

TOP OF THE CLASS

Coming up

FCAT retakes through Friday
FTE week, Monday-Friday
Oct. 18: End of first quarter

Class notes

Moon Lake Elementary: Family Literacy Night is at 6 p.m. Thursday.

Briefly

• **Classical Preparatory School**, a charter school that will open in fall 2014 in Land O'Lakes, has launched a website. To learn more about what the school has to offer, go to classicalprep.org.

Music/art/theater

• A collection of works by the art students of **Day Spring Academy Middle School** will be included in the "Small World, Big Love" exhibit held through October at the Downtown New Port Richey Art Gallery, 6231 Grand Blvd. For information, call (727) 848-6500.

Center for the Arts at Wesley Chapel, 30651 Wells Road, Wesley Chapel, (813) 794-8772 or (727) 774-8772

• "Sound and Vision" by the University of Tampa Wind Ensemble, 7 p.m. Tuesday. Free.

• John Long Middle band/orchestra concert, 7 p.m. Thursday.

• John Long Middle choral concert, 7 p.m. Friday.

Center for the Arts at River Ridge, 11646 Town Center Road, New Port Richey, (727) 774-7381

• Gulf Middle Chamber Winds concert, 7 p.m. Monday.

• J.W. Mitchell High band concert, 7 p.m. Tuesday.

College bound

• Tuesday is the deadline to apply for the **2014 Barnes Scholarships**. Four scholarships will be awarded at \$15,000 per year. Semifinalists will receive \$1,000. Scholarships will be awarded based on academic achievement, financial need, community service and evidence of overcoming significant obstacles. Apply at tampabay.com/scholarships.

Library notes

Centennial Park, 5740 Moog Road, Holiday, (727) 834-3204

• Paws for Friendship therapy dog reading event, 4-4:30 p.m. Thursday. Elementary ages.

• Anime club, 2-3:30 p.m. Saturday. Grades 6-12.

Hudson Regional, 8012 Library Road, (727) 861-3040

• Board games, books and movie night, 6-7 p.m. Tuesday. Teens.

• Scott "Stormin'" Norman: Picasso of Pumpkin Carving program, 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Saturday.

Hugh Embry, 14215 Fourth St., Dade City, (352) 567-3576

• Tween-Teen YuGiOh! Club, 4-5:30 p.m. Wednesday.. Grades 5-12.

• Pathfinder Game, 4-6 p.m. Thursday. Grades 6-12.

• Family movie matinee, 2-4 p.m. Saturday.

Land O'Lakes, 2818 Collier Parkway, (813) 929-1214

• Teen Iron Chef, 6-8 p.m. Tuesday. Assemble a team of up to four and compete against other teams to create the best dishes using only an available selection of ingredients. Each dish must contain the mystery ingredient, which will be revealed the night of the event. Cooking experience is not required. Space is limited to 25 contestants. Call (813) 929-1214 to sign up or show up by 5:45 that night to register.

• "Hundreds of Hats," Family Night Out, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday. Stories, crafts and games.

• Taste of Sunshine, 5-6 p.m. Wednesday. Children in grades 3-5 discuss the current Sunshine State Readers.

• Reading Buddies, 10-11 a.m. Saturday. Elementary school readers gather for reading practice with a volunteer. Bring your favorite book or choose one from the library. Call the library to register.

• Kids crafts/spooky creations, 2-3:30 p.m. Saturday. Grades K-5.

New Port Richey, 5939 Main St., (727) 853-1279

• Halloween Craft, 4 p.m. Tuesday. Ages 4-11.

New River, 34043 State Road 54, Zephyrhills, (813) 788-6375

• Homework Help, 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesday, Friday by appointment only. Grades 1-5.

• Teen advisory board, 6-6:30 p.m. Thursday.

• Teen costume competition and improv games, 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday. Grades 6-12.

• Cite it Right research workshop, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday. Covers primary versus secondary sources, locating sources, databases, advanced searching, copyright/intellectual property rights, plagiarism, citations and more. Teens.

• Craft Corner, 2-3 p.m. Saturday. Elementary ages.

• R.P.G. gaming, 2-3:45 p.m. Saturday. Teens.

Regency Park, 9701 Little Road, New Port Richey, (727) 861-3049

• Werewolves of Miller Costume Contest, 4-5:45 p.m. Wednesday. Grades 6-12.

• Tail Waggin' Tutors, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Thursday. Story time with therapy dogs for grades K-5.

• The Haunted Library, 2-3 p.m. Saturday. Grades K-5.

South Holiday, 4649 Mile Stretch Drive, Holiday, (727) 834-3331

• LEGO maniacs, 4:30-6 p.m. Tuesday. Grades K-5.

• Murder Mystery Theater, 6 p.m. Wednesday.. Grades 6-12.

• One Eye Open craft, 2-4 p.m. Saturday. Grades 4-7.

Send your school news to miller@tampabay.com.

Mitchell plays gracious host



Gulf High's NJROTC armed exhibition team commander, Cadet P02 Zachary Gorr, 17, gives a final salute during the competition.



