

**GOOD MORNING MR. CHAIRMAN, COMMISSIONERS,  
FELLOW RESIDENTS...**

**WE ARE CELEBRATING THE COMPLETION OF YET  
ANOTHER SCHOOL YEAR AND THIS MORNING, WE  
ARE HAPPY TO HIGHLIGHT THE SCHOLASTIC AND  
COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YOUNG MEN  
AND WOMEN WHO ARE THE MAYOR'S SHINING  
SCHOLARS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE.**

**THEY REPRESENT THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST OF  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IN THE AREAS OF  
SCHOLARSHIP, LEADERSHIP, AND EXCELLENCE.**

**THIS MONTH'S WINNERS ARE FEATURED IN OUR  
HALL OF STARS ON MY WEBSITE, AND YOU CAN  
READ MORE ABOUT THEM AND PAST WINNERS AS  
WELL.**

**IT IS NOW MY PLEASURE TO ANNOUNCE THE  
MAYOR'S SHINING SCHOLARS FOR JUNE.**

**OUR UNSTOPPABLE SCHOLAR IS WALEED  
MNEIMNEH, A SENIOR AT PALMER TRINITY SCHOOL  
WHO LIVES IN COMMISSIONER SUAREZ'S DISTRICT.**

**WALEED AND HIS FAMILY LEFT LEBANON TO FIND THE RIGHT EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR HIS BROTHER.**

**HE UNSELFISHLY DEVOTES HIS TIME TO HELPING HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, WHO AT THE AGE OF FIVE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM.**

**IN FACT, DURING WALEED'S FRESHMEN YEAR, HE INSPIRED HIS PEERS TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY BY CREATING AN AUTISM AWARENESS CLUB, WHICH HAS BECOME HIS SCHOOL'S LARGEST CLUB WITH 80 STUDENTS PARTICIPATING.**

**THE CLUB HAS BEEN SPONSORING THE ANNUAL "ACE OF AUTISM" TENNIS TOURNAMENT. THE TOURNAMENT DRAWS MORE THAN 100 PLAYERS EVERY YEAR AND HAS RAISED OVER \$70,000 OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS IN SUPPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI-NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR AUTISM AND RELATED DISABILITIES.**

**HE ALSO SERVES ON THE ATHLETIC FIELD. HE IS A TOP-RANKED TENNIS PLAYER AND HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY RANKED AMONG THE FLORIDA'S TOP UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION'S PLAYERS FOR MANY YEARS.**

**HE IS ALSO THE CO-CAPTAIN OF HIS SCHOOL'S SOCCER TEAM. LAST YEAR, HE WAS SELECTED TO THE ALL-STAR TEAM AT JOE DIMAGGIO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, WHICH REWARDS CHARACTER ON AND OFF THE FIELD.**

**IN ADDITION, WALEED WAS NOMINATED FOR A SILVER KNIGHT AWARD. HE PLANS TO ATTEND A CHALLENGING UNIVERSITY, JOIN THAT UNIVERSITY'S TENNIS TEAM, AND LATER EARN HIS MBA.**

**LET'S GIVE WALEED A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE!**

**OUR EMERGING LEADER IS MARIA MERCADO, A JUNIOR AT ST. BRENDAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL WHO LIVES IN COMMISSIONER DIAZ'S DISTRICT.**

**MARIA UNFORTUNATELY COULD NOT BE IN ATTENDANCE TODAY, BUT I WILL SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF THE REASONS WHY SHE WAS CHOSEN AS ONE OF JUNE'S SHINING SCHOLARS.**

**INSPIRED BY MALALA YOUSAFZAI A NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER, MARIA CREATED THE EDU-CITIES PROJECT. THROUGH THIS PROJECT SHE HOPES TO**

**SPREAD AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION FOR ALL BY HELPING LOW-INCOME HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PREPARE TO ATTEND COLLEGE.**

**MARIA HAS JOINED 15 CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES DURING HER HIGH SCHOOL CAREER. SHE HAS ACCUMULATED 370 COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS AT THE SHELTON ACADEMY SUMMER CAMP, WHERE SHE ASSISTS WITH THE DAILY ACTIVITIES FOR TODDLERS, AND 200 HOURS AT THE SALES SANTOVENIA ADULT DAY CARE, WHERE SHE READS POEMS AND DRAWS PORTRAITS FOR ELDERLY PERSONS.**

**MARIA HAS ALSO DEDICATED EIGHT YEARS TO LEARNING THE PIANO, HAS BEEN PAINTING FOR 15 YEARS, AND PLAYS VOLLEYBALL WITH A CLUB TEAM.**

**LET'S GIVE MARIA A BIG HAND!**

**AND, OUR PURSUER OF EXCELLENCE IS DAVID MILLER, A SENIOR AT SOUTH DADE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL WHO LIVES IN COMMISSIONER LEVINE CAVA'S DISTRICT.**

**DAVID EARNED A 5.9 WEIGHTED GPA, WHICH PLACED HIM IN THE TOP TWO PERCENT AT HIS SCHOOL. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE I.B. PROGRAM AND SERVED AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE MATH HONOR SOCIETY AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SCIENCE HONOR SOCIETY.**

**DAVID IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE POLICE EXPLORERS. HE WAS NAMED CADET OF THE YEAR IN 2014 AND WAS VOTED CLASS LEADER THAT SAME YEAR. AFTER COMPLETING THE EXPLORER ACADEMY, HE QUICKLY ROSE TO THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT, ASSISTING WITH THE SUPERVISION OF HIS PLATOON OF 40 EXPLORERS. HE HAS COMPLETED OVER 1,500 COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS AS AN EXPLORER, AND HAS DEVELOPED A HOMEWORK HELP AND PEER TUTORING NETWORK WITHIN THE PROGRAM.**

**HE HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE HOMESTEAD POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR HIS OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION TO THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD.**

**DAVID HAS ALSO HELPED COORDINATE A BABY SUPPLY DRIVE FOR FAMILIES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS, COLLECTING AND DISTRIBUTING DIAPERS, WIPES, BABY FOOD,**

**FORMULA, AND BOTTLES TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE FAMILIES FACE DURING THE HOLIDAYS.**

**HE HAS BEEN ACCEPTED TO ALL THE MAJOR UNIVERSITIES IN FLORIDA AND HAS DECIDED TO ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA.**

**DAVID COULD NOT BE HERE WITH US AS HE HAS ALREADY MOVED TO GAINESVILLE, BUT NEVERTHELESS HE DESERVES A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY!**

**MR. CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS, THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MAYOR'S SHINING SCHOLARS MAKE US ALL PROUD, AND EXCITED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OUR GREAT COUNTY.**

**LET'S ALL JOIN TOGETHER IN GIVING THEM ALL ONE FINAL ROUND OF APPLAUSE!**