the world's future leaders."

Bickell has also excelled in debate class at Maclay.

"She's equally adept at building an impenetrable fortress of logic as she is at bringing the audience to near tears with genuine pathos," teacher Lee Norment said.

Bickell hopes to leave behind stronger clubs and collaborative spirit along with bolder leaders and greater possibilities.

"I hope I leave behind seeds of kindness that will grow into a more open, compassionate atmosphere," she said. "I hope I leave behind a community that never stops improving, that always reaches for the stars, even through difficulties."

## FINALISTS

### TYRA BROWN

#### Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:** Top 10 Student (2014-2018)

**Activity Highlights:** Drama Student of the Year (2014, 2015) Tech Olympics Award First Place (2016), Thespian Districts Superior Rating (2016), Softball Spirit Award (2016), Junior Achievement Shark Bowl Finalist (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** Godby Technical Crew, Softball (2016-2018), International Thespian Society

**My Legacy:** "I hope to have been an example for others to look up to and want to follow in my footsteps of being a hard worker and customer oriented for our community. Ultimately, I want them to look at my accomplishments and move the bar even higher."

**What Others Are Saying:** "As a high school student, Tyra has proven to be a strong and determined individual and I have no doubt in my mind that she will go far. I have watched her mature and grow into a respectable, very well-liked, and all around outstanding young woman. She is driven and worthy and will be successful in every endeavor she chooses to embark upon."

- Randi C. Lundgren, Godby Arts Teacher

### MELANIE BYNUM

#### SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** General Arts Category Winner for Lemoyne, FIRST Robotics Competition Second Place

**Activity Highlights:** Octo-Pi-Rates Secretary, Ultimate Frisbee Club, Drama Club, National Honor Society Vice President, Member of The Bardlings

**My Legacy:** "I want to inspire others with my food drive, pushing them to start their own initiatives. Be the change the community some way, even if that community is just your

favorite club. I want other to feel the love when someone receives food for Thanksgiving dinner or the excitement of a charity receiving a donation."

**What Others Are Saying:** "From the moment Melanie stepped into the Drama Club auditions and started her monologue, her talent floored me. She stood out as being one of the most natural actresses that had ever graced my stage. She is an actress who is deeply in touch with her emotions and is not afraid to leave it all on stage."

- Sierra Service, SAIL Drama Teacher

### AMELIA COOPER

#### Leon High School



**Awards and Honors:** National Honor Thespian Ranking, International Honor Thespian Ranking, Rod Durham Award for Brilliance in Theatre

**Activity Highlights:** International Thespian Society, Capital Singers, light technician at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy will be one that young technicians will model themselves after and one that leads ambitious career-oriented students to mirror their work ethic after mine. I will also want my legacy to be the spark that ignites the unity that should belong between Cast and Crew, Performers and Technicians."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Amelia is an absolute standout in Technical theatre with her design work, and is always eager and proficient in whatever she undertakes for our productions. If she doesn't know how to do something, she set her mind to learn and master each new technique and piece of equipment or computer program. Her attention to detail sets her apart from other theater students."

- Lea Marshall, Leon Director of Dramatic Arts



## JAMIE JOHNSON Home School



**Awards and Honors:** Distinguished Young Women of Lean County (2018), Junior Artist (2016)

**Activity Highlights:** Catalyst Leadership Team Senior Associate, Girls in Action, Junior League Teen Board (2015), Yearbook (2016), Youth Praise Board (2016)

**My Legacy:** "As my legacy, I want everyone to know me as someone who cares genuinely, loves unconditionally, and gives freely of my time to help where needed. I want to be seen as an encourager to others through good leadership of fairness, one who steps up to challenges, puts forth my best effort, and performs all with a good attitude."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Jamie has served faithfully in our extensive leadership program and has developed into an example of a responsible leader, compassionate young leader. Jamie communicates well. Pays attention to detail and encourages others as she serves each week. Jamie has proven to be dependable, hardworking young lady who has developed skills and abilities in areas of her life."

- Kevin C. Hall, Thomasville Road Baptist Church Youth Pastor

## SHREYA KONDAPALLI Rickards High School



**Awards and Honors:** District History Fair Third Place (2014), Regional Science Olympiad Winner (2016), AP Scholar Award (2016)

**Activity Highlights:** Choreographer for the Indian Association of Tallahassee (2016), Key Club (2017), Ambassador for the American Indian Foundation (2017), National Honor Society President (2017), Spanish Club

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I hope that my legacy shows to always have passion with what you commit to. Rather than being remembered

for who I am, I hope to be remembered for what I've been able to contribute to our community and the constant dedication that went into it."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Shreya is a fast learner and always ready to learn while helping others along the way. Surpassing difficulties while learning various dance forms over the years she is determined to always work harder and develop on their skills as a dancer. She possesses the ability to reach fellow dancers on all levels while working to encourage and empower them in the same art."

- Padmini Lakshmin, Dance Teacher

## KELSEY NEUGENT North Florida Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** Leading Role in "High School Musical 2" (2018), Leading Role in "Oklahoma!" (2017), Sign Language Solo First Place (2014, 2016) Best Lead Role in Fine Arts

**Activity Highlights:** Family Fun Day volunteer, Childrens Church volunteer, New York mission trip (2015)

**My Legacy:** "I want my legacy to be known as, "she was little but she was heard". I say that when performing you can do and be anyone you want. Myself, I am 4'11 but I want the world to be able to hear of my name one day."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Kelsey is a strong actress for several reasons, but I believe her social nature is what allows her to stand out from her peers. Kelsey is friends with everyone and really takes the time to get to know each cast member both in rehearsal and away from performance setting; she is the first to be excited for them and with them when they master a difficult line or dance step."

- Emily Burgess, NFC Drama Director

## JOSHUA WEINSTEIN Florida State University School



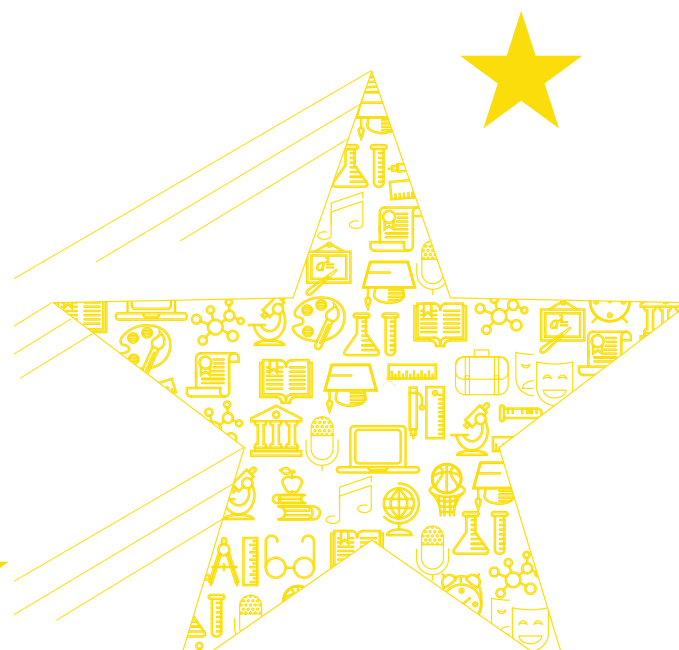
**Awards and Honors:** Senior Athletic Award for Swimming, Principal's Honor Roll, Commander of FSUS Astronaut Challenge Team

**Activity Highlights:** Varsity Swimming, multiple roles in Various School Productions, WFSU (2014-2018), Camp Shalom of the Jewish Federation camp counselor, Southern Shakespeare Festival

**My Legacy:** "Upon my graduation for Florida High, I want to have been a prime example of what a lot of practice, determination, and hard work can leap up to. I not only want to lead others to greatness, but I want them to surpass me on their journey, to be greater than I ever could. People believed in my own journey, and now I believe in them, the future generation."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Josh is truly a Jack-of-all-trades in theatre, visual arts, engineering, math, government, all of is academic and elective pursuits, and social justice concerns. It is wonderful to see a student who is as eager to pursue creative ideas and learn how to use tools correctly to make his vision a reality."

- Barbra Davis, FSUS Associate Professor





# MARY-SHELDON WILLIAMS

## St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Freshman Class President (2014), Senior Class Vice President (2017), American Citizenship Award (2015)

**Activity Highlights:** Drama Club, Thespian National Honor Society, Student Government Association, Squirettes, National Honor Society, Mock Trial, Junior League of Tallahassee Teen Board

**My Legacy:** "I hope to have offered a different way of seeing people who live in this world. I hope I contributed to the student body by recognizing each person as a part of one diverse body and recognized each of their own unique and precious gifts."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Mary-Sheldon is a passionate student of the arts. Her service to the community through the performing arts is outstanding. Her dedication to serving our community using her gifts and talents is a testament to her selflessness. Mary-Sheldon is an inspirational and vigorous student that has inspired many young dancers through her commitment to service."

- Sara Gordon, SJPII Music Teacher

## PAST WINNERS

2006

Winner - Cynthia Jackson  
Runner-up - Chris Hand  
Honorable Mention - Bethany Mihalik

2007

Winner - Waylen Roche  
Runner-up - Jennifer Skene  
Honorable Mention - Jonathan Kubik

2008

Winner - Lauren Bacon  
Runner-up - William Simpson  
Honorable Mention - Michael Dorsey

2009

Winner - Alexandria Collins  
Runner-up - Christopher Frazier  
Honorable Mention - Carly Langston

2010

Winner - Shonn McCloud  
Runner-up - Kayla Valentine  
Honorable Mention - Erik Reed

2011

Winner - Julia Draper  
Runner-up - Ladarian Lilly  
Honorable Mention - Katherine Skene

2012

Winner - Victoria Whitley  
Runner-up - Anna Bradshaw  
Honorable Mention - Laura Johnson

2013

Winner - Lauren Jones  
Runner-up - Lee Moleski  
Honorable Mention - Saint-Claire Mottley

2014

Winner - Roxanne Jester  
Runner-up - Anna Brooks  
Honorable Mention - Mathieu Fredrickson

2015

Winner - Maxx Marshall  
Runner-up - Corrie Ostrander  
Honorable Mention - Jamie Shuman

2016

Winner - Bethany O'Leary  
Runner-up - Briallen Sanchez-Thurber  
Honorable Mention - Mia Pesta

2017

Winner - Jordyn Berrian  
Runner-up - Katherine Jones  
Honorable Mention - Sarah Barton



**WINNER**


## SARAH HALBERT

### Rickards High School

As a lover of animals with a dedication to help others, volunteering for the nonprofit organization Voices of Chance Animal League in 2014 was a no-brainer.

"I believe that my time with VOCAL helped me better understand the issues surrounding chained dogs and why VOCAL is trying so hard to get them off those chains, so that animals may feel safe, loved and cared for," Halbert said. "It is something that has touched me deeply and I am greatly inspired by my time there."

As a volunteer, Halbert spent five hours a morning every other week comforting animals, unloading food, toys and bedding as well as concrete bags, chain link and other tools.

"She was a pleasure to work with and we appreciate all her effort in helping to bring positive change to the lives of so many animals," said VOCAL president and founder Angie Wyche.

Halbert has participated in a variety of clubs and organizations during her four years at Rickards. As a member of the marching band, her love of writing led her to establish the Magnolia Writing Club. During the club's weekly off-campus meetings, she leads discussions about books, writing styles

and poetry.

She has also served as vice president of the Rickards Multicultural Club since its inception in 2015. Halbert manages the club's website, announcement, sponsorship, planning and often the direction of endeavors such as the Haiti Initiative Project. A participant of the local NPR program "411 Teen," Halbert has also been active in Model United Nations, serving as both secretary and vice president and collecting multiple awards.

Halbert has also assisted with activities for the National Honor Society and won a Bronze Award for the Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle. She has served as editor of poetry and fiction as well as editor in chief of the Rickards Literary Magazine.

Rickards IB instructor Janalee Jarrett said Halbert's writing offers a unique perspective, and Halbert enjoys portraying characters in skits and reenactments.

"She is generous in spirit and her integrity is above reproach," Jarrett said.

Halbert hopes to leave a legacy of inspiring others.

"I take great pride in the work that I do; the ability to help and inspire pride in others is something that means much to me," Halbert said. "As I look toward the future, I wish to be the same mentor for others as they are to me."

**RUNNER-UP**


## ANDREA MENDOZA

### St. John Paul II Catholic School

Last summer, Andrea Mendoza helped initiate a creative writing camp, where she taught different types of poetry, short story writing and playwriting among other topics.

"I felt like I was really passing something on to the kids who attended the camp," Mendoza said. "I felt like they left with a new or strengthened appreciation for the art of writing."

Mendoza also founded a creative writing club as well as Blue & Gold, a literary magazine. During her four years at SJPII, she has also played cello and starred in productions for the drama club.

For the last three summers, Mendoza has volunteered at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, where she assisted nurses with cleaning, entertaining patients and distributing food and water. She also participated in the Junior League of Tallahassee Teen Board.

"People around Andrea see that she does all things with a great deal of thought and intent," said SJPII teacher Jennifer Freeman. "She is curious about learning and investing new and disparate topics."

Mendoza's hopes her legacy at SJPII will live on through the creative writing club and literary magazine.

"I hope through my clubs, students can keep learning about the literary arts and advancing their writing skills," she said.





## HONORABLE MENTION

### CHLOE CAYLOR Chiles High School



During the summer of 2016, Chloe Caylor spent six hours a week at the FSU Museum of Fine Arts working tirelessly with college students as they created lesson plans for the museum.

"I understood more clearly the level of detail needed to accurately put together the behind-the-scenes features of a museum exhibit," Caylor said.

Since last spring, Caylor has volunteered with Reading Pals at Hawks Rise Elementary, where she worked one-on-one with students struggling with English.

She has also volunteered at the Leon County Public Library and took care of animals at the Humane Society. In June of 2015, Caylor went on a mission trip to New Orleans.

Chiles teacher Andrew Shoenberger said Caylor's voice is present in her writing.

"She does not merely respond to a prompt," Shoenberger said. "She engages with the prompt synthesizing her own ideas with the author's to create a probing and insightful essay."

Caylor hopes others will recognize her love for service.

"I desire that others would remember my involvement in and advancement of clubs on campus such as FCA as well as service groups like Reading Pals, and that this would inspire them to do the same," she said.

## FINALISTS

### ANNA CAMPBELL SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** Top 10 Student (2014-2018)

**Activity Highlights:** National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists Award of Excellence

**Activity Highlights:** Student District Advisory Council Secretary, Student Ambassador, National Honor Society, Florida Assertion of Student Government

**My Legacy:** "I want to be remembered as the girl who was always smiling and held compassion for other people. A person who could be considered a mentor and friend. Someone who could always help you with your homework or give you advice on your art project. I don't want to be remembered as some genius but as someone who had a big heart."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Anna is a leader within student government and an inspiration to the underclassmen. Anna speaks clearly and eloquently about her positions and responds to questions and criticisms in a respectful way. Outside of the classroom, Anna shows her dedication to community service and inspiring others to do their best."

- Caitlyn Starkey, SAIL Social Studies Teacher

### JOSHUA CHANG Lincoln High School



**Awards and Honors:** Principal's Award (2014-2016), Florida Scholastic Rowing Association North Florida District Championship (2014-2016), Tampa Fall Sprint (2017), Certificate of Service for Overseas Youth English Teaching Volunteer Services

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society (2014-2017), Maclay Gardens Long Skinny Boat Camp counselor (2014-2016), Guan Miao Elementary School volunteer (2017)

**My Legacy:** "As a second generation immigrant, I want to prove that I am always able to compete at the highest level like the others. The daily three hours rowing practice routine has led to my belief of persistence being key. I may not be the smartest one, but I believe that through tenacity and hard work it will lead to success."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Josh has made an outstanding contribution in the class and in service to the school and community in a variety of ways. In the classroom, Josh is very driven; when learning a new concept, Josh is quick to ask for clarification so that he can better understand the subject. Josh expects the best from his instructors and himself, as his work reflects high quality and upper-level thinking."

-Rebecca Crouch, Lincoln English Teacher

### JOSHUA CIARLARIELLO Community Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** Elizabeth Elliot English Composition Award, Eagle Scout Ranking

**Activity Highlights:** Immersion Week, Winter EX, The Longest Table, Navajo Nation Mission trip

**My Legacy:** "My legacy will be simple: I want to be remembered for the unwavering focus on God and genuine love for others that defines who I am. Relationships are the currency of life, and I hope that at the end of mine, I will be able to look back and know that I found treasure."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Josh has continued to push himself, choosing ambitious topics over simple ones, deciding to start over from a blank page when he concluded that his first draft wasn't quite what he wanted, or completing extra drafts for no credit when he was unsatisfied with the final result for the class. I have watched him discover, explore, and refine this voice over the years, accepting criticism with alacrity and praise with humility."

- Mara Eller, CCS English Teacher



## TAKEIA DAVIS FAMU Developmental Research School



**Awards and Honors:** Superintendent Award of Achievement, National Society of High School Scholars, SGA Parliamentarian

**Activity Highlights:** JROTC Staff Member, JROTC Battalion Commander (2016-2017), Quiz Bowl (2017), B.E.T.A. Club Secretary, Student Government Association, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

**My Legacy:** "Courageous knights in armor and exquisite princesses. My legacy will be beyond those limits. Everything I have done or even thought of doing, will be acknowledged within my community, if not worldwide. I have spread smiles, shared tears, and reached unbreakable bonds through literature with many people, and only wish for that limit to be surpassed by another curious youth."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Takeia Davis is a bright young lady with a bright future in the Florida higher education system. She is highly involved in her community. Takeia is a great leader."

- Anthony Thompson, FAMU DRS Social Studies Teacher

## CHANDLER DOWNIE Maclay School



**Awards and Honors:** National French Exam Silver Medal (2016), National Merit Exam Honorable Mention, Science Fair Regionals

**Activity Highlights:** Literary Journal Editor-in-Chief, National Honor Society (2016, 2017)

**My Legacy:** "I hope the legacy I leave at Maclay is fearlessness about being unique. In my years of high school, I have strived to be my own person, regardless of what my peers said I should be. I hope the underclassmen

I've known will do as I have and stay true to themselves, no matter what."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Chandler Downie possesses a curiosity and kind spirit that make our school a cooler, smarter place. Chandler lets herself shine through in all she does. Her musical talents, leadership abilities, beautiful writing, and academic performance make her one of the most well-respected people on our campus."

- Lee Normet, Maclay School English Department Chair

## WILLIAM JONES Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:** Best & Brightest Award 8th Grade Essay Finalist (2014), Academic Achievement Award, volunteer Income Tax Certification

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society Secretary, AVID Scholars Council Secretary, Future Business Leaders of America Secretary, Godby's VITA program

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy upon graduating will be attending college and participating in internships and study abroad trips, all while completing a degree in accounting and the proceeding to obtain my MAcc and MBA after my bachelor is received. I then hope to go from Certified Public Accountant to a CFO of a large corporation."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Noah has displayed a tenacity of taking difficult courses from the most demanding teachers. This work ethic pays off in large with concrete knowledge and discipline for study. Noah shows that he is a strong and determined individual whose ambition is obvious. I have no doubt in my mind he will succeed in any endeavor he embarks on."

