

# FOR RELEASE ON NOVEMBER 10, 2017

## Support Your Elementary School – Buy a Kid Tag Today!

*Statewide Program Expects to Hit \$1 Million in Classroom Support In 2018!*

BARTOW, Florida/PR Free/November 7, 2017

For thousands of fifth graders across Polk County, today is the day they have been awaiting! Today, Polk County Kids Tag Art announces the top two tag art designs from each participating school, earning the Award of Distinction designation, as well as naming finalists for three other special awards: the Home Sweet Home Award, hosted by Southern Homes of Polk County; the Heart Smart Art Award, hosted by the Florida Heart Research Foundation sponsor, and the Build Your Imagination Award, hosted by Legoland\*Florida Resort.

And this year, Joe Tedder's folks at The Tax Collector's Office for Polk County have made ordering student tags even easier. Today is launch day for their brand new web page and sales portal where all 7,000 student designs will soon be available for sale, including these award-winning designs.

Earlier this school year, 81 Polk County elementary schools' fifth grade classes participated in this contest, instructed by their art classroom teachers to create their unique designs over an 8-week period. Despite hurricanes and school closings, artwork was completed and judging took place on October 24, when 174 students' tag art designs, representing the top two tags from each school were selected to become the 2017 Kids Tag Art Exhibition, a mobile collage of license tag art which will travel around the county over the coming months. Judging the art designs this year was Ellen Chastain, Education Manager with Polk Museum of Art and Head Judge, Stephen Koury, world-renown and local wildlife artist, and Nancy Puri, Visual Arts Coordinator with Polk County Schools. Special awards finalists were also selected at this time and are also named today, with final winning designs to be chosen by those organizations and recognition to be announced later in the year.

These fifth grade art students will also have the unique experience of what it feels like to be a celebrated artist when their Kids Tag Art winning designs go up for sale to the public on its new web page, [www.PolkTaxes.com/KTAOnline.aspx](http://www.PolkTaxes.com/KTAOnline.aspx) **which launches today, Friday November 10, 2017.** The price of a tag is \$15, with key fobs on sale for just \$5, and a combination pack for \$17.50. **All net proceeds go back to each school for classroom art supplies. Parents and friends can order from the winning designs for holiday gift-giving.**

Kids Tag Art inspires young artists to create their own unique design, learning the practical application of license plate art to support worthy causes, fashioned after Florida's 100+ specialty license plates. However, these tags are strictly art and not for use as legal identification on the rear bumper of cars.

This year, the major sponsor for this project is again Southern Homes of Polk County. Greg Masters, co-owner at Southern Homes explains their involvement, saying "This program encourages creative and critical thinking, both of which are needed to grow a future innovative workforce. Our involvement with Polk County Kids Tag Art has been very rewarding."

Joe G. Tedder, Tax Collector for Polk County adds, "We have a great team of business partners and sponsors who have generously supported arts education in our schools through this creative program that brings value to all involved. As is now known, students who participate in the arts have higher test scores

and are more likely to graduate high school and enter the workforce as innovative thinkers for today's complex world. Art provides the context for creative problem-solving, the number one skill that Fortune 500 firms hire for today."

In addition to Southern Homes, other Kids Tag Art sponsors include Publix Super Market Charities, , Legoland\*Florida Resort, Mid Florida Credit Union, Grasslands & Oakbridge, Florida Heart Research Foundation, Point & Pay, Polk Education Foundation, Unlimited DPI, Hall Communications Big Four - WNN (AM) -WPCV (FM) -WWRZ (FM) -WLKF (AM), The Lakeland Ledger, and charter sponsor Dprint. The Polk County Tax Collector's office promotes Kids Tag Art each year, along with its partners, Polk Museum of Art, Polk Arts Alliance, and Polk County Schools.

### ***The History of Kids Tag Art...***

Back in 2006, the Polk County Tax Collector's Office, with help from local businesses and community groups, put together a fundraising project with Polk County Schools that would teach children art design while raising much-needed monies for classroom art supplies.

During the month of September, teachers guide students in classroom design creation. Teachers may set whatever guidelines for their students they believe will generate creative, award-winning artwork. Parents can purchase their child's design through school sales conducted in November of each year, in time for the holidays. Their child's design is individually scanned and made into a unique metal alloy tag which can be purchased as a keepsake or given as gifts.

