

## Student of the Month

### Arts4All Florida

### November, 2019



15-year-old **Melissa Precilla** was nominated by Helen Hauser, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Greater Miami Youth Symphony (GMYS). She shares with Arts4All Florida the amazing evolution of “shy, speech-delayed child” into an accomplished musician.

Melissa joined the Greater Miami Youth Symphony ten years ago for their 2009 3-week summer camp program. Ms. Hauser writes, “She quickly realized she had an affinity for music, worked hard and attained recognition. Along the way, she also acquired confidence and greatly improved social skills.”

As she continued to attend music classes at GMYS preparatory program, Melissa’s skilled music making continued and she was accepted into the string ensemble, Young Mozarts and eventually progressed to the advanced GMYS Symphony Orchestra. Accolades began to mount and in 2017 she won second place in the GMYS concerto competition. This same summer she attended the Strings Music Camp at Florida State University in Tallahassee, where she was tasked as concertmaster. Now a sophomore at the New World School of the Arts in Miami, Melissa has set her goals for a career as a professional musician.

Melissa remains active in the aggressive performance and community outreach programs of GMYS and the New World School of the Arts performing at Hospitals and community venues.



17-year-old **Mitchell Kutell** was nominated by art teacher Mari Heinonen from Unicorn Village Academy in Boca Raton, Florida. She writes, “I am nominating [Mitchell] for his outstanding enthusiasm and positive attitude that never wavers even when other students may be engaging in negative behaviors. He deserves recognition for being a fantastic art student and believe this type of recognition will encourage him even more to continue finding new, healthy and constructive avenues of self-expression.”

Mitchell is an avid art enthusiast and enjoys creating both at home and at school. He’s had a chance to experience many art projects while at Unicorn Village Academy including painting, drawing, sculpture and mixed media and over time is more comfortable taking risks by trying new materials such as paper-mache. The therapeutic value of engaging in the arts has given Ms. Heinonen a chance to observe Mitchell becoming less anxious, more focused and although he has autism, more patient with the ability to self-regulate and stay on task.

Mitchell participates in Student Council and PAWS, Unicorn Village Academy’s student driven business. He also enjoys his theatre classes and partakes in a music ensemble.