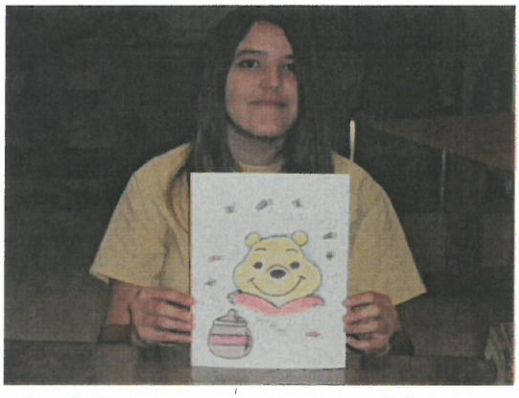
VSA Florida Students of the Month – October 2015

VSA Florida is pleased to announce 17 year old **Deanna Truett** and 19 year old **Genevieve Mesa** as their October Students of the Month.



Deanna Truett was nominated by her teacher, Tammy Harrison at Union County High School. "Deanna is a student that was given the gift of arts", Ms. Harrison, writes, "and she uses her artwork to make others happy through cards, projects and visuals. She celebrates the abilities in her peers, not their disabilities."

Despite being in a self-contained ESE classroom, Deanna is in high academic standing and enjoys school. Although a shy individual, she advocates for others to be the best they can be, which is evident in her community outreach as well as artistic abilities.

Deanna is a member of SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) and JROTC. She remains an active member of Grace Christian Fellowship and Florida Crown as well as actively participating in school events throughout the year.

Ms. Harrison writes, "I believe her greatest accomplishment is when we lost a student due to illness in our class and Deanna created a drawing of this student to present to the parents in his memory at our prom. They were deeply touched to be able to carry that memory forever."

Drawing done in memory of my classmate
By: Deanna Truett

Genevieve Mesa is a student at Center Academy in Riverview, an independent private school offering specialized instruction for students grade 4-12 with disabilities. She was lovingly nominated by her guardian/grandmother, Juelene Gregory. She writes, "Genevieve has an infectious smile and caring nature...sees the good in each person she meets. She gives her all in whatever she chooses to do and has overcome some big obstacles in her young

life." Through Genevieve's love of art, many doors have opened, revealing opportunities for her to grow and develop.

Genevieve participates in art classes at Center Place Fine Arts and Civic Association and through VSA Florida's community art class program at USF. She specializes in drawing and painting and her artwork can even be seen on the cover of the Center Academy 2014 yearbook. Last year, Genevieve spearheaded a soda tab collection fundraiser for Shriner's Children's Hospital and is continuing the project again this year. But that's not all this young lady can do! She participates in St. James UMC Special Connections and the JOYS Choir, the Portico Chorus and has performed as a soloist for The One Roof Initiative and MacDonald Training Center fundraisers.

Genevieve has Autism. Ms. Gregory continues, "She does not feel it hinders her but serves to have her strive harder to accomplish what she sets out to do. Her mom & dad are both deceased but yet she still shines, smiles and loves every day."

A recognition award ceremony is scheduled for Genevieve this month at Center Academy, 10518 Riverview Drive, Riverview, FL 33578.