

## VSA Florida Student of the Month February 2018

VSA Florida is proud to announce Kelly Miller and Jacob French as the February 2018 Students of the Month.



11-year-old Kelly attends Roy Allen Elementary School in Melbourne and was nominated by Karen Miller, Kelly's proud mother and advocate. Mrs. Miller nominated her daughter for the huge advances Kelly has exemplified through her love of, not only the visual arts, but also chorus, musical theatre, and playing the violin and piano. "Kelly has always responded to music and art since she was a toddler." Mrs. Miller explains, "Before she could really talk, she was singing and playing simple songs on the piano. Now we see her improving in her other academics, her personality, and her behavior. She is doing things we never thought she would do." The performing arts at times includes loud music and voracious clapping, which can unnerve a person with autism, such as Kelly. The Miller family has noticed that through these sometimes-antagonistic situations, Kelly has moved forward with calm patience, saving her overwhelming feelings until she arrives home. In addition to her school involvement, Kelly enjoys being active in her church and community. Last summer she participated in the Syracuse, NY Children's Theater.



17-year-old Jacob was nominated by Kelly Delaney, Department Chair for Fine and Performing Arts and Jacob's art teacher at Atlantic Coast High School in Jacksonville. Under the tutelage of Ms. Delaney for the past three years, Jacob's positive, "can do" approach to various new art projects has fueled his creative, colorful expression. His never-ending curiosity, Ms. Delaney says, "and his aspiration to learn more about various techniques has made him a better artist. Students in the classroom enjoy seeing his creativity and he inspires other students to try new methods in art." Favoring acrylic and watercolor painting as well as clay sculpting, Jacob strives for excellence in his all of his work. These conceptual talents have given him the ability to help maintain the school parterre garden, shaped as the school mascot, a stingray. Jacob also enjoys collecting trains, watching movies, and is an active participant in the Atlantic Coast Physical Education program. Jacob, who has autism spectrum disorder, is just another exemplification of how the arts can help one contribute and bring fulfillment to life!