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www.floridapride.org, or
www.childrenfirstflorida.org.

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON SCHOOL CHOICE IN FLORIDA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Shamel Donawa
Heartland Christian
Academy
Kissimmee, FL

Shamel has been on the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program since February 2002, making her one of the first children to participate in the innovative program. The scholarship program made it possible for her to attend Heartland Christian Academy, where she has developed into a shining star.

Before receiving a Step Up For Students Scholarship to attend Heartland Christian, Shamel's grades were poor – mainly C's, D's and F's. Her mother, Ursala, wanted her to attend a school that would enable her to improve academically and work towards a better future. Upon receiving the scholarship, Ursala enrolled Shamel in Heartland Christian Academy.

Now in the 12th grade, Shamel has grown into an individual with rich experiences and a wealth of

knowledge that is priceless. She has gone on three mission trips to Honduras – and is preparing for her fourth in Spring 2007. She is also involved in the drama and performing arts program at Heartland, where she participates in school plays and competitions. She is also involved in student council and serves as the Praise and Worship Leader and the Senior Trip Planner. Additionally, she is also dual-enrolled at Valencia Community College.

Attending Heartland Christian School has enabled Shamel to rise as a leader. After graduating from high school, Shamel plans on completing her associate's degree at the community college, and then transferring to University of Central Florida to become a registered nurse and pursue a career as a certified midwife.

Want to nominate your student for our Student Spotlight?
Visit www.stepupforstudents.com/parents.htm to send us your story.

HIGH MARKS



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



OF STEP UP FOR STUDENTS

5 YEARS + 100 DONORS = 20,000 SAVED

Governor Jeb Bush Thanks Corporate Scholarship Donors

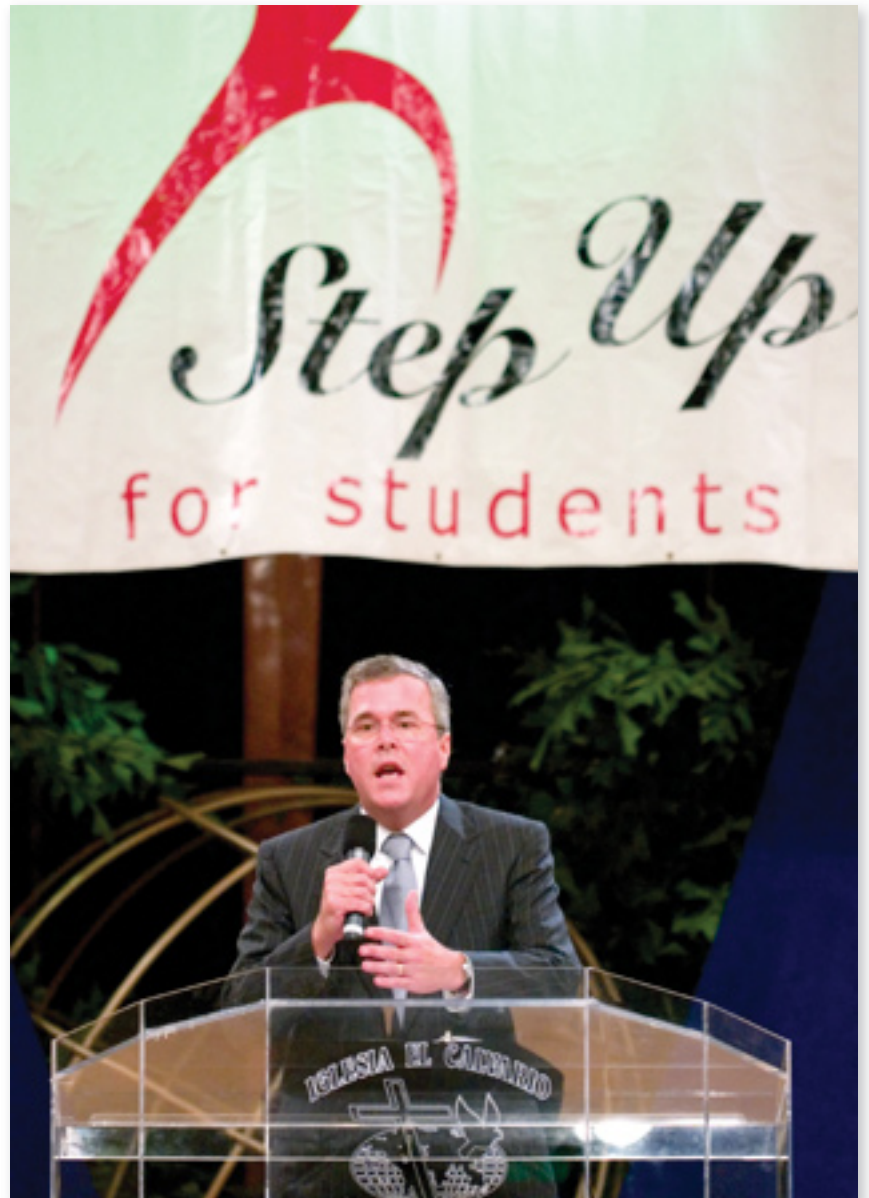
More than 2,000 parents, students and teachers gathered at El Calvario Christian Academy in Orlando on October 20 to celebrate five successful years of the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Governor Jeb Bush, and executives from WellCare, Albertsons and Walgreens gathered at the Donor Appreciation Rally and thanked all present corporations for their generosity and praised students for their strides of success.

