



The Buzz

MARCH/
APRIL 2016



Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

Message from the Superintendent: SPRING BRINGS GOOD NEWS

This is an exciting time of year! Many of our teachers and students are excelling in a wide range of competitions. Thomas County Middle School Teacher Megan Palmer was named NATIONAL FCS Teacher of the Year. Our high school forensics team won the state championship and is preparing for national competition. Our middle and high school bands received superior ratings at festival, and our students made an outstanding showing at regional literary meet with first place wins in argumentative essay, trio, and quartet. Our high school captured the top awards at regional science fair, and TCCHS and TCMS are sending more students to state science fair than any other school system in our region. TCCHS senior Sophie Anderson received the Congressional

Art award, and our students won top awards in the Center for the Arts Youth Arts Month competition. Christina Maggita has been selected to represent TCCHS in dance at Governor's Honors. These are but a few of the many awards that our students have garnered in recent weeks. See many of these awards highlighted in the Buzz and on our website.

Thanks to your hard work, the ESPLOST IV referendum passed with more than a 2 to 1 margin, ensuring that we will be able to advance our technology plan, update our facilities, purchase new textbooks, and replace many aging school buses. I will have more to share about the ESPLOST program in my end-of-the year updates.

Finally, I am happy to report that the state legislature

passed a bill to reduce state testing and the percentage that student test scores will contribute to teachers' and administrators' annual evaluations. If signed by the Governor, science and social studies Milestones tests will be eliminated in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7. The bill will require language arts and math formative evaluations in first and second grades. The bill will also reduce from 50% to 30% the weight that test scores will have on teacher evaluations and from 70% to 40% the weight that test scores will have on administrative evaluations. There are a number of issues to be worked out by the State Department of Education regarding how student growth measures will

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The Thomas County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin, sex, or disability.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



April 4 - 8 - Spring Break

April 17 - TCMS 6th Grade Band Concert, 3:00 p.m.; 7th/8th Grade Band Concert, 4:30 p.m.

April 16 - Rose City Walk

April 18 - 22 - Georgia Milestones Testing

April 23 - Rose City Run; TCCHS Band Rose City Performance, 8:00 a.m.

April 24 - Lee Bailey Memorial, TCCHS, 3:00 p.m.

Please visit the school websites for a complete calendar of events.



TCMS Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher Megan Palmer helps Caroline Harrison and Zoey Griffin with a class project.

Palmer Named National FCS Teacher of the Year

The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) announced that Megan Palmer, Ed.S., CFCS, will receive the AAFCS 2015 National Teacher of the Year Award at the AAFCS 107th Annual Conference and Expo in Bellevue, Washington. The award will be presented during the Opening General Session on June 22, 2016.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

The Buzz is a monthly publication of the Thomas County Schools. Send suggestions or comments to Melanie Hester, 200 North Pinetree Blvd., Thomasville, GA 31792; 229.225-4380, ext. 115; mhester@thomas.k12.ga.us. The Buzz is available online at www.thomas.k12.ga.us, News and Events tab.



Pat Griffin, Ela Griffin, Charlie Griffin, Elexis Griffin (holding Wil Griffin), Trey Griffin, Jason Pittman, Monsanto Representative, Hand-In-Hand Principal Jeanna Mayhall, Hand-In-Hand Assistant Principal Dee Gaines, Thomas County Schools Assistant Superintendent Lisa Williams, Three-Year Old Teacher Shelley Wilson, Holly Smith, and Brent Griffin.

Thomas County Farmer Directs Donation to Hand-In-Hand

Hand-In-Hand Primary School received a \$2,500 donation from America’s Farmers Grow Communities, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund and directed by local farmer Trey Griffin of Thomas County. The donation will help the organization purchase new all-terrain trikes for gross motor play. Currently, the trikes are more than five years old. Students participate in gross motor play through riding trikes once or twice weekly.

Trey Griffin chose to donate the funds to Hand-In-Hand Primary School where his daughter currently attends. He realizes that public schools are in need of funds to support programs that are not typically funded with traditional instructional budgets. Trikes are considered one of those “extras” that Hand-In-Hand Primary provides its students.

