

Press Release – Jan. 2013
30th ANNUAL “SPOTLIGHT ON TALENT” COMPETITION

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Calling all future stars! This is our area’s version of “American Idol”! We do have judges, but they try to be helpful, not hurtful! No record contracts, but how about a \$150 check and big trophy? Heritage Arts Center Association is hard at work on plans for our 30th talent contest. The dates have been set; applications and information are available on our web site at www.heritagearts.org; and information distributed to each school music teacher in central and east Pasco County, many dance, vocal and instrumental studios, and at the Chambers of Commerce. Check it out! Talented young people need to start “getting their act together” right away, the deadline is early this year.

In celebration of the 30th anniversary the big news is that HACA will award a newly created \$1,000 scholarship to a Pasco county resident graduating senior! The regional competition already gives over \$3,000 in cash prizes and trophies to winners in several age categories. Now, because of the community support of the “Moonlight and Ivory” concerts as well as the “Spotlight” contest, we are adding this scholarship to the Pasco senior who has the highest total scores from the finals judges. The scholarship winner will be announced at the end of the final evening show, and will be separate and in addition to the individual category winners.

The last few years have been record-breaking for “Spotlight on Talent”. Several hundred students participate each year, with judges evaluating up to 126 different acts. The final competitions will be on Saturday, March 16, at the theater at Wesley Chapel High School. Act I at noon will be younger finalists and Act II at 7 pm will be older competitors. Tickets for adults will be \$12 or both shows for \$20. For students through high school the fee is \$6, both shows for \$10 (under 5 is free).

On Saturday, Feb. 16, we expect that another energetic crowd of excited youngsters will compete in the tryouts for the thrill of becoming a finalist. Participants are judged primarily on talent, and also on stage presence and appropriate appearance. The deadline for receiving applications is Thursday, Jan. 31. In addition to over \$4,000 in cash prizes, talented young people have a chance to compete onstage with an audience of several hundred!

The competition is conducted in a professional atmosphere with judges from central Florida who are outstanding in their respective fields. Every year, as word of the excitement and quality talent spreads, more and more young people participate, some coming from as far away as Tampa, Brooksville, St. Pete, and West Pasco. Singers, instrumental musicians, acrobats, piano players, bands, baton twirlers, dancers and other forms of entertainment are welcome to participate. There are several age categories for solos and one or more group categories, and a student may enter as a solo and with a group.

Community sponsors have always allowed us to generously reward these young people for their hard work in developing their talents. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please email Barbara Friedman at spotlight@heritagearts.org or call 352-567-1720.

This uplifting and exciting day of entertainment is one of the highlights of the year for our community, and many gifted young people eagerly wait each spring for a chance to shine as a true star! Many of our former contestants have gained valuable experience and confidence, and have gone on to receive college scholarships and positions with professional performance organizations. It is indeed a rewarding event for all – sponsors, audience, producers, and performers!