- Randi C. Lundgren, Godby Art Teacher

## CYNTHIA PATERSON Leon High School



**Awards and Honors:** English Student of the Year (2015), Girl Scout Gold Award (2017), Young Women Recognition Award (2016), Honor Bee Award (2017), Outstanding Freshman Orchestra Student of the Year (2014)

**Activity Highlights:** Anchor Club President, Yarn Club Vice President

**My Legacy:** "I hope to leave a legacy of integrity, dedication, and compassion. I strive to be honest in my dealings, as I view honesty as a trait essential to personal growth. I set goals for myself that I diligently work towards, and I hope to inspire others to remain dedicated. My life's principles goal is to show compassion through willingness to push myself out of my comfort zone to serve others."

**What Others Are Saying:** "While Cynthia's obvious intelligence means that she stands out in any classroom, I think what I most appreciated about her was her sharp insight, especially during small and large group discussions. Cynthia is thoughtful and judicious about her contributions to a discussion. Cynthia's unassuming nature belies a wicked intelligence, and the class soon understood that when Cynthia spoke it was time to listen."

- Jennifer Roady-Lawson, Leon English Teacher





## SKYLAR RAINEY

### Florida State University School



**Awards and Honors:** Chorus Leadership Award (2015), Chorus Notable Singer Award (2017), published in 2014 and 2015 The American Poetry Library

**Activity Highlights:** National Society of High School Scholars, Learning Buddy, Writing Club Founder

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy after graduation will be that I started the Writing Club at my school for the kids who wanted to say something. I hope that I was able to help everyone, especially my juniors. Perhaps that the walls heard their stories, that we all did and I will carry them with me wherever I go."

**What Others Are Saying:** "I have noticed that her role in the class and the community is one that is steeped and embodied in the English language. Not only is Skylar and avid reader and writer, but even her community service is related to spreading a love for humanities and the art of writing."

- Shannon Axtell, FSUS English Teacher

## KALYN TYSON

### North Florida Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** English Award (2015, 2016), Scholar Cheerleader Award (2014-2016), Varsity Cheerleading Spirit Award (2014, 2016)

**Activity Highlights:** Varsity Cheerleading, Key Club, Spirit Club, Little Eagles Cheerleading Camp (2014-2018)

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I hope that my legacy will be an encouragement and motivation so students at my school will have more school spirit and become more involved in their community and school-related programs."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Kalyn works hard each day in class to do her very best. She is extremely well organized which helps her in everything she is involved in. Kalyn has the ability to lead others in such a positive way. She is capable of taking on many tasks in a timely fashion. Kalyn is very well-rounded, and NFC will truly miss the leadership she has provided during her high school years."

- Holly Gorham, NFC Math Department Chair

## PAST WINNERS

### 2006

Winner - Catherine Chase  
Runner-up - Maria Diaz  
Honorable Mention - Ariel Adams

### 2007

Winner - Rebecca Lu  
Runner-up - Alexander McNaughton  
Honorable Mention - David Capelouto

### 2008

Winner - Anna Beck  
Runner-up - Erin Canter  
Honorable Mention - Elizabeth Seery

### 2009

Winner - Mark Stern  
Runner-up - Julia Slayden  
Honorable Mention - Lendra Coker

### 2010

Winner - Taylor Conley  
Runner-up - Rebecca Markell  
Honorable Mention - Aidan Hale

### 2011

Winner - Ciara Niamh Lepanto  
Runner-up - Jazmyn Reed  
Honorable Mention - India Watkins

### 2012

Winner - Cecelia Smith-Schoenwalder  
Runner-up - Mary Kathryn King  
Honorable Mention - Christina Mbuya

### 2013

Winner - Rachel Cannella  
Runner-up - Taylor Harvey  
Honorable Mention - Winston McGriff

### 2014

Winner - Yasemin Altun  
Runner-up - Brooke Harrison  
Honorable Mention - Emily Ostreich

### 2015

Winner - Mary Dixon  
Runner-up - Mikayla Murray  
Honorable Mention - Zoe Hume

### 2016

Winner - Amelia Bunnell  
Runner-up - Kaitlyn Bludau  
Honorable Mention - Marilyn Edmond

### 2017

Winner - Leteme Ashebo  
Runner-up - Quinlan Mewborne  
Honorable Mention - Rachel Corry



WINNER



### BRENDA GIKUNDA Rickards High School

A native of Kenya, Brenda Gikunda's first language is Swahili and she is fluent in other tribal languages.

After learning of an influx of refugees from Congo and Uganda in Tallahassee, Gikunda was called on to help two refugee students at Rickards. As a translator and liaison, she was often called out of class to help and sacrificed study and lunch time doing so.

"I thought, if I could be the one to make them feel comfortable in a situation like this, then I would do everything in my ability to do so," Gikunda said.

Gikunda has helped the students express their feelings to their guidance counselors and the administration. She also introduced them to clubs and activities like the Spanish Club and Multicultural Club as well as bake sales and potlucks.

Helping the refugees reminded Gikunda of her struggles assimilating.

"I am so happy that I am able to use my bilingual abilities to help others, especially those who I have been in their shoes," she said.

She found a little piece of home in the students and hopes they found the same in her.

"This experience has allowed me to clearly understand how to value others and their feelings and has also made me aware of my

own individual abilities and power to make a difference in my very own community," Gikunda said.

Rickards guidance counselor Linda Thompson called Gikunda a "heroine" who has excelled in the International Baccalaureate Program and is also fluent in Spanish.

"Students who see her success know that they too have a place in this country," Thompson said of Gikunda.

Last summer, Gikunda spent time at the Gaitu Health Clinic in Kenya as a translator, collecting patient information and counting and organizing medicine.

Gikunda has also been active with Habitat for Humanity, and volunteer coordinator Melissa Meadowcroft called her instrumental in mentoring and leading her peers on five building projects.

"Her dedication to the notion of eliminating substandard housing and homelessness is exemplified by her selfless commitment to the ideals of the Habitat humanitarian effort," Meadowcroft said.

Gikunda hopes to leave a legacy of love and selflessness.

"I want to be remembered as the girl who used her abilities to help those in need," she said. "I hope I've made a difference in the lives of the refugee students and to my peers, to show them that genuine love and kindness can go a great distance."

RUNNER-UP



### AASHARI WILLIAMS Florida State University School

Aashari Williams distinctly remembers being captivated by the Spanish language growing up and jumped at the chance to take Spanish at Florida High as a seventh grader.

Five years later, Williams is still fascinated with the language and wanted to keep in touch with the language, so she became her school's first Spanish intern. She helped three Spanish teachers with tutoring students, grading papers, editing lesson plans and preparing activities for Florida High's chapter of the Spanish National Honor Society.

"Because I have seen the point of view of both the student and the teacher, I have a better understanding of how to reach kids emotionally and mentally," Williams said. "Knowing this language has opened up so many doors for me and has been a big part of my life."

Williams has participated in numerous service projects, and at school she served as president of the Spanish Club and Spanish National Honor Society.

"I can't think of anyone else who has worked so hard in order to make a real and positive difference in people's lives who just happen to be less fortunate or have at times encountered difficult situations throughout their lives," said Florida High Spanish teacher Salvador Guastella.

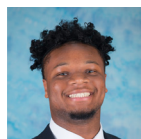




## HONORABLE MENTION

### JORDAN BURNLEY

#### Godby High School



While excelling in his Spanish courses at Godby, Jordan Burnley has lent his knowledge to his classmates.

Whether helping students study or finish assignments, Burnley has guided others to succeed

"My role is to demonstrate that it is beyond possible, yet attainable to know another language other than the first language spoken," Burnley said. "One significant influence is learning that there are people who are not English speakers in this nation. This is what encouraged me to study Spanish, so that I may be of assistance or service for them."

Burnley has volunteered at St. Phillips, helping prepare for upcoming performances and programs and events at the Miracle Hill Nursing Home.

Godby Spanish teacher Daphne McClain said Burnley demonstrates a willingness to work and learn.

"Mr. Burnley knows how to use time wisely and set priorities," McClain said. "Even with all these activities, he has maintained a high grade point average in many challenging courses."

Burnley hopes to leave a legacy motivating students to "continue on taking the extra course, no matter what it may be."

"I want my legacy to encourage students to go above and beyond the standard requirements and to enhance their academic abilities," he said.

## FINALISTS

### EMMA BONNEY

#### Chiles High School



**Awards and Honors:** Impromptu Speaking and Recitation Modern Language Expo Competitor, Outstanding Freshman Award

**Activity Highlights:** Anchor Club, Sharon Davis School of Dance, National Honor Society, Artistry Dance Alliance Assistant Teacher

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I hope the girls that I teach will remember me not only as a teacher, but a friend, big sister, and someone they can trust. I want to make an impression as a positive role model and help them grow into kind, confident people."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Emma is a talented young woman who follows her goals and dreams. Her caring nature and personality allows her to work well with others in a team setting, as she always respects other's opinion even when they differ from her own. I am certain the Emma is going to continue to do great things in her future, she is talented, caring, intuitive, dedicated and focused in her pursuits."

- Medina Edinam, Chiles Spanish Teacher

### ALEXANDER CASPARY

#### Lincoln High School



**Awards and Honors:** AP Spanish Language Student of the Year, All Around Winner for Spanish State Competition, Spanish State Impromptu Speaking Perfect Score, Spanish State Declamation Superior Score, Swimming Coach's Award, District History Fair

**Activity Highlights:** Lincoln Swimming, Spanish Club and Honor Society, Mission San Luis Tour Guide

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I hope my legacy will be being remembered as the student who taught young children the importance of knowing a foreign language in this era we live in and

showing them how it can help in their future endeavors I hope that the knowledge and love for the world languages I left with them will pass on to the next generations."

**What Others Are Saying:** "He employs a teaching method that makes the lessons interesting and amusing in order for the younger generation to find the same love he has for the Spanish Language. He always has a goal of teaching something new to the kids who struggle with conjugations, tenses, and sentence structure in order to better their Spanish skills. His primary goal is to benefit the students and make them as successful as they can be."

- Dr. Jose Morales, Lincoln Spanish Teacher

### BENJAMIN EACKER

#### St. John Paul II

#### Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Best in Spanish 3, Best in Spanish 4, Best in U.S. History

**Activity Highlights:** President of Spanish National Honors Society, Varsity Baseball, Leader in F.C.A., Senior Class Treasurer

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy will be the aspect of acceptance and perseverance. Defying odds has been something I always liked to do and to be perseverant is an important part. Being accepted can build bridges and connect people, which is very important."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Ben has been highly involved in the volunteer aspect of the Spanish National Honors Society and helping to tutor other students who need help. He has done his best to teach others and also create connections with them."

- Vladimir Inguil, SJPII Spanish Teacher



## GABRIELLE GOKE SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** High Honor Roll (2014-2018), SAIL High School Medallion Award

**Activity Highlights:** Tallahassee Animal Shelter, American Red Cross

**My Legacy:** "I hope that upon graduating my legacy will be spreading kindness and accepting everyone, and to never stop trying and to stay hopeful in all situations."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Gabrielle is a leader in her classes and our SAIL community. She always cared for others on her team in Math for College Readiness and inspired students to come to class and complete their assignments by her attention to detail and pursuit of understanding. Gabrielle always stays to true education- both for herself and the students around her."

- Marilyn Griffith, SAIL Math Teacher

## JADE HOFBAUER Leon High School



**Awards and Honors:** President French National Honor (2017-2018), A/B Honor Roll (2014-2018)

**Activity Highlights:** French National Honor Society (2014-2018), Pierian National Honor Society (2017-2018), Rho Kappa Social Studies National Honor Society (2017-2018), Tennis (2014-2015)

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I hope to leave a legacy of respect for my school and an emphasis on the importance and value of learning language in high school. For me specifically, foreign language is easily the thing I put the most effort into consistently throughout my years at Leon and through that I hope to maintain the legacy behind the service-based French National Honor Society."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Jade takes her academic challenges seriously and strives for excellence with every assignment. She is helpful with other students, shares ideas in a positive way, and is understanding with their struggles. Her commitment to helping others is remarkable and inspiring, and she is extremely well organized with any endeavor she undertakes"

- Madame C. Clarke, French National Honor Society Sponsor

## ANNA LEWIS Maclay School



**Awards and Honors:** High Honor Roll, Bright Futures, Student of the Semester at Maclay High School (Fall 2017), Homecoming Queen (2017-2018), Nominee for student athlete (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** National Honors Society, Anchor Club, Red Cross Club, Mu Alpha Theta Club, Multicultural Awareness Club, Spanish Honors Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Varsity Track, Varsity Soccer, BUSC Regional Team Club Soccer, ASG Club Soccer

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I hope my legacy is one that inspires people to be the best and most genuine versions of themselves. In everything I do, I strive to exhibit to my peers a level of dedication and tenacity in all areas of my life. Life is a beautiful gift that we, as society, take for granted all too often."

**What Others Are Saying:** "She was thorough with all assignments and always worked with a positive attitude. Her biggest passion involving the language is her work to better the lives of people in a small part of Guatemala. Anna has set a goal to bring the love to more than just Guatemala; she hopes to help bring love to many more countries around the world!"

- Heather Bas, Maclay Dean of Students

## SHEALYN SULLIVAN Home School



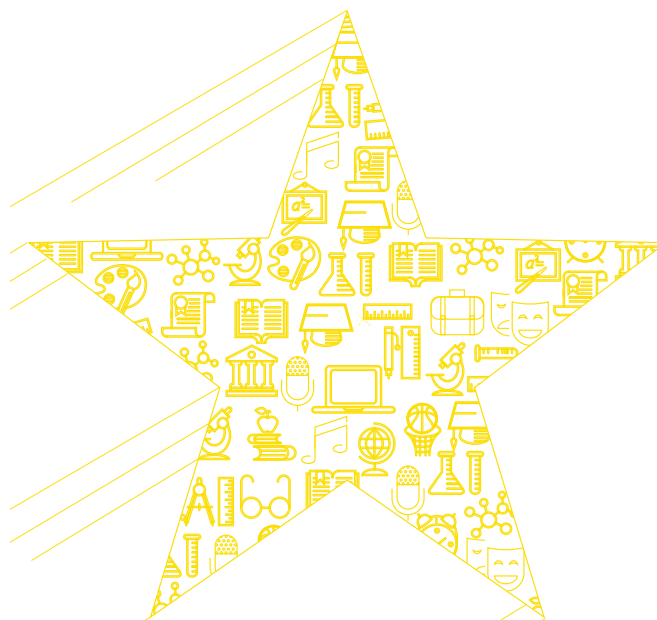
**Awards and Honors:** National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA) (2016), Scholar Athlete Award Track and Field (2016-2017), Scholar Athlete Award Cross Country (2017-2018)

**Activity Highlights:** International Impact Ministries (2014-2015), Peer Volunteer (2016-2017)

**My Legacy:** "I want my time in high school to be remembered by the love I shared. Because of the abundant love Jesus has for me, I was able to use my service and friendships to spread the love He has passed to me. I strive to live like Him and I hope my legacy reflects that."

**What Others Are Saying:** "She had an exemplary rapport with both me as her instructor and with her fellow students. She works well in a team setting, assuming responsibility for her part in any co-operative project while being willing to help other students. Shealyn is a young women who is committed to excellence and to serving those around her whether it be at home in the US or in a foreign culture"

- Terri W. Hall, Science Instructor





# PAST WINNERS

**2006** Winner - Olivia Trowers  
 Runner-up - Kelli Frazier  
 Honorable Mention - Jessica Mestre

**2007** Winner - Marley Moynahan  
 Runner-up - Sarah Stern  
 Honorable Mention - Morgan Hicks

**2008** Winner - Genevieve Tuveson  
 Runner-up - Kristen Ramsey  
 Honorable Mention - Diana Hernández

**2009** Winner - Annika Silverman  
 Runner-up - Ethan Rosenblum  
 Honorable Mention - Sophie Lang

**2010** Winner - Erinma Kalu  
 Runner-up - Emily Vogelgesang  
 Honorable Mention - Mark Schmertmann

**2011** Winner - Jane Darby Menton  
 Runner-up - Heather Claypoole  
 Honorable Mention - Kara Wilcox

**2012** Winner - Vasilije Dobrosavljevic  
 Runner-up - Nida Mohyuddin  
 Honorable Mention - Nina Rodríguez

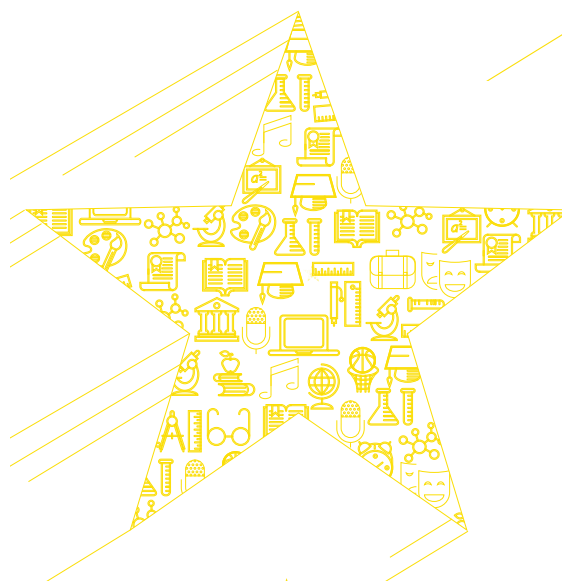
**2013** Winner - Amberly Williams  
 Runner-up - Sonia Koul  
 Honorable Mention - Robert King

**2014** Winner - Mackenzie Teek  
 Runner-up - Kevin Ramirez  
 Honorable Mention - William Courrèges-Clerc

**2015** Winner - Nia Harmon  
 Runner-up - Michelle Fonseca  
 Honorable Mention - Shannon Duncanson

**2016** Winner - Catherine Wilhelm  
 Runner-up - Nancy Engel  
 Honorable Mention - Blake Williams-

**2017** Winner - Delaney Kaklamanos  
 Runner-up - Erin Mulrooney  
 Honorable Mention - Joseph McCann II





**WINNER**


## LAUREN SHIRLEY

### Florida State University School

Inspired by her own personal experience, Lauren Shirley sought out personal accounts of survivors of sexual harassment and assault.

"When I became aware of how common sexual assault is and how little it is discussed, I felt compelled to make a difference," she said.

Shirley said she wanted to raise awareness of the personal impact that sexual abuse has on individual members of the community.

She started by reaching out to survivors she knew personally, and as the project progressed she talked to survivors that were recommended to her.

"Even though I considered myself knowledgeable about the statistics of sexual assault, I was still surprised to see how far-reaching this issue is, and how many people in our community had experienced sexual assault," Shirley said.

Using her platform as a student journalist, Shirley fought to include articles about sexual assault in Florida High's school newspaper, Tomahawk Talk.

"My ultimate goal is to publish my compilation in some form," Shirley said. "I think it is important that people see these issues don't just happen in Hollywood or big cities, but that even small towns like Tallahassee can, and are, impacted by sexual harassment and assault."

