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Beacon of Hope awarded national accreditation

Special to The Record

Beacon of Hope Christian School received a dual accreditation Nov. 4 from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and Florida League of Christian Schools (FLOCS) during the annual FLOCS teacher training session here. This makes Beacon fully accredited through three accrediting agencies. The other is Church of God Association of Christian Schools (CGACS). Each of the accreditations is important and helps to open doors and provide extra accountability to Beacon as an educational institution, notes Pastor LaVoy Newson of Lighthouse Church of God.

Beacon of Hope Christian School, a ministry of Lighthouse Church of God, is located at 1230 Kings Estate Road. Mary Whitfield is school principal.

Beacon of Hope began in September 1999 as a vision of Pastor LaVoy and Kelli Newton. The school had humble beginnings, says Newton. It started with 18 students in grades kindergarten through second grade. The goal at that time was to add a grade each year with the first graduating class to be in 2010. So far, Beacon has graduated 13 students who are attending various colleges including Flagler College, University of North Florida, University of West Florida and St. Johns River State College.

The vision of the school is to

“shine hope into the minds of our future,” Newton continues. Beacon of Hope seeks to fulfill the vision to be a school of HOPE.

Not only has the school accomplished the goal of going all the way through the 12th grade but has also added a pre-school program which includes 3 and 4-year old students. They recently were approved as a VPK provider as a “gold seal” program.

Athletics, music programs

Beacon of Hope has a full high school and middle school athletic program. The school offers football, basketball, baseball, volleyball and cheerleading to its students.

Beacon also offers a music program at the school that teaches the students from beginning to advanced levels. Jeremy Dowler who also is one of the worship leaders at Anastasia Baptist Church is the music teacher. “Mr. Dowler takes students who can barely even carry an instrument and in just a few months he will have them leading worship,” says Newton. It is amazing.” The Beacon worship teams have already recorded two worship albums.

The Beacon school office is lined with plaques from years of successful academic bowl wins. Beacon participates annually in academic competitions including Quiz Bowl, Math Bowl, Spelling Bee, Bible Bowl, Art, Writing and Speech.



Beacon of Hope student Kaylann Sims.

The school is representative of the community and has a diversity of student and staff population, notes Principal Whitfield. The annual tuition including fees is normally less than \$4,000 a year. Beacon of Hope is approved to receive scholarships from a number of different sources.

Step Up for Students is an independent scholarship-funding agency, which receives moneys from various corporate sponsors. They currently have about \$27 million of unclaimed scholarships. Beacon of Hope also is approved to receive the McKay Scholarship, Episcopal and VPK.

For more information go to www.stepupforstudents.org.

For more information about Beacon of Hope call the school office at 797-6996 or go to www.beaconeagles.net.

Step Up scholarships available

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The Step Up For Students scholarship program for low-income families has announced that it has a limited number of scholarships available until Nov. 30 for the 2011-12 school year. Students who would normally qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch in public school are eligible for the scholarship, which is cur-

rently worth up to \$4,011 and can be applied to the tuition of the K-12 private school of the family's choice.

Schools in St. Johns County approved to receive the students include Beacon of Hope Christian School, Cathedral Parish School, St. Joseph Academy, Turning Point Christian Academy and Victory Preparatory School.

Students entering grades 2

through 12 must have spent the prior year in a public school, but children entering kindergarten and first grade can enter directly into the scholarship program. Parents interested in the scholarship must fill out an online application at www.stepupforstudents.org. The cost of the application is \$30 per family. For more information, call Step Up For Students at 1-877-735-7837.