

Funding Futures

A project of the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance

Student Arts Opportunity Award Stories

“It’s not just about the art for these students. It’s about gaining confidence, understanding collaboration and feeling compassionate towards others and how the simple act of learning new artistic traits, can teach skills that are the building blocks of a promising future in any industry.”

Organizations nominated students.



St. Petersburg Ballet Conservatory nominating Willow B. (age 11) –

“Willow is one of our hardest working students at SPBC. Her growth during the school year has been a dramatic increase this year, being her first year on pointe. We are excited about the potential she has for ballet. Her parents cannot afford to send her to our summer program all summer. Missing out on any weeks this summer would hinder her training at such a crucial time.”

Students were encouraged to apply for the award in their own words.

Amora J. – Age 11

“When I grow up I want to find a profession that allows me to be creative. Attending American Stage’s Summer Camp helps me with my future plans exposing me to all types of performing arts.”

Willow B. – Age 11

“There is a summer intensive at SPBC that I would love to attend, but it is expensive and I know it would be difficult for my parents to pay for it. My mom and dad work very hard for our family....”

April 22nd 2021

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Willow [redacted] and I am an 11 year old ballet dancer. I have been dancing at the St. Petersburg Ballet Conservatory (SPBC) for nearly two years.

Since the age of four years old I was a competing gymnast. I came 1st in the state in my age group, two years in a row. But I fell off the high bar and broke my arm. After that, I couldn't get over my fear of falling, so I tried ballet instead. I love it! In less than a year I was on pointe, and now I practice six days a week. Hopefully one day I will be a principal ballet dancer for a company.

There is a summer intensive at SPBC that I would love to attend, but it is expensive and I know it would be difficult for my parents to pay for it. My mom and dad work very hard for our family and my mom has always homeschooled me. If I could receive a scholarship to help pay for the six week summer intensive program, then I may be able to attend. I really want to go because it will help me advance in ballet and contemporary and I will be able to dance with my friends over the summer too.

Best Wishes,
Willow

Each student provided a letter of recommendation:

Sophia H. – age 10 attended the Morean Arts Center’s “Playing with Fire” Metalsmithing Summer Arts Camp

“I am writing to nominate my client, Sophia Luchsinger-Perez for The Funding Futures Grant. She has been an active part of all her Art Therapy sessions for over a year now. Through art therapy, Sophia and I explore self expression via: drawing, painting, sculpting, baking, etc, in order for her to gain both personal insight and to develop and master coping skills. Sophia is very much deserving of this honor and privilege.

Parents were also asked to talk about their student’s interest in the arts.

Mrs. T. about Maggie T. (age 12) attending St. Pete Mad’s Teen Beach Musical Camp –

“The Funding Futures grant will make theater camp possible for my teen. She has been involved in theater, voice, and music for several years. Before she found the stage, she seemed timid and very much a “follower”. I wanted her to be a confident girl who was comfortable in her own skin and content to make her own decisions. Theater, music, and the stage has given her the confidence to be herself.”

Sophia H. – age 10 attended the Morean Arts Center’s “Playing with Fire” Metalsmithing Summer Arts Camp

“As her solo parent, I want her to feel that her possibilities are endless despite any obstacles we may face. Art is her peace, art is her calm, art is her self confidence and pride, art is her shelter, ART is Sophia. Since the first time Sophia held a crayon at 1, she has never stopped creating. It is her way of recording her ideas when she can’t find the words. Art is what Sophia CHOOSES to do, it is never forced or assigned, she is always willing to both innovate and create, this is her happy place.”



Students and organizations were asked to report about their experience after their camp ended.

Letter from parent Sam B. about student Willow B.’s (age 11) experience at the St. Petersburg Ballet Company (SPBC)

“Hi Tracy, I wanted to write to you and thank you personally for supporting my daughter, Willow, during her summer intensive at St.Pete Ballet Conservatory. She had the most amazing experience- grew so much and became stronger than ever. Willow was given an opportunity to lead

in two dances. Thank you again for supporting Willow's dream. She is a very talented dancer and last week was selected at age 11 to go pre professional at the SPBC. Onwards and upwards!"

SPBC Completion report about Willow B's experience at camp – *"Being a part of the summer intensive in its entirety helped Willow realize her potential and be able to dance side-by-side with great dancers. Her confidence level is much higher after the summer program, but she still remains a very humble young lady."*

Asked of American Stage about Amora J. (age 11)

- **How did the Speak Out: Creating Our Future Summer Program at American Stage change the student?** *"Amora showed immense compassion towards a student in the session who is neurodiverse. She was a leader in including him and making him feel more a part of the ensemble."*
- **How did the student benefit from this camp?** *"Amora grew her confidence in trusting herself and her own creative voice."*



Asked of American Stage about Kiera N. (age 11)

- **How did the Musical Improv and Musical Theater Power Dance Moves Summer Program at American Stage change the student?** *"Kiera was shy and hesitant when the camp first began. By the end of camp, they were collaborating and jumping into new situations and activities outside of their comfort zone."*

Asked of St. Pete Mad about Sophia J. (age 11)

- **How did participating in St. Pete Mad's 2 week musical theater camp change the student?** *"In her role as Square, she had to exhibit leaderships traits with her fellow "band mates". In order for this to seem genuine to the audience, Sophia was given an actual leadership role in working with peers in the cast. She greatly benefited from an increase in confidence, ability to direct peers, and believability as a character on stage."*

Sophia J. – Age 11

How did the program change you? *"It was a great experience for Sophia . She came out of with a lot of growth and confidence."*