

# Titan Tribune

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## Aspiring MYA barber practices on students

By: J. E.

Titan Tribune Staff Writer

Student G. C. wants to become a barber and run his own shop. He has been practicing on some of the students to get better.

"I just like cutting hair, so I became interested in trying it myself," he said. "I found what I want to do for my future."

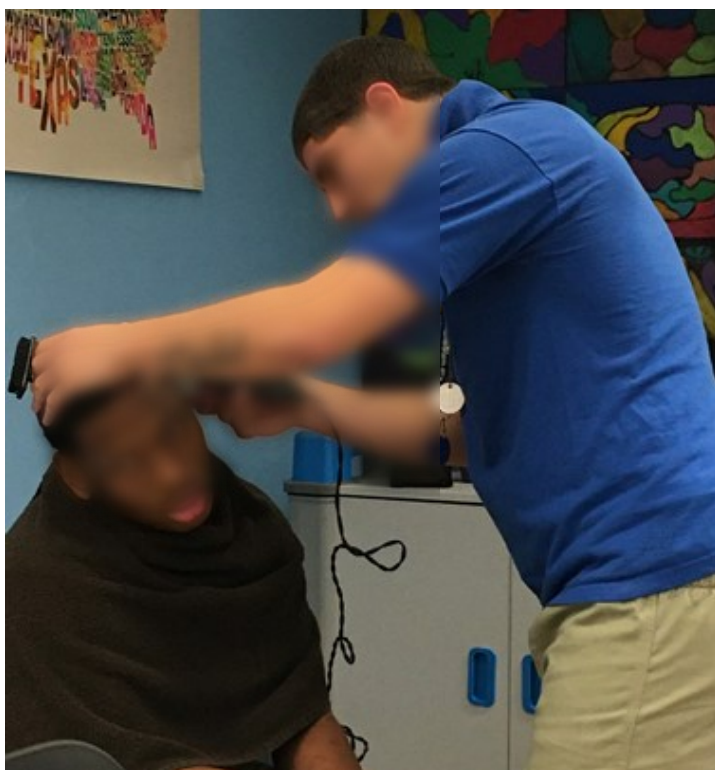
How did you learn?

"I really learned by myself," G. said. "It takes a lot of attention."

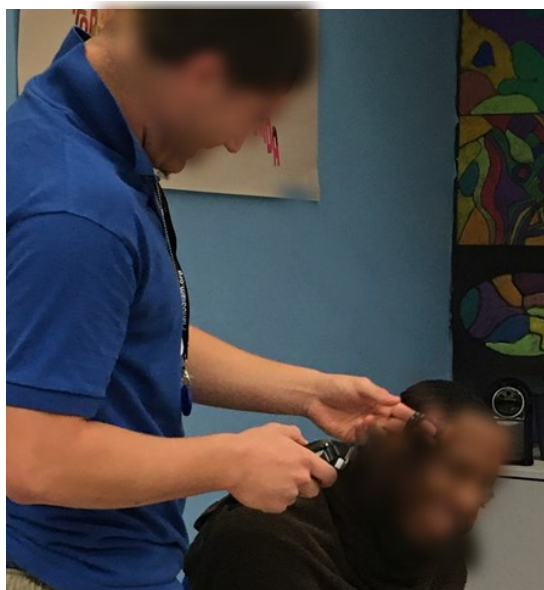
G. said he knows how to do tape-up fades, Mohawks, blowouts, regular fades and drop fades.

"To me, it's fun and makes time fly," he said. "It also makes people look good."

N. F., one of the students whose hair was cut, said, "He does a good job for a starter. I think he has a lot more to go in the future."



MYA student-barber G. C. cuts A.'s hair.



S. H., another student, said, "I would like for him to be my personal barber on the outs."

How will you run your business?

"I will make sure my business is going well," G. said. "I'll make sure all my employees get their payments. ...I have a goal that sounds pretty difficult, but I will achieve it. By 2023, I will have \$200,000 and two shops. ...I'm all about business."

What mindset do you think you will have when leaving this program?

"A positive one," he said. "I have a daughter that's 2 years old. I need to be there for her, so nothing but a positive attitude."

# WELCOME

This is the fifth issue of the Titan Tribune, a newspaper about Miami Youth Academy that is reported and written by the journalism students here.

The class and newspaper is a collaboration of MYA, Exchange for Change and Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Educational Opportunity and Access. Exchange for Change is a Miami non-profit that teaches writing classes in youth commitment and adult correctional facilities.