Shirley has served as features editor and sports editor for Tomahawk Talk, and as a senior she became editor-in-chief. Florida High English teacher and newspaper and yearbook adviser Leslie Klein said Shirley became an editor whom every staff writer turned to with questions and concerns, and she went above and beyond representing Florida High in a competition.

This year, Shirley joined the yearbook staff.

"I have nothing but respect for Lauren's enthusiasm and willingness to take on any challenge that she is presented with," Klein said. "I know that this will transfer to anything she puts her mind to, making her successful in all aspects of life."

Shirley has been a member of student government, helping set up various events. Last year she was head of the prom committee, conducting year-round meetings.

She received a Gold Award in Girl Scouts for partnering with the Leon County Animal Shelter. She has volunteered to help homeless people in Nashville and Ridgecrest, North Carolina and volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club of South Alabama.

Shirley hopes to be remembered as someone who is passionate about social justice and equality.

"I hope I have inspired at least one person to care about what is happening in the world around them," she said.

**RUNNER-UP**


## HANNAH WONG

### Leon High School

Hannah Wong has spent her summers on mission trips to Guatemala through St. Peter's Anglican Church. After volunteering there on four occasions, she was called on to be a part of her church's trip to Uganda.

For a year leading up to the Uganda mission, Wong helped coordinate a program called the Vulnerable Children's Ministry, which pairs a disadvantaged Ugandan child with a St. Peter's family.

After her 14-day stay, Wong delivered the children's letters to their sponsors, and by seeing their enthusiasm she learned the Tallahassee community extends far beyond city limits.

"Foreign mission work may not be the typical form of community service, but from my experience it is one of the most impactful," she said.

Wong also served as an intern at the Knight Creative Communities Institute and has been on the staff of Leon's newspaper, the High Life. She has also served as secretary of Leon's Pierian chapter of the National Honor Society.

Leon English teacher Martha Kinch Towey said Wong has a humble attitude and is seemingly unaware of her talent.

Wong wants to be remembered as an avid pursuer of news and cultivator of rhetoric.

"I hope my writing and leadership conveyed the power and potential that journalism possesses," Wong said.





## HONORABLE MENTION

### CRISTIN MCKEE

#### Home School



Inspired by Tallahassee Woman Magazine, her favorite publication, Cristin "Cristi" McKee sought to start her own magazine for local teenagers.

McKee reached out to Tallahassee Woman, and she was invited to meet with the editor and publisher. She walked out of the meeting as the founder and editor-in-chief of Tallahassee Teen Magazine.

While writing stories for each section of the magazine, she also edited articles, oversaw the layout and design and brainstormed ideas for the publication.

The debut issue of Tallahassee Teen Magazine was released in print and online in June 2016.

"This magazine gave me the ability to share my ideas and words of encouragement and let others write about what they feel strongly about, all while showcasing Tallahassee teenagers' accomplishments and stories," McKee said.

McKee has also spent time volunteering at St. Peter's Anglican Church, assisting teachers and helping children. She also is a member of the Florida Virtual School chapter of the National English Honor Society, for which she created monthly content.

She always keeps an eye out for ways that she can help others.

"I hope my legacy upon graduating will be that of helping others through doing what I love," McKee said.

## FINALISTS

### ABBYGALE CLOUD

#### Chiles High School



**Awards and Honors:** Academic Award for maintaining A/B Honor Roll (2015-2018)

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society (2016-2018), Externship at Tallahassee Woman Magazine (2017-2018), Chiles High School Ambassador (2016-2018), Colquitt Miller County Chamber of Commerce

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I hope to leave a legacy associated with my interest and passion with writing. With a world advancing in technology and social media, journalism is becoming a crucial supplier of news to all societies. I hope to contribute positively to the community of journalists and reporters by sharing my own works with a magazine or company."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Abby quickly learned to manage her time, work in group situations under strict deadlines, and recognize the importance of a strong work ethic, persistence, and intellectual integrity. Mindful of the differing opinions of others in the classroom, she became one of the most valued contributors to intense class discussions. Her stellar work ethic was evident with each of her completed assignments and projects."

- Lana Middlebrooks, Chiles English Teacher

### JOSEPHINE FINN

#### St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Marine Media Young Filmmaker, Participant in Freecon's Cosplay Contest, Participant in Holiday Matsuri's Runway Contest, GPA Award (2014-2016)

**Activities Highlights:** Makeup department (2015-2018), Geek Club (2016-2017), Volleyball

(2015), Piano and Bass guitar (2015-2018)

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I want my legacy to be the girl that never settled. I want to encourage other students to push themselves to be better than they ever knew they could be. Whether you want to go into film, like myself, or neuroscience, you can do anything you want if you work for it."

**What Others Are Saying:** "One of the phrases I would use to describe Josey is that she beats to her own drum, in a good way. Josey is a genial, smart young woman with a quiet disposition but a strong inner drive and unique voice."

- Jennifer Freeman, SJPII English Teacher

### LEXI FITZPATRICK

#### Lincoln High School



**Awards and Honors:** Awards and Honors: "Play like a Champion" Essay Scholarship Winner, 24K Recipient, University of Florida's Journalism Camp's "Best Theme"

**Activity Highlights:** Editor-in-Chief of Lincoln Legend Yearbook, Trojan Talk Broadcaster (2016-2017)

**My Legacy:** "I hope to have used the yearbook and the second year ever of Trojan Talk as a platform to spread positivity, inclusivity, and school spirit around Lincoln. I hope that students will have seen my excitement in Lincoln and duplicate it as they go through their four years."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Lexi is a well-respected athlete. She is also incredibly conscientious about all of her classwork. Her persistent commitment to excellence, her writing and critical thinking skills serve as models for her classmates as she has honored her talents through her exemplary skills in copywriting, design, and theme. Without her leadership, her determination, and her positive attitude, our student publication would not be as successful as it is."

- Jonathan Herrera, Lincoln English Teacher



# STAR KHAN

## SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** Department Award of Excellence for Outstanding Achievement in Photography (2016), Pirate Medallion Award (2016), SAIL Poetry Contest Winner (2017)

**Activities Highlights:** KEY Club Editor (2016, 2017), National Honors Society President (2016, 2017), Drama Club Co-President (2017)

**My Legacy:** "Because of the way I conduct myself in public, others know that everyone deserves to be treated as an equal and shown nothing but love and acceptance. They also know that their voice is the most powerful weapon in their artillery and should always be used to standing up for themselves and others in order to change things for the better."

**What others are saying:** "I thoroughly enjoyed my time working with Star, and came to know her as a truly valuable asset to absolutely any team. She is honest, dependable, and incredibly hard-working. Star is thoroughly a well-rounded student scholar and role model."

- Emily Bell, SAIL Media Specialist

# LAURYN PARKER

## Maclay School



**Awards and Honors:** Honor Roll (2014-2018), Robert S. Kass Award (2014), State Volleyball Final Four (2016)

**Activities Highlights:** Marauder Yearbook, Varsity Volleyball, Varsity Softball, Varsity Baseball, Dance Marathon Committee

**My Legacy:** "As an editor and leader of this year's staff, I hope that I have instilled a hard work ethic in the Marauder yearbook staff behind me. I want them to understand the importance of time management along with quality work. I also want them to remember

that when they are overwhelmed they have a family of support all around."

**What Others Are Saying:** "There is much to admire about Lauryn's work ethic, character, and attitude. Lauryn devotes her time and energy to the entire community emulating the characteristics of young and caring citizens. She is truly one of the finest people I have the privilege to know."

- Deborah Mayer, Maclay English Teacher

# CHYNA WRIGHT

## Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:** Microsoft Office Specialist, Aviation Student of the Year, High Academic Achievement Award

**Activities Highlights:** National Honors Society, Yearbook Editor, Varsity Tennis, Youth Leadership Tallahassee, The Longest Table, Ladies Learning to Lead, National Junior Beta Club, WFSU American Graduate Voices From the Classroom, Not Forgotten 365

**My Legacy:** "I hope to leave behind a lasting impact for others to follow. I want people to know that their value means something and anything can help make a difference."

**What Others Are Saying:** "A natural in the classroom, Chyna has worked with students in both the classroom as well as individually, focusing on the needs of the yearbook program. She goes above and beyond in editing, designing, and marketing for the school as far as the cover, t-shirts for the senior class, and assisting students with the list."

- Joliz Myers, Godby Yearbook Teacher

# PHILLIP WRIGHT

## Rickards High School



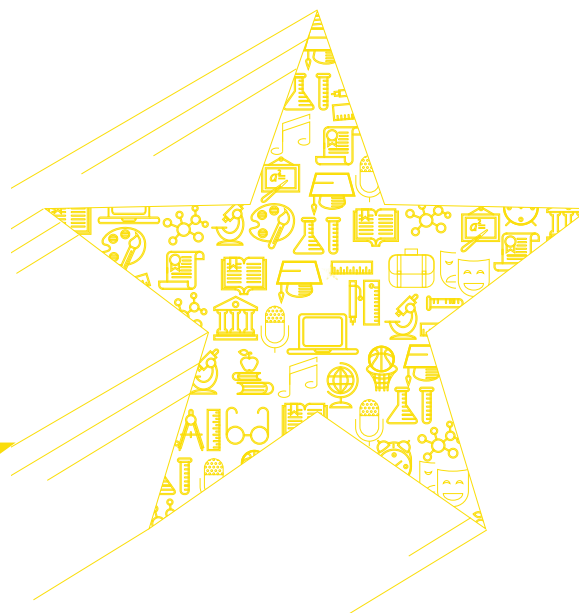
**Awards and Honors:** Leon Country Student Reporter, Wakulla Film Festival Best Overall Film, No Place for Hate Candidate

**Activities Highlights:** Honor Roll, National Honor Society, IB Candidate, Student Government Association Secretary

**My Legacy:** "Ever since I was in 9th grade I have always wanted my legacy to be that I was the one who started something new and ambitious at my school. I was the one who did the unthinkable and the unimaginable which was continued by many students in the future."

**What Others Are Saying:** "His knowledge and energy was evident from the very first day when he stood up and performed, impromptu, a monologue from the film The Dark Knight. The fact that this young man dared to dream of making something this ambitious and then invited his friends and classmates along, pushing them all to do their best that is the most invaluable service of all. Mr. Wright is a strong student with a great positive attitude, full of confidence, energy, good humor and a genuine concern for others."

- Jeff Distefano, Rickards Art and Film Teacher





## PAST WINNERS

2006

Winner - Wendy Walters  
 Runner-up - Elizabeth Copps  
 Honorable Mention - Camille Goethe

2007

Winner - Jessica Moody  
Runner-up - Amber Frydrychowski  
Honorable Mention - Clay Celandier

2008

Winner - Eden Joyner  
 Runner-up - Alexander Saunders  
 Honorable Mention - Sarah Taylor

2009

Winner - Elizabeth Landers  
 Runner-up - Kathryn Schofield  
 Honorable Mention - Tara Gonzalez

2010

Winner - Dana Edwards  
 Runner-up - Madeleine Loeb  
 Honorable Mention - Ashira Morris

2011

Winner - Katie Mullaly  
Runner-up - Lisa Gault  
Honorable Mention - Chi-Valry Wu

2012

Winner - Taylor McMahon  
 Runner-up - Nigel King  
 Honorable Mention - Kylie Parham

2013

Winner - Joni Lindsey  
 Runner-up - Elizabeth Santoro  
 Honorable Mention - Patricia Moes

2014

Winner - Mina Kaji  
 Runner-up - Madison Harris-Parks  
 Honorable Mention - Torri Hart

2015

Winner - Muireall Brown  
 Runner-up - Rachel Rivers  
 Honorable Mention - Dakota Williams

2016

Winner - Celita Summa  
 Runner-up - John-Ike Smith-Schoenwalder  
 Honorable Mention - Reagan Anderson

2017

Winner - Caleb Riggins  
 Runner-up - Julia Chodyla  
 Honorable Mention - Saniya Pradhan





**WINNER**


## DANIEL SWEENEY

### Maclay School

Growing up in Florida, Daniel Sweeney knows the devastating impact hurricanes can have on communities. He saw it firsthand on his first of several mission trips to New Orleans, where he helped rebuild and repair homes.

"I was struck by the appreciation the homeowners showed for our help, as well as how much our demonstration of love impacted them," Sweeney said.

Sweeney was inspired to make the same impact in Tallahassee, and soon he was offered a board position for Big Bend Habitat for Humanity. He worked on construction sites, stocked the charity's store and facilitated fundraising events.

"I witnessed the positive impact on the families in my community directly and indirectly impacted by the creation of affordable housing," he said. "Moving forward, I plan to continue to increase my involvement in this effort by working on the Family Selection Committee where I will have the opportunity to directly interact with prospective partners with Habitat."

In 2016, Sweeney participated in Leon County Teen Court, for which he served as an attorney in jury member. He has volunteered at youth soccer camps and raised money for Strides for Seizures and the Tallahassee Memorial Hospital Foundation. In addition, he was chosen

to participate in Youth Leadership Tallahassee.

Sweeney was captain of Maclay's varsity soccer and cross country teams, and his leadership abilities landed him on the Florida High School Athletic Association Student Athlete Advisory Committee.

At school, Sweeney has been student council president for the upper school, founded and served as co-president of the Investment Club and was also a voting member of the Honor Council.

A National Merit Scholar semifinalist and AP Scholar with Distinction, Sweeney juggled five Advanced Placement courses his senior year. He published an essay in Maclay's literary magazine, for which he served as its fiction editor.

Maclay English department chair Lee Norment said Sweeney has the most ambitious schedule of any student he's ever taught.

"His work ethic, discipline, intellect, and leadership skills make him one of the best students I've ever taught and one of the best people I've ever met," Norment said.

Sweeney strives to put his best foot forward every day and seeks to put others first.

"Upon graduating from Maclay, I hope to leave a legacy of maximizing the opportunities of high school through balancing commitments to genuine relationships, curious scholarship, competitive athletics, and altruistic service," he said.

**RUNNER-UP**


## SLADE MACHADO

### Community Christian School

For five years, Slade Machado has served as a cadet and counselor at Camp Charis, now known as Camp Crosspoint.

"This might be our only chance to love on and serve kids who may come from troubled backgrounds and broken families, and it means more to those kids than we could ever know," Machado said. "No matter what may be going on with them, every kid wants a friend who cares for them enough to give up their summer for them."

Machado has gone on mission trips to New Orleans as well as Haiti last summer. At school, he has played in and led the worship team.

"He is a young man who is passionate, driven, focused, and highly intelligent," said Camp Crosspoint director JT Thompson.

"He will impact the lives of so many through volunteering and serving, and he does so with a gentleness and love."

Machado hopes to leave his legacy having championed the Latin phrase "Semper Excelsior," meaning "Always Higher."

"This phrase has changed the way I look at life, and I want people to see me in that dedicated, faithful pursuit of a higher calling, despite knowing that I cannot achieve perfection without God."





## HONORABLE MENTION

### TAREQ SALLEY

#### Rickards High School



In almost every club and organization Tareq Salley has been a part of, he has risen up to a leadership position.

He has been an officer in student government since his freshman year, and has climbed through the ranks of JROTC. He has also been an active member of the National Honor Society and participated in No Place for Hate, a three-day seminar which promotes a nonviolent school environment.

"I feel like leadership is a skill with many faces, and what face you use depends on who you are leading," Salley said. "With my different clubs and organizations, I use different types of leadership to get the results I desire."

Salley is the only student member on Rickards' advisory council and SITE, for which he speaks out to make sure students' voices are heard.

"Tareq's involvement is far and wide and despite his extensive resume of participation and leadership, what impresses me is the way he balances it all," said Rickards teacher Roosevelt Sea.

Salley said he hopes "to leave a legacy full of diverse wide spanning leadership that has impacted students, the community and has a continuous daily impact through positive policies initiated by myself."

## FINALISTS

### HELEN ABERNETHY Florida State University School



**Awards and Honors:** Student Body President (2017-2018), Student Government Association Leadership Award (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** Executive Director for Dance Marathon (2017-2018), FSUS Board Representative (2017-2018), RHO Kappa Honors Society, Quill and Scroll Honors Society, Student Body Vice President (2016-2017), Dance Marathon Dancer Relations Chair (2016-2018), Junior Varsity Cheerleading Captain (2014-2015)

**My Legacy:** "I want to make an impact in my community and in the lives of people all around the world. I believe in the ability to change the world one person at a time. I want to be remembered as someone who made a difference to leading people to their fullest potential."

**What Are Others Saying:** "Helen is an optimistic, team-oriented, and driven student who is superbly organized. She conducts herself with the utmost integrity, and her classmates cannot help but be drawn to her likeability. Through it all, her energy, selflessness, and dependability have truly shined."

- Ryan Capas, FSUS SGA Advisor

### CAMERON FINK Leon High School



**Awards and Honors:** Student Body President (2017), Comma-Club through Dance Marathon

**Activity Highlights:** Student Government Association (2014-2018), Leon High School Foundation Student Representative, Student District Advisory Council Member, Dance Marathon Executive Director (2016-2018), School Advisory Council

**My Legacy:** "I hope that what I leave behind is an example to other students that nothing is too big to accomplish if you try hard enough. If I have inspired only one person to do something that's bigger than themselves through service, then I have made a difference."

**What Are Others Saying:** "It has been wonderful to get to know Cameron as a leader and watch as he deftly handles setbacks as they happen and work with his team to put on the best event possible. I have no doubt that he will continue to be an involved member of our community and will prove himself a leader outside of the high school area."

- Kate David, Leon Social Studies Teacher

### ASYA GRIFFIN FAMU Developmental Research School



**Awards and Honors:** Awards and Honors: Student Government Association President, JROTC Executive Officer (2017-2018), JROTC Adjutant SI (2016-2017), Star Light Youth Council (2011-2018), Black History Brain Bowl (2015)

**Activity Highlights:** FAMU DRS Royal Court (2016-2018), JROTC, Cheer Nation Athletics (2013-2016), FAMU DRS Varsity Cheerleading team (2015-2018)

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I want to be remembered for taking part in helping out the school by leading students to succeed academically and giving advice when needed."

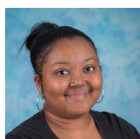
**What Are Others Saying:** "Her leadership, work ethic, and interpersonal skills are excellent when interacting with others. She is a rising young superstar and gifted mathematician with excellent teamwork, initiative, and challenge she encounters. Asya's leadership and organizational skills have been invaluable to the contributions she made in her community."

- Zellee Barnes, FAMU DRS Assessment Administrator



## AZURE HARVEY

### SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** Medallion Award SAIL (2014-2015), SGA Officer Award (2015-2017), Key Club Officer Award (2015-2017)

**Activity Highlights:** Key Club President, Tabernacle Teen Ministry Vice President, SGA Secretary/Treasurer, Human Relations Club, National Honor Society

**My Legacy:** "The legacy that I hope upon graduation is to be known as the Leader. I want to be known for all the hard work and determination that I did throughout my years in high school. Nothing was handed to me. I have to work hard for everything and because of that I accomplished a lot more than what was expected of me."

**What Are Others Saying:** "Azure always manages to connect with and understand her peers in some way. In the myriad of different leadership positions Azure has held throughout her years at SAIL, she has never demonstrated anything by openness, kindness, and strength leader, but a great role model as well."