For six years, America’s Farmers Grow Communities has collaborated with farmers to donate over \$22 million to more than 8,000 community organizations across rural America. Winning farmers will direct donations to nonprofits to help fight rural hunger,

purchase life saving fire and EMS equipment, support ag youth leadership programs, buy much needed classroom resources, and so much more.

America’s Farmers Grow Communities partners with farmers to support local nonprofit causes that positively impact farming communities across rural America. Grow Communities is one program in the America’s Farmers community outreach effort, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund. Other programs include America’s Farmers Grow Ag Leaders, which encourages rural youth to remain in agriculture and provides \$1,500 college scholarships to high school and college students pursuing ag-related degrees and America’s Farmers Grow Rural Education, which works with farmers to nominate rural school districts to compete for \$10,000 and \$25,000 math and science grants.

About the Monsanto Fund
The Monsanto Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Monsanto Company, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the communities where farmers and Monsanto Company employees live and work. Visit the Monsanto Fund at www.monsantofund.org.

TCCHS Places Second at Regional Science Olympiad



TCCHS medal winners at the Gordon College Region Science Olympiad tournament are: (front row) Randi Dupree, Logan Herring, Luvy Miranda, Jordan Bush, Hannah Dixon, Palmer NeSmith, C’lee Kornegay; (back row) Eli Kosciw, Jacob Hancock, Guanghui Li, Chandler Watson, Steven Tran, Maggie Martin, and Hailey Ferrel. Not pictured is Ethan Hopper.

Thomas County Central High School students had great success at the region Science Olympiad competition in February.

Students brought home several medals, ribbons, and a second place overall trophy from the Gordon State College Region Science Olympiad tournament, ensuring them a spot at state competition.

Among the two teams, both coached by TCCHS science teacher Laura Kornegay, every student placed or won a ribbon in at least one event.

Out of the 23 categories given, TCCHS did well in each one. Several students

spent months in competition preparation, constructing everything from a robot to a bridge to a glider; other students studied for tests and prepared for labs.

Science Olympiad state competition will be held April 16 at Emory University in Atlanta. Students say they are “looking forward” to the competition.

“We had tough competition at region, and we know what we need to do to be competitive at the state level,” Coach Laura Kornegay said. “I am proud of how well the students did – I’ve never had this many medal winners at a region event before!”



TCCMS SCIENCE OLYMPIAD TEAM PLACES THIRD - On Saturday, March 5, students from Thomas County Middle School participated in the Science Olympiad Regional competition held at South Georgia College in Douglas, Georgia. This young group of first-time competitors won 18 medals, five of which were first place. Overall, the team won third place.

National History Bee Finalists from TCMS to Compete in Chicago



Front row (left to right): Brynna Robertson, Anna James, Danielle Sauls, Ethan Nicoll Back row (left to right): Isaac Swope, Chandler Craven, Zach Goff, Matthew Sherrod, Jackson Singletary

Nine students from Thomas County Middle School have qualified for the National History Bee. The competition began with a test the students completed at school. Students who scored high enough on the test advanced to the Regional Contest in Jackson, Georgia on Saturday, February 20. There are only 40 regions in the United States for this competition. Five of the nine qualifying students were in the top eight for their division.

"National History Bee is a new academic competition for TCMS," said Mandy West, social studies department chair at Thomas County Middle School. "The social studies department was excited to offer the opportunity to compete on historical knowledge- a topic that many students love. Several of our students who qualified for the regional competition were those that have not competed in a competition at this level before."

The students were excited to make the cut in the

competition and have a chance to show off their knowledge of history.

Deann Garcia teaches all three of the eighth grade students who have advanced to the next level of the National History Bee.

She said, "Attending the Regional History Bee was an excellent experience for our students. They were able to showcase their knowledge of history through head to head

competition with other history buffs from around the state."

West added, "While we are proud of our students and their success, we are very proud of the way they represented our school and system."

The students who have qualified for the National Bee include Ethan Nicoll (6th grade); Anna James, Danielle Sauls, Jackson Singletary, Isaac Swope, Brynna Robertson (7th grade); and Chandler Craven, Zach Goff, and Matthew Sherrod (8th grade).

The National History Bee competition will take place June 9-12 in Chicago, Illinois.



Kornegay presents project to symposium

One inquisitive young mind is educating others about how some tiny particles could have a big world impact.

