

# SOUTH FLORIDA SunSentinel

October 29, 2013

## Local educator receives state honor

By Sergio Carmona,



A local teacher was recently honored by the State of Florida.

Dana Sostchin, a first-grade teacher who has taught for more than 20 years at Yeshiva Elementary School in Miami Beach, was awarded a Governor's Shine Award by Florida Gov. Rick Scott. The school, along with the Step Up For Students, a nonprofit organization that administers the Florida Tax Credit Scholar-

ship Program, hosted an event to celebrate Sostchin's honor.

"I am truly honored and flattered to accept this recognition on behalf of our school," Sostchin said while addressing the audience at the event. "And in doing so, I wish to acknowledge the rest of our outstanding faculty, administration, staff, students and parents here at Y.E.S., as I believe it is this atmosphere of dedication and mutual respect that encourages all of us to help and learn from each other and makes our school such a special place."

In an interview, Sostchin said the honor makes her reflect on the fact that her profession has been a privilege.

"What I'm doing in life, as far as professionally, is that I'm touching the future in a sense and I'm having an opportunity to make a difference in children's lives and that inspires me to even do a better job," she added. "I find that acknowledgement to be very special but at the same token it's also an inspiration for the future."

Y.E.S. educates students in prekindergarten through sixth grade and also currently serves approximately 160 students who benefit from the Step Up For Stu-

dents scholarship program. Sostchin said the program recognized the school as a faith-based one. When asked how she felt the school's contributions to the program exemplify Jewish values, Sostchin said "We believe that every child is special and that we all have different strengths and that it's really important to teach the students different strengths and provide opportunities for children to blossom."

The scholarship program also honored one of its largest donors, Southern Wine & Spirits, for the company's \$25 million contribution during the celebratory event. In a press release prepared by the program, John Kirtley, its chairman and founder, noted that the success of the program is dependent on the spirit of collaboration.

"I am so grateful for both Ms. Sostchin's and Southern's contributions to the education of these children," he noted in the release. "Because of the efforts from dedicated teachers, legislators and donors, about 60,000 students this school year are receiving an education that their families have hand-picked."