- Benny Brustad, SAIL Key Club Sponsor

## JALEN MCCLEES

### Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:** Student Body Vice President (2016-2017), Student Body President (2017-2018), Alpha Millennium Academy, Oratorical Contest Winner (2016-2017)

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society (2016-2018), Future Business Leaders of America Vice President (2017-2018), Leon Country Student District Advisory Council (2016-2018), Baseball Team (2014-2018), Links Incorporated Junior Beau (2017), Sons of Sophistication Student Liaison (2016-2017), National Achievers Society (2016-2018)

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I want to leave behind a legacy of philanthropic giving, respectfulness, and leadership in not just my community, but the world around me. I want to portray myself as a charismatic student-leader that has left a positive imprint on people's lives and has improved his surroundings. Conclusively, I strive to live up to my potential."

**What Are Others Saying:** "No matters the capacity in which he serves, Jalen is a leader in any organization or activity in which he participates. He is very respectful, self-motivated and his determination has driven him to be successful. No matter the task assigned, he completes it willingly, has a pleasant attitude, and strives to maintain academic."

- Zondra Clayton, Godby Physics Teacher

## ELSA MEYER

### Chiles High School



**Awards and Honors:** Junior Varsity Scholastic Athlete Award (2015, 2016), Junior Varsity Flag Football Offensive Player of the Year (2016), High Honor Roll (2014-2018)

**Activity Highlights:** Dance Marathon Executive Board (2017, 2018), National Honors Society President, Student Government Association (2014-2016), Children's Home Society Teen Leadership Council Vice-Chair

**My Legacy:** "I hope to be remembered as a spirited, active student involved in many different school events. I would love for my legacy to be continuing motivation for younger students to get involved and be driven to serve both our school and our community."

**What Are Others Saying:** "As a junior in my class this year, she has earned one of the highest overall class grade point averages and has demonstrated persistence and drive to succeed. She holds a very impressive academic record, list of activities and talents, but importantly she embodies our school motto. Elsa's achievements both in and out

of the classroom have been grounded in her courage to participate in activities that reflect her interests, creative talents and unwavering values."

- Kate Gonsalves, Chiles Social Studies Teacher

## MORIA NEWSOME

### St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Varsity Soccer Top New Player Award (2015), Varsity Tennis Most Improved Award (2015), Varsity Tennis Coaches Award (2016), Latin II Award (2016)

**Activity Highlights:** Class Vice President (2014-2017), Student Body Secretary (2017-2018), Fellowship of Christian Athletes (2016-2018), Varsity Soccer Captain (2016-2018), Dance Marathon Head of Morale (2017-2018)

**My Legacy:** "When I graduate, I want to leave behind a legacy of love. I want to touch as many hearts as I can. I want to be known for spreading love to everyone, because you never know how far love can go. The legacy I want to leave is one of selfless love and care for others."

**What Are Others Saying:** "Moria has blazed a path for future student leaders, taking advantage of every opportunity to improve herself and our school. Moria's humble, yet contagiously-enthusiastic and positive demeanor make her extremely popular with peers and teachers, but she also exhibits tremendous grit and flexibility- performing whatever job is required. The economic and social challenges she experienced in a fatherless home of six children helped shape Moria into an extremely popular, long suffering and extraordinarily capable leader who cares deeply for her peer, family, and community."

- Dr. David Rolfs, SJPII History Teacher





## VICTORIA TRAWICK

**North Florida Christian School**



**Awards and Honors:** Science Fair Placer (2014-2016), History Fair Placer (2015), Scholar Cheerleader (2014-2016), Hustle Award (2015), Christian Character Award (2015)

**Activity Highlights:** Key Club (2016), Cheerleading (2014-2016), Tennis (2015-2017), Senior Class President (2017), National Honor Society (2016), Fellowship of Christian Athletes

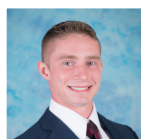
**My Legacy:** "Legacies are typically left by all-star athletes, or the brains of the school. I do not want to be known for my athleticism or intelligence. I would rather be remembered as the positive influence around the school campus, the one that brightened everybody's day up, the person that had put a smile on someone's face. That is the legacy I want to leave."

**What Are Others Saying:** "She is a good role model for students at NFC. She is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in. Her peers look to her for guidance and advice; they respect her opinions. She is well-rounded and NFC is blessed to have the kind of leadership that she provides."

- Holly Gorham, NFC Math Department Chair

## NICHOLAS WOLFE

**Lincoln High School**



**Awards and Honors:** American Legion Scholastic Bronze Medal (2017), Eagle Scout, Captain of Swim Team

**Activity Highlights:** Fellowship of Christian Athletes (2016-2017), Navy JROTC (2016-2017), Petty Officer- Athletes Drill Team Commander, Marching Band (2014-2016), Swim Team (2014-2017), Boys State (2017), Boy Scouts of America (2012-2016)

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I can only hope that I have inspired those around me to step outside of their comfort zones in order to serve our community. I have strived to create a legacy of cheerful service where Lincoln's student body is not driven by obligation, but by pride in what it means to be an outstanding student, athlete, and citizen."

**WHAT ARE OTHERS SAYING:** "Nicholas is academically gifted and creatively talented. His flair and style are all his own and his creativity sets him apart from his peers. He is the type of student who never quits even if there appears to be no solution. As an educator, I can honestly say that Nicholas will leave a mark on anything and everything he chooses to touch."

- Cheryl Henley, Lincoln AP English Literature Teacher

## PAST WINNERS

**2006**

Winner - Michael Jones  
Runner-up - Katherine Davis  
Honorable Mention - Christopher Emmanuel

**2007**

Winner - Jamel Langley  
Runner-up - Whitney Moore  
Honorable Mention - Brittany Gredler

**2008**

Winner - Nusaibah Kofar -Naisa  
Runner-up - Netia McCray  
Honorable Mention - Haylee Lamb

**2009**

Winner - Auriel Rolle-Polk  
Runner-up - Gregory Cummins  
Honorable Mention - Stephanie Post

**2010**

Winner - Jasmine Holmes  
Runner-up - Kelly Jones  
Honorable Mention - Caroline Maxwell

**2011**

Winner - Mary Lundberg  
Runner-up - LaCrai Mitchell  
Honorable Mention - Haven Mills

**2012**

Winner - Jennifer Berrian  
Runner-up - Joi Edwards  
Honorable Mention - Mary Grace Conroy

**2013**

Winner - Elizabeth Sell  
Runner-up - Kristin Sweeney  
Honorable Mention - Cody Johansen

**2014**

Winner - Brooke Williams  
Runner-up - Joshua Gallaher  
Honorable Mention - Amina Kamau

**2015**

Winner - Carolyn Shi  
Runner-up - Matthew Sweeney  
Honorable Mention - Kenidee Webster

**2016**

Winner - Taylar Hall  
Runner-up - Carlton DiSalvo  
Honorable Mention - Mariam Mckee

**2017**

Winner - Nia Close  
Runner-up - Rida Darji  
Honorable Mention - Robyn Seniors



**WINNER**


## CAROLINE ENGLERT

### Leon High School

Motivated to make a meaningful impact on her school and community, Caroline Englert led Leon's cancer fundraiser for the Tallahassee Memorial Cancer Center last year.

Englert and her team established a fundraising budget and evaluated the probability of success.

Her math experience helped her navigate the complex thinking that was necessary for the job. She led the committee in securing sponsors, and came up with the new idea to host a community festival at the cancer center with live music, food trucks, a silent auction and tours of the facility.

Her goal was achieved, with the students raising more than \$34,000, exceeding their financial target by 70 percent.

"Personally, the experience put me to the test," Englert said. "I pushed through setbacks and learned that leadership is not about having all the answers, but teamwork, collaboration and problem solving."

Englert has volunteered with Petite Players, a local performing arts studio for young girls. At school, she has been active in the Pierian National Honor Society and National English Honor Society. She was Leon's student government Special Olympics Committee head, prom decorations committee co-chair

and Dance Marathon Dancer Relations chair.

She was Sweetheart for Leon's Interact Club publication, leading the design and sales of the student calendar to support club-sponsored projects, including participating at the local community food bank. In addition, she organized Leon's Rocktoberfest, marketing and managing bands for the largest turnout in the event's history.

Englert was a recipient of the Leon Swim and Dive Team's scholarship award and was named a commended student in the National Merit Scholarship program. She also spent time working as an intern at the Zimmerman Agency.

"She is known by her peers and by the faculty as one who will get the job done properly, no matter if it is for herself or for others," said Leon social studies teacher and student government advisor Joshua Stewart. "It is this strength on inner character and level of integrity that earns her the respect of both of those she supervises and those she works alongside. There is nothing she would ask or tell her inferiors to do that she would not readily do herself, if not for the constraints of time and good leadership delegation."

"I hope to be remembered for my engagement in community service, sparking school spirit, being a friend to many, and showing kindness to all," Englert said.

**RUNNER-UP**


## JOANNA WANG

### Chiles High School

Throughout her time in high school, Joanna Wang has served as a tutor and mentor for countless students from elementary school kids to her own classmates at Chiles.

Through MathPals, Wang mentored a student at Ruediger Elementary every week and did the same with ReadingPals. At Chiles, she tutored students in her favorite subject, geometry. For most of the school year, she met with four students every week.

"Knowing that I have had this impact on even a single person motivates me to continue working with and helping those around me to better ourselves and our community," Wang said.

Wang has been an active member of Mu Alpha Theta and was an American Invitational Mathematics Examination qualifier, and she also helped out with the Chiles Mini Mu competition. She has also volunteered at a lab at Florida State University.

"Joanna's honor and integrity has never been questioned," said Chiles teacher Steve Friedlander. "She is a young lady who can handle responsibility, works on a project until completion, and her personality is above reproach."

"After I graduate, I hope that my actions in school and in my community will leave behind a legacy of dedication and respect," Wang said.





## HONORABLE MENTION

### LUKE MCCARTHY Florida State University School



Luke McCarthy has always loved math, and he utilized his skills as president of Mu Alpha Theta. His job duties included organizing meetings, fundraising and running the tutoring program.

McCarthy feels he has made the biggest impact on fellow students through tutoring, as he was in charge of his own group of three to five students. Soon, the elementary students began to love math as much as he did and performed better at competitions.

"Mu Alpha Theta was a great experience that allowed me to help the community, as well as learn leadership skills," McCarthy said. "I learned to be confident in myself when speaking to groups, as well as leading by example. However, I am most proud for the assistance and excitement I provided to the children's education, as I believe math is fundamental to flourishing as they progress in school."

McCarthy was also a member of the Florida High golf team and Youth Leadership Tallahassee.

"Luke is an enthusiastic, dedicated student with reliable and excellent work habits," said teacher John Stinchfield. "He never needs guidance or supervision. But willingly accepts it when offered."

McCarthy said he hopes to be known as a leader when he graduates.

## FINALISTS

### DANIEL BRYANT St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Mu Alpha Theta AP Statistics Competition Placer (2016), Best Drumline Newcomer (2015)

**Activity Highlights:** Mu Alpha Theta Honor Society, Brain Bowl Gold Team Member (2015-2017), National Honor Society (2016, 2017), Aerospace Engineering Club (2017)

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy will be one that encourages team effort just as much as individual achievement, across all academic subjects, by using our specialized skills in each subject, we can strengthen each other's weaknesses for a much greater whole."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Daniel is a talented, hard-working, and well-rounded young man. In the classroom, Daniel is certainly at the top of his class. Beyond the classroom, Daniel has used his gifts to make an impact in our community. He has a way of leading quietly by example and because his peers trust where he is going."

- Emily Serpico, SJPII Math teacher

### CARSON JONES Rickards High School



**Awards and Honors:** Rocket City Math League Competition, First Annual Stanford Math League Summer Tournament, International Math League Competition, Annual FSU High School Math Competition

**Activity Highlights:** Mu Alpha Theta, Tallahassee Youth Orchestra, Programing Club Vice President

**My Legacy:** "Although future Rickards 'mathletes' won't remember my particular competitive victories and prizes, I hope they will retain a stronger sense of their own

potential as a result of my hard work and the time I have invested. It's been a great privilege to serve my school's math team, to assist my teammates, and to set the best example I can."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Carson is an extremely successful student especially in classes related to mathematics, computer programming, and scientific discipline. Carson's aptitude for mathematical challenges has earned him a steady stream of competitive success at many levels. His motivation seems to be mathematical achievement for its own sake, and he has consistently demonstrated a generous and genuine concern for her fellow student's comprehension and success."

- Dr. Bruce T. Fraser, Rickards Mathematics Teacher

### MICHAEL JONES FAMU Developmental Research School



**Awards and Honors:** Superintendent Award of Achievement, Mathematics Participation Award, Outstanding Academic Achievement Award

**Activity Highlights:** Future Business Leader of America, JV Basketball, Varsity Football, JROTC, Student Government Association

**My Legacy:** "After graduation, I want people to remember me as a person that truly cared about them. I want people to remember me as the student that always had a smile on his face and stayed optimistic about everything."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Mike Jones achieved well in my class, and he always helped me out after school by tutoring the ninth and tenth graders in math. He has clearly lifted the school's achievement with his math skills."

- Anthony Thompson, FAMU DRS Social Sciences Teacher



## PARIS MILLER

### Maclay School



**Awards and Honors:** National Latin Exam Gold and Silver Awards, Cum Laude Member (2018)

**Activity Highlights:** Science National Honor Society President (2017), Junior Class League Regional Leader (2017), Junior Classical League President (2016, 2017), Mu Alpha Theta Member (2015-2017), Maclay Summer Camp counselor

**My Legacy:** "When I graduate, I want to leave a legacy of lasting passion for learning. From my classes and club experiences, I realized nothing is more valuable than finding a subject you love and pursuing it. I hope by promoting my interests on campus, particularly classical languages and STEM, I can inspire students to follow their academic passions."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Beyond the classroom, Paris is a star too, for despite an incredibly rigorous schedule, she has managed to accrue an unbelievable 435 hours of community service. As she does in her academic pursuits, she also lets her passions guide her service. Without a doubt, Paris is an altruistic young person who has helped make our community a better place."

- Lee Norment, Maclay School Teacher

## GRAHAM O'DONNELL

### Lincoln High School



**Awards and Honors:** World Math Team Championship (2017), USA Junior Math Olympiad Qualifier (2017), US Physics Olympiad Silver Medalist (2106, 2017), National Merit Semifinalist

**Activity Highlights:** Florida Student Association of Mathematics (2016, 2017), Brain Bowl Club President, Mu Alpha Theta

**My Legacy:** "I hope to be remembered as a great friend and teacher who dedicated himself to supporting others along their path to greatness. By showing what heights mathematics can lead to, I hope to set an example for others to follow to their own success."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Graham sets himself apart not only from his class, but also from many of the greats who have been members of our Florida Math Team. He is one of the greatest ambassadors I have seen since I have been involved with math competitions. To see a young man of this caliber have the savvy, maturity, and poise to handle these types of responsibilities goes above and beyond the typical."

- Jason Wiggins, Florida Math Team Coach

## JAMIE SOUDERS

### SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** Certified in Financial Literacy, Continuous Academic Honor Roll

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society, Franklin County School Volunteer

**My Legacy:** "I hope to be remembered for being a hardworking student that strived to achieve greatness in all academic areas. I also hope to be remembered for being a good team player and showing leadership."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Jamie was enthusiastic with the children in my classroom, participating in all activities. She successfully helped the students learn new skills daily. While a student at FCS, Jamie always excelled academically. She was well-liked by her peers, her teachers, and anyone she interacted with."

- Tammy Boone, Franklin County Pre-K Teacher

## BRIAN VILMENAY

### Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:** Junior Creative Writing Student of the Year (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society

**My Legacy:** "What I hope my legacy will be upon graduating is that while being in one of the most influential clubs in the school (National Honor Society), my peers can look at me as a hardworking and dedicated leader, which is what I hope to be further into my college career."

**What Others Are Saying:** "This award is intended to go to someone who demonstrates strong leadership skills. Brian fits these guidelines perfectly. He is a wonderful role model. It is rare to meet a student who is so mature, organized, and results-oriented."

- Rafael Ricard, Godby Social Studies Teacher





# PAST WINNERS

2006	Winner - Amina Ellison Runner-up - Kirk Hansen Honorable Mention - Erin Burnside
2007	Winner - Catherine Cottle Runner-up - Louis Reis Honorable Mention - Weiping Zhang
2008	Winner - Chenyu Lin Runner-up - Kavita Chandra Honorable Mention - Kyle Trainor
2009	Winner - Suvrat Jain Runner-up - William Tsai Honorable Mention - Gina Shetty
2010	Winner - Aditi Hota Runner-up - Jitesh Kuntawala Honorable Mention - Kathleen Park
2011	Winner - Pratik Sachdeva Runner-up - Shuai Jiang Honorable Mention - Emily Stowers
2012	Winner - Dae Kang Runner-up - Breshawn Best Honorable Mention - Bailey Ruark
2013	Winner - Grace Ying Runner-up - Ralph Wilhelm Honorable Mention - Seungbyn Baek
2014	Winner - Jimmy Zhang Runner-up - Alexander Yu Honorable Mention - Dionte Boddie
2015	Winner - Jessie Chi Runner-up - Siddarth Kethireddy Honorable Mention - Justin Bartell
2016	Winner - Puneet Sachdeva Runner-up - Sadhana Ponnaluri Honorable Mention - Amelia Maddox
2017	Winner - James Baggett Runner-up - Emily LeHeup Honorable Mention - Kyle Chen





**WINNER**


## ODESSA DENG

### Chiles High School

Odessa Deng knows the healing power of music, so much so it inspired her to play music for people in need of uplifting.

"I realized that the people who needed music the most in their lives were the ones who had access to it the least," she said.

Deng, who has played violin since the age of four, started MusiCare in June 2016. Deng recalled MusiCare's first performance at the homeless shelter, where the group played for the residents while they were having lunch.

"With each note that left our instruments, we conveyed that we were there for them and believed they would make it," Deng said. "We serenaded them with multiple pieces, but a string version of Elvis Presley's 'Can't Help Falling in Love' became a crowd favorite and was encored many times."

Since then, MusiCare has performed at the Senior Center and Tallahassee Memorial Hospital as well as the homeless shelter.

"They listen and heal, we play and learn, and we both gain a greater understanding of each other," Deng said. "Music, unlike much else, gains tremendous value when shared, and sharing it has quite possibly been my greatest achievement."

Deng has also participated in Youth Leadership Tallahassee, volunteering for

the Ronald McDonald House Charity. She helped with research at the FSU Department of Medicine and was a counselor at SciGirls camp, where she led young girls through scientific excursions and experiments. She also served as an assistant coach for the Deerlake Middle School Majorettes.

In addition, she has played violin for celebrations with the Chinese Association of Tallahassee. At school, she is a member of the National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta. She's a four-year member of the Chiles chamber orchestra and played violin for the school's production of "The Music Man."

"With all the weight she carries and the intense demands her achievements make upon her, she is always friendly, light-hearted and a pleasure to be around," said Chiles orchestra director Chris Miller. "She can be all-business when the situation warrants, but when those periods are passed she is full of smiles."