Photos by MICHELE MILLER | Times

Cadets on the Gulf High NJROTC armed exhibition drill team take their place on the field during the Mustang Stampede Drill Competition.

Gulf High takes top honors as JROTC cadets from 15 schools compete.

BY MICHELE MILLER
Times Staff Writer

TRINITY

It may have been Saturday morning, but there would be no sleeping in.

Feet hit the floor early for some 600 JROTC cadets from 15 Florida high schools who descended upon J.W. Mitchell High around 7 a.m. on Oct. 5 to strut their stuff on the field, in the gymnasium and in the classroom at the school's seventh annual Mustang Stampede field meet.

Among the events cadets competed in: unarmed and armed basic and exhibition drills, color guard, pushup and situp contests, 100- and 200-meter relays and academics.

It was a "three-fer" for Gulf High's Navy JROTC. After totaling their scores, they came away with First Overall for the third year in row, securing a spot in the state championship down the road along with Brooksville's Central High and Tampa's Gaither High NJROTC programs, which placed second and third respectively.

"We love coming here. Mitchell does a fine job," said retired Navy Cmdr. John McGuire, who serves as instructor for the Gulf High NJROTC along with Chief Jose



Cadet P02 Rinalyn Tharp, 18, competes as a member of Gulf High's NJROTC armed exhibition drill team during the Mustang Stampede.

Rodriguez. They will host their own athletic fun meet for JROTC cadets in the spring. "And it's important for the kids to get a sense of what it's like to be on a team. After all that practice they get to show what they have learned."

"We've done it twice before, but this time it feels so real," said Gulf High Cadet Lt. Brooke Sheehan, 18. "It's (my) senior year, and we're going out in first place."

Local military recruiters, Navy and Army ROTC cadets from the University of South Florida and representatives from SOCOM (Special Operations Command),U.S. Central Command and NAVCENT (United States Naval Forces Central Command) served as judges. The meet was hosted by Mitchell High cadets under the leadership of retired Navy Cmdr. Steve Okun and Marine Gunnery Sgt. Freddie Jones.

And while they did not compete, Mitchell cadets also came away with some valuable experience, Okun said. "It's important for them because it teaches them organization and management planning. Plus it's an opportunity for them to show off their school."

Michele Miller can be reached at miller@tampabay.com.

Their double dose of determination

A visually impaired student is as eager to learn as her teacher is to teach. Both receive honors.

BY MEGAN HUSSEY
Times Correspondent

When Genesis Morales-Agosto won the Most Promising Visually Impaired High School Senior Award on Sept. 19, she didn't accept it in person.

The honors were given on a school day, and Morales-Agosto didn't want to miss class to attend the award ceremony, held at the Florida Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired annual conference in Tallahassee.

"I want to learn all the information the teacher has to give that day," said Morales-Agosto, an 18-year-old senior at River Ridge High School.

To Andrea Schleicher, a teacher of visually impaired students in Pasco County who has worked with Morales-Agosto since age 5, her attitude comes as no surprise.

"This is an incredible, one-of-a-kind young lady," said Schleicher, a district employee based at Seven Springs Middle School who serves 15 students at 20 Pasco schools. "She learns all the skills she needs to be successful. ... She has to get good grades, and whatever she sets out to accomplish, she does."

Schleicher nominated Morales-Agosto for the award and agreed to pick it up for her at the conference. At the same time, she got one herself.

Schleicher received the Florida 2013-2014 Outstanding Educator of the Blind at this year's FAER conference. Both she and Morales-Agosto were nominated for the honors by Sylvia Perez, executive director of the Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind in Pasco.

Perez worked with both last summer as part of a Lighthouse transitional school-to-work program. Schleicher was a teacher; Morales-Agosto, who has 20/70 vision that limits her ability to see at a distance, was a student.

"Andrea's warmth and dedication as a teacher is incredible," said Perez. "And Genesis is an outstanding student that works really hard. She's very determined and nothing can stop her."

The dual award marks the latest milestone in the partnership between Schleicher and Morales-Agosto.

"From the beginning she was the student that teachers in my profession pray for," said Schleicher, who



MICHELE MILLER | Times

has served visually impaired students in the Pasco and Pinellas school systems for 31 years.

Schleicher taught a young Morales-Agosto how to use a magnifier and other equipment that would improve her vision. She taught her life skills from cooking to job seeking, and tutored her in how to explain her challenge to teachers and others.

"I can't tell you what Ms. Schleicher has brought to my life," said Morales-Agosto. "I just can't put it into words."

Morales-Agosto no longer has need for the special equipment that aided

her as a child. She is now a professional artist and has done graphic design work for Lighthouse and United Way of Pasco. She is also a member of the National Society of High School Scholars, a percussionist in the River Ridge High marching band and member of the Tri-M music honor society, holds a black belt in karate and loves to dance at Arthur Murray Studios.

She hopes to be a professional artist. Schleicher takes pride in the part she played in her student's success. "This is why I do my job," she said.

River Ridge High School senior Genesis Morales-Agosto, left, and Andrea Schleicher, who teaches visually impaired students in Pasco County have worked together since Morales-Agosto was 5.