

## Arts4All Florida Student of the Month September 2020



16-year old **Em Atkinson** was nominated by therapist, Niki Aronoff at Martin County High School in Stuart, Florida. Ms. Aronoff writes, “Em is highly motivated to do art and soaks up everything like a sponge. Each time [he has] a new assignment Em is ready with questions and ideas. [His] passion for art is apparent and students like Em make this job very rewarding.”

Arts4All Florida was delighted to view a self-produced portfolio of Em’s work that included his personal evaluation of each piece submitted to his art teacher for review. It reflects a very talented budding young artist that is evolving in style. Once a stick figure artist, Em has developed into a self-reflective fervent artist who is driven to reach a level of success that meets his expectations. His repertoire includes pencil and chalk pastel drawings, paints of all kinds and digital art.

Em has been drawing since he was 5 years old, using the visual arts to express his views of the world he knows as a deaf/hard of hearing student. “I started drawing cats based off my favorite book series by Erin Hunter, *Warriors*, around 4<sup>th</sup> grade”, writes Em in his portfolio review. “By 6<sup>th</sup> grade I started drawing people in a Shoujo/anime-like art style, and drawing more people and less cats, while working on my anatomy. I’ve recently started more realism, instead of always drawing cartoons. I’ve been working on as many mediums as I can, working on more sewing and comics to further my dreams.”



8-year old **Mari’jah Bunch** was nominated by Carol Gannon, her art teacher at Legacy Elementary School in Ocala, Florida and she shares, “I have had Mari’jah in my art class for the last two years. I have seen such growth in her; she is the sweetest child with a huge heart and smile to go with it that lights up the room.”

As a challenging special education student, Mari’jah presented as a withdrawn child that did not engage with teachers or other students and spoke with limited language skills and prone to disruptive classroom outbursts. Ms. Gannon shares her success story with Arts4All Florida, noting how beautifully Mari’jah has embraced the art room two years later by following directions, completing lessons and communicating enough in words and gestures to understand her needs. “While she enjoys painting and drawing, I believe working with clay is her favorite. When given instruction, she has her own ideas and will quickly go about creating. It has been a privilege to watch her grow as a person and an artist.”