The paper is edited by retired newspaper reporter Mr. Henry Unger, who is an Exchange for Change volunteer, and Miami-Dade teacher Mr. Jesus Gonzalez. The layout and design was done by Miami-Dade teacher Mr. Daniel Wynne.

## Contributing Writers

**J. B.:** I'm 16, from Pompano Beach. But where I'm from is not a pretty place. My main goal is to get out of the slums, become a successful auto mechanic, and to finally see my family after eight years of absence.

**G. C.:** I'm 18, from Leisure City. My goal is to complete this program and get something out of it. I'm a dad, so I have to take responsibility for my daughter and to better myself. I want to be there for her and for my family. One day, I would like to start my own business being a barber.

**C. C.:** I am 16, from Clay County. I love playing football and sometimes basketball. My goal while I'm at MYA is to change the way I think and move. I also want to get my SafeStaff food-handling certificate to help me get a job when I get out. I want to get my life on the right track and make money the legal way. I'm going to return to high school so I can get my diploma and do successful things with my life.

**J. E.:** I'm 16 years old from Lakeland City. My goal here is to get out of this program and have a different mindset when I leave. I hope to get my GED and a job when I leave. Also, I would like to make my family happy on the outs.

**N. F.:** I'm 19, from Santa Rosa County. I like to run, play basketball, read, write and expand my knowledge. I made mistakes but you cannot let mistakes stand in the way of what you can become. Nobody's perfect. While in this program, I graduated high school and I'm planning to go to college. I want to go into the U.S. Air Force and become a dental specialist. I want to continually strive for greatness and also help and in-spire other teens to do great things with their lives, and stay away from negativity.

**G. G.:** I am 17 years old, from Homestead. I have done a lot of wrong throughout my life, but I am now trying to change my ways, not only for me but for my family so that they don't have to see me in jail anymore. I am currently working on getting my GED before I leave the program, so that I can start working and stay occupied and out of trouble.

**S. H.:** I'm 16, from Polk County. Originally, I'm from New York. I enjoy swimming and playing basket-ball. While I'm in this program, I'm working on getting my GED. I want to become a plumber or a pilot. I'm glad I came to this program, so I can change my life around.

**D. M.:** I'm 17 years old, born and raised in Miami. My parents are from Cuba. I have always played sports, such as basketball and football, since I was little. I was born asthmatic and was in and out of the hospital until I was 4 years old. My goal in this program is to get my GED and go home successfully with no issues. I want to find a job and make mom happy. So far, I've gotten As and Bs with a 3.8 GPA.

**J. M.:** I'm 18 years old, from the Allapattah area of Miami. I got my GED and will leave this program at the end of the month. I would like to become a mechanic and to bring home with me some of the positive things this program has to offer.

# Two students who passed GED exams look to the future

By N. F. and S. H. Titan  
Tribune Staff Writers

I. K. and R. P. are looking forward to restarting their lives after passing the GED exams.

Ian, who was happy he did not have to return to high school, said he would like to become an EMT when he leaves the program.

"I want to build a firm foundation, so that I cannot only support myself, but my family and future children moving forward," he said. His goal is to strive to be the best he can be.

Teachers Mr. Jeff Rudd and Ms. Deborah Sanchez helped him prepare for the GED and gave him plenty of tips, Ian said. The math portion of the test was the toughest part for him.

Meanwhile, R. said he took the GED route because it was faster. He wants to attend a vocational school and get a job, so he can help his mother and feed his family. He wants to make them proud.

He said the GED tests weren't easy, but he studied hard so he'd be prepared. He studied for five months, struggling the most with math.

If it wasn't for the program here at MYA, R. said he probably would not have gotten his GED. He said Ms. Edith Meneses helped him a lot.

When he learned he passed, R. said it was an amazing feeling he could not describe.



## Mr. Bynum has long career working with youth

By A. R.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writer

Mr. Deandrey Bynum, a case manager here, has been working with young people for 19 years.

At MYA, where he's been for about seven months, he enjoys helping students look at the world differently. For example, he said, you have to give respect to get respect.

He said it's important for the entire staff to pull together to see that students move forward.

Mr. Bynum said he may want to become a facility administrator or assistant facility administrator one day.

Asked if he has ever given up on his dreams, he said yes, but that he still has time to reach them.

