

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

**SUBJECT:           REQUEST APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 19-008 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING STUDENTS FROM CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, CORAL REEF, CUTLER BAY, MEDICAL ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES HOMESTEAD CAMPUS FOR OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**COMMITTEE:       PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC**

**BLUEPRINT:       SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Volunteerism and community projects can provide young people an opportunity to engage meaningfully in acts of service and charity. At Center for International Education (CIE), Coral Reef, Cutler Bay, Medical Academy for Science and Technology (MAST @ Homestead), and School for Advanced Studies Homestead Campus (SAS Homestead) high schools, students are dedicated to assisting communities in need through an array of projects and initiatives. This item seeks to highlight the drive, passion and initiative of five seniors and their service-based projects and volunteer work.

Fabiana Lara is a highly dedicated CIE student that strives for excellence in all her endeavors. She has had a significant impact on her school, as well as the community, completing over 200 service hours at La Ventana de Los Cielos, a therapy center for children with disabilities that uses interaction with art, animals, and music as a means for healing. Fabiana regularly assists the physical therapists by helping with games and daily activities that encourage mental and physical development while forming long lasting bonds with the children. During her time there, she initiated her own therapeutic project that incorporated the use of photographs of objects around the organization's farm and a scavenger hunt to encourage cognitive development. This activity was designed to accelerate their strengths in writing, drawing, and the mental processes. Her design and strategies yielded noticeable improvements among the patients. Along with her ongoing volunteer work, Fabiana currently leads about 60 members and has managed numerous service and fundraising projects as the president of the National Honor Society. Fabiana was also recognized as a semifinalist for the 2018-19 Posse Scholarship, a finalist for the Questbridge program, a nominee for the Silver Knight Award, and is second in her class. Her work has directly impacted the school culture, and she continues to blaze a path for others.

Coral Reef Senior High student Sofia Alvarado is an intelligent, conscientious, motivated, and responsible student who meets every challenge she is presented. Sofia is this year's Silver Knight nominee in the category of Business. Being a student in the Business Academy at Coral Reef High School has allowed her to gain valuable experience not only through her classes, but also in her role as a member of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA).

Sofia has participated in various FBLA competitions, earning awards in Business and Community Service. Outside of school, she has devoted hours to her own personal community service project, which she references in her Silver Knight application. After being forced to escape Venezuela and receiving political asylum in the United States, Sofia created the project Stand Up for Venezuela, which focuses on bringing awareness to the socio-political issues of her country and sending much needed supplies to its children. The injustice and despair her family had to endure served as a catalyst to her to try and ensure that those who are not able to escape these issues are able to at the very least survive in the failed state. Through her project, she has been able to collect and send over 300 boxes of supplies to over twelve different communal homes that take care of children around Venezuela. They have received basic products such as, medicine, food, and clothes. This project has allowed relief for these impoverished people as many supplies are currently unattainable due to scarcity and staggering inflation. Overall, Sofia exhibits the qualities of a leader, one who excels not only academically, but as a selfless, well-rounded individual.

Cutler Bay Senior High School's iPrep Academy junior, Kristina Alzugaray, is one of the most vigorous, enthusiastic and versatile students truly distinguishing herself among her peers. Kristina is on the Principal's Honor Roll every quarter and is always eager to meet new people and challenges. Her enthusiasm is evident beyond the classroom walls in her ability to give to the community and school. Because of her diverse background, her versatility shines through the expression of her world view and in her ability to focus and prioritize the many things she tackles with equal efficiency. Her dexterity and dependability are incomparable. Her vast community service includes her involvement with the Sandy Hook Promise, peer counseling, tutoring underrepresented students three times per week at a karate school, and the organization she formed, Honor Our Veterans, as a salute those who have served in the military.

Katherine Rodriguez is the Music and Dance Silver Knight Nominee at MAST@Homestead. She has completed over 1,100 hours of service since 2016 in a project she initiated called "New Image Dance Project." After winning Miss Teen Hialeah in 2015, she took her passion of dancing and decided she wanted to share her moves with those who could not afford to pay for dance classes. She teaches free dance classes to children ages 6-14. For over two years, this project has given children the opportunity to perform on a multitude of stages (e.g., Triangle Park Tree Lighting Ceremony, FIU Spirit halftime show), aid those in need (e.g., Hurricane Harvey victims) and celebrate special events in a safe and welcoming environment. Katherine choreographs all the dance numbers, schedules classes, and ensures they have a location to practice. Though she received a lot of resistance from adults, she was determined to succeed and prove herself. Through this experience, she has learned how to work with children of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities while teaching life lessons through dance. One of her biggest challenges was working with children on the Autism spectrum; however, this proved to be her biggest accomplishment. As Katherine turns 18 soon, she plans on creating a non-profit with this program and continue it as she attends college to study medicine.

Alejandra Curbelo-Paz has maintained straight A's in all classes at SAS Homestead, one of the most rigorous high schools in the United States. She has numerous achievements and is active within her school community, serving as the Student Government Association president for the past two years. She is the recipient of the "Service Learning Award" having dedicated time and effort towards helping migrant children. Alejandra also dedicates a great amount of time volunteering at "Project Miracle" at Patches in Homestead, which serves families with children born with severe special needs.