Deng wants to continue using music as a medium for creating a better world.

"I hope to have shown through example that science and the arts work hand in hand to shape our world, and it is possible and beneficial to incorporate both into the lives we lead," she said.

**RUNNER-UP**


## DANIEL SPAINHOUR

### Lincoln High School

Daniel Spainhour joined his church's Wings youth choir in the sixth grade. The group participates in a variety of service events in the area, from caroling to singing at nursing homes.

Over time, Spainhour became more comfortable with his voice and for years he was the only bass singer in the group.

"The group also taught me to sing for a cause larger than myself, as both God and the community could be served with my ability."

Spainhour was honored to sing to homeless people as well as visitors of the Dothan Rescue Mission. He has helped teach children at Thomasville Road Baptist Church. At school, he has been active in chorus and band, for which he was the saxophone section leader.

"He has held his chin high in all kinds of moments in my classroom – moments when the music sounds wonderful or awful, moments when good news is given to him or undesirable news is presented, and of course moments when he must lead his peers easily or take a stand when it is the right thing to do," said Chiles band director Daniel Rosman. "I believe this is Daniel's finest qualities as a musician and a young man."





## HONORABLE MENTION

### CLAIRE THALER Leon County Virtual School



After transferring to the Leon County Virtual School for her senior year, Claire Thaler wanted to spend more time volunteering with a musical organization.

That desire led her to work with the Tallahassee Homeschool String Orchestra. Since the beginning of the school year, she has worked as a mentor and sectionals coach for the advanced group.

"Through this experience, I have learned a lot about how to be a thoughtful and energetic teacher, and how the example I set will carry on through the next generation of players," she said. "I want to inspire other young musicians the way I was guided and inspired by my mentors."

Thaler has performed with the Tallahassee Youth Orchestra in the Symphony String Quartet, Big Bend Community Orchestra and Chiles High School Chamber Orchestra. She is taking an orchestra class at FSU that required an audition.

"She has impressed me with her dedication to excellence and her determination to succeed," said guidance counselor Teri Gimbel.

Thaler is ready to achieve her goals by attending music school.

"I hope to inspire the next generation of young musicians to work hard, help others achieve their musical goals, and take time to share music and performances with my community," Thaler said.

## FINALISTS

### MICHAELA FREDRICKSON

Leon High School



**Awards and Honors:** Critic's Choice and Best in Show Award, Volunteer of the Year Award, State Jr. Thespians Solo Musical and Monologue Superior Rating, Mu Alpha Theta Competition

**Activity Highlights:** Capital Singers Section Leader, All-State Honors Chorus, National Honor Society, Future Physics of Florida, National Society for High School Scholars, Melodears, Tallahassee Youth Orchestra

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduating, I hope to leave a legacy of humility and gratitude for the music in my life. I am truly blessed to live in a town where lyrical expression knits together the stories a diverse, riveting group of individuals. We cannot earn this beauty. It is simply a gift that we must embrace with each new day."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Michaela is an extraordinary young lady, constantly serving her community, her school, and her peers. She is respected by her peers, the faculty at Leon, as well as the administration. She is the embodiment of what every teacher desires in a student, and will certainly be a success in everything she pursues."

- Tabitha Peck, Leon Director of Choral Activities

### JOSIE KRISS Rickards High School



**Awards and Honors:** Superior Rating at District Solo and Ensemble (2014-2017), State Solo and Ensemble Superior Rating (2015-2017)

**Activity Highlights:** Rickards Symphonic Band, Marching Band Section Leader, All-District Symphonic Band Flute Player, Nation Honor Society

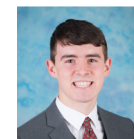
**My Legacy:** "I hope that the time I've spent working with members of the band, especially

the flute section, will have shown that being humble, determined, and honest is key to improving yourself and will lead to success in whatever they may dedicate themselves."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Ms. Kriss perseveres; she asks questions, she stumbles sometimes, but she always does what is necessary, and does so in a way that show off her strengths. Her diligence has helped her to make her way through the IB program, to maintain her grades, and have allowed her to participate in many programs at Rickards. In addition to her academics, Josie has shined as one of the leading members of the Rickards High School Band."

- Jose P. Fallos, Rickards English Department Chair

### WILLIAM LACAYO Florida State University School



**Awards and Honors:** Wrestling Scholar Athlete (2014-2017), Stan Dietrich Award (2016)

**Activity Highlights:** Varsity Wrestling, Varsity Band, Marching Band Woodwind Captain (2016), NSHSS, Social Studies Honor Society

**My Legacy:** "After I graduate, I would like to be remembered for the efforts that I made to create opportunities for those around me and those who will come after me. I only hope the current and future students in my school community will have equal and greater opportunities and resources that I did."

**What Others Are Saying:** "I have witnessed Harrison work extremely hard to become the best musician he can be. He is the principal tenor saxophone in the Florida High Symphonic Band, the highest ensemble a student can place in at our school. Harrison not only performs beautifully, but he uses his talent to benefit and serve others."

- Paulette Tomlinson, FSUS Director of Bands



## SAMUEL MCANALLY

**Community Christian  
School**



**Awards and Honors:** Senior Leadership Award

**Activity Highlights:** LETOUR multi-arts performance ensemble, Our Father's Storehouse, Navajo Nation Mission Trip, Digital Projection Coordinator

**My Legacy:** "What I hope to show the underclassmen at my school is that if you want to see a change in the world, you have to be the one to initiate it. I attempt to show that through my actions and how I serve the ones around me."

**What Others Are Saying:** "He provides the leadership necessary to guide and direct the team to ensure things flow smoothly. Sam is a diligent worker and can be counted on to show up every time we meet. He works well with others in the spirit of cooperation and teamwork. He also does a great job of engaging the community he is serving, making them feel loved and valued."

- Greg Xanders, Our Father's Storehouse volunteer

## AMELIE OSTERTAG

**SAIL High School**



**Awards and Honors:** SAIL Talent Show Runner-Up with an original song

**Activity Highlights:** SAIL Bluegrass Ensemble, WVFS Tallahassee Assistant, Florida Folk Festival Performer, Drama Club, Lemoyne Center for the Arts

**My Legacy:** "Through songwriting and performing original music, I am hoping to have encouraged others to find their creative voice and hone their skills in the arts."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Amalie started playing at SAIL her freshman year, and was

a very accomplished guitar player. She was proficient in acoustic music, namely bluegrass, but her love of music in general aided her in developing her skill in a multitude of different genres. She is our foundational element during our music ensemble practices in both musicianship and mentorship"

- Pablo Perez de Alejo, SAIL Music Ensemble Co-Sponsor

## JARVIS RITTMAN

**Godby High School**



**Awards and Honors:** Music Performance Assessment Superior, Best Overall Band Musician, Best Overall AS1 Cadet, Best Overall AS2 Cadet

**Activity Highlights:** Band President, Gentlemen's Club, Tallahassee Kappa League

**My Legacy:** "I hope that my legacy when I graduate would remind people of how much of a hardworking and dedicated young man I am to be and, baseball, and my school work. I hope my legacy will also remind people of how kind I am and how fun and genuine my personality is."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Over the years as I've watched Jarvis develop my admiration and appreciation for his natural leadership skills and compassion has grown immensely. He continues to work hard at school and he consistently finds opportunities to touch the lives of others through his giving nature and soulful heart."

- Susan Barrineau, Godby High School Guidance Counselor

## KATHRYN WHISENANT

**St. John Paul II  
Catholic School**



**Awards and Honors:** SJPII President's List Best in Algebra II Honors, Pre-Calculus Honors Academic Scholar, Best in AMH 2010, Mu Alpha Theta Competitor

**Activity Highlights:** Drama Club, Chaplain Treasurer and Vice President, International Thespian Troupe, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, Squirettes of Mary, National Honor Society, Volleyball, Chapel Choir, Literary Magazine Coeditor, Model United Nations

**My Legacy:** "I hope that I have inspired others to work hard every day. I hope that after seeing my struggles, others will know that achievements aren't just handed out, you must earn them. I hope that future classes can benefit from the fruits of our class' arduous work so that it can inspire them to do the same."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Kathryn is an exceptional student, excelling in all areas of high school society, academics, music, and the arts, volunteerism, and student life. Miss Whisenant is a very talented musician who loves to sing. She's has been a part of the Student Mass Choir for 4 years of high school. Her voice has grown stronger with every new opportunity."

- Kristin G. Manos, retired SJPII teacher





# PETER YANG

Maclay School



**Awards and Honors:** Solo Superior Grade (2015), Maclay Top Upper School Band Student of the Year (2016), Maclay Band Student of the Year (2017), Yale Book Award (2016)

**Activity Highlights:** All State Concert Orchestra (2014, 2015), All State Symphonic Band (2016), All District Band Concert Master (2014), Mu Alpha Theta, Science National Honor Society, JCL National Honor Society, Maclay Soccer team

**My Legacy:** "I hope that future students will remember me for my zeal and positive attitude about learning. Rather than thinking my work in school and music as a chore, I embrace it hoping to always be better than the day before. As I leave for Princeton next fall, I hope to impart the idea of hard work and dedication to future students of Maclay."

**What Others Are Saying:** "In witnessing his conduct toward other students, it is clear that he carries great respect for them and often offers his aid when needed. The conduct and expertise he offers in the classroom is phenomenal. It is largely because of Peter that Maclay has our first Music Theory course."

- Sean Gorman, Maclay Music Teacher

## PAST WINNERS

2006

Winner - Drew Pattison  
Runner-up - Joseph Sheets  
Honorable Mention - Jake Armstrong

2007

Winner - Kerian Cox  
Runner-up - Matthew King  
Honorable Mention - Raine Guthrie

2008

Winner - Victoria Warnet  
Runner-up - Amanda Mihalik  
Honorable Mention - Jarrod Holland

2009

Winner - Benjamin Pattison  
Runner-up - Christine Hatcher  
Honorable Mention - Jacqueline Saha

2010

Winner - Greta Smidt  
Runner-up - Chase Banks  
Honorable Mention - Hannah Haugen

2011

Winner - Devon Richardson  
Runner-up - Paul Miller  
Honorable Mention - Richard Mattox

2012

Winner - Lindsey Langston  
Runner-up - Alexander Horton  
Honorable Mention - Taylor Williams

2013

Winner - Phillip Mendez  
Runner-up - Diego Hernandez  
Honorable Mention - Jessey Krehl

2014

Winner - Samuel Cherrier-Vickers  
Runner-up - Jatericka Connelly  
Honorable Mention - Justin Fitzpatrick

2015

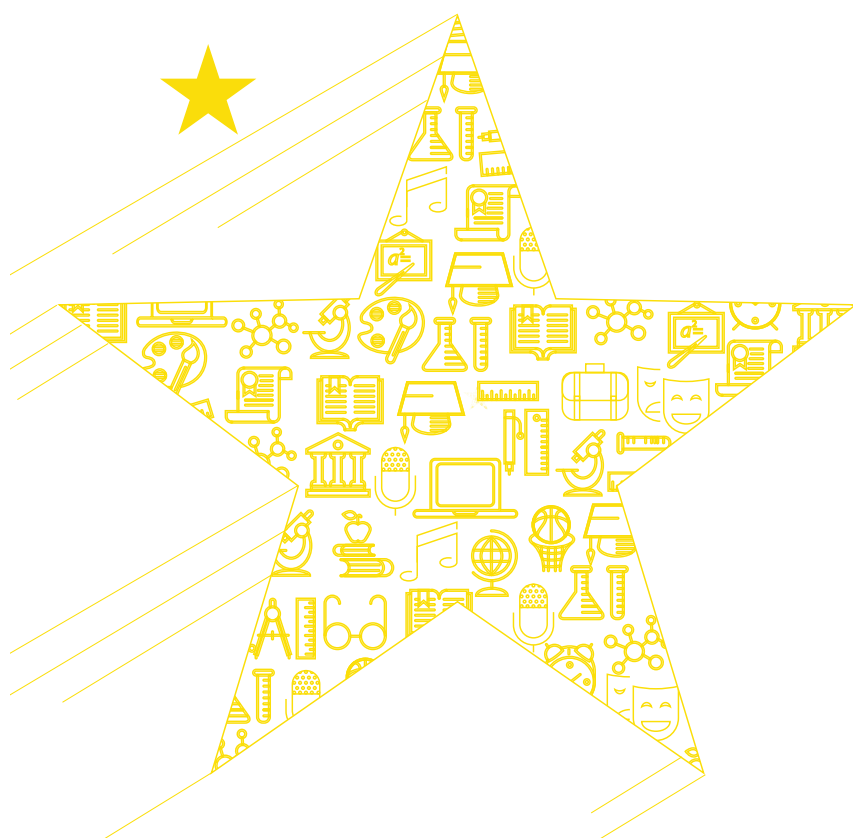
Winner - Kayla Williams  
Runner-up - Jacob Goldstein-Greenwood  
Honorable Mention - Stephen Barton

2016

Winner - Christie Ger  
Runner-up - Tiffany Vaughn  
Honorable Mention - Adam Rusmisell

2017

Winner - Samantha Crawford  
Runner-up - Roehl-Dean Reyes  
Honorable Mention - Hannah Prasse





**WINNER**


## KATHERINE SORRELL

### Rickards High School

After becoming inspired by a workshop, Katherine "Katie" Sorrell started Youth Leadership and Social Change.

"I created this club to meet the demands that youth were facing for leadership experience, despite the lack of programs that actually support the youth and propel them to lead their own projects in the community," she said.

The group meets twice a week, alternating between student-led workshops, guest speakers – including former Tallahassee Mayor John Marks – and planning service projects.

In 2016, she planned a service project focusing on student-led workshops and the social climate within schools. A video was created, featuring a discussion of how students want to feel at school.

"YLSC has been an inspiring journey for me, not only seeing other students start to grow in confidence and come out of their shell, but also a huge growth for me in my confidence and sense of identity," Sorrell said. "When running a completely new, specifically youth leadership program, there are going to be obstacles you face in your community, but also surprising amounts of support as well."

Sorrell was a member of Ladies Learning to

Lead, for which she spent three days lobbying to state legislators to support a bill. She was also involved with Leon County's Alliance for Girls, creating templates and collecting contacts of all girl-related organizations in the Big Bend. She has spoken on youth panels at the National PACE Conference and Ladies Learning to Lead Conference..

She spent months planning and coordinating the Brighter Tomorrow initiative to raise money for installing solar panels in a village in India and to give them electricity. For her school's Key Club, she participated in multiple service events like the Turkey Trot. With the National Honor Society, she helped with events like Dance Marathon.

In her free time, Sorrell has starred in several productions at Young Actors Theatre.

"She is a young woman with a wide variety of skills and talents, as well as a sunny and engaging personality," said Rickards IB instructor Janalee Jarrett. "She is poised to make not only a local impact, but to be a force for good at a global level. She is a young woman of unquestionable integrity and seemingly unending energy."

Sorrell plans to make sure her organization continues after she graduates.

"My legacy will be the students who have grown from YLSC's support and program, and brought their own initiatives into the community," she said.

**RUNNER-UP**


## LANDON COLES

### Leon High School

Landon Coles has not shied away from taking leadership roles. One such role was as student chairman and keynote speaker for Leon's annual Black History Assembly.

"Prior to that speech, I had never spoken on such a grand scale, but in that moment, I knew that that was my opportunity to seize to speak the truth," Coles said. "In that moment, I spoke for every minority who potentially needed a catalyst for change and was chained and forced to bow to the standards placed on them by society."

Coles has been active in student government, Dance Marathon and was chairman of the Student District Advisory Council. He's also a member of the debate team and has done service projects for the Pierian National Honor Society. He has worked as a legislative page and messenger and interned at a law firm.

"The difference between Landon Coles and other high achievers that you may encounter is his incredible sense of self, his persuasive conveyance of thought, and his contagious enthusiasm toward anything he chooses to participate in," said Leon's Erin Kaven.

Coles aspires to be remembered as "a leader who raised his voice to accentuate that progress is not owned, but rather leased."





## HONORABLE MENTION

### MORGAN ZETTL

#### Lincoln High School



The summer of her freshman year, Morgan Zettle went to Nicaragua, where she taught music and English.

"The smiles and pure laughs from the children's beautiful faces made me want to take volunteering into my own community," she said.

So Zettle joined student government, and as a senior she was elected student body president. Her favorite SGA project was Battle of the Bands, which raises money for the Tallahassee Memorial Hospital Heart and Vascular Center.

She was a student representative for Lincoln's School Advisory Council and was Lincoln's representative for Leon County's Student Director Advisory Council. In addition, Zettle has served on Lincoln's yearbook staff.

"She works well under pressure and is always willing to help out in any way," said Lincoln teacher Pat Jones. "She helps her fellow classmates, friends and officers in the student body."

Zettle hopes she has taught students to find their voice.

"I want students to have confidence in hearing themselves voice their opinions, in publicizing various events, and in anything that they feel passionate about," Zettle said. "Being able to speak up and be heard is something very powerful, which I hope is an area where more students decide to challenge themselves in."

## FINALISTS

### SHARIA ABLORNYI

#### SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** Green Dot Bystander Training Certificate (2017), Rotary Youth Leadership Award (2016), MLK Dreamers and Doers Award (2018)

**Activity Highlights:** Human Relations Club (2015-2017), Cheerleading (2017), Color Guard, Saber Team, Drill Team, Student Government Association (2017)

**My Legacy:** "I want to be remembered as the person whose footsteps in the community, nation, and world made a difference. I want to be a role model like my great grandmother was for me—that my beauty was not the only thing that captured a room, but intelligence and outspokenness is what I will also be remembered by."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Sharia's upbeat demeanor and can do attitude brightened the office. Her interpersonal skills enabled her to interface very effectively with many different constituencies. Sharia is a natural caring person with a strong help-oriented personality, who consistently demonstrated a solid service orientation."

- Susan Everitt, American Red Cross Executive Director

### JACKSON BLAY

#### Chiles High School



**Awards and Honors:** National Merit Commended Scholar, Eagle Scout, MLK Dreamers and Doers Award (2018)

**Activity Highlights:** Boy Scouts of America, Model United Nations President, founding member Speech and Debate Club

**My Legacy:** "I hope that the Chiles Model United Nations Club and the Chiles Speech and Debate Club continue to grow and compete at the highest level. Additionally,

I hope that the trees I planted at Tall Timbers will be used to create new forestry methods for many years to come."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Jackson is a great example of how the Scouting program develops leadership; but he has also shown the capacity to use the skills he has learned towards a positive outcome. I would highly recommend Jackson as an outstanding example of exemplary community service and leadership."

- Bob Norwillio, Camp Director

### SAMIERYAH BRADWELL

#### Godby High School



**Awards and Honors:** FHSAA Track & Field State Qualifier (2016), Coach's Award (2016), Female Student Athlete Award (2018), Outstanding Junior (2016), U.S. Army "Army Strong" Student Athlete

**Activity Highlights:** Freshman Summer Bridge Program, Student Government Association, Volleyball Team Captain, Track Team Captain

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, my hope is that my name will be elevated to the true definition of a student athlete. I hope that my poise and passion for success leaves a positive influence on the student body. Throughout my high school career, I have encouraged those around me to stay true to themselves, while honoring their morals and values."

