

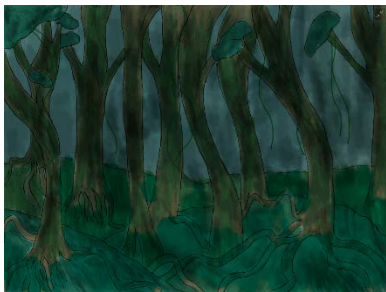
VSA Florida – February 2017 Students of the Month

VSA Florida is proud to announce **Angel Uzcategul** and **Jesus Saldana** as the February 2017 Students of the Month.



8-year-old **Angel** was nominated by VSA Florida-Palm Beach County Performing Arts Coordinator, Erica Russell, following a dance residency at Forest Hill Elementary School where Angel is in the third grade. Classroom teacher, Ms. Koch, Ms. Russell and their VSAFL teaching artist, Dee Mac, unanimously selected Angel to perform at the VSA Holiday Showcase in December as the understudy to play “The Artful Dodger.” When the original performer was no longer able to be in the show, Angel was more than ready to jump in. Ms. Russell writes, “On the day of the performance, Angel shined! He delivered his line with confidence and wowed the audience with his dance moves.” Angel rises to any occasion despite

having ASD/ADHD. Ms. Koch says, “Angel is hardworking and enthusiastic. He always tried to do his best in whatever he is asked.” Outside of school, Angel participates in karate classes, enjoys reading about the adventures of Captain Underpants and plays soccer with his sister.



15-year-old **Jesus** was nominated by his school counselor, Annette Giuliano, at American Preparatory Academy in Davie. She writes, “Jesus is passionate about his animation drawing and plans to pursue a career in the visual arts after high school. He wants to direct his own animate series.” Jesus focuses on his technique, not his autism spectrum disorder, and embraces his own unique style of drawing. Many of his characters serve as vehicles to express his various emotions or situations in which he

and his friends may find themselves. Taught and mentored by an art professor who recognizes his talent, Jesus is developing his portfolio to pursue his dream career in the arts.

In the coming weeks, VSA Florida is looking forward to presenting Angel and Jesus with their gift certificates and personalized trophies for winning this prestigious award.

The VSA 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.