

Press Release – Dec. 2019  
**37th ANNUAL “SPOTLIGHT ON TALENT” COMPETITION**

**Contact Person: Barbara Friedman**  
[spotlight@heritagearts.org](mailto:spotlight@heritagearts.org) or (352)567-1720

Calling all future stars! This is our area’s version of “America's Got Talent”! Do you dream of performing onstage, or have plans to earn a performing arts college scholarship? Prepare first in a local competition, “**Spotlight on Talent**” which is hosted by the Heritage Arts Center Association (HACA). The event gives talented performers up through grade 12 valuable opportunities for audition and performance experience, \$\$ prizes and trophies. The dates have been set and HACA is hard at work on plans for our 37th talent contest. Applications and information are available on our web site at [heritagearts.org](http://heritagearts.org) and information is 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 and get their applications completed.

The regional competition gives over \$4,000 in cash prizes and trophies to winners in several age categories. Part of the excitement is that HACA also awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a Pasco county resident graduating senior! Because of the community support of the “Moonlight and Ivory” concerts as well as the “Spotlight” contest, we added this scholarship to the Pasco senior who has the highest total scores from the preliminary and finals judges. The scholarship winner will be announced at the end of the final show - 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 about 100 different acts. The final competitions will be on Saturday, March 7, at the theater at Wesley Chapel High School. The Matinee at 12 noon will be younger finalists and the Evening Show at 7 pm will be older competitors. Tickets for adults are \$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, February 8, 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 with additional points for stage presence and appropriate appearance. The deadline for receiving applications is Thursday, January 23, 2020. In addition to over \$4,000 in cash prizes, talented young people have a chance to perform 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 coming from as far away as Tampa, Brooksville, St. Pete, and West Pasco. Vocalists, dancers, instrumental musicians, piano players, baton twirlers, bands, gymnasts and other forms of entertainment are welcome to participate. There are several age categories for solos and one or more group categories. 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](mailto:spotlight@heritagearts.org) or call 352-567-1720, and our newly launched web site will have a "donate now" button.

This uplifting and exciting day of entertainment is one of the highlights of the year for our community, and many gifted young people are eager 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!