**What Others Are Saying:** "The drive to be the best that she can be is the quality that makes Sam a fantastic athlete. She takes the lessons learned and with ethic showed in the classroom and applies those traits to the court and track. The key to Sam's success, however, is rooted in her strong positive character."

- Kyle Logan Carr, Godby Social Studies Teacher



## EMAURIA LING Florida State University School



**Awards and Honors:** MLK Dreamers and Doers Award, Lemoyne General Artist Award

**Activity Highlights:** Freshman Class President, Sophomore Class President, Student Government Association (2014-2018), 411 Teen, Spanish Club

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I want to leave a legacy that shows people how hard work can make anything possible. I want people to know that it's okay to not be the best of the best at first. That's what life is all about. Allowing us to continue to improve ourselves. Showing people how believing in yourself is vital for self-growth."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Emauria has been an integral part of organizing, preparing and executing our diverse Community Outreach programs. She has worked tirelessly with other officers and member on our Community Outreach program."

- Salvador Guastella, FSUS Spanish Club Sponsor

## JARED PICHARD Maclay School



**Awards and Honors:** Eagle Scout Ranking, Soccer Most Valuable Defensive Player of the Year, Soccer State Championship, Biletnikoff Scholarship Recipient, Regional track title

**Activity Highlights:** Backpack Buddies Founder, Eagle Scout, Senior Class President, Junior Class President, Sophomore Class Treasurer, Maclay School Service Club President, Student Council Representative, Lacrosse Team Captain

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy will be that I was a caring, charismatic student who was kind to others, started and spread awareness

of an outreach program to help hungry children in our community, and that I was a fun senior class president whose influence made for a better, more positive school environment."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Jared has distinguished himself as a conscious and energetic student. Jared always prepares his speeches to be motivational and candid. Never one to be afraid of speaking in front of a group, his wording is always apt, his analysis insightful and logical."

- Charles E. Beamer Jr., Maclay Upper School Head

## JACOB STAVRES St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Comcast Leaders and Achievers Scholarship Recipient, Elks Most Valuable Student State Finalist, All Big-Bend Soccer Honorable Mention, Soccer Defensive MVP, Outstand HOPE Student, Outstanding Latin Student

**Activity Highlights:** National Honor Society, Youth Leadership Tallahassee, Varsity Baseball, Varsity Football, Varsity Soccer

**My Legacy:** "When I graduate, I wish to leave a legacy of perseverance and dedication; not as in never failing, but as in never giving up and always trying my hardest. I wish to be remembered as always being dedicated to my for, my family, my friends, my school, and any activity I was involved in"

**What Others Are Saying:** "On a personal level, Jacob is a delight and a person who always displays a bright, engaging and positive personality. He is a student who is honest and trustworthy and clearly a valued member of SJPII to his community and his family."

- Trinidad K. Dixon, SJPII Math Teacher

## KENYAH WILLIAMS FAMU Developmental Research School



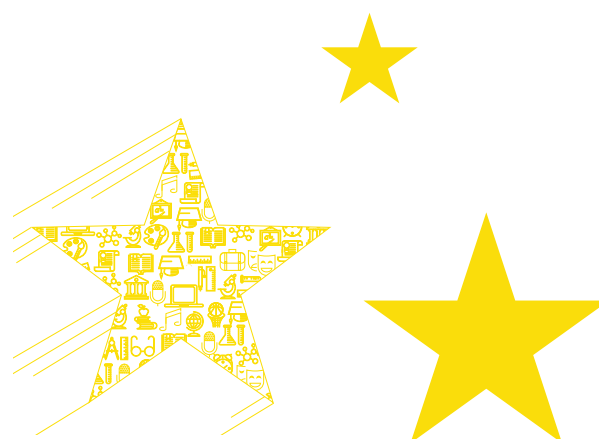
**Awards and Honors:** best performing Cheerleader (2015), Jefferson County Pageant Second Runner Up, Miss FAMU DRS

**Activity Highlights:** Big Bend Flag Football Team (2016), Beta Club (2014-2017), National Society of High School Scholars (2017), Cheerleading Team Captain (2014, 2016), Pearls of Perfection, Executive Officer FAMU DRS Battalion Passed Inspection

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I hope to leave a legacy of selfless service, humanity, and altruism. I truly want to engage regards for the communication of reason and morality through public speaking with others. I wish to leave a legacy that advocates the positive use of language. As Dionysius of Halicarnassus suggested, 'Let thy speech be greater than silence, or be silent.'"

**What Others Are Saying:** "Kenyah Williams is an epitome of success and a crown jewel to the educational arena. Kenyah is by far the most articulate, intellectual, and astute student that I have had the privilege of to educate in the last twenty six years. Kenyah has proven to be a well-rounded student who has earned the highest academic and extracurricular honors."

- Dr. Vivian Wilson, FAMU DRS Associate Professor





## REAGAN WILLIAMS

### Community Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** MLK Christian Statesman Award, CCS Honor Award

**Activity Highlights:** Leadership Program Senior Leader, Junior Research Expedition, Navajo Mission Trip

**My Legacy:** "I desire to leave a legacy that when looked upon, encourages others to go beyond their comfort zones and experience new things. Change is an important part of life that needs to be pursued constantly, and can only be done with God on our side."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Reagan has achieved distinction from his fellow classmates through his community service public speaking, and character. Reagan has gone above the norm for service as a part of leadership by becoming a senior leader in our Leadership Program. Reagan's public speaking has greatly improved from entering high school. Over time, his confidence grew until he would share ideas in class and public settings."

- Jeff Collier, CCS Chaplain

## CALEB WILSON

### Home School



**Awards and Honors:** Team Policy Debate First Place, Southeast Regional Invitational Championship, Eagle Scout, Florida Band Masters Competition

**Activity Highlights:** National Christian Forensics and Communications Association, Boy Scouts, Camp Charis volunteer

**My Legacy:** "Much of my high school career has centered around competitions in speech and debate, but I don't want to be remembered for the trophies I've won, but for the way I competed, as someone who speaks up for issues that mattered, who did the right thing even when it was hard, and who won and loss with grace."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Caleb is an intelligent, studious, self-motivated, mature, and capable young man, and I believe he has the potential to excel in whatever field he chooses to apply himself. His prowess as a debater has taught me that in spite of his quiet disposition, he is a skilled communicator. I believe that investing in Caleb means investing in a future leader."

- Jon Nicholson, Challenge I Director for Classical Conversations

## PAST WINNERS

2006

Winner - Ashley Williams  
Runner-up - Forrest Boone  
Honorable Mention - Jessica Isabelle

2007

Winner - Nicola Menchetti  
Runner-up - Tatiana Galante  
Honorable Mention - Thy Bui

2008

Winner - Madison Grant  
Runner-up - Kathleen Wade  
Honorable Mention - Lauren Hendricks

2009

Winner - Stacia Dudley  
Runner-up - William Liner  
Honorable Mention - Chelsea Moore

2010

Winner - Callie Crumpler  
Runner-up - Samuel Stockstill  
Honorable Mention - Ryan Sweeney

2011

Winner - Austin Mall  
Runner-up - Christopher Hill  
Honorable Mention - Rachel Procaccini

2012

Winner - William Moor, III  
Runner-up - Jamie Holley  
Honorable Mention - Dominique Moreno

2013

Winner - Kinsey Grant  
Runner-up - Samuel Kerce  
Honorable Mention - Tryton Swigart-Johnson

2014

Winner - Amber Borgersen  
Runner-up - Yasmire Whigham  
Honorable Mention - Stuart Garrity

2015

Winner - Maya King  
Runner-up - Nathan Morse  
Honorable Mention - Julia Osagie

2016

Winner - Elyse Thompson  
Runner-up - Irfan Kovankaya  
Honorable Mention - Zenani Johnson

2017

Winner - Jean-Paul Recht  
Runner-up - Micah Joyner  
Honorable Mention - James Williams III



**WINNER**


## KHADEJA AHMED

### Maclay School

When Khadeja Ahmed started volunteering at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, she was shocked by the transportation issues of patients, which inspired her to make the Telehealth monitoring system program a reality for them.

"Having so much responsibility was nerve-wracking, so I thoroughly looked into national guidelines and researched to ensure that my data was correct," Ahmed said.

She presented the monitoring system to the hospital where it was approved and implemented.

I felt very accomplished to have made an impact on a permanent part of the patients' daily healthcare routine and to have made such an influence on the lives of so many by making healthcare more accessible to underprivileged communities," Ahmed said.

Ahmed expanded her cause by becoming a member of Youth Health Leadership Tallahassee. Throughout her high school experience, she has been involved in numerous leadership programs like Youth Leadership Tallahassee, which opened the door to her position as a community board member of the local nonprofit Alzheimer's Project and Youth Health Leadership.

At school, Ahmed was president of Anchor Club and Spectrum Club for Inclusivity and Diversity, raising over \$1,000 for areas affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. She also founded and served as president for the Maclay chapters of Health Occupation Students of America and American Red Cross. She served as vice president of the National Honor Society and is a member of Mu Alpha Theta and the Cum Laude Society.

"Her impressive dedication to service has been an inspiration to anyone lucky enough to know her," said Maclay English Department Chair Lee Norment.

Ahmed placed first in the Science Olympiad multiple times and won the Suwannee Award for Excellence in Writing. She also placed first in the FSU College of Medicine Anatomy Bowl in the region through Science Students Together Reaching Instructional Diversity and Excellence. Ahmed is also a recipient of the AP Scholar Award.

"You have the power to make an impact through inspiring others and being a good role model," Ahmed said. "Through health and nutrition literacy and preventive care, we can overcome the barriers of inequality in healthcare. Tallahassee can become a community of people who have the courage to improve the lives of its residents and prompt a health revolution from within."

**RUNNER-UP**


## CYNTHIA WANG

### Chiles High School

Cynthia Wang attended her first math competition, Chiles Mini Mu as a fourth grader, and it had such an impact on her that years later she took charge in organizing the competition as president of the Chiles math team.

"It was a blast," Wang said. "I loved the adrenaline rush of working through a test that forced you to think outside the box. I was hooked – and thus began my competitive math career."

Wang has also used her math skills to mentor a student at Ruediger Elementary through MathPal and was a math tutor at Nims Middle School. She also mentored a student at Hawks Rise Elementary through ReadingPal.

She also volunteered at the FSU Rokyta Lab and the FSU-FAMU Zheng Lab and worked on the Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign.

"Cynthia is most comfortable as a public speaker and she is remarkable at organizing people to accomplish goals," said Chiles math teacher Steve Friedlander.

"I hope to be remembered as an approachable and dynamic leader who worked hard to create spaces in which students could find a sense of belonging and express their passions, growing student involvement on campus and in local volunteer efforts and building a stronger community of peers," she said.





## HONORABLE MENTION

### VENKATA SAI CHARITHA MOPARTHY

**Rickards High School**



In middle school, Charitha Moparthi wasn't one to speak in class. Four years later, she blossomed into a leader who has made an impact on her school and community.

Moparthi was a Lieutenant Governor and board of trustee member for the Florida District of Key Club International. She said it was the accepting nature of people that kept her coming back. Her first service event was an Echo Feed the Hungry event at Faith Presbyterian Church, where she brought in food donations and fed the homeless.

"That day, not only was I proud of the work I had done along with my Key Club, but I felt a sense of identity and belonging," Moparthi said.

Moparthi has been active in Mu Alpha Theta and served as treasurer of the National Honor Society. She tutors students at Fairview Middle School and is a member of an ethnic Indian dance group. As captain of the Rickards tennis team, she was the first girl in 24 years on the team to qualify for the state finals.

"With the presence of a strong sense of community and sharing in her life, I am confident she will excel further in whatever she does," said Rickards teacher Bruce Fraser.

## FINALISTS

### EVAN BOUCK

**Community Christian School**



**Awards and Honors:** National Merit Scholar Semi-Finalist, Senior Leadership Award, Honorable Dialogue Award

**Activity Highlights:** Winter Ex, Immersion Week, Various Mission Trips

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy will inspire other students to excel and work towards their goals, but also that they can have fun and enjoy the process as well."

**What Others Are Saying:** "I am always impressed with his ability to engage with new information, quickly master novel concepts and push the envelope of ideas. In the science classroom he serves as a nearly eternal source of questions, although sometimes a bit tangential, and I believe his curious and questioning nature will serve him well as he pursues engineering related fields of study in college. Evan's curiosity and knack for scientific thinking allow them to not only understand known concepts, but to expand on current concept and break into the unknown."

- Jacob Breman, CCS Science Teacher

### SIMONE CHANDLER

**SAIL High School**



**Awards and Honors:** SAIL Pirate Medallion Award (2016), Honor Roll (2015-2016)

**Activity Highlights:** Human Relations (2015-2018), Black History Showcase Production (2015-2018), Key Club (2016-2018), Green Dot (2017)

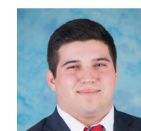
**My Legacy:** "My legacy will be compassion. I hope to have influence others with the joy of giving and the gift of taking care of the ones who came before us."

**What Others Are Saying:** "She's always respectful and polite, but with a little friendly sass to make it fun. It's clear from discussions with her that she loves taking care of people and enjoys her job. Simone has made valuable contributions to SAIL and the community at large and I wish her the best moving forward."

- Charles Robshaw, SAIL ESE Teacher

### HUNTER HANSTEIN

**Florida State University School**



**Awards and Honors:** Sunshine State STEM Scholar (2017), FSUS Varsity Football Scholar Athlete of the Year (2016-2017), Insights Scholar Athlete of the Week (2017), Eagle Scout

**Activity Highlights:** National Honors Society Co-President, Varsity Football Captain, Varsity Throwers (Track and Field) Captain, Student Government Association Executive Board, FSUS Dance Marathon Executive Board

**My Legacy:** "I want to be remembered for radiating positivity into other people's lives and being able to better the lives of others through laughter and greater character. I want to be able to lay a foundation today for the betterment of the next generation."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Hunter is an outstanding student who embodies qualities that this program emphasizes academic success and services to be community. He raised money and worked with the city to build a covered bus shelter for the city bus route that stops right by our school. Hunter's goal of increasing community awareness has bled into his course and career choices."

- Melanie Hester, FSUS Science Teacher



## TIA HUIE

### Godby High School



#### Awards and Honors:

National Society of High School Scholar, Social Studies Student of the Year, Outstanding Youth Volunteer of the Year, MLK Dreamers and Doers Honoree, Senior Homecoming Queen

**Activity Highlights:** National Honors Society, Future Business Leaders of America (2017), student athletic trainer

**My Legacy:** "From cheering in front of fans to constructing rehab for athletes, I want to be remembered for my love and care for sports. From making superior grades in the classroom to holding multiple royal court titles, I want to be honored for my strive to be successful. When I depart from Godby, let only the good times reign."

**What Others Are Saying:** "She is such a special young lady to many of us on campus as she has such an endearing personality. As I have grown to know Tia over the past four years, my appreciation of her academic thirst and natural leadership skills grew immensely. I believe, whole heartedly, that Tia will be a world changer, and I cannot think of a better person to join the medical field."

- Jackie Burkette, Godby High School Athletic Director

## LAIKEN KINSEY

### North Florida Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** Full Moon and Apiaries Scholarship (2014), Capital Regional Science Fair (2014, 2015), West Point Society of Tallahassee Leadership Award (2017)

**Activity Highlights:** Youth Leadership Tallahassee, West Point Society, Florida Department of Agriculture, Junior League of Tallahassee Teen Board, Student Government Organization, National Honor Society

**My Legacy:** "I hope that I inspired the students at my school to have school pride and to be involved in student life as much

as they want to. I also hope that the girls have seen through me that there is nothing wrong with being academic and being a high achiever. Don't ever listen to people tell you that you're weird. You'll flourish from doing the things that make you happy."

**What Others Are Saying:** "I feel that she has excellent comprehension skills that assist her in the day to day problem solving challenges she encounters in math class. Laiken has constantly kept herself at the top of her class academically and maintains status on the A honor roll. Not only is she bright in this area, but she also enjoys the subject matter."

- Holly Gorham, NFC Math Department Chair



## ZIWEI LIN

### Lincoln High School

**Awards and Honors:** American Red Cross Youth in Action Award, AP Scholar Award, History Fair Regionals Winner, Mu Alpha Theta Nationals Convention, Excellence in Science

**Activity Highlights:** Key Club, National Honors Society, Student Government Association, American Red Cross

**My Legacy:** "I hope to continue improving public health. I'm working towards establishing a Red Cross club in every Leon county high school. The end of high school doesn't signify the end of your service; rather let it be a stepping stone for you to accomplish greater things for society. Push yourself to assist; as you help others, you develop your own skills."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Her well-roundedness and commitment to her various organizations highlight her fervor for success. She exhibits an earnest desire to improve the programs of which she is a member. This exemplary student undoubtedly represents one of the best and brightest students Lincoln has encountered over the past several years."

- Jonathon Herrera, Lincoln English Department Chair

## VIRGINIA LUCAS

### St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Laboratory Challenger Winner (2016), various Outstanding Achievement Awards, Academic Scholar Award, National Junior Classical League Winner (2014), Certamen (2015), Region II Latin Forum

**Activity Highlights:** Aerospace Engineering (2016, 2017), Flight Crew and Florida Student Astronaut Challenge Team, National Honors Society, Mu Alpha Theta, International Thespian Society, SJPII Yearbook Copy Editor (2014, 2015), Varsity Volleyball (2014-2017)

**My Legacy:** "I hope to have influenced a greater part of my peers to learn diligently, serve passionately, and find such realms of study that compel each individual to realize their own abilities and strengths. I am neither false nor fake, but am simply me, and I hope to inspire others to embrace their identities, promoting character and excellence in this generation."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Virginia continuously shows great interest in going the extra mile to make sure she understands concepts and to make sure those around her are educated and will also succeed in the class. Virginia has leadership, drive, motivation, academic ability, maturity, and scientific curiosity."

- Laura Lamilla, SJPII Science Teacher

## ANNIE PHAM

### Leon County Virtual School



**Awards and Honors:** Watchtower Bible and Tract Society Regular Pioneer

**Activity Highlights:** Southwood Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

**My Legacy:** "No matter what your starting point is, you can always change your life to be the way you want it to be, take action, don't wait around for a change. Be the change. Nothing worth having in your life will fall into your lap."





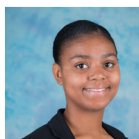
Don't follow the stereotype, be dedicated, be excellent, and be humble."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Annie is a natural leader and influential role model. She encourages other students to show respect and have a positive attitude simply by her own words and action. Whatever the circumstance, I have always observed her to embody everything we want our graduates to be – team players, lifelong learners, positive contributors, hopeful leaders, caring, and open-minded individuals."