C'lee Kornegay, a sophomore at Thomas County Central High School, recently was selected to present her science fair research project during the Georgia Junior Science & Humanities Symposium (JSHS). Her project was one of few chosen for the event.

"This was an honor because my project was one of 50 from the whole state to present at this," Kornegay said. "My experience was unique because I was able to share the information I learned from my project while learning about other research students my age conducted. The most challenging part of this experience was presenting because I was nervous."

Kornegay was invited to attend Georgia JSHS after being approved during a preliminary judging process conducted by qualified scientists who reviewed applicants' research papers and extended abstracts.

"Any student who completes a science project can apply to present," TCCHS Science Department Chair Laura Kornegay said. "It's



C'lee Kornegay

a great opportunity for students to present their work to an audience, and to answer questions from experts in the field. Students also get to see close up what kind of research their peers are doing across the state."

Kornegay's project, "The Effect of AgNP on Chlorella," won overall first place in the senior division of the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Region Science & Engineering Fair. It is advancing to the Georgia Science & Engineering Fair (GSEF), which will be held March 31-April 2 at the University of Georgia.

"This trip allowed for me to experience how real scientists form hypotheses, conduct experiments, and share their findings," Kornegay said. "This has benefitted me and my science fair project."

NEED CPR? FIRST AID?

CPR will be offered on Tuesday, April 21, at Cross Creek from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. Please sign up on PDEExpress to attend the training session.



Garrison-Pilcher Raised More than \$11,700 for Jump Rope for Heart



Coach Veletta Reed (center) stands with top JRFH fundraisers Braeden Barlow (left) and Laylen Hines.

Garrison-Pilcher Elementary School recently held its annual Jump Rope for Heart (JRFH) to raise money for the American Heart Association. The students raised a total of \$11,790, while learning about the importance of having a healthy heart and giving back to the community.

Coach Veletta Reed organized the annual event that is always held in February, Healthy Heart Month, and promoted by the American Heart Association and the American Alliance for Health and Physical Education.

"As always the reason we do this is to save lives," said Reed. "We aim to teach the kids the importance of their heart health, for people like our former nurse Terri Matthews, for our students who have had heart surgeries, and for our kids to learn to be compassionate towards others. This is my 28th year doing JRFH with Garrison-Pilcher and it is always a huge success and lots of fun."

The top fund raiser this year was Laylen Hines from Vickie Warren's class with a total of \$700. Coming in second place was Braeden Barlow with \$388.50, also from Warren's room. A highlight

of the fundraising efforts was a chance to silly-string the Assistant Principal Richard Potter.

Principal Sharonda O'Neal said, "We really appreciate our parents, students, and community for supporting our efforts in raising over \$11,700 for the American Heart Association. Coach Reed and Coach Kristy Peebles are always encouraging our students and staff to live healthy lives. Heart disease is a very serious illness. The funds raised during our JRFH event will definitely help support research and treatment of heart disease."

Since heart disease is the leading cause of death for people in the United States, this event is very important. Garrison-Pilcher students raised more funds this year than ever before.

"Jump Rope for Heart teaches kids the importance of heart healthy habits and that being active is fun," added Reed. "It also teaches them to help others by raising funds to support cardiovascular research and education. Our students and the people that donated to them have been extremely helpful for Thomas County. The efforts of our students and faculty certainly paid off in a big way."

Sam Holland Wins Region's Yearly AD Award

Thomas County Central High School Coach Sam Holland was awarded the Region 1-AAAA Athletic Director of the Year Award at the recent Georgia Athletic Directors Association (GADA) Conference held in Savannah, Georgia.

By winning this award, Sam Holland is nominated to run for the Georgia 1-AAAA Athletic Director of the Year Award.

Jasper Jewel, GADA's executive committee member, called the group of recipients an "esteemed group of individuals."

She said, "This award exemplifies Holland's character. It is voted on by his peers in the eleven schools within TCCHS's district."

"It is an unbelievable honor to receive this award," said Holland. "To me, the award represents the support



Pictured is Coach Sam Holland at the GADA awards ceremony.

from our administration and their love for TCCHS athletics. It also represents the hard work and dedication of our coaches as they passionately pursue excellence both on and off the field."