In late October, thousands of designs are submitted from all across the county for judging. Selections of the top two entries from each school are made. Those top entries become available to the public for sale on the Polk County Tax Collector's website on the Kids Tag Art page.

According to Tedder, the project originated at the Tax Collector's office, whose employees have over the years, volunteered in one or two elementary schools during business 'teach-in' days. The kids eagerly grasped the art project and staff worked to build a tag art program around this fun learning concept. Since then, tax collector employees have volunteered in the schools, at open houses, art festivals and recognition events, to raise awareness of the importance of arts education and to help stimulate student and school involvement.

Today, over 20 other counties host a similar Kids Tag Art project in their districts, with tax collectors expected to contribute by this school year, over \$1,000,000 for classroom art programs statewide.

### ***Where to View Tag Art...***

For the first time, this year's balance of tag art designs will be on display for sale to the public. Thanks to sponsor Point & Pay, the payment processor for the tax collector's office, a special portal has been built to showcase all participating schools' artwork. On this website, [www.PolkTaxes.com/KTAOnline.aspx](http://www.PolkTaxes.com/KTAOnline.aspx) , **which goes live on Friday, November 10, 2017**, the public can scroll through all 76 participating schools to find their child's artwork and order either a metal tag, key fob, or both. The prior year's Awards of Distinction tag designs are also available for sale.

In addition, The Tag Art Exhibit will begin traveling around the county beginning later this year. A calendar of exhibit dates and locations is online as well. Anyone who wishes to host the exhibit is invited to inquire. Tags will be offered for sale with the exhibit and throughout the school year.

For more information, contact the Polk County Tax Collector's office at (863)534-4722.

### Build Your Imagination Finalists

School	Student First Name	Student Last Name
Alta Vista Elementary	Harry	Rojas
Berkley Charter	Brooke	Kreisler
Brigham Academy	Antonette	Cadovana
Dixieland Elementary	Jamie	Fonseca
Pinewood Elementary	Quentin	Sargent
St Anthony Catholic School	Micah	Barlow

### Heart Smart Art Finalists

School	Student First Name	Student Last Name
Babson Park Elementary	Haily	Castello
Bartow Elementary Academy	Cameron	Moore
Bethune Academy	Caroline	Schneggenburger
Floral Avenue Elementary	Emma	Haviland
Phillip O Brien Elementary	Yermari	Rivera
Pinewood Elementary	Naomi	Contreras
Spessard L. Holland Elementary	Julia	Odermatt
Valleyview Elementary	Leah	Parker

### Home Sweet Home Finalists

School	Student First Name	Student Last Name
Citrus Ridge Academy	Gabriela	Suarez-Martino
Garner Elementary	Brian	Rayas
Lewis Anna Woodbury Elementary	Lesly	Gomez
Lincoln Avenue Academy	Emma	Wuitschick
Medulla Elementary	Lilly	Brown
Phillip O Brien Elementary	Lillian	Barton
Pinewood Elementary	Destiny	Dickey
Scott Lake Elementary	Destiny	Stoler
Spessard L. Holland Elementary	Leia	Young

## Awards Of Distinction Honorees

School	Student First Name	Student Last Name
All Saints Academy	Anastasia	McElvoy
All Saints Academy	Roochika	Choubey
Alta Vista Elementary	Natalie	Smith
Alta Vista Elementary	Luiz	Hernandez
Alturas Elementary	Kelly	Sanchez
Alturas Elementary	Marissa	Boyzo
Auburndale Central Elementary	Helen	Chen
Auburndale Central Elementary	Katelynn	Bergeron
Babson Park Elementary	Ally	Donley
Babson Park Elementary	Julianna	Haislip
Bartow Elementary Academy	Lily	Hebb
Bartow Elementary Academy	Everett	Long
Ben Hill Griffin Jr. Elementary	Xavier	Gravley
Ben Hill Griffin Jr. Elementary	Mia	Loaiza
Ben Hill Griffin Jr. Elementary	Ragan	Ogburn
Berkley Charter	Amreen	Sikder
Berkley Charter	Nataly	Carranza
Bethune Academy	Bresais	Furr
Bethune Academy	Pedro	Jimenez
Blake Academy	Di'Andre	Vargas
Blake Academy	Derry	Sanders
Boswell Elementary	Julie	Hoyt
Boswell Elementary	Angelina	Zapata
Brigham Academy	Shannon	Anthony
Brigham Academy	Hayden	Long
Caldwell Elementary	Saratul	Ramim
Caldwell Elementary	Nhi	To
Candlelight Christian School	Eva	Hitt
Candlelight Christian School	Khamani	Scarlett
Carlton Palmore Elementary	Jillian	Potts
Carlton Palmore Elementary	Jyllian	Waller
Chain of Lakes Elementary	Mariah	Hamilton
Chain of Lakes Elementary	Jarelle	Hernandez-Aguilar
Chain of Lakes Elementary	Lillian	Rogers
Chain of Lakes Elementary	Keanna	Tavira

