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# Local Nonprofit Celebrates Bay Area High School Scholarship Recipients

*Tampa Bay Businesses for Culture and the Arts (TBBCA) helps cultivate local students' artistic abilities by providing \$15,000 in scholarships*

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TAMPA, Fla. – Nearly two hundred gathered in Hyde Park's CineBistro Thursday evening to celebrate the awarding of \$15,000 in scholarships to help Bay Area high school juniors and seniors fund their continued education in the arts. Scholarships were awarded in the areas of theater, dance, literature, visual arts, instrumental music and vocal music.

A total of 56 students applied for this year's TBBCA High School Art Stars Scholarship. Six \$2,500 scholarships were awarded in each area and, for the first time, a multi-talented student was awarded a scholarship in two categories.

Each of the talent budding recipients began at a young age and was inspired by their passion for the arts, as well as family, friends, instructors and industry leaders. They continued to maintain exceptional GPAs and participation in multiple extra-curriculars.

Samuel French, dual scholarship recipient in theatre and literary arts, helped start a children's theater where he encourages the arts in the lives of other students. He says that his artistic and personal life must intertwine in order for him to be fulfilled and that it isn't uncommon for him to conclude a movie by analyzing story structure and sequencing with his family. French attends Gibbs High School and will study playwriting in college.

The arts have become not only a hobby and passion for these young Bay Area students, but also a career choice.

Brianna Sparklin is preparing for a hard yet rewarding road throughout and subsequent to college. She predicts practicing day after day, going from audition to audition while working to pay rent to establish herself as a performer in New York. Sparklin attends East Bay High School and was awarded a vocal music scholarship.

"I have fallen so far in love with dance that not pursuing a career in it just wouldn't make sense," said Hallie Evans, dance scholarship recipient attending Howard Blake High School.

"Without art, my life would be unimaginably and unbearably dull," said Rebekah Kirkman, Seminole High School visual arts recipient, who strives to experience art in some way every day.

Global thinker, Nicholas Smart of Tarpon Springs High School was awarded an instrumental music scholarship and hopes to make a positive impact across the world through the universal language of music.

The panel of judges included Michael Connelly, internationally acclaimed and New York Times Best Selling novelist; Erin Cardinal Wright, co-founder of Moving Current dance collective; Richard Sparrow with The Florida Orchestra; Dawne Eubanks, vocalist and instructor at Eckerd College; Michael Murphy, founder of Michael Murphy Gallery M, a fine art gallery; and Anna Brennen, founder and producing director of Stageworks Theatre Company.

This is the third year the TBBCA has presented its High School Arts Stars Scholarship program to encourage aspiring young artists to pursue their dreams. The program is funded by Bay Area business and individuals dedicated to supporting arts and culture. The program has provided more than \$45,000 in scholarships.

## About TBBCA:

Tampa Bay Businesses for Culture and the Arts (TBBCA), founded in 1989, is a nonprofit organization of businesses committed to supporting the arts. The TBBCA is an affiliate of the national Business Committee for the Arts, which in 2008 became a part of Americans for the Arts. In 2009, TBBCA changed its name from Tampa Bay Business Committee for the Arts to better reflect the mission of the organization. The mission of the TBBCA is to help build a stronger arts and cultural community with the support of area businesses.