- Teri Gimbel, LCVS Guidance Counselor

## KEYANNA SMITH

### FAMU Developmental Research School



**Awards and Honors:** Microsoft Office Certification, Flag Football Final Four District Championships, Quiz Bowl

**Activity Highlights:** JROTC Staff Member, TRIO, B.E.T.A. Club President, Student Government Association Vice President, Second Harvest Food Drive, Honors Society of High School Scholars

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation I hope that I have set a standard for upcoming students who will become young leaders at FAMU DRS. I hope that they look at the guidelines that followed though high school so that they can learn to teach, learn public speaking, model, and get their point across on why they are who they are."

**What Others Are Saying:** "I see that the scholarship is intended to go to someone who demonstrates strong leadership skills. Keyanna fits these guidelines perfectly. Her demonstrated leadership and vision have made a positive impact on our school community and I have no doubt that this will continue at the university she will be attending."

- Lorian Miles, FAMU DRS English Teacher

## CAYLYNNE TEEM

### Leon High School



**Awards and Honors:** National Merit Scholar Semifinalist, Girls Who Code Graduate, FSU Winthrop-King Travel Abroad Scholarship, Leon Scholarship Academic Honor Roll Student (2014-2018), Leon High School Athletic Recognition

**Activity Highlights:** Science National Honor Society President, French National Honor Society Vice President, Rho Kappa Social Science National Honor Society, Pierian National Honor Society, Interact Calendar Girl

**My Legacy:** "Upon graduation, I hope to be thought of as caring individual whose passion and engagement in the lab environment helped others bridge the gap between science and service in the classroom."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Very early, she earned a reputation for showing a true potential that is a rarity amongst students of her age and life experiences. Caylynne has consistently shown responsibility and determination towards her school work in general, as well as her community. Caylynne has taken to the role of academic leader with an enthusiasm that is fun to watch."

- Matthew Guyton, Leon Science Teacher

## PAST WINNERS

2006

Winner - Ugwechi Amadi  
Runner-up - Irina Kotchach  
Honorable Mention - Chase Pfeifer

2007

Winner - Brittany Garner  
Runner-up - John Turner  
Honorable Mention - Tyler Rowland

2008

Winner - Min Jiang  
Runner-up - Xin Guan  
Honorable Mention - Clara Vu

2009

Winner - Rasheedat Zakare-Fagbamila  
Runner-up - Andrew Wyatt  
Honorable Mention - Derek Hettinger

2010

Winner - Philip Schlenoff  
Runner-up - Esha Atolia  
Honorable Mention - Kejing Jiang

2011

Winner - Eta Atolia  
Runner-up - Stanley Stupski  
Honorable Mention - Linda Wang

2012

Winner - Payal Patel  
Runner-up - Yushan Wang  
Honorable Mention - Luxi Qiao

2013

Winner - Jeremy Jones  
Runner-up - Hunter Brown  
Honorable Mention - Stanley Denny

2014

Winner - Samantha Skrob  
Runner-up - Alyssa Morrison  
Honorable Mention - Stephen Crothers

2015

Winner - Rachel Joyner  
Runner-up - Shwetha Shetty  
Honorable Mention - Jordyn Lee

2016

Winner - Amara Ahmed  
Runner-up - Aneesh Rahangdale  
Honorable Mention - Alexander Alabugin

2017

Winner - Will Rogers  
Runner-up - Aditya Hota  
Honorable Mention - Tiffany Lee



WINNER



### ANDREW COLVIN Chiles High School

Of all of Andrew Colvin's community service endeavors, the one that affected him the most was the Fallen Timberwolves Memorial Project to honor Chiles teachers and students who have passed away.

The event served as Colvin's Eagle Scout project. He saw the opportunity for it after the passing of a Chiles student in 2015, and he met with the principal to put his plan into action.

"Being in Scouting for most of my life, from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts, I have learned to appreciate the value that service brings to the community," he said.

He decided to plant a landscape memorial grove along the parent-student drop off road. The beautification project was a success, and Colvin became an Eagle Scout.

But Colvin's work was not done. He then planned a memorial ceremony, which was held in front of the newly planted memorial grove.

The following year, a Chiles teacher and two students passed away, and Colvin sprung back into action to plan a larger ceremony, which included the families of those lost. One parent shared her appreciation to Colvin after the ceremony.

"I am very grateful to have led the opportunity to start such a meaningful program that will have an impact on our

community for years to come," Colvin said.

Colvin has raised funds for the March of Dimes and has volunteered for the American Red Cross. He volunteered at local business Firefly Pottery and Roberts Elementary School as well as Chiles' basketball summer camp.

In addition, he was a delegate for Florida Boys State in 2017 and was elected city councilman, county commissioner and state senator.

At school, Colvin co-founded CFAC, a club focusing on fundraising for various events. He has also served as a student ambassador, helping incoming freshman make the transition to high school. He also has been active in the National Honor Society.

"His civic pride is obvious to all who meet him, and his Eagle Scout project is a reflection of his genuine compassion and unwavering patriotism," said Chiles teacher Emily Barbacci.

Colvin hopes to be remembered as someone who served his community.

"From raising funds for our veterans to honoring those that are no longer with us, I hope that my legacy is one that will inspire others to lead and serve the community," Colvin said. "As Mahatma Ghandi once said, 'You must be the change you wish to see in the world.'"

RUNNER-UP



### JOHN MENTON Maclay School

For his Eagle Scout project, John Menton sought to build park benches, plant trees and create an outdoor seating area at the nonprofit organization A\*Rise.

The project was a success, and Menton donated the rest of his fundraising money to A\*Rise to help feed the impoverished in Gretna, Florida.

Menton said the project helped him realize how fortunate he is and to look for other opportunities to help those in need.

"More than just a project organization and leadership skills, this project taught me to appreciate the small things that I often take for granted in life and showed me the importance of giving back to my community," he said.

Menton has interned for United States Representative Gwen Graham and has served as a Florida Senate page. He is president of the Florida Junior Classical League. He also served on Maclay's upper school student council and honor council.

"The students and faculty all respect John's commitment to work hard and his willingness to lead," said Maclay teacher Paul Berk.

Menton hopes his efforts will leave a positive impact on his community.

"I'd like people to remember me as a good person – someone that was kind and helpful during my time at the school," he said.





## HONORABLE MENTION

### DOHERTY GUIRAND

**Leon High School**



Of all of the performances Doherty Guirand has been a part of with the First Baptist Church of Tallahassee's Youth Choir, her favorite places to sing are various cities that have underserved communities.

From nursing homes and orphanages to mental health facilities, Guirand has not only sung for audiences, but has gotten to know the people who are less fortunate.

"I have met the most inspirational people during my time in the youth choir, and I genuinely believe that I have touched many lives as well," she said.

Besides serving as co-president of the choir, Guirand has been a camp counselor, and at school she has been active in chorus and the service program Pearls of Perfection. In addition, she has tutored her classmates in various subjects.

"Her choices in extracurricular activities highlight her dedication to community and serving others," said Leon teacher Amanda Geiger.

"I hope that my legacy will be one that no matter a student's socioeconomic status, that student can strive to excel in and out of the classroom to build a better future," Guirand said. "I hope to be remembered as a passionate, loving person who is a role model for others in the same position."

## FINALISTS

### ALEXIS BONDI St. John Paul II Catholic School



**Awards and Honors:** Awards and Honors: Class President Award (2015-2017), Spanish Honor Society Activities Coordinator Awards, Spanish II Non-Native Speaker Award, National Honors Society Award, The National Society of High School Scholars Award, Ladies Tennis Most Valuable Player Award

**Activity Highlights:** Rho Kappa National Social Studies, Student Government, Student Government Class Treasurer, Fellowship of Christian Athlete Leader, Senior Homecoming Court, Fine Arts Trip Member, National Honor Society

**My legacy:** "I hope that my legacy inspires others to try new things until they find what they are passionate about. Then, work hard and to learn from the past to become the best versions of themselves. Our past can teach us a lot, because history so often repeats itself."

**What Others Are Saying:** "She is a very hard working and conscientious student. Alexis naturally excels in social studies and I have seen, on multiple occasions, Alexis take time to help her classmates grasp material. She has encouraged and pushed others to be the best they can be as she pushes herself as well."

- Meaghan Eckerle, SJPII Social Studies Teacher

### ANTIONNA GRANT FAMU Developmental Research School



**Awards and Honors:** Certificate of Academia

**Activities Highlights:** FAMU DRS Business Fair, JROTC (2014-2018)

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy will be that I'm a hard worker dedicated to helping other achieve

their goals is life and when younger kids enter to high school they know that I will be a there for them to guide them through their path and journey."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Antionna has a great knack for understanding social and political issues. She is one of the best students in the field of social that I ever taught. In the community, she has helped peers expanded their minds and engage in political and civic programs."

- Anthony Thompson, FAMU DRS Social Studies Teacher

### ANNA MARTIN Lincoln High School



**Awards and Honors:** 2nd Place junior rider Retired Racehorse Project's \$25,000 Thoroughbred Makeover, Grand Oaks Horse Trials Training Division Rider

**Activity Highlights:** National Honors Society, Southwind Dressage and Eventing Association (SWDEA) Board Member, Special Olympics volunteer

**My Legacy:** "After graduating I will make a difference by leaving behind my insight on contribution. I want to inspire individuals to become more selfless, giving up some of their personal desires in order to help others achieve their own. Contribution acts as a circle and no one can achieve their dreams on their own, it takes help!"

**What Others Are Saying:** "Based on my interactions with her through NHS, I knew that she would be an excellent student, and I have not been disappointed. Anna is thoughtful and curious; she makes important connections and asks relevant questions. That fact that Anna manages to maintain such an impressive GPA in rigorous academic classes while finding ways to share her love of both horses and helping other deserves to be recognized."

- Kristen Hobbs, Lincoln Teacher



## PAST WINNERS

### ANDREW RAKESTRAW

#### Florida State University School



**Awards and Honors:** Scout Troop Senior Patrol Leader, Life Rank Scout, Scholar Athlete Award, Cross Country Seminole Award, Principal's Honor Roll

**Activities Highlights:** Student Government Association, Track & Cross Country

**My Legacy:** "I hope that my legacy upon graduating is the inspiration of my younger classmates, fellow scouts, and community members to pursue excellence and balance in all aspects of life. With dedication and perseverance you can be the change you want to see in the world, nothing is beyond your grasp."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Andrew is easily in the top one-percent of students that I have encountered in my career, in all measures. Integrity cannot be learned. Combined with his outstanding maturity, Andrew is once again an outlier. There is no one more trustworthy than Andrew. It has been a privilege to be his teacher."

- Patricia Steed, FSUS Social Studies Teacher

### OLIVIA SAUNDERS

#### Rickards High School



**Awards and Honors:** National Merit Commended Scholar, National AP Scholar, STARTALK Scholarship, National History Day Competition Finalist

**Activities Highlights:** Rickards Model United Nations President, Brain Bowl, founding VP of Youth Leadership and Social Changes Club, Pangea Cultural Showcase, Messenger in the Florida House of Representatives, National Honors Society

**My Legacy:** "During my high school career, I have worked to inspire others in my school community to engage with problems throughout the world and discover the power of public speaking. I hope that in the future, the programs I championed as a student will continue to encourage students to think creatively, embrace a global mindset, and standup for their beliefs."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Olivia is well liked by her classmates, which in my opinion says a lot for her character. Her fellow students know that if they are having difficulty with concept that they can ask her for help. With Olivia's skills, talents, and her impeccable academic background for someone so young, I believe that she will do well in whatever challenges lie ahead of her."

- Dr. Paula Hall, Rickards Science Teacher

### JONATHON WYNN

#### Community Christian School



**Awards and Honors:** AP Scholar, Headmaster's List, High Honor Roll, Senior Leadership Award

**Activities Highlights:** Junior Research Exhibition, Various Mission Trips

**My Legacy:** "I hope that my legacy leaves all that I came in contact with knowing that they are loved, my friends better equipped for their lives through my service, and the few people that sacrificed so much to and to carry the torch and do the same to their close friends."

**What Others Are Saying:** "He has been a regular and insightful contributor to class discussions, exhibiting prodigious corollary and contextual knowledge of history. Jonathon is a fine young man with an outstanding mind, a love of and unusual proficiency in history and the social sciences, and makes an excellent candidate for Best and Brightest."

- Tom Argersinger, CCS Guidance Counselor

2006

Winner - Amanda Van Landingham  
Runner-up - Joi Robinson  
Honorable Mention - Lisa Trainor

2007

Winner - Michael McKibben  
Runner-up - Forat Lutfi  
Honorable Mention - Sarah Martin

2008

Winner - Shayla Shane  
Runner-up - Sarah Haston  
Honorable Mention - James Crowley

2009

Winner - Douglas Chico  
Runner-up - Alexandra Sorchych-Hoffman  
Honorable Mention - Taylor Brown

2010

Winner - Christina Ciaravella  
Runner-up - Hunter King  
Honorable Mention - Joshua Berrian

2011

Winner - Marta Perez  
Runner-up - Blanche Brown  
Honorable Mention - Kendrick Smith

2012

Winner - Jasmine Lucas  
Runner-up - Sarah Busby  
Honorable Mention - Kenneth Soyars

2013

Winner - Robert Celander  
Runner-up - Avery Smith  
Honorable Mention - Kaytron Coker

2014

Winner - Kayley Erickson  
Runner-up - Matthew Kang  
Honorable Mention - Cooper Perlman

2015

Winner - Adrian Schell  
Runner-up - Abhinav Harish  
Honorable Mention - Hannah Williams

2016

Winner - Graham Boone  
Runner-up - Megan Choutupalli  
Honorable Mention - Aditya Srivastava

2017

Winner - Cannon Haworth  
Runner-up - William Cannard  
Honorable Mention - Emily Brockmeier





WINNER



### HANA KIROS Rickards High School

At the beginning of her junior year, Hana Kiros reached out to WFSU with the idea of putting on a show for teens to discuss politics.

"This program was born from my dissatisfaction with the lack of public arenas available where Americans from different backgrounds could just sit together and civilly discuss politics," she said.

As a result, Kiros became founder and executive producer of "Common Sense: Teens Take on Politics," which airs monthly on WFSU. Through each episode, she seeks out three to six teens of varying political beliefs to discuss politics. Kiros herself has served as a panelist and also works on the technical aspect of production.

"I truly believe that broadcasting such conversations helps to bridge divides within my community," Kiros said. "I hope that the 112,000-plus listeners the series has reached thus far will be encouraged to engage with those from whom they differ."

Kiros also created the Superintendent Forum for superintendent candidates to field student-posed questions. Since last February, she has developed presentations utilizing microbots to engage elementary school students in their core curriculum.

At school, Kiros has been involved with the National Honor Society, participating in projects such as the Lake Henrietta Clean Up following Hurricane Irma. She served as hospitality chair of Dance Marathon, for which she coordinated fundraising efforts benefiting Shand's Children's Hospital and FSU College of Medicine's Pediatric Outreach Program. She also worked on the tech crew for Pangaea, Rickards' annual multicultural event.

She has volunteered at Hartsfield Elementary School to help make ornaments to be sold during the Arts & Antiques Fair, and she also volunteered at Oak Ridge Elementary School on behalf of Girls Get Information Technology, a local STEM nonprofit.

"Ms. Kiros is driven by the desire to do good, personally, for those who immediately surround her, and also to effect change in the world," said Rickards teacher Jose Fiallos.

"And then not simply to be a positive force for those whose lives she affects, but to then share the knowledge and understanding that she has acquired so that others can be positive forces as well."

"I hope to be remembered as a person that did what they could to better the places they were, and as someone that engaged with the world around them," Kiros said. "I think one of the primary joys of being able to not only witness, but influence the world around you."

RUNNER-UP



### PATRICK HOLLIS St. John Paul II Catholic School

When Patrick Hollis noticed the lack of sound at SJPII events, he took matters into his own hands by becoming a sound technician for the school.

"At that time, nobody knew how to use the good equipment that the school had, as nobody had tried to learn it, but once I was in charge of using that equipment, it became my mission to learn how to use that equipment to the fullest," he said.

His hard work paid off when the spring musical had the best sound quality in the school's history.

Hollis also is a technician and president of the Aerospace Engineering Team and has led teams in Brain Bowl and Mu Alpha Theta.

"PJ is a servant leader; he leads by serving and never seeks recognition for it," said SJPII teacher Emily Serpico. "He has applied his gift for problem solving to help our community succeed."

"I hope that I am remembered for a spirit of hard work, dedication, and a commitment to excellence in all areas," Hollis said. "If just one aspect of the things that I worked on remains, I would want it to be the constant outflowing of passion into the projects that matter most to me."



## HONORABLE MENTION

### IBRAHIM FAGBAMILA-ZAKARE

**Lincoln High School**



Ibrahim Fagbamila-Zakare took it upon himself to teach his fellow students at Lincoln computer science.

For an hour on Fridays in the computer lab, he "would experience a metamorphosis, emerging from my chrysalis as a confident mentor students could rely on."

"Witnessing the germination and growth of the seed I planted propels me to do what I can to continue cultivating a generation of problem solvers as a computer scientist and an educator," he said.

Fagbamila-Zakare started the Muslim Culture and Heritage Club at Lincoln, which put on the fundraiser "Kebabs for a Cause," which raised money for refugees. He has also been an active member of Brain Bowl and Model United Nations and volunteered at a retirement home.

"Ibrahim's greatest strength is his desire to learn and apply his knowledge," said Lincoln teacher James Richmond. "It is obvious that his greatest motivation is the intrinsic desire to self-improve and I can say with confidence that his desire for academic success comes from within."

"I hope to inspire students in the coming years to make the transition from consumer to producer, gaining an understanding of the technologies they use every day, and acquiring the skills to create their own," Fagbamila-Zakare said.

## FINALISTS

### SAMANTHA BICKEL

**Florida State University School**



**Awards and Honors:** Final Cut Pro Software Proficient, Quill and Scroll Yearbook Nomination, National Cheerleading Association Leadership Award

**Activity Highlights:** TV Production, Varsity Cheerleading Co-Captain (2015-2017), Student Government Association Executive Board Member, Dance Marathon Executive Board Member, Mini-Dance Marathon Executive Board Member, Senior Homecoming Court Representative

**My Legacy:** "I hope to be remembered as a kind, caring person that would go out of my way to help others. I would love to be remembered as one of the founding members of the Mini-Dance Marathon at Florida High and that it will live on to raise thousands of dollars in the future for the kids."

**What Others Are Saying:** "She is a fundamental part of our FSUS morning news crew, and has served for two years as both a producer and director. This is not always an easy job, but Samantha is able to manage it successfully with maturity and professionalism. Samantha is also a very proficient editor using the software Final Cut Pro to edit all of the videos she creates."

- Clayton Allen, FSUS TV Production Teacher

### JOSHUA CHOI

**Godby High School**



**Awards and Honors:** Certification of Safety, Small UAS Safety Certification Program, JROTC Order of Daedalians Award, JROTC Hunley, JROTC Achievement Award

**Activities Highlights:** JROTC Air Force (2014-

2017), Student Government Association (2016-2018), Varsity Tennis

**My Legacy:** "I want to be studied about in history books, research papers about who I was and how I helped pave the way for new medical engineering. To ensure that the ones I love live a great life."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Josh has an impressive mix of academic and extra-curricular achievements. He has achieved a perfect A-average in those classes and has maintained an overall A in all of his dual enrollment classes. I have witnessed firsthand Josh's exceptional leadership skills both in and outside the classroom."