Debra Garza, Director of Government and Community Relations of Walgreens, presented Step Up For Students with a generous donation of \$8 million. Walgreens support will enable more than 2,100 additional students to attend the school of their choice this year.

In addition, Laquanda Fields, a junior at Teacher's Hands Academy in Orlando, shared her testimony of how Step Up For Students has given her a second chance at education and hope for her future. Laquanda has been a part of the Step Up For Students program since its inception five years ago and has improved remarkably both in and out of the classroom.

Aspiring actress and singer, Karen Feliciano, performed two songs, one in English and the other in Spanish, which thanked donors for their contributions to Step Up For Students. Karen, a junior at Covenant Christian School in Palm Bay, has been singing a song of success since she qualified for her scholarship two years ago.

On behalf of the Step Up For Students Family, we thank the 100 corporate donors for their five years of support and making it possible for over 20,000 students to have school choice options in Florida.



Governor Jeb Bush thanks scholarship students, parents, teachers and donors for five years of continued support during the October Rally in Orlando.



DONOR CORNER:

WALGREENS

Walgreens is one of the newest corporate donors to join Step Up For Students. The multi-billion dollar drugstore officially announced their partnership with Step Up For Students on October 20, 2006, during the Donor Appreciation Rally (see front page story). The large crowd cheered as Debra Garza, Director of Government and Community Relations for Walgreens, presented an oversized check for \$8 million to Governor Jeb Bush for the Step Up For Students program. This tremendous donation will enable more than 2,100 disadvantaged children throughout Florida to receive a Step Up For Students Scholarship.

Founded in 1901, Walgreens is the nation's largest drugstore chain operating 5,461 stores in 47 states and Puerto Rico. Walgreens also provides additional services to pharmacy patients and prescription drug and medical plans through Walgreens Health Services, its managed care division, which includes Walgreens Health Initiatives Inc. (a pharmacy benefits manager), Wal-

greens Mail Service Inc., Walgreens Home Care Inc. and Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy.

"We believe that by supporting Step Up For Students, we are not only contributing to a cause that's important to our customers and employees, but we're also helping to provide the educational foundation for students across the state who will become tomorrow's employees and community leaders," said Debra Garza.

Walgreens provides resources for healthy and productive communities, employs more than 26,000 people throughout Florida, and now through its partnership with Step Up For Students, the company is helping to provide the educational foundation for thousands of Florida's children.

Walgreens cares about our communities and the success of our future generations. We applaud them for their actions and appreciate their support of Florida's children.

