

YourNews

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GIVING BACK

Scholarship program helps struggling families

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STUART — From an early age, David Wise could be found singing, dancing and putting on performances for his family and friends. It was evident that he had talent and a passion for the performing arts, but as he grew older he began to understand that, although he loved singing and dancing, it would be too difficult for his family to take on the financial burden of enrolling him in musical theater classes.

Fortunately for David, and students in similar situations, one community organization has been working to provide young people with the opportunity to pursue their dreams and get involved in the arts. With support from corporate and private donors, Martin County-based nonprofit Artists for a Cause (A4AC) created a scholarship program to assist students and families with the many expenses that come along with participating in visual and performing arts.

"Research has shown that participation in visual and performing arts has a positive effect on young adults," explained Terry Barber, founder and executive director of Artists for a Cause. "But unfortunately during these tough economic times, not all families can afford to sign their children up for dance, piano or theatre lessons. This is when we step in to lift some of the burden off of parents' shoulders."

During the last two years, a partnership between A4AC and StarStruck Performing Arts Center, the largest performing and visual arts education institutions in Martin County has resulted in more than 40 students receiving training in their arts discipline



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Thanks to the A4AC Scholarship Program, David Wise is able participate in musical theatre at StarStruck Performing Arts Center.

of choice, despite their families financial challenges. In addition to A4AC scholarships, StarStruck also awards need-based and talent-based scholarships to students.

For David Wise, the scholarship he received from A4AC has allowed him to enroll in musical theater classes at StarStruck.

"From the costumes, to the classes and performances, participating in the arts can be really expensive," Wise said. "The scholarship from Artists for a Cause has been a huge help to my family financially and has allowed me to pursue my dreams of performing on the big stage."

All A4AC scholarships are awarded on the basis of financial need. To maximize the range and efficiency of the program, Artists for a Cause recently announced the implementation of new measures for the screening of prospective scholarship recipients. Scholarship applicants are required to submit documentation showing their financial need and a written statement addressing why they are interested in becoming involved in the arts.

To date, most funding

for a Cause, or if you'd like to support arts education for those less fortunate call 772-419-8778 or email info@aac.org.

ABOUT ARTISTS FOR A CAUSE

Artists for a Cause is a Stuart-based, national, nonprofit organization that improves communities using art as a catalyst to achieve incredible results.

Some programs help artists and charities get the most out of their collaboration, while others produce results directly, by feeding the poor, healing the sick, or solving other problems through unique artistic solutions. Current programs include Dance for Food, Therapeutic Arts, Donated Instrument Closet, Classical for Schools, A4AC

Scholarships, A4AC High School Clubs, Homeless Musical Ensemble, Artist Auction Packages and Benefit Concerts — all of which improve communities through artistic endeavors.

Among the organizations receiving support from Artists for a Cause Inc. are the Boys and Girls Club of Martin County, Helping People Succeed, Treasure Coast Food Bank, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, House of Hope, Sailfish Point Foundation, Arc Broward, Farmworker Coordinating Council of Palm Beach and more, as well as hundreds of artists in every genre.

To learn more about A4AC please visit <http://www.a4ac.org>, call 772-419-8778 or email info@aac.org.