## Contributing Writers, continued

**A. R.:** I'm 16 years old, from Tampa. I'm in the 10th grade. I've been through a lot, but I've been trying to hang in there. I'm glad I've come to Miami Youth Academy because I'm learning how to control my anger and how to let bad vibes just slide. I'm also glad I'm here because I'm learning how to do new things. I hope to get my GED so I can prove to people that I have changed. I would like to go into the military to do something good with my life.

**A. S.:** I am 17, from Broward County. I like to cook and play football. While I'm in this pro-gram, I plan on getting my GED. Someday, I would like to start my own personal business as a cook.

**M. S.:** I'm 14, from Tampa. As I was growing up, I started doing crimes, getting in trouble. Now, I'm in MYA and trying to change my ways. I am working with the staff on my anger and on becoming a better person.



## Two students chosen to perform their poems in Piano Slam 12

G. C. and N. F. were selected after stiff competition from over 4,000 other student-poets from Miami-Dade County Public Schools to perform in Piano Slam 12 at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Perform-ing Arts in downtown Miami. G. and N. joined 16 other student-poets at the exciting event on Friday, February 28. Fellow student, J. B., had a poem selected as honorable mention and placed within the top 100 poems.

### The Hard Way By G C.

My pops said pimpin ain't easy  
But Kodak showed us it was  
Listening to older cats  
They say you have to watch your back  
They switch up on you like time signatures  
Prayer and music my soul salvation  
Going crazy, In a cell, feeling pain,

Much like Melly, I'm money motivated, Cars, women, jewelry  
You know, like foreign things from distant lands

I'm thuggin in this world, a relentless beat  
Knowing that God has a plan for me  
Compositions I never thought would happen  
Trapped in these cell blocks reprising  
I'm getting after this money like a fiend

Like a drum, I'm hard headed, Never learned anything  
A concert composed by my environment  
Dade County raised me

Aria of my life, I done did a lot of dirt  
And been in many concerts I can't believe  
From being broke, To selling drugs  
To breaking bread and showing love  
Felt like I climbed out of a sinkhole  
I came a long way from the trenches  
If the world was different and our dreams came true  
We would see tunnel vision and different hymns become truth  
I have a daughter now, my little baby is two  
Trying to stay in rhythm now, trying to hold a note  
Remember in them cell blocks  
Four walls sing the blues  
I don't trust anybody  
I'm not trying to be rude  
Free all my brothers in that county  
An elegy is my salute  
I'll never fold under any circumstance  
Just another victim trying to move out of poverty  
This is my second verse in a program  
And I'm trying to make something of it  
I'm sorry mama, the coda is coming soon

The Judge set the volume at 10, there was nothing to say  
Felt there was just one option, that was to pray  
In the courtroom, in and out, day after day  
Heard familiar rondos, repetitive play  
Don't always try to win  
Curtain call, take your loss



Students N. F. (top le t) and G. C. (top right) with the other Piano Slam 12 inalists.

### Sharpen Your Mind By N. F.

Just like a pencil you can sharpen your mind  
You must seek knowledge and analyze  
Don't get caught in the negativity of this cruel world but be the conductor of your  
own life  
Everyone has a purpose, I'm still trying to discover mine  
Like composing your own song you must discover your own rhythm, sound and style

Which is not easy to find  
But I drown myself in poetry, music, and rhymes  
Like a scuba diver I was covered by the tide  
Just trying to get my octaves right

When I was a young boy determined to never go broke again I got caught up in the streets

## PIANO SLAM<sup>TM</sup> 12

But put my heart into beats  
On a journey searching for my purpose like a guitar, God plucked at my heartstrings  
An' in that moment my intellectual eye was opened realizing I could use melodies  
To help younger teens  
Just like me  
Stay out of the streets

Listen when I tell you:  
Malcolm X and Dr. King both had dreams  
Not to see us build our lives on drugs, money, jewelry, or materialistic things  
But to unite as an orchestra and make symphonies  
All coming together as one and synchronizing in a beautiful harmony

There's a lesson in every bit of pain  
Life is your test so fill in the blanks  
You won't get all the answers right but don't be afraid to put pencil to page  
And don't forget to always give thanks  
For another day  
Because you never know when the drum beat of your heart will stop

I'm not trying to become #1 with a #2  
I'm putting pencil to paper and using vocals to reach out to you  
Maybe right now you're singing the blues  
But after rain comes sunshine and rainbows too  
It's your own song you're writing the words produced  
You may fail before you succeed but there's more than just one tune  
You may not hear the right notes right now but one day you'll orchestrate the  
right anthem

