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Arts4All Florida
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Seminole County Student Named Arts4All Florida
October 2021 Student of the Month

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Arts4All is pleased to announce 16-year-old, Aidan Wilson, as one of their October 2021 Student of the Month winners. Aidan was nominated by Deborah Knispel, Art Teacher at Pace Brantley School in Longwood, Florida. She writes, "The arts have changed Aidan's life by bringing him out of his shell and giving him a laser focus. His self-confidence has grown tremendously."

Aidan's ingenuity and creativity impressed Arts4All Florida very much. This young artist works with recycled materials to bring 3D works to life. Ms. Knispel described how "[Aidan] scours the recycling bin for plastic bottles and containers, cardboard boxes and paper towel rolls and transforms them into works of art." His works include life-size recreations of popular media characters such as Forky from *Toy Story 4*, Spongebob Squarepants, Charlie Brown, and even Scarecrow and Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*. Aidan is not just a visual artist but a performer as well. According to Ms. Knispel, he has secured roles in plays such as *Elf*, *High School Musical*, *Shrek*, *Wizard of Oz* and is auditioning for *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* this year. He not only performs on stage but also helps build the set designs with the stagecraft crew.

Beyond the arts, Aidan has recently been inducted to Pace Brantley School's National Honor Society and is a part of the Pace News Network. He is also Team Captain and the Food Bag Leader for [Hearts, Hands, and Hope](#), a local nonprofit dedicated to serving meals to Seminole County families in need. These feats, as well as his artistic accomplishments, are even more remarkable when considering that "just a few years ago, Aidan couldn't read, communicate and was afraid to talk or engage with other people." Ms. Knispel explained that since Aidan started at Pace Brantley and embraced the arts, he has transformed "from hiding and not engaging, to standing in front of hundreds of people on stage." Aidan's story is emblematic of the transformative role the arts can play in the lives of neurodiverse students.

Arts4All Florida looks forward to recognizing Aidan in our newsletter, highlighting him on our website and sending him a personalized trophy. The Arts4All Florida Student of the Month Program is designed to increase public awareness and recognize the impact arts make on students with disabilities statewide. Students who participate in the arts develop creativity, have increased self-confidence, understand teamwork, have increased language and math skills and are generally more engaged. For more information about the Student of the Month program and others, please visit www.arts4allflorida.org.

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