- Jeffrey Spraggins, Godby Aeronautics Teacher

### MICHAEL MOLEN

**Chiles High School**



**Awards and Honors:** Youth Volunteer Award, Outstanding Service Award, nominated for Leon County Student Volunteer of the Year (2017-2018)

**Activities Highlights:** Student Government Association, Gulf Winds Track Club, Teen Court

**My Legacy:** "I hope that the work I have done at my school will be used for now and thereafter. I wish only the best for my school and community and I want to be a part of it."

**What Others Are Saying:** "He has become the student that teachers and administrators call on to help run camera and sound equipment at events or to problem solve issues in the computer lab. His knowledge, reliability, and positive attitude make him a valuable resource and collaborative partner in solving technology issues. What makes Michael stand out is that he is proactive."

- Melissa Ingram, Chiles Media Specialist



## ELIJAH MURPHY

### Leon High School



**Awards and Honors:** FIRST Robotics Semifinalist, Automation Direct Competition/ FIRST Robotics, Adobe Certification, Savannah College of Art and Design Summer Program Scholarship, Honor Roll (2014-2018)

**Activities Highlights:** Leon Robotics Co-Founder, Student Government Association, internship Pod Advertising Agency

**My Legacy:** "I want to be remembered for the robotics program I started and the impact it will have on the community in addition to the contributions it's already made. My goal is to engage high schoolers (and eventually younger kids through mentorship programs) with the world of STEM and engineering, ultimately helping to create a generation of creative, constructive, critically- thinking, and helpful people."

**WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING:** "Eli Murphy is an upstanding young man who has found his passion and joy in all things creative. When I think of Eli Murphy the words that come to my mind are enthusiasm, desire, fervor, and compassion. His dedication, his quiet determination, and his academic gifts will serve Eli well as he completes his high school career and enters the post- secondary learning environment."

- Sarah Hembree, Leon Assistant Principal

## EMILY SYMEON

### SAIL High School



**Awards and Honors:** Microsoft Office Specialist Certification, SAIL Pirate Medallion Award (2014-2015), SAIL High School Youth Volunteer of the Year Award (2016-2017), SGA Spirit of Service Award (2016-2017)

**Activities Highlights:** Key Club (2015-2016), Cheerleading, SAIL Human Relations Club (2014-2017), Student Government Association (2014-2017)

**My Legacy:** "I hope my legacy is that I have inspired more people to volunteer in our community, and that through Technology I have shown through digital designs I have made that have shown the true beauty of SAIL and how amazing SAIL is."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Emily is an outstanding young leader who has made a difference here at SAIL High School and who is committed to the Student Government Association. She always lends a helping hand where needed and willingly gives of her time and resources. Emily works diligently each year to reflect to the community the pride and spirit we have here at SAIL High School."

- Caitlin Starkey, SAIL Social Studies Teacher

## LEE WILLIAMS

### Maclay School



**Awards and Honors:** Published Author

**Activities Highlights:** Notes From the Underground Art Editor, self-published blog

**My Legacy:** I want to leave behind the power of perseverance. When my mother passed away, it made me rethink life completely. A new outlook on life allowed me to be more productive and determined. I was published on multiple platforms, and I started writing a novel, Seasons. Through tragedy comes greatness, and I am living proof of it."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Throughout the year, her work had a profound effect on me, and she's literally helped make Maclay a better, more humane place. Lee's sentences, though, resound with herself and unique way of seeing the world. She is an involved and altruistic young who actively works to make out world better."

- Lee Norment, Maclay English Department Chair

## KATELYN WOOD

### North Florida Christian School



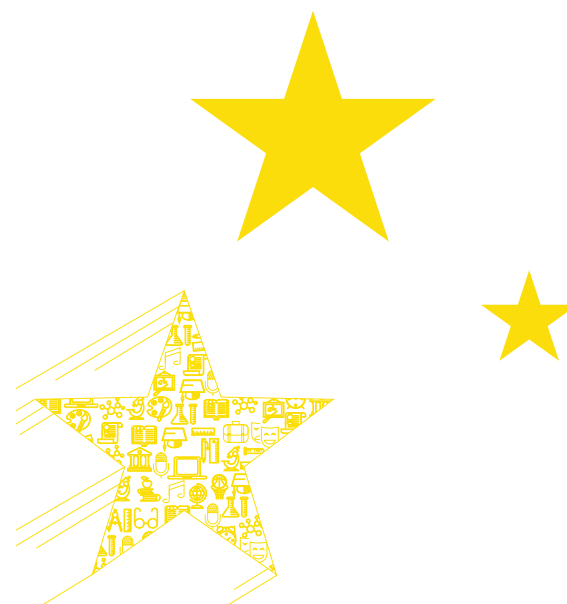
**Awards and Honors:** Awards and Honors: Media Head for Student Government Advisors of NFC

**Activities Highlights:** National Honors Society Treasurer, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, NFC Praise Band

**My Legacy:** "Approaching graduation, I pray that when my fellow classmates look back and remember me they see me as someone who was never afraid of anything. Someone who lived her life always up for a challenge whether it be in school or in sports. Life is always going to challenge you and try to throw you off your game, but I want others to see me as someone who enjoyed the challenge."

**What Others Are Saying:** "Katelyn works hard each day in class to do her very best. She is truly gifted in the ability to take raw footage and create short video/movies. She is capable of taking on many tasks and completing them in a timely fashion."

- Holly Gorham, NFC Math Department Chair





# PAST WINNERS

## TECHNOLOGY

2006

Winner - Kevin Yon  
Runner-up - David Schubert  
Honorable Mention - Adam Grayson

2007

Winner - James Fadool  
Runner-up - Rachel Luczynski  
Honorable Mention - Ross Nichols

2008

Winner - Ian Elsner  
Runner-up - Nelson James  
Honorable Mention - William Lindsey

2009

Winner - Michael DiTanna  
Runner-up - Jay Christopher Cardenas  
Honorable Mention - Jared Young

2010

Winner - Scott Atherton  
Runner-up - Sung Woo Han  
Honorable Mention - Katelyn Varn

2011

Winner - Ryan David Reyes  
Runner-up - Jameson Tucker  
Honorable Mention - Cameron Ridgewell

2012

Winner - Zachary Grayson  
Runner-up - James Pace  
Honorable Mention - Jordan Dick

2013

Winner - Emily Gardner  
Runner-up - Justin Burt  
Honorable Mention - Joey Cardenas

2014

Winner - Brenna Wonsey  
Runner-up - Brady Robshaw  
Honorable Mention - Saikrishnapriya Gunasegaran

2015

Winner - Babar Ahmed  
Runner-up - Brendan O'Healaigh  
Honorable Mention - Rachael Steverson

2016

Winner - Daniel Becker  
Runner-up - Christopher Witmer  
Honorable Mention - Jessica McNeil

2017

Winner - Sanwal Ahmed  
Runner-up - Sophie Nelsen  
Honorable Mention - Elspeth Suber



Best &  
Brightest

## 8TH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

The Best & Brightest Awards invited Leon County eighth grade students to recognize their potential and dream about their future by participating in the 2018 Best & Brightest Awards Essay Contest. This year, students analyzed the following quote and wrote an essay describing how involvement in volunteer service can make a difference in our community and how it relates to their service in school and community.

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” - Leo Buscaglia

WINNER



ZOE ALBRIGO  
Fairview Middle School

“A big aspect of community service is to be able to talk with people. I could look up and see all the adults smiling and everyone just having a good time. One person's energy bound to another until they had all started to smile.”

RUNNER-UP



GRACE DENNIG  
Holy Comforter Episcopal School

“Small acts of caring are what really matter, volunteering some of your day to help those in need, even just to inspire others. Lead by example and start changing the world.”

HONORABLE MENTION



ALLIE BOYD  
Raa Middle School

“Small acts of caring are what really matter, volunteering some of your day to help those in need, even just to inspire others. Lead by example and start changing the world.”





## RUNNER-UP

ELIZABETH COBB  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

CaMya Smith  
Timothy Spencer  
Kayden Washington

COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL

Katherine Bouck  
Chaelee Crowe  
Lydia Shackelford

CORNERSTONE LEARNING  
COMMUNITY

Cayden Bevis  
LeKayla Griffin  
Lorelei Selman

DEERLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Nora Bearss  
Liam Hawk  
Bryan Park

FAIRVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

Zoe Albrigo  
Maya Cobb  
Sheena Lu

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL

Denim Carter  
Shane Mincy  
Aidan Stresing

FORT BRADEN SCHOOL

April Perez

GRIFFIN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bryaunah Burton  
Xavier Oglesby  
Rodney Zellars

HOLY COMFORTER  
EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Elizabeth Crapps  
Grace Dennig  
Brian McNulty

HOME SCHOOL

Katherine Cox  
Robert Muñiz  
Alyssa Witherington

WILLIAM J. MONTFORD, III  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tzu-Chin Hsu

NORTH FLORIDA  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Hannah Reece  
Ashlynn Stennett

AUGUSTA RAA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Athena Baucum  
Allie Boyd  
Tobianna Hendon

SWIFT CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Emily Adams  
Michael Aldridge  
Xavier Patterson

TALLAHASSEE SCHOOL  
OF MATH & SCIENCE

Jeremiah Acosta  
Jamari Lovett

TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Ian McFarlin  
Katherine Prendeville  
Karlie Stroud

WOODVILLE SCHOOL

Serenity Gavin  
Kaylee Jones  
Tiana Jones

## PAST WINNERS

### 2011

Winner - Muireall Brown,  
Elizabeth Cobb Middle School  
Runner-up - Danielle Federico,  
Griffin Middle School  
Honorable Mention - Shane Smith,  
Montford Middle School

### 2012

Winner - Colleen Newton,  
Fairview Middle School  
Runner-up - Simone Butler,  
Maclay School  
Honorable Mention - Alexandria Rogers,  
Fairview Middle School

### 2013

Winner - Jadaicia Ervin,  
Montford Middle School  
Runner-up - Imani Walker,  
Griffin Middle School  
Honorable Mention - Rebecca Morales,  
Maclay School

### 2014

Winner - John McCann,  
Florida State University School  
Runner-up - Kassidy Stuart,  
Florida State University School  
Honorable Mention - Grant Womble,  
Deerlake Middle School

### 2015

Winner - Meghan Gilmore,  
Fairview Middle School  
Runner-up - Kirsten Whaley,  
Deerlake Middle School  
Honorable Mention - Sarah Schaper,  
Home School

### 2016

Winner - Connor Yablonski,  
Deerlake Middle School  
Runner-up - Julia Hernandez,  
Trinity Catholic School  
Honorable Mention - Madeleine Roberts,  
Maclay School

### 2017

Winner - Aniketh Mukhirala,  
Fairview Middle School  
Runner-up - Natalie Johns,  
Trinity Catholic School  
Honorable Mention - Presley Allen,  
Raa Middle School





## SPIRIT OF THE BEST & BRIGHTEST

This award is in honor of Brooks Rogers, who tragically lost his life in an automobile accident in 2011. His passion for life and commitment to helping others exemplifies the “spirit” of the Best & Brightest. Because of the generosity of the Tallahassee community after his death, a scholarship fund was formed to benefit the Best & Brightest Awards recipients. This recognition has been an exciting culmination of the awards program, with a \$2,500 scholarship presented to a student recognized for exemplifying that “Spirit.”

The winners are selected among the 45 honorable mentions, runners-up and winners in each of the categories. The recipient of the spirit of the Best & Brightest award truly exemplifies what it means to have a passion for service and giving back to the community.

### 2018 SPIRIT AWARD



#### KHADEJA AHMED

##### Maclay School



It takes a village to raise a child. According to Khadeja Ahmed, Tallahassee is no exception as the traditions of unity and interpersonal hospitality have been passed on to her.

“I have felt the impact of everyday people’s kindness and now that I have grown, I feel a duty to give back to those in need,” Ahmed said. “During my early volunteer experience, I saw how medicine helps the community and my motivation was to have the same impact even at my age.”

During her volunteer ship at TMH, Ahmed’s mentor introduced her to the Telehealth monitoring initiative, which encompasses a variety of technologies and tactics to deliver virtual medical, health, and education services

“I believe that one should never have to go through such extensive measures just to get necessary healthcare. This was my main motivation for volunteering my heart into making the Telehealth monitoring program a reality for patients.”

As this new initiative progresses into the future of healthcare, Ahmed predicts it will impact thousands in Tallahassee and the surrounding areas.

The success of her newly instated program led Ahmed to expand her cause. She became a member of Youth Health Leadership Tallahassee (YHLT), where she learned to design community-based health outreach projects and implement health education on a broader level.

Her role in YHLT led her to truly apply her knowledge in combination with leadership skills to make a direct impact on the community.

She assisted in creating nutrition outreach presentations that were then demonstrated in Frenchtown and local elementary schools.

Ahmed has authored a book about childhood obesity, which will further support her endeavor to educate the community about the importance of watching our health.

Through her efforts, she became better at interacting with others, strengthened her organizing and leadership skills, and became a devoted servant to enhance literacy, awareness, and educational outreach efforts in the community.

Ahmed is currently working on a research project to further understand nutritional label literacy in Tallahassee while training a new generation of health volunteers through service clubs she has founded.

### PAST WINNERS

2012 Zemoria Johnson  
RICKARDS HIGH SCHOOL

2013 Sam Kerce  
LEON HIGH SCHOOL

2014 Mackenzie Teek  
LEON HIGH SCHOOL

2015 Carina Krehl  
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

2016 Zenani Johnson  
RICKARDS HIGH SCHOOL

2017 Jordyn Berrian  
LEON HIGH SCHOOL







## JUDGES

### ART

**Dean Gioia**, Fine Arts Artist

**Daniel Taylor**, President,  
Daniel Taylor Consulting, Inc.

**Amanda Karioth Thompson**, Assistant  
Director/Education and Exhibitions  
Manager, Council on Culture & Arts

### ATHLETICS

**Todd Del Calzo**, Operations Supervisor,  
Premier Health & Fitness Center

**Maicel Green**, Olympic Gold medalist,  
Talquin Electric Cooperative, Inc.

**Dr. Jim Rauschenbach**, CHP Champions  
Program Facilitator, Titus Sports Academy

### BUSINESS

**Keith Bowers**, Regional Director, FAMU  
Small Business Development Center

**Steve Evans**, IBM Vice President, retired

**Jennifer Gunter**, Cash Forecasting  
and Funds Management Manager,  
Florida Department of Transportation

### CAREER/TECHNICAL

**Dr. Elaine Bryant**, CEO/President,  
EW Bryant Associates

**Myrna Hoover**, Director,  
The FSU Career Center

**Dan McGrew**, General Manager,  
Career Source Capital Region

### DRAMA & PERFORMING ARTS

**Joyce Fausone**, Retired, FSU School of Dance

**Cameron Jackson**, Executive Director,  
FSU School of Theatre

**Luther Wells**, Chair, FAMU Department  
of Visual Arts, Humanities and Theatre

### ENGLISH & LANGUAGE ARTS

**Cay Hohmeister**, Director, LeRoy Collins/  
Leon County Public Library System

**Kim Kelling**, Director of Content  
& Community Partnerships, WFSU-FM

**Yakini Kemp**, Chair, FAMU Department  
of English & Modern Languages

### FOREIGN LANGUAGE

**Rhonda Cooper**, Program Director,  
Literacy Volunteers of Leon County

**Dr. Maria Pouncey**, Administrator for  
Instructional Services, Panhandle Area  
Educational Consortium

**Gretchen Sunderman**, Professor,  
FSU - Modern Languages & Linguistics

### JOURNALISM & MEDIA PRODUCTION

**Julie Montanaro**, Anchor/  
Reporter, WCTV

**Andrew Skerritt**, Storytelling  
Coach, Tallahassee Democrat

**Dr. Dhyana Ziegler**, Interim Dean,  
FAMU School of Journalism  
& Graphic Communication

### LEADERSHIP

**Mary Coburn**, Vice President,  
retired, The Florida State University

**Julie Lovelace**, Attorney,  
Municipal Code Corporation

**Curtis Richardson**, Commissioner,  
City of Tallahassee

### MATHEMATICS

**Todd Clark**, Director,  
Office of Articulation,  
Florida Department of Education

**Kalynda Holton**, Associate Dean,  
Tallahassee Community College

**Dr. Sonya Stephens**, Associate  
Dean, FAMU College of Science  
and Technology

### MUSIC

**Dr. Lori Gooding**, Assistant Professor,  
FSU College of Music

**Glenn Hosken**, Treasurer, The Artist  
Series of Tallahassee

**Dr. Deloise Lima**, Program Director  
of Collaborative Piano, FSU College  
of Music

### PUBLIC SPEAKING

**Forrest Boone**, Commission Advisor,  
Florida Public Service Commission

**Susan Fiorito**, Director, Jim Moran School  
of Entrepreneurship

**Rick Grant**, Chief Operating Officer, Municode

### SCIENCE & HEALTH

**Dr. Mark Kearley**, Honors Director, FSU  
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

**Dr. Dragana Popovich**, Senior Scientist,  
National High Magnetic Field Laboratory

**Francis C. Skilling, Jr., M.D.**, Ophthalmologist,  
Eye Associates of Tallahassee, P.A.

### SOCIAL SCIENCE

**Dr. Murrell Dawson**, Research Associate,  
Meek-Eaton Black Archives

**Sandy Shaughnessy**, Division Director,  
Florida Division of Cultural Affairs

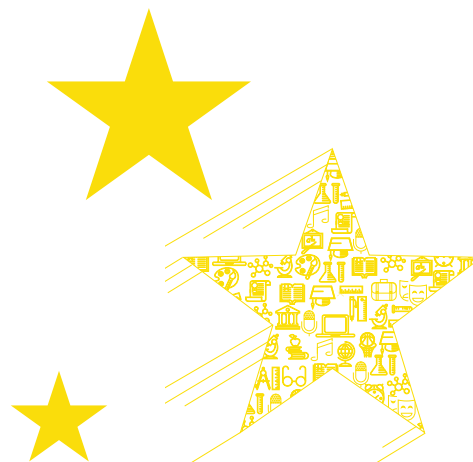
**Dr. Darius Young**, Associate Professor,  
FAMU College of Social Sciences,  
Arts and Humanities

### TECHNOLOGY

**Pam Butler**, Chairman, Aegis Business  
Technologies

**Larry Dennis**, Dean, FSU College  
of Communication & Information

**Eric Smith, Sr.**, Vice President of Information  
Systems, Capital Health Plan





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Anosh Gill, Graphic Design; David Barfield, Lonely Fox Photography; Aimee Sachs, Editorial Writer; Cobb Middle School; Charlie Belvin, Impact Visual Media; Cobb Middle School's Beta Club; Ben Gunter, Pianist; Hotel Duval; Leon County Schools; Leon County School Board; Southern Scholarship Foundation; Tallahassee Community College; Tallahassee Nurseries; Volunteer Florida; Dean Pat Flowers, Heather Mayo and The Technical Team at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall; Lilith Edwards and Joseph Edwards, Photographer; Zemoria Johnson

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