

VSA Florida Student of the Month January 2018

VSA Florida is proud to announce Ayelen Arabe Tardio and Hailey Buxton as the January 2018 Students of the Month.



10-year-old Ayelen was nominated by Ximena Hurtado, an ESE Teacher at Pinewoods Elementary School in Estero, due to the outstanding leadership she has developed through her love of dance. Ms. Hurtado tells us, “she leads the rest of the class in dance”. Gone is the shy little girl from last year who would hide under desks and not participate in creative activities with her classmates. She is now ready to enthusiastically create all types work in her art class. Ms. Hurtado writes, “This year Ayelen has blossomed and embraced her talents. Ayelen is able to use the arts to express herself in a positive manner. She is truly a part of the class and is a happier child because of it.” As a child with Downs Syndrome, Ayelen has overcome many personal obstacles, yet continues to be a community role model and champion for awareness and kindness. Ayelen has also modeled for Culvers, Sears, Chuck E. Cheese and Disney.



17-year-old Hailey was nominated by Lilian Palmer, a Theatre Arts Instructor at Seminole High School in Pinellas County, for the growth and leadership she exemplifies while working with others and participating in the school drama program. Ms. Palmer shares, “Hailey is without a doubt an integral part of our theatre program here at SHS. She takes pride in what she does and shows dedication on a daily basis.” Hailey has taken many roles in community theatre programs over the years including some that were developed for students such as Hailey that have Autism Spectrum Disorder. Ms. Palmer writes, “She is trained and does well in singing, dancing and acting. She has grown into a successful thespian. Performing Arts has been critical to her development.” Additionally, Hailey is involved in the school based enterprise “coffee shop” and has reaped the benefits that come with developing social, emotional and practical skills of a small business.