



Florida P.R.I.D.E.  
Parental Rights in Deciding Education

Children First  
FLORIDA

**6,000**

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS  
AVAILABLE!

TELL A FRIEND!

For more information:  
[www.floridapride.org](http://www.floridapride.org), or  
[www.childrenfirstflorida.org](http://www.childrenfirstflorida.org).

## IMPORTANT UPDATES ON SCHOOL CHOICE IN FLORIDA

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



**Karen Feliciano**  
Covenant Christian School  
Palm Bay, FL

Karen Feliciano is an eleventh grader attending Covenant Christian School in Palm Bay on a Step Up For Students Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship from the Children First Florida scholarship funding organization. An aspiring singer and musician, Karen's experience at Covenant Christian has given her the opportunity to shine in both academics and fine arts.

Karen and her parents moved from Puerto Rico to Florida when she was in third grade, and Karen began attending public school in Palm Bay. While attending the public school, Karen's grades and self-esteem suffered. She had the most difficult time in her math class – a subject in which she continually made failing grades. As a result of her failing grades, she did not believe in herself, or in her academic abilities. Additionally, Karen feared going to school, where physical fighting among

her peers was a daily occurrence and the students had a lack of respect for the teachers.

Upon entering Covenant Christian, Karen immediately received help from her teachers and tutors and her grades improved. Now in the 11th grade, Karen has improved academically, and she is no longer struggling in her math classes – she is making straight A's! Karen has also developed her amazing talents in singing and acting through Covenant Christian's chorus and drama programs. She also has taken on other leadership roles in her community – such as serving as the youth leader at her church, organizing meetings and activities.

Step Up For Students salutes Karen Feliciano for her perseverance and hard work. She's laying a solid foundation for a successful and fulfilling future.

**Want to nominate your student for our Student Spotlight?**  
Visit [www.stepupforstudents.com/parents.htm](http://www.stepupforstudents.com/parents.htm) to send us your story.  
Or contact Jason Wilcox at [Jwilcox@flice.org](mailto:Jwilcox@flice.org) or (866) 590-5364.

# HIGH MARKS



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



OF STEP UP FOR STUDENTS

## SAVE THE DATE

### Step Up For Students Will Host Rally on April 12

On April 12, Step Up For Students will be hosting its annual Rally in Tallahassee. The Rally will be held in the Capitol Courtyard and we will need your help to encourage legislators to pass bills that will protect the scholarships. The theme this year is "Many Faces, One Dream" and will thrive with the encouragement and energy from scholarship recipients, parents, teachers, donors and supporters. As always, it is extremely important to show your support for Corporate Tax Credit Scholarships and prevent the potential risk of the program being eliminated.

The Rally will begin with a march from the Civic Center to the Capitol. After the Rally, a picnic lunch will be hosted in the Courtyard and legislative visits will be arranged for those who wish to speak with their elected officials.

For transportation information and how you can join us, please contact Michael Benjamin at [mjbenjamin@face.org](mailto:mjbenjamin@face.org) or visit [www.face.org](http://www.face.org). If you are interested in a legislative visit, please contact Denise Lasher at [dlasher@feff.org](mailto:dlasher@feff.org).

Step Up and we will see you in Tallahassee.



**Bishop Harold Ray greets school choice advocates at 2006 Tallahassee Rally.**



**Parents, students and teachers rallied to protect educational options at the 2006 Tallahassee Rally. With your help we can secure the future of Florida's children.**

**>> INSIDE: IMPORTANT SCHOLARSHIP RENEWAL DEADLINES**





## RENEWAL CALENDAR AND APPLICATION DEADLINES

You'll be blue if you forget to renew. **New scholarships** are awarded on a first completed, first awarded basis. Don't let this great opportunity pass you by.

**March 2007: Applications Available**

**April 20, 2007: Children First Florida Renewal Deadline**

**May 1, 2007: Florida P.R.I.D.E. Renewal Deadline**

### TO ENSURE QUICK PROCESSING OF YOUR APPLICATION, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

- Answer every question completely
- PRINT CLEARLY
- Include all information and proof of income required
- Do not staple anything to the application form
- Make a copy of the application package for your records
- Send all of your family's applications in one envelope
- Use proper postage
- Include a money order for the non-refundable processing fee

For information on Florida P.R.I.D.E. scholarships or to request an application, please email [info@floridapride.org](mailto:info@floridapride.org) or call (866) 590-5364.