"Project Miracle" aims to provide hope for families that may have become discouraged due to the overwhelming circumstances they face with a special needs child. She also meets weekly, alongside other students, at the migrant camp, Redland Christian Migrant Association, to help under resourced children write and illustrate their very own book through the program "Pages for All Ages." She is also involved with her church's Alpha and Omega Children Ministry, where she volunteers each month. During the summer, she volunteered at the Kidney Treatment Center of South Florida by scheduling patient appointments, filing paperwork, and serving as the front desk greeter.

Engaging in volunteer efforts and service has provided these students with the opportunity to become active members of their community and will have a lasting, positive impact on the communities they served. These students are to be commended for their service, initiative, drive and passion.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 19-008 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing students from Center for International Education, Coral Reef, Cutler Bay, Medical Academy for Science and Technology and School for Advanced Studies Homestead Campus high schools for outstanding community service.

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TECHNOLOGY AND SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES HOMESTEAD CAMPUS FOR  
OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**WHEREAS**, Fabiana Lara is a highly dedicated CIE student that strives for excellence in all her endeavors. She has had a significant impact on her school, as well as the community, completing over 200 service hours at La Ventana de Los Cielos, a therapy center for children with disabilities that uses interaction with art, animals, and music as a means for healing. Fabiana regularly assists the physical therapists by helping with games and daily activities that encourage mental and physical development while forming long lasting bonds with the children. During her time there, she initiated her own therapeutic project that incorporated the use of photographs of objects around the organization's farm and a scavenger hunt to encourage cognitive development. Her design and strategies yielded noticeable improvements among the patients. Along with her ongoing volunteer work, Fabiana currently leads about 60 members and has managed numerous service and fundraising projects as the president of the National Honor Society. Fabiana was also recognized as a semifinalist for the 2018-19 Posse Scholarship, a finalist for the Questbridge program, a nominee for the Silver Knight Award, and is second in her class; and

**WHEREAS**, Coral Reef Senior High student Sofia Alvarado is an intelligent, conscientious, motivated, and responsible student. Sofia is this year's Silver Knight nominee in the category of Business. Being a student in the Business Academy at Coral Reef High School has allowed her to gain valuable experience not only through her classes, but also in her role as a member of Future Business Leaders of America. After being forced to escape Venezuela and receiving political asylum in the United States, Sofia created the project Stand Up for Venezuela, which focuses on bringing awareness to the socio-political issues of her country and sending much needed supplies to its children. Through her project, she has been able to collect and send over 300 boxes of supplies to over twelve different communal homes that take care of children around Venezuela. This project has allowed relief for these impoverished people as many supplies are currently unattainable due to scarcity and staggering inflation; and

**WHEREAS**, Cutler Bay Senior High School's iPrep Academy junior, Kristina Alzugaray, is one of the most vigorous, enthusiastic and versatile students, truly distinguishing herself among her peers. Kristina is on the Principal's Honor Roll every quarter and is always eager to meet new people and challenges. Her enthusiasm is evident beyond the classroom walls in her ability to give to the community and school. Because of her diverse background, her versatility shines through the expression of her world view and in her ability to focus and prioritize the many things she tackles with equal efficiency. Her dexterity and dependability are incomparable. Her vast community service includes her involvement with the Sandy Hook Promise, peer counseling, tutoring underrepresented students three times per week at a karate school, and the organization she formed, Honor Our Veterans, as a salute those who have served in the military; and

**WHEREAS**, Katherine Rodriguez is the Music and Dance Silver Knight Nominee at MAST@Homestead. She has completed over 1,100 hours of service since 2016 in a project she initiated called "New Image Dance Project." After winning Miss Teen Hialeah in 2015, she took her passion of dancing and decided she wanted to share her moves with those who could not afford to pay for dance classes.

She teaches free dance classes to children ages 6-14. For over two years this project has given children the opportunity to perform on a multitude of stages, aid those in need and celebrate special events in a safe and welcoming environment. Katherine choreographs all the dance numbers, schedules classes, and ensures they have a location to practice. Through this experience, she has learned how to work with children of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities while teaching life lessons through dance. As Katherine turns 18 soon, she plans on creating a non-profit with this program and continue it as she attends college to study medicine; and

**WHEREAS**, Alejandra Curbelo-Paz has maintained straight A's in all classes at SAS Homestead. She has numerous achievements and is active within her school community, serving as the Student Government Association president for the past two years. She is the recipient of the "Service Learning Award" having dedicated time and effort towards helping migrant children. Alejandra also dedicates a great amount of time volunteering at "Project Miracle" at Patches in Homestead, which serves families with children born with severe special needs. She also meets weekly, alongside other students, at the migrant camp, Redland Christian Migrant Association, to help under resourced children write and illustrate their very own book through the program "Pages for All Ages." She is also involved with her church's Alpha and Omega Children Ministry, where she volunteers each month. During the summer, she volunteered at the Kidney Treatment Center of South Florida by scheduling patient appointments, filing paperwork, and serving as the front desk greeter.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 19-008 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing students from Center for International Education, Coral Reef, Cutler Bay, Medical Academy for Science and Technology and School for Advanced Studies Homestead Campus high schools for outstanding community service.

A copy of this resolution is placed in the permanent records of this Board.

**Presented this thirteenth day of February, A.D. 2019**

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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CHAIR

ATTEST:

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Secretary