

**Arts4All Florida
Student of the Month
November 2018**



21-year-old **April Tucciarone** attends the Clearlake BLAST program at Clearlake Learning Center in Cocoa, Florida and was nominated by her classroom teacher, Veronica Marren. “April’s shyness and developmental delays have not stopped her from challenging herself to learn new things”, April’s mother, Jennifer Tucciarone states. Well stated, as we have learned!

With an evident song in her heart, April began playing the piano when she was in first grade and has continued to pursue and share her passion through middle and high school choral programs. While in high school, April incorporated her musical talents into a multimedia, creative geography project which can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9sqluYNNDE.

“Piano has helped April with fine motor skills, tracking, speaking, listening, reading, focusing and planning”, says Ms. Tucciarone. “But most of all, learning to play the piano is a lifelong skill that has built confidence in April.”

Currently, April is a participant in the BLAST transition skills program and successfully participates in community-based vocational education and in the LEAP volunteer job training programs. She takes part in Special Olympics bowling and frequently attends dances for adults with disabilities at her local Parks and Recreation Club. “It is a pleasure discovering hidden talents of our team members”, Mrs. Marren writes in her enthusiastic nomination of April for Student of the Month.



13-year-old **Katie Yaques** attends the Florida Autism Center in Tallahassee and was nominated by her music teacher, Amanda Broadfoot from Making Light Productions where she currently participates as a cast member. The Making Light Productions Mainstage cast is an inclusive cast of special needs students that work alongside typical peers to produce a musical production.

“Katie is the kindest, hardest working student I know. She is living proof that autism needn’t hold a child back from participating in something they love. Watching her natural gifts flourish and grow with her practice and lessons has been a blessing for me as a teacher.” writes Ms. Broadfoot.

Katie has been studying voice and piano for four years and spends most days after school honing her skills by participating in group and private performing arts lessons. The payoff has been sweet this year when she took home High Gold ratings at the Access Broadway regional musical theatre competition.

Ms. Broadfoot adds heartfelt accolades by sharing, “[Katie] works so hard, has come so far and serves as an inspiration to so many who know her.”