

MR. CHAIRMAN, COMMISSIONERS, FRIENDS...

**IT'S MY PLEASURE THIS MORNING TO ANNOUNCE
OUR NEWEST "SHINING SCHOLARS."**

**THIS IS A SPECIAL PRESENTATION FOR ME BECAUSE
IT PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT THE
CONTRIBUTIONS THAT SOME OF OUR FINEST
YOUNG RESIDENTS ARE MAKING FOR THE
BETTERMENT OF OUR WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY.**

**THE THREE STUDENTS WE'RE HONORING TODAY
ARE BEING RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP,
SCHOLARSHIP AND OVERALL EXCELLENCE.**

**THEY ALSO SHARE A PASSION FOR COMMUNITY
SERVICE.**

**AS WITH PAST "SHINING SCHOLARS," THEIR
PROFILES ARE FEATURED IN OUR "HALL OF STARS"
ON MY WEBSITE.**

**AND NOW, MR. CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS,
IT'S MY PRIVILEGE TO INTRODUCE OUR LATEST
"SHINING SCHOLARS."**

OUR “EMERGING LEADER” IS SALMA ABDELRAHMAN, A SENIOR AT CORAL REEF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, WHO LIVES IN COMMISSIONER MOSS’S DISTRICT.

SALMA AND HER FAMILY IMMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES SHORTLY AFTER SEPTEMBER 11. SALMA IS EGYPTIAN-AMERICAN, AND SHE AND HER FAMILY, WHO PRACTICE ISLAM, WERE RACIALLY PROFILED.

AS A RESULT, SALMA DECIDED TO EDUCATE OTHERS ABOUT HER RELIGION AND TO COMFORT OTHERS WHO’VE ALSO BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST FOR REASONS SUCH AS RACE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, RELIGION OR NATIONALITY. SHE FOUNDED A MOVEMENT CALLED “FABULA RASA,” WHICH GIVES INDIVIDUALS WHO’VE FACED DISCRIMINATION AN OUTLET TO BUILD AWARENESS VIA VIDEO.

WHILE PRODUCING ONE OF THESE VIDEOS, SALMA BECAME DETERMINED TO BUILD AWARENESS AROUND THE ISSUES SURROUNDING UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS IN OUR COUNTRY.

SHE DESIGNED A PROGRAM CALLED “INVOKING EMPATHY: UNDOCUMENTED AND UNAFRAID,” WHICH INCLUDED A PANEL DISCUSSION AMONG LOCAL UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AND A LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN TO POLITICIANS REGARDING IMMIGRATION POLICY.

SALMA IS THE PRESIDENT OF MODEL UNITED NATIONS AND EXECUTIVE ADVISOR OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT. SHE’S ALSO A MEMBER OF THE STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION, FLORIDA YOUTH COMMISSION, HOLOCAUST IMPACT THEATRE, BANK OF AMERICA’S STUDENT LEADER PROGRAM, AND A STUDENT VOICES’ PANELIST.

ON TOP OF ALL THIS, SHE’S ALSO A SILVER KNIGHT NOMINEE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND AN A.P. SCHOLAR WITH DISTINCTION.

LET’S GIVE SALMA A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE!

OUR “UNSTOPPABLE SCHOLAR” IS JAMILA GOWDY, A JUNIOR AT MIAMI BEACH SENIOR HIGH, WHO LIVES IN COMMISSIONER JORDAN’S DISTRICT.

JAMILA OVERCAME A SPINAL FUSION IN SEVENTH GRADE, RETURNING TO GOLF -- A SPORT THAT SHE LOVES AS MUCH AS I DO -- AND WORKING HARD TO CATCH UP AND EXCEL. SHE JOINED HER SCHOOL'S GOLF TEAM IN NINTH GRADE AND BECAME CO-CAPTAIN THIS YEAR. SHE'S ALSO ON THE BASKETBALL TEAM. IN ADDITION, SHE VOLUNTEERS AT THE FIRST TEE'S SUMMER PROGRAM AND HELPS TO SUPPORT THE ORANGE BOWL COMMITTEE'S GIRLS SPORTS PROGRAM.

JAMILA IS ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM AT HER HIGH SCHOOL AND IS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY, QUILL AND SCROLL, AND THE ENVIRONMENT CLUB. SHE ALSO HOLDS A PART-TIME JOB AT PORTMIAMI, PROVIDING BOARDING AND SHORE SERVICES FOR CRUISE SHIPS. AND SHE SPEAKS PORTUGUESE, WHICH ALLOWS HER TO COMMUNICATE WITH PASSENGERS FROM BRAZIL.

JAMILA IS THE PRESIDENT OF HER CHURCH'S YOUTH DEPARTMENT. SHE'S ALSO A GIRL SCOUT, AND HAS DEVELOPED A PROGRAM TO SUPPORT FAMILIES OF MOBILIZED MILITARY TROOPS.

IN ADDITION, JAMILA IS CURRENTLY DEVELOPING A WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT AT HER HIGH SCHOOL TO RAISE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION OF WOUNDED WARRIORS IN SOUTH FLORIDA.

LET'S CONGRATULATE JAMILA!

LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST, OUR "PURSUER OF EXCELLENCE" IS ANASTASIA TISHENA, A SENIOR AT THE SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES – WOLFSON CAMPUS, WHO LIVES IN COMMISSIONER HEYMAN'S DISTRICT.

ANASTASIA IMMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES FROM RUSSIA AT THE AGE OF NINE. BY THE END OF HER SENIOR YEAR, SHE WILL HAVE GRADUATED WITH 10 A.P. CLASSES, AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE, AND A 5.28 WEIGHTED G.P.A.

ANASTASIA FOUNDED HER OWN PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB, THROUGH WHICH MEMBERS TAKE PICTURES FOR THE YEARBOOK AND LITERARY MAGAZINE, AS WELL AS ENTER COMPETITIONS. SHE'S ALSO THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CLASS OF 2016 AND A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY.

ANASTASIA ORGANIZES FOOD, CLOTHING AND TOY DRIVES TO BENEFIT ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS TOYS FOR TOTS, THE CHAPMAN FOUNDATION AND CAMILLUS HOUSE. IN ADDITION, SHE TUTORS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN STEM SUBJECTS LIKE ALGEBRA AND BIOLOGY.

LAST SUMMER, ANASTASIA ATTENDED A SEVEN-WEEK PROGRAM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, WHERE SHE LIVED ON CAMPUS AND TOOK CLASSES IN GENETICS AND PHILOSOPHY. SHE'S ALSO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN BIOINFORMATICS RESEARCH, A FIELD THAT DEVELOPS METHODS AND SOFTWARE TOOLS FOR UNDERSTANDING BIOLOGICAL DATA, WITH A PROFESSOR AT MIAMI DADE COLLEGE.

HER WORK WITH THE PROFESSOR WAS LATER PRESENTED AT THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

ANASTASIA HOPES TO ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA AND MAJOR IN BIOCHEMISTRY -- WITH THE GOAL TO ONE DAY CONDUCT GENETIC RESEARCH AND PURSUE A CAREER IN OBSTETRICS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

LET'S APPLAUD ANASTASIA FOR HER REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS!

MR. CHAIRMAN, COMMISSIONERS, FRIENDS...

THESE YOUNG MIAMI-DADE RESIDENTS ARE SHINING EXAMPLES OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S BRIGHT FUTURE...AND AN INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN CONGRATULATING THEM FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS, HARD WORK AND COMMUNITY SERVICE!

CONGRATULATIONS, SALMA, JAMILA AND ANASTASIA!