STATE COMPETITION WINNERS FROM TCMS- Two students from Thomas County Middle School recently brought home medals from the Georgia Educational Technology Fair state competition. The event was held at Middle Georgia State University in Macon. Georgia Rose Patton, a sixth grade student from TCMS, placed second in the state in the Internet Applications category for a website she designed for her National History Day project. Ethan Nicoll, sixth grade, earned second place in the Technology Literacy competition. This competition consists of an exam based on questions in many different areas of computer and technology use. These students competed against students from across the state.



Fifth-grader Campbell Smith works with his teacher Teresa Rieber on solving complex math problems. Smith will travel to Chicago to compete in April as the only fifth-grader from Georgia.

Fifth-Grader Campbell Smith Math Competition Finalist

Campbell Smith, a fifth grade student in the Thomas County Middle School MERIT program, has qualified for finals with MathCON, an online math competition for students in grades 5-12 with grade-level specific timed tests. Smith will compete in the final round in Chicago, Illinois, on April 23, as the only fifth-grader from Georgia.

"I feel very honored to be a finalist for the MathCOM competition," Smith said. "What a privilege to represent the Thomas County school system, as well as the state of Georgia. I am thankful for all of the support from my parents, family, teachers and friends. It will also be fun to see a new place and experience new things."

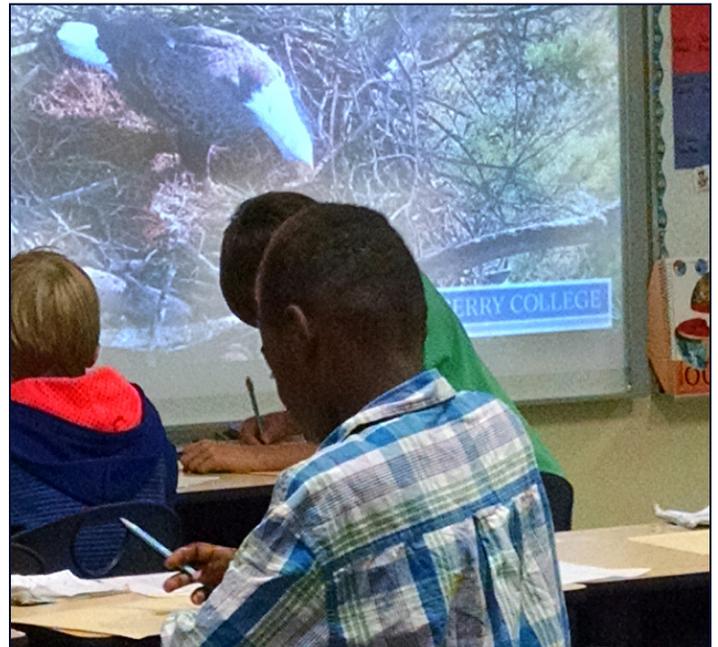
Teresa Rieber is Smith's math teacher. Of his success, she said, "Campbell has been in math club this year and has been very focused on solving math problems that involve higher order thinking skills. He is an exceptional student who has shown dedication in

all of his academic classes and competitions."

TCMS math department chairperson Leslie Elkins coordinated the MathCON competition at the school.

"We are very proud of Campbell's success with MathCON," Elkins said. "For him to be the only fifth grade qualifier in the state of Georgia is a huge accomplishment, not only for him, but for our school system as well."

MathCON is a popular math competition that consists of two rounds: the first round is an online test that students take in their schools. Students who score in the top ten from each region of the United States advance to the final competition. Georgia is in the Southeast Region, and Smith scored in the 99th percentile on the first round exam and is the only fifth grade student from the state of Georgia to qualify for finals. Thomas County Middle School had sixty-six other students receive "honorable mention" on the first round exam.



EAGLE EYES AT CROSS CREEK - Kelli Dorminey's and Angela Hutchings' homerooms at Cross Creek Elementary started observing the Eaglecam at Berry College as a kick off to their unit on Georgia Habitats. Students observed, participated in lesson plan activities through the Berry College Eagles website, and even wrote letters to the eagles. As students awaited the arrival of the two eggs that were being watched by the parent eagles, they were able to learn about the Mountain region of Georgia, eagle habitats, as well as the eagle nest and the foods they eat. Students mailed letters and artwork to Berry College eagerly awaiting a response from the eagles, as well as a glimpse of baby eagles.