For more information about Walgreens, visit www.walgreens.com.



Debra Garza with Walgreens presented Governor Jeb Bush with an \$8 million donation during the Donor Appreciation Rally in October.

WELLSTUDENT

Since its launch in 1992, Florida Healthy Kids has offered working families access to high-quality doctors and preventative care for their children at an affordable cost. In 1998, Florida Healthy Kids became part of Florida KidCare, Florida's child health insurance program and began offering coverage statewide to uninsured, eligible children ages 5-18. The Florida KidCare program also includes other programs for children from birth through age 18 based on the child's age and family household and income. Families submit a single application for all of these programs.

Today, Florida Healthy Kids and KidCare continue to provide quality health insurance benefits to uninsured children under the age of 19. Children enrolled in the Florida KidCare program have access to regular doctor's visits, check-ups, shots, prescriptions, emergency care as well as vision and hearing screenings. **Most families pay a monthly premium of \$15 or \$20 per family per month.**

Interested families can apply for Florida Healthy Kids and KidCare by simply completing a one-page application, attaching verification documents, and mailing, faxing or e-mailing them to Florida Healthy Kids or applying online at www.healthykids.org.

Don't delay! If you have additional questions or need help completing the Florida KidCare application, call the **Florida KidCare Hotline at 1-888-540-5437** or visit, **www.floridakidcare.org**.

Florida KidCare Application Submission

Mail:

**Post Office Box 980,
Tallahassee, Florida 32302-0980**

Overnight:

**661 East Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor,
Tallahassee, FL 32301**

Fax: **(850) 681-2131**

E-mail it to: **apply@healthykids.org**





DOE REACHES OUT TO PARENTS



School choice brochures are available for download.

The Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, as part of the Florida Department of Education, works diligently to educate parents about their school choice options through the School Choice website at www.floridaschoolchoice.org. The link titled "Parent Resources" located on the Quick Navigation bar on the far left-hand side of the screen lists valuable links to resources to aid parents in exercising school choice for their children.

One link you should check out is "Choosing a School for Your Child" booklet produced by the US Department of Education. This booklet offers step-by-step advice on how to choose among the schools available to your child. It identifies important factors you may want to consider before making a decision.

Also included on the Parent Resource page

are links to school choice brochures. These parent-friendly brochures focus on several of Florida's most widely used choice options. The brochures describe the choice option and what it offers, who may be eligible to participate and where to go for further information. Contact them if you would like copies to distribute in your area to help educate other parents about their school choice options.

The Department of Education Office also offers a toll-free School Choice information hotline at (800) 447-1636. Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8am - 5pm to answer questions and provide information on School Choice programs and website functions. Check out the DOE website at www.floridaschoolchoice.org or give them a call; this is a valuable resource for parents and schools alike.

FLORIDA ELECTS SCHOOL CHOICE ADVOCATE CHARLIE CRIST

For many, the wonderful part of Election Day is the fact that we won't have to watch the TV commercials anymore and sort through all the advertisements the candidates send us each day. Though we loath the political ads, this election was crucial to the future of the Step Up For Student Scholarship Program.

Our partner organization, The Florida Committee for Educational Freedom, mailed voter guides to all Step Up For Student families for the Governor's race and key legislative races as well. Many families contacted FCEF to thank them for this helpful information and utilized this information when they cast their votes.

Step Up For Student families were instrumental in electing a pro-school choice Governor, Charlie Crist, who has pledged to do whatever is necessary to protect this scholarship program.

Several key State Senate races also were highlighted in a voter guide and pro-school choice winners Steve Oelrich, from Alachua County, and Rhonda Storms, from Hillsborough County, have promised to work hard to make sure all families have educational options as they begin their new terms as State

Senators.

We thank all of our families who took the time to vote this election and we look forward to working with all the new and returning legislators this coming year. Your continued involvement will be necessary as we fight to protect school choice in Florida.



Governor-Elect Charlie Crist advocates for school choice at 2004 Step Up For Students Rally.