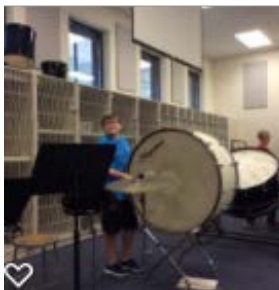


**VSA Florida
Student of the Month
January 2017**

VSA Florida is proud to announce **Oscar Trejo** and **Dalton Thorpe** as the January 2017 Students of the Month.



Ten-year-old **Oscar** was nominated by his art teacher, Stacie Little, from San Jose Elementary School in Dunedin. Ms. Little writes, “[Oscar] never ceases to amaze me with his creative solutions. He gets his ideas from various sources and takes them to an entirely new level. I can see him becoming a game designer.” Oscar, a primarily Spanish-speaking student on the Autism spectrum, has had a difficult time with socialization. Because of his art, however, Oscar has learned to engage better with his fellow students. With improved language skills and elevated self-confidence due to these interactions with his classmates, he recently began mentoring his younger peers in math...something his teachers would have never expected in previous years.



Fourteen-year-old **Dalton** was nominated by his teacher, Keerstin Blankenbeck, from Martin Luther King Middle School in Milton. Ms. Blankenbeck writes, “Dalton has a real love for music. He has a connection to music that no words can explain. He inspires our whole class to believe they can do anything with dedication and practice”. Dalton sang in his elementary school chorus and now plays percussion instruments in his middle school band. He practices for 30 minutes each day and looks forward to school and his next band class! Dalton has exemplified devotion and enthusiasm for his craft, using music to bridge the gap between his ASD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and expressing himself to others.

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