MESSAGE cont. from page 1

be calculated for teachers who do not teach tested subjects. The bill will not be final until signed by the Governor. If signed, the bill will make significant changes in both testing and teacher evaluation.

The budget passed by the legislature partially restores austerity cuts, and the Governor has called for these funds to be used to give teachers raises. In addition to experience step increases that about half of the teachers will receive, we hope to be able to provide an increased local supplement that will be approximately 2% of the teacher's base pay. Combined, these salary increases will average over 3% and will be the largest increase in teacher salaries since the

Great Recession, still far short of what we would like to see, but a welcome change to the stagnant salaries that we have seen the last several years.

Finally, we will be adding about a dozen new teaching positions system-wide to reduce class sizes and special education caseloads. When we surveyed teachers earlier this year about budget priorities, teacher raises and reduced class sizes emerged as the top two priorities. Those goals are helping to shape the school system's budget that is currently under development.

Thank you for all that you do for our students. I hope that you have a safe, restful, and rejuvenating spring break!

Dust Komegy

Audience Captivated at Garrison-Pilcher's Science Night



Garrison-Pilcher science teacher Forrest Love guides student Aiden Miranda, and mom, Brandi Miranda in an experiment demonstrating force by using air currents.

Garrison-Pilcher recently held Science Night. It was standing room only in the school gymnasium, which was packed with enthusiastic participants. The event is held to promote and engage students in science at a young age, and to encourage parents and students to experience science in a fun way through everyday living.

Forrest Love, Garrison-Pilcher's science teacher, demonstrated the use of common items to encourage science exploration and

creativity. "It is wonderful to see so many parents who come out for our biggest event of the year," said Love. "I enjoy showing families great ways to do fun science at home."

"Science night was so much fun," commented Aiden Miranda, a second grade student at Garrison-Pilcher. "I can do this stuff at my house."

"It was a spectacular event, and just wonderful to see parents and students so excited and engaged when learning about science," said Richard Potter, Assistant Principal.



TRAPPING THE LEPRECHAUNS- Kindergarten students in Angie Manning's class used engineering and creativity to build elaborate leprechaun traps on St. Patrick's Day. Pictured from left to right are De'Andra Andrews, Cooper Creech, and Bryson Ross.

Talent Recognized TCCHS Students Featured in TCA Youth Arts Show

Thomas County Central High School art students created, painted, sculpted, and drew their way into the ranks of a local youth arts show.

Students were awarded honors and recognitions in the Thomasville Center for the Arts Youth Arts Show, Competition and Exhibition. TCCHS students earned 10 out of 22 awards (see box below).

"Overall, the students' works from TCCHS are a fine representation of the variety of media, subjects and techniques that they explored in their visual arts classes," TCCHS art teacher Jocelyn Rivard said.

The competition and exhibition is part of the Thomasville Center for the Arts Youth Arts Month celebration, centered on spotlighting young talent and arts education.

All entries had to be new submissions and original artwork with all content created by the student. Each school (all high schools in Thomas County were invited to participate) was limited to 30 entries with no more than two submissions per student.

The Thomasville Center for the Arts Visual Arts Scholarship is a juried portfolio competition. The \$1,000 check will be awarded directly to the scholarship recipient's college or university and can only be used for educational purposes.



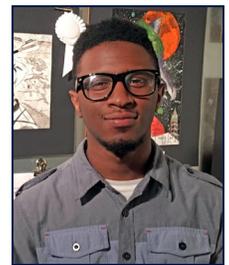
Sophie Anderson

Scholarship recipient Sophie Anderson plans to attend Valdosta State University to study advertising and graphic design.

"It really means a lot to have not just one of my artworks recognized but a whole portfolio," she said. "This is an award I've been dreaming about getting ever since I started high school and it's exciting to see that it was realized because of my hard work."

Hakeem Stevens was honored with the Most Potential Award for students in 12th grade.

His entire portfolio received this recognition.