Churchwell Elementary	Luis	Gonzalez
Churchwell Elementary	Chloe	Dixon
Citrus Ridge Academy	Megan	Luihn
Citrus Ridge Academy	Scott	Diaz
Citrus Ridge Academy	Alany	Seda
Citrus Ridge Academy	Alfredo	Olivo
Cleveland Court Elementary	Sarah	Brunt
Cleveland Court Elementary	Jarett	Waters
Combee Academy of Design and Engineering (CODE)	Ariana	Castaneda
Combee Academy of Design and Engineering (CODE)	Montalvo	Raymond
Crystal Lake Elementary	Mirla	Gonzalez
Crystal Lake Elementary	Leahnisa	Skiles
Davenport School of the Arts	Courtney	Perkins
Davenport School of the Arts	Marisol	Enhelder
Dixieland Elementary	Sadie	Cortijo
Dixieland Elementary	Devan	McGillen
N.E. Roberts Academy	Madeline	Whitehead
N.E. Roberts Academy	Emma	Chambers
Eagle Lake Elementary	Jasmine	Sierra
Eagle Lake Elementary	Melinda	Emrick
Eastside Elementary	Bryan	Santigo-Lopez
Eastside Elementary	Emily	Martinez
Elbert Elementary	Tyler	Styles
Elbert Elementary	Karina	Morel
Floral Avenue Elementary	Alex	Muirhead
Floral Avenue Elementary	Kayden	Schultz
Garden Grove Elementary	Bella	Battalia
Garden Grove Elementary	Q'Lindsey	Metelus
Garner Elementary	Shakira	Morris
Garner Elementary	Alisandra	Nerio
Gibbons Street Elementary	Daneishaliz	Ruiz
Gibbons Street Elementary	Crisbelny	Baez
Grace Lutheran School	Blake	Emanuel
Grace Lutheran School	Vincent	Miller
Griffin Elementary	Devon	Stearns
Griffin Elementary	Gabriela	Colon
Highland City Elementary	Alexis	Russell
Highland City Elementary	Enily	Miranda
Highlands Grove Elementary	Gabriel	Kirkland
Highlands Grove Elementary	Brooke	Crockett

Horizon Elementary A	Cesar	Ayala-Miranda
Horizon Elementary A	Jahzeer	Keels
Horizon Elementary B	Ayeziah	Johnson
Horizon Elementary B	Evelyn	Galindo
Janie Howard Wilson Elementary	Mary Jane	Foster
Janie Howard Wilson Elementary	Brianna	Lopez
Jesse Keen Elementary	Marianna	Villalon
Jesse Keen Elementary	Jonathan	Gonzalez
Jewett School of the Arts	Georgia	Medrano-Flores
Jewett School of the Arts	Lily	Sell
Kathleen Elementary	Cynthia	Wickersham
Kathleen Elementary	Kasey	Matson
Kingsford Elementary	Lacy	Staggs
Kingsford Elementary	Hailey	Hill
Lake Alfred Elementary	Isabela	Sanchez-Mata
Lake Alfred Elementary	Stephanie	Bahena- Garcia
Lake Marion Creek Elementary	Destiny	Rivera
Lake Marion Creek Elementary	Ashley	Seguinot
Lake Marion Creek Elementary	Liyah	Jasper
Lake Marion Creek Elementary	Aiden	Bergeron
Lake Shipp Elementary	Keira	McAlpine
Lake Shipp Elementary	Julianah	Sanchez
Lakeland Christian School	Marianella	Carr
Lakeland Christian School	Sara Grace	Sparkman
Landmark Christian School	Cayleigh	McGuire
Landmark Christian School	Brandon	Lopez
Lena Vista Elementary	Emannel	Garcia
Lena Vista Elementary	Jak	Rivera
Lewis Anna Woodbury Elementary	Victoria	Garcia
Lewis Anna Woodbury Elementary	JB	Thornton
Lincoln Avenue Academy	Leighton	Wyatt
Lincoln Avenue Academy	Megan	Volpe
Loughman Oaks Elementary	Willow	Deterra
Loughman Oaks Elementary	Nehemiah	Aladin
Magnolia Montessori Academy	Della	Lucas
Magnolia Montessori Academy	Ryan	Scott
McKeel Central Academy	Emily	Burse
McKeel Central Academy	Olivia	Shriner
Medulla Elementary	Scarlett	Plants
Medulla Elementary	Aaliyah	Augillard
North Lakeland Elementary	Jazlyn	Goad

