

Arts4All Florida Student of the Month December, 2018



10-year-old Charlie Salli was nominated by Allison Knazick, his art teacher at Layer Elementary School in Winter Springs, Florida. "Art is an absolute outlet for Charlie to not only express himself freely, but to shine in a special way that has helped to raise his self-esteem and to connect him to other students through his art", Ms. Knazick writes.

Charlie Salli, a very shy, well-behaved boy in the classroom, blossoms when given the chance to share his pieces. "His eyes never fail to light up when he talks about his artwork. It's the happiest I see him", shares Knazick. He has participated in several Seminole County arts shows including the Reflections school contest along with joining the prestigious school art club where he was one of 15 students invited in. His teacher describes his art as inventive, creating subjects that seem to be inspired by shows he watches or games he plays.

With a tendency to occasionally seclude himself from his peers because of being self-conscious of his autism, Charlie is grateful to his skills in terms of relationship building. Everyone loves this warm spirited young artist! "I have seen Charlie grow from a boy who liked art, to a boy who LOVES art, to a child who is extremely talented and will most certainly have a job as an artist, animator, illustrator or some other profession in the visual arts field.", Knazick states.

Charlie attends STEAM Teams in the morning at school, helps his family around the house, and is a fantastic class assistant. He participates in group reading activities and actively engages in music class as well, serving as a role model for so many kids at Layer Elementary School.



21-year-old Mario Jimenez was nominated by Elena Novikova, his art teacher at UCO's Transitional Learning Academy in Miami, Florida. Her nomination shares Mario's passion for the visual arts as well as music.

"Mario uses his imagination to create unique art work with no direction from anyone. Most of his pieces are made from recycled things he has found; [his art] has its own personality and style", writes Ms. Novikova. This budding artist enjoys a strong art education program not only in his transitional school environment but during weekend community art classes. He plays the piano as well as the drums, (which are his primary instrument) and he's been able to add another layer of instruction from

the MP School of Music and the Alberto Pancorbo Art School, both in Miami.

Outside of the many hours he devotes to art making, Mario is tasked with cashier duties and daily record keeping of payroll and expenses for the school's café. The Learning Academy recognizes these type of skills for an enthusiastic SLD student are necessary to prepare him for the workplace.