Hakeem Stevens

See ART AWARDS on page 7

TCCHS Thomasville Center for the Arts Youth Arts Show Winners

Thomasville Center for the Arts Visual Arts Scholarship: Sophie Anderson, portfolio, \$1,000
 First Place: Rebecca Spruiell, "Retro Wolf," \$100
 Award of Excellence: Mikayla Jordan, "Orange & Yellow Mask," \$25
 Award of Excellence: Kate Weaver, "Moose Wading," \$25
 Creativity Award: Chandler Wilson, "Red & Violet Mask with Horns," \$50
 Most Potential- 12th Grade: Hakeem Stevens, whole portfolio
 Honorable Mention: Carly Clark, "Dandy Rhino"
 Honorable Mention: Tayler Deas, "Postmodern Mansion"
 Honorable Mention: Darius James, "Fruits & Vegetables for Sale"
 Honorable Mention: Camille Sowell, "Fox in Snow"

TCCHS Forensics Team Advances to National Competition



TCCHS Forensics team (left to right) Jennifer Shoup, Angela Gutierrez, Langley Wooten (student observer) and J.J. Ward won first place in the Georgia Skills USA competition and will compete at nationals.

A team of young scientific sleuths has solved its way into a national competition.

Thomas County Central High School Forensics team placed first in the recent Georgia Skills USA competition and advanced to the national level. Team members are Angela Gutierrez, J.J. Ward, Jennifer Shoup, and Langley Wooten (student observer).

"I am so proud of our students and could not be happier for their amazing achievement," Dr. Scott Sweeting, team sponsor and forensics teacher, said. "This is a life-changing experience for them and one they will never forget."

Team member J.J. Ward knew they were going to place, but "was happy when we got first."

"I feel great about this win and can't wait for nationals to start," he said.

Team member Angela Gutierrez said she "honestly couldn't believe it" when she realized the team won.

"I feel proud not only of myself, but the people around me who supported us since

the very beginning," she said.

Sweeting adds his team does not have the same level of forensic resources as schools in north Georgia do, which makes this win all the more exceptional.

"The fact that we beat them this year really put us on the map," he said. "In fact, the second place team this year just behind us is the same team that competed at nationals last year and won seventh in the country!"

The team prepared for competition by practicing whenever it could, running "crime scenes."

During competition, the team had a murder scene to process, which meant a "body" and various types of physical evidence, like a bloody footprint, to document, photograph and collect, Sweeting explained. The team had 15

minutes to work the scene and answer questions from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation judges.

Ward describes the scene as "this big fake body and evidence all across the floor."

"The judges stated that we were the first team to use sterile tip swabs and leave the warrant at the scene," he said of the team's performance.

Sweeting thanked the Thomas County School System, as well as members of the Thomas County Sheriff's Office and the local forensics unit, and fellow advisor Officer John Sellers for their support.

The forensic science field is "rapidly growing," he continued, and programs like the one at TCCHS provide students who have genuine interest in it the chance to gain hands-on experience and exposure to the work of a real life forensics investigator.

National Skills USA competition will be held in Louisville, KY, June 20-25.

Sweeting said the TCCHS team will "practice, practice, practice" for its next challenge. They'll also be fundraising to cover the cost of the trip, including competition fees, uniform requirements, and lodging.



TCCHS Forensics team (left to right) Jennifer Shoup, J.J. Ward, Angela Gutierrez and Langley Wooten (student observer) "work" a practice scene. The team had to "work" a scene during Georgia Skills USA competition.

ART AWARDS cont. from page 6

"To me, this award means I have a bright future and more room to grow as an artist," Stevens said. "I can only honor such an award by giving my absolute best and more to live up to such faith."

Senior Rebecca Spruiell won first place for her clay sculpture, "Retro Wolf."

It is the result of an assignment in which students were challenged to combine



Rebecca Spruiell

human with animal. Spruiell chose to make a wolf man.

"My feelings were shock and surprise," she said of her win. "I knew that I would get recognized but not first place. Art is relaxation for me. I go to my happy place. Art would be important to me even if it were not judged."

Chandler Wilson won a Creativity Award for her piece "Red & Violet Mask with Horns."

"The Creativity Award means a lot to me because it shows that other people care about my art as much as I do," Wilson said. "People get to see my style of creativity and it shows with my mask. My mask has tall, twisting horns as well as a beak, both covered in many different 'Zentangles' and patterns."