The young quiet guy performing a solo giving you the message to not follow  
the crowd but to expand your mind  
I'm a young poet in disguise, I'm a young man with a dream  
Listen to the message between the beats  
I don't want to be the greatest but strive for greatness like Ali  
Float like a butterfly and sting like a bee  
Be kind to one another and let freedom ring  
An let love circulate like a refreshing breeze  
Rejoice and sing  
For just being able to breathe is a marvelous thing  
This is a message to you, Miami, FL this is me

# Everglades Correctional students share lessons with MYA

By C. C.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writer

For many weeks, our journalism teacher, Mr. Henry Unger, has been bringing us letters from the Everglades Correctional Institution prisoners he also teaches.

At first, I thought nothing of it. Then, I started to read the letters and realized what they wrote about is literally just like my life.

They all have given some wonderful advice on why we shouldn't go to prison. For example: "Ask yourself if you would want to spend the rest of your life living like this," one ECI student wrote to us.

That really got me thinking, like there are so many more opportunities out there in the real world for me to have fun the legal way.

Another piece of advice was: "Don't act off emotions." That is really good advice to give, because every one of the inmates who wrote to us got into trouble by acting impulsively.

One important comment was that getting sent to prison is a "foundational shift" that requires people to rebuild their lives from ruins.

Excerpt from Everglades Correctional inmate's letter

*Life can be unfair. But we have the power to make things good by doing the right thing. It's really simple. Don't spend time making mistakes and not fixing them. We are given a small time on this earth. You are not going to miss out on anything by doing things the right way. You will avoid a lot of heartache.*

## Change in state policy affects new students

By J. B.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writer

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has reduced the time youth stay in juvenile detention facilities like MYA.

Mr. Darrell Allen, assistant facility administrator, explained in an interview that new residents start off with a stay of six months. That was cut from nine months.

"It was a call DJJ made and we have to follow it," Mr. Allen said. In general, he said, he thought it was a good idea.

Do you think there is going to be tension between new students who are here for six months and those who are here for nine?

"No," he said. "If there was, it would have already happened."

## Ms. Royes had career goals from an early age

By M. S.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writer

As a kid, Ms. Terah Royes wanted to be a forensic crime investigator. Growing up, she saw young people involved with the juvenile justice system.

While she has changed course, it was not a complete 180 degrees. Ms. Royes has been a youth specialist here for two years.

She said the best part of her job is seeing students leave here successfully.

Her toughest challenge is being as firm as she can be when students "have their moments."

Ms. Royes attended high school in Miami and Florida A&M University in Tallahassee.



## Exchange class with UM provides unique experience

By A. S.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writer

A group of 10 MYA students has been traveling to the University of Miami several times this semester to talk with college students taking a criminology course.

It's been a great experience to meet new people from around the country and learn about them. A lot of questions went back and forth between us and them.

For example, UM students wanted to know about our daily schedule at MYA and what we do.

I learned that some of them had made mistakes, too, including getting arrested. That surprised me.

In general, getting the chance to go to UM means



MYA student D. M. in class with UM students.

we can see what college is like and what students do there. For one thing, the classroom is huge and there were a lot of students.

We learned what it takes to stay in college, what the benefits are and what sports they have. Two of the UM students were on the football team.

We would like to keep going to UM to learn things we never knew about.

## MYA students assist Farm Share program

By J. M.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writer

Helping out others has its own pleasant feeling. That's what we were able to experience as volunteers for the Farm Share program. Its mission is to make sure no Floridian goes hungry and no food goes to waste.



Even though we didn't have the chance to hand out groceries directly to the homeless, I still feel proud that we prepared the bags for them.

Five of us went. We set up an assembly line. S. passed the cans to me. I bagged them and passed them to Nathan, who put in more groceries. He then passed it to G. G., who put in bags of beans and rice. J. then tied up the bags. Then recreational therapist, Ms. Arielle Deverson, who organized the trip, scooped the bags from the counter and put them in a huge bin.

## Student Advisory Board selected

By J. B.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writer

Students have voted for the new Student Advisory Board, selecting C. C., N. F. and me, J. B.

Already, we've had one meeting with Mr. Ainsworth Miller, the facility administrator. We are trying to push for birthday parties at the park for the youth who can go off-grounds. We are also seeking better outings, tastier food for lunch and dinner, and more tutoring opportunities for those who are studying for the GED and college entrance exams.

Our slogan is, "We are here to help." We stand by it, no matter the situation. We talk with our fellow students, find out about their concerns and try to speak on their behalf with Mr. Miller and the staff.

