

**Arts4All Florida  
Student of the Month  
January 2022**

11-year-old **Max Lemus** was nominated by his parents, Claudia and Raudel Lemus.

Max attends Morning Star School in Tampa, Florida. Since the pandemic, he has been taking piano lessons virtually under the tutelage of his teacher, Mrs Tannia Laracuente-Martinez, from Miami. Max's parents shared how "this would have not been possible without her dedication and commitment." Mr. and Mrs. Lemus described how "Max's remarkable ability to play the piano is a testament to his perseverance." He is a testament to the benefits the arts can have on students on the Autism spectrum. "[His] dedication, persistence, and resilience, has allowed him to progress to new heights in his ability to play the piano..." - Mr. and Mrs. Lemus. As he's progressed in his musical abilities, Max has also grown in his self-confidence, expressing his emotions through music.



Arts4All was impressed at Max's ease on the stage and in front of the camera. His knowledge of notes and piano chords is clear in his ability to play without sheet music. His cover of *Amazing Grace* reverberated like an organ in a towering cathedral. Each key was played precisely and patiently, holding each note as needed. Max enjoys playing for his friends, families, and fellow community members. We are certain he will continue to grow in his skills!



19-year-old **Joey Suarez** was nominated by Matthew Foster, his classroom teacher at Navarre High School in Navarre, Florida. He wrote, "Joey's talent and passion goes way beyond what [we expected]." Beyond the arts, Joey is involved in Navarre's Dillon Administrative Center, a transition program where students further their employment skills. Joey is a hardworking student who is carving a bright future for himself! "While he considers [art] a hobby (for now) our hope is that he will one day acknowledge the tremendous amount of talent he possesses and continue to activate his creative side regardless of where his life takes him." – Mr. Foster.

Joey's media of choice include drawing and sculpture. His figurative works and keen eye for detail impressed Arts4All very much! Joey's awareness of shading and precise linework make his images pop out of the white page. Mr. Foster described Joey as a student with varying exceptionalities: "Joey shared his interests in the arts with us early in the semester -- showing us his clay sculptures, sketches, portraits and his own written and illustrated comic book...From our conversations with Joey, he is almost entirely self-taught as far as his artistic talents with clay and sketching are concerned. He has been honing his skills for as long as he can remember." Mr. Foster worked in journalism for 10+ years and commented how Joey's "work easily matches or surpasses what you would find from many comic strip artists."