The exhibition runs March 1-31. It is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. It features more than 100 entries.

"I encourage everyone to visit the center this March during National Youth Arts Month and see the pieces' craftsmanship and creativity for themselves," Rivard said.

TCCHS Students Advance to National FBLA Competition

A duo of enterprising business students is headed to national competition, and others held their own during a state conference.

Thomas County Central High School students Steven Tran and Marion Rose Young will advance to the Future Business Leaders of America National Leadership Conference, to be held this summer in Atlanta. They were part of a group of TCCHS FBLA students who competed in the FBLA State Leadership Conference & Competition, held March 6-8 in Athens. During the competition, TCCHS had 13 students make the finals and 10 students medaled.

"I could not be more proud of the students and their hard work," TCCHS FBLA Advisor Nick Haskin said. "This was the most competitive SLC (State Leadership Conference) I've seen in my 10 years of advising FBLA."

Young and Tran placed second in the Digital Video Production category.

"I am so proud of Marion Rose Young and Steven Tran for their hard work and dedication in Digital Video Production," Haskin said. "Qualifying for FBLA Nationals is very difficult. I am very impressed that a team comprised of a junior (Tran) and sophomore (Young) was able to stand toe-to-toe against upperclassmen and prove that they are among the best."

Young said she and her partner knew they could go far with the video, both technically and creatively.

"The theme of this year was to rewrite a song



TCCHS students Steven Tran and Marion Rose Young wait onstage during the awards presentation in the Digital Video Production category. The duo placed second and advanced to national competition.

and make a music video to promote FBLA," Young said. "We chose 'Uptown Funk' (by Mark Ronson and featuring Bruno Mars) because it's a fun and popular song, and we were able to fit our lyrics to it."

Their section of competition included the presentation of a Power Point project that explained how and why they made their video.

"At state we had to resubmit and present the video," Tran explained. "The presentation was about the video-making process and equipment we used. While I waited to go in, I did a lot of practice so I could know what I would say. Along with that, I tried to calm down before I went before the judges."

Tran said he wanted to compete in the category because he wanted to improve his video skills. He also wanted the chance to compete because his sister (Ngan, a TCCHS graduate) previously qualified for nationals and he wanted to



TCCHS FBLA state qualifiers pose for a photo during competition.

do an event like hers.

"I think we did well, but I didn't expect placing so high," Tran said. "I'm pretty excited for nationals. It's my first time qualifying for this event and it let me know that I've improved a lot this past year."

Haskin said all FBLA students who advanced to state spent time building and rehearsing presentations, working on their projects, researching their topics and, if taking tests, studying practice tests.

The 2016 FBLA National Leadership Conference will be held June 29-July 2 at the World Congress Center in Atlanta.

Haskin said this conference gives students an opportunity to "compete shoulder-to-shoulder" against other high schoolers around the world "in business, presentation, and academic events," and be judged by representatives from major colleges and Fortune 500 companies.

Young is "very excited" to advance to nationals. "It's such an honor to have the opportunity that we have worked for, and to be able to represent our school," she said.

The duo intends to prepare for the next level of competition by improving their presentation and video, including shooting more

footage.

"I want to try some new shots and equipment to make an even more serious video," Tran said. "I have to change some shots and replace them with improved focus and stability because those are some shortcomings of the video."

Haskin said TCCHS FBLA "provides an environment where every student is challenged, every student is accepted, and every student is part of the family of TCCHS FBLA."

Tran said the club has benefitted him. He has gained more confidence in presentations and speaking.

Young is also proud to be an FBLA member.

"FBLA is an outstanding organization to help students like us prepare for our future," she said. "It also teaches us how to succeed in business, and life in general."

TCCHS FBLA State Results

Digital Video Production

Steven Tran & Marion Rose Young - 2nd
Shelby Howard & Mason Lawing - 5th

Public Service Announcement

Keri Corbin & Mason Lawing - 6th
Sanny Patel & Steven Tran - 9th

Business Plan

Justin Barfield, Anna Jense and Tyler
Williamson - 8th

Insurance & Risk Management

Kaitlyn Douglas - 9th

Healthcare Administration

Kaitlyn Douglas - 9th