We are not above other students. We are equal. We are just trying to help them out.

At the same time, we try to help the staff, too. We advise students to cooperate with them.

Currently, C. is the president of the board, N. is the treasurer and I am the secretary.

## Nathan F. graduates

By S. H.

Titan Tribune Staff Writer

N. F. said his recent graduation was wonderful.

"It was a very enthusiastic feeling to finally graduate," he said.

When he leaves MYA, his plans are to get a job, begin college, get an apartment and car, and spend time with family and friends.

N. wants to continue to save money and enjoy life to the fullest, with an optimistic viewpoint.

He said MYA, through its controlled environment and staff, helped him realize that everything happens for a reason, even if it may not feel like it at the time. He plans to apply himself to strive for greatness, partly by not following the crowd.

He wants to always look at the bright side of things and keep working on himself, even if in a negative situation. He learned to keep moving forward and never give up on his goal.

What's the best advice you have for other students here?

## Black History Word Search

By C. C./ Titan Tribune Staff Writer

q w e r k a t h e r i n e j o h n s o n t d  
y w i l l i a m c o s b y u i o p a s m d o  
f g h j k l z x c s v b n m q w e r a t e r  
y u i o p a s d n a t u r n e r f y g m l o  
j k l z x c v b n p m q w e r t a y t a l t  
f g t h a w f h d a t s h d y a s d h r a h  
n d d h s c g s r r w e r f n g h j u t b y  
i s o n e d f g v k d e x g n r x s r i a h  
l f p o h l d f b s w s e x o i v i g n k e  
k d r s g f i g h j k l l q s c w l o l e i  
n c a r u c s t w e o r t y n h u a o u r g  
a z h e h m l x t u c v s g i a j d d t v h  
r s w d n a s a s l w d b j b r x a m h n t  
f m i n o e i q u w e r t y o d s m a e c h  
a a n a t j w w x d c r b n r a w m r r s n  
h l f n s e e f a g e h o j e l s a s k i x  
t c r a g m l c w c s m w v i l n h h i u n  
e o e i n i y y r q w e c r k e z u a n o q  
r l y r a s r w c v b n m k c n r m l g l a  
a m a a l o a a w x g b d w a w i w l j e x  
a x q m w n m e r t y d g s j y s n c r o t  
z o r a n e a l e h u r s t o n u t e s j u

Aretha Franklin

Claude McKay

Dorothy Height

Ella Baker

Jackie Robinson

Jesse Owens

Joe Louis

Katherine Johnson

Langston Hughes

Mae Jemison

Malcolm X

Marian Anderson

Martin Luther King Jr.

Mary Lewis

Maya Angelou

Muhammad Ali

Nat Turner

Oprah Winfrey

Richard Allen

Rosa Parks

The Little Rock Nine

Thurgood Marshall

William Cosby

Zora Neale Hurston

"Never think less of yourself or sell yourself short," he said. "You can do anything you put your mind to." Anyone can beat the odds, he said, if they don't give up. "Don't listen to what haters have to say. Believe in yourself."

## Mr. Allen's experiences help with No. 2 job

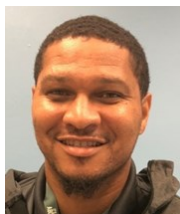
By G. G. and D. M. Titan  
Tribune Staff Writers

Mr. Darrell Allen's first position at the program was as a youth specialist, monitoring the students during his shift.

But he recently was promoted to become assistant facility administrator, the No. 2 position here.

Mr. Allen grew up in Miami in a low-income neighborhood. He got into trouble with the law as a juvenile. In fact, he likes his current job, partly because he can have an impact on students to do better.

Mr. Allen, who has worked at the program for five years, said he loves the fact that he can try to help students who are feeling down or angry or helpless. He had similar feelings when he was younger.



But it's also been a two-way street, with the students here helping him change his outlook on the world and become a better person. He said his experiences at MYA have helped him increase his self-control.

At the same time, he said he's trying to help the program become the best it can be.

If there is one thing he would like to change about the program, it would be to increase the number of people who come here from the outside to share their experiences. He said students could learn a lot from how people overcame bad situations.

Unfortunately, he said, some youth leave the program and end up back in jail or worse. That not only makes him sad, but it also motivates him to work harder with the next group of students to prevent that from happening again. He feels his current job position is "a blessing" because he now has more influence to try to divert someone from going down the wrong path.