For information on Children First Florida scholarships or to request an application, please email [ChildrenFirstFL@scholarship-funding.org](mailto:ChildrenFirstFL@scholarship-funding.org) or call (407) 702-2607 or (904) 247-6033.

If you should choose **not to renew** any or all of your children's scholarships, please contact your SFO as soon as possible so the scholarship can be awarded to another student.

## WELLSTUDENT

If your children meet the income standards to qualify for a Step Up For Students Scholarship, they may also qualify for Florida's health insurance program for uninsured children, Florida KidCare.

Florida KidCare is a program that includes Medicaid, MediKids, Healthy Kids and the Children's Medical Services Network. MediKids, Healthy Kids and the Children's Medical Services Network provide health insurance to children without health insurance whose family income exceeds Medicaid eligibility.



MediKids, Healthy Kids and the Children's Medical Services Network have limited space, and applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. By completing one application for Florida KidCare, you apply for all four programs and will be informed which one your child qualifies for.

### TO QUALIFY FOR FLORIDA KIDCARE, HERE ARE SOME OF THE REQUIREMENTS:

- Be under age 19
- Be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen

### COST:

- There is no charge for Medicaid
- For the other Florida KidCare programs, monthly premiums depend on your household size and income. Most families pay \$15 or \$20 a month. Some families may pay more.
- You may have to pay small charges or co-payments for some services.

You can apply for Florida KidCare by mail, fax, and online:

#### Florida KidCare

Mail: Post Office Box 980, Tallahassee, Florida 32302-0980

Fax (Toll Free): 1-866-867-0054

Web: [www.healthykids.org](http://www.healthykids.org)

To have an application mailed to you or if you need additional information, call toll-free 1-888-540-5437





# FREE TAX RETURN ASSISTANCE AND TAX CREDITS



Help is available at hundreds of VITA locations.

Are you puzzled by the tax law, or which credits and deductions to take? Tax time is upon us and for many it is a dreadful experience. Finding someone to help complete your tax return, and then worrying if you have to pay additional taxes can make us all especially anxious.

Help is available at hundreds of locations in Florida that participate in the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program which offers **FREE** tax assistance to families with limited financial resources.

Trained community volunteers can help you with special tax credits, such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit,

for which you may qualify. In addition to free tax return preparation assistance, most sites also offer free electronic filing, also known as e-filing. Individuals taking advantage of the e-file program will receive their refunds in half the time it would take if the taxes were filed on paper – even faster if you have your refund deposited directly into your bank account.

VITA locations are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations. Most locations also offer free electronic filing. To locate the nearest VITA site, call **1-800-829-1040** or visit <http://www.flprosperitycampaign.org/findpc.html>.

## DONOR CORNER:

### MACY'S

Macy's will provide at least 180 scholarships for low-income students with their donation of \$675,000 corporate tax credit dollars to Step Up For Students. As a caring corporate citizen, Macy's gives back to the communities it serves by supporting worthwhile community initiatives such as the Step Up For Students program.

In 1858, the first Macy's Store opened in New York City. The company merged with Federated Department stores in 1994 to create the largest department store company in the United States. Today, Macy's has transitioned into a national retailer, with more than 800 stores in 45 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam.

Macy's and the Federated Department Stores Foundation directly fund charitable organizations, civic programs, community projects, arts and culture programs, and educational institutions. Since 1989, Macy's Florida has sponsored the Teacher of the Year program, which provides cash contributions to reward teacher excellence in Florida. To date, nearly \$2 million



**Macy's employees giving back to the community.**

has been contributed to teachers – representing one of the largest corporate cash contributions to Florida public schools.

The company's grants-for-schools initiative provides schools with the opportunity to receive financial support through Macy's employee and family volunteerism in support of academic programs. Additionally, Macy's supports Reading is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF) through a unique customer donation program.

Macy's encourages employees to give back to their communities through "Partners in Time" – an award-winning volunteer program in which more than 1.2

million hours of volunteer time have been given in community service nationwide – a \$20 million value. In 2005, "Partners in Time" received the "Award for Excellence in Workplace Volunteerism Programs" from the Points of Light Foundation.

Macy's support of Step Up For Students will give many disadvantaged children the opportunity for success.

We congratulate Macy's on their outstanding commitment to the community and thank the company for its support of Step Up For Students. Macy's is making a difference for both our children and community.