

MEDIA ADVISORY
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012

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CENTRAL FLORIDA'S TOP STEM SCHOLARS TO BE HONORED IN ORLANDO

Central Florida's highest achieving science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) students will join their peers from around the state Thursday and Friday in Orlando to be honored during the 2012 Sunshine State Scholars program. The two-day awards and recruitment event celebrates the accomplishments of these elite students and provides a unique opportunity for Florida's colleges and universities to recruit their talents.

The Scholars event started as a simple science and math competition in 1997 and has evolved into a program designed to recognize Florida's top high school STEM students and recruit them to pursue their post secondary education in Florida – increasing the likelihood that they will join Florida's future workforce. Each school district selects and names one 11th grade scholar based on established criteria.

The program will begin on Thursday evening with a welcome reception and continues on Friday with a breakfast, recruitment fair and workshops where students can talk with officials representing more than 40 public and private higher education institutions about the opportunities that are available at Florida's colleges and universities. The event concludes with an award luncheon.

The event will take place at

Doubletree Hotel at Entrance to Universal Orlando
5780 Major Blvd.
Orlando

Thursday, Feb. 16
Welcome Reception
6:00 p.m.

Gerard Robinson, Florida Education Commissioner
Frank Brogan, Chancellor, State University System of Florida
Stacy Carlson, Vice President and Director, Helios Education Foundation

Friday, Feb. 17
Breakfast
8:00 a.m.

Jennifer Grove, Workforce Development Coordinator, Gulf Power
Dr. Jimmie L. Davis, Jr., President, *STEMflorida*

Recruitment Fair, Concurrent Exhibits and Workshops
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Awards Luncheon

12:00 p.m.

Roberto Martinez, Vice Chair, Florida State Board of Education

Pam Stewart, Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools

Rosemary Woods, Vice President of Transportation, Atkins

Stephen K. Klasko, M.D., CEO, USF Health, and Dean, Morsani College of Medicine

The Sunshine State Scholars program is a collaborative effort between the Florida Education Foundation, the Division of Florida Colleges, the State University System and the Florida Department of Education. Event sponsors of this year's program include the Helios Education Foundation, Atkins, Universal Orlando Resort, Gulf Power, Florida Trend Magazine, and the Florida Lottery.

A list of the Sunshine State Scholars from Central Florida is below.

CENTRAL FLORIDA		
District	Student	School
Brevard	Rashad Abdulla	West Shore Jr./Sr. High School
Florida Virtual School	Ariel Rediker	Champion Preparatory School, Seminole County
Indian River	Caroline Colbert	Sebastian River High School
Lake	Sagar Patel	Mount Dora High School
Martin	Vishalakshi Lakshmanan	South Fork High School
Okeechobee	Sara Davis	Okeechobee High School
Orange	Rebecca Burns	Boone High School
Orange	Mary Hwang	Winter Park High School
Osceola	Nithin Sankar	Celebration High School
St. Lucie	Helda Vega	Fort Pierce Westwood High School, Marine and Oceanographic Academy
Seminole	Anish Khanorkar	Lake Mary High School

For more information about the Sunshine State Scholars program, visit

www.floridaeducationfoundation.org.

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