North Lakeland Elementary	Kaitlyn	Schram
Oscar J. Pope Elementary	Sarah	Porter
Oscar J. Pope Elementary	Joseph	Maldonado
Padgett Elementary	Mariamercedes	Jimenez
Padgett Elementary	Isaiah	McKinley
Phillip O Brien Elementary	Kora	Henry
Phillip O Brien Elementary	Naomi	Garner
Pinewood Elementary	Kolby	Smith
Pinewood Elementary	Ruby	Lora
Polk City Elementary	Angel	Cano
Polk City Elementary	Brialle	Struthers
Purcell Elementary	Finesse	Kosanke
Purcell Elementary	Kevin	Morales
R. Bruce Wagner Elementary	Evelyn	Ramirez-Cruz
R. Bruce Wagner Elementary	Danielys	Estevez
Roberts Academy	Benton	Marlowe
Roberts Academy	Emily	Matlach
Rochelle SOTA	Annalyse	McGuirt
Rochelle SOTA	Lilly	Williams
Sandhill Elementary	Tywicka	Dabresil
Sandhill Elementary	Lillian	Wood
Sandhill Elementary	Daynisha	Muniz
Sandhill Elementary	Leann	Muller
Scott Lake Elementary	Emma	Dorsey
Scott Lake Elementary	Emily	Stockin
Scott Lake Elementary	Rijal	Akimoto
Sikes Elementary	Analiz	Huerta
Sikes Elementary	Maryanmi	Ramirez
Sikes Elementary	Isaiah	Greeson
Sleepy Hill Elementary	Hansika Reddy	Karpurapu
Sleepy Hill Elementary	Suri	Vergara
Snively Elementary	Dennis	Ramirez
Snively Elementary	Zoe	Long
Socrum Elementary	Cody	Daigle
Socrum Elementary	Joseph	Rodriguez
South McKeel Academy	Elissa	Agee
South McKeel Academy	Mackenzie	Davis
Southwest Elementary	Janiah	Thomas
Southwest Elementary	Alyssa	Agosto
Spessard L. Holland Elementary	Tyler	Feist
Spessard L. Holland Elementary	Kayla	Autrey

Spook Hill Elementary	Mariangelis	Pena De Jesus
Spook Hill Elementary	Jalyn	Alston
St Anthony Catholic School	Stephen	Becker
St Anthony Catholic School	Avery	Pence
St Joseph's Academy	Reina	Aguilar-Torres
St Joseph's Academy	Isabel	Casasnovas- Martino
St Joseph's Catholic School	Giuliana	Soto
St Joseph's Catholic School	Connor	Touchton
St. Paul Lutheran School	Nevaeh	Wiltcher
St. Paul Lutheran School	Owen	Umscheid
Stephens Elementary	Abigail	Hernandez-Enciso
Stephens Elementary	Jacqueline	Osorio
Valleyview Elementary	Brady	Lowers
Valleyview Elementary	Madison	Mathews
Wendell Watson	Evangeline	Raniolo
Wendell Watson	Ann	Nguyen
Wendell Watson	Vanessa	Solis
Winston Academy of Engineering	Kate	Gonzalez
Winston Academy of Engineering	Yaressi	Cantoriano

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