

**PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS AWARDED FOR
THEIR ARTISTIC FLAIR**
*14th Annual Ocean Bank Center for Educational Materials
Art Exhibit and Awards Ceremony*

Miami, FL –May 9, 2007—The Education Fund’s Ocean Bank Center for Educational Materials Annual Art Exhibit and Award Ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 12th from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Ocean Bank Headquarters, 780 NW 42nd Avenue in Miami. At this event, more than 90 students and their teachers will receive awards. The majority of these young artists are elementary-school age. In addition, the Ocean Bank lobby will be decorated with the winning art, including a self-reflective recreation of an elementary-school art class with 3-D students, a large ornate Moroccan palace, and a jungle orchestra of frogs indulging in a high-spirited rumba, a high-wire balancing act and a number of other visually stunning pieces. The unique and vibrant compositions are ideal for photo opportunities. The bank lobby resembles a SOHO gallery, adorned with numerous 3-D pieces on the floor and tables, as well as colorful multi-medium pieces hanging on walls and columns designed especially for the exhibit.

The Education Fund’s Ocean Bank Center for Educational Materials annual art exhibit challenges students’ talents and imagination by asking them to create pieces from found objects. Sponsored by Ocean Bank and The Education Fund for 14 years, this year’s exhibit features 132 **striking pieces** submitted by students from 24 **Miami-Dade County Public Schools** and an additional 28 pieces submitted by their art teachers. The stakes were higher than ever in this year’s competition, as Ocean Bank doubled the artists’ incentive and challenge, initiating a new category for creations reflecting the number “25” to commemorate the bank’s **25th year of service** to the community. As a result the number of prize winners and amount of prize money are doubled.

All of the pieces were **created from materials recycled** by the Ocean Bank Center, a program of The Education Fund. Students used their imaginations to create stunning pieces from rulers, coat hangers, multi-colored telephone wire, scrap metal, cardboard tubes, metallic paper, Styrofoam, plastic boxes, music CDs and many other objects that were donated to the Ocean Bank Center.

“We have been involved in this project for 14 years now and each time, the artwork gets better and better,” said José A. Concepción, President and CEO of Ocean Bank. “We are truly impressed by the level of talent and creativity these school children possess and it’s amazing what they can create from recycled materials.”

The annual art exhibit combines the power of a child’s imagination with the ultimate recycling program. The project helps to fuel a child’s mind and generate creativity in the classroom by giving kids the opportunity to use everyday objects and convert them into works of art. Students used a combination of traditional sculptures, mixed media, 3-D pieces and a large number of paintings and drawings in this year’s exhibit.

A number of this year’s entries represent schools located in some of Miami-Dade County’s low-income neighborhoods. Students, teachers and classes represent Banyan Elementary, Rainbow Park Elementary, Biscayne Elementary, Hialeah Elementary, Centennial Middle School, and Miami Springs High School among many others.

Ocean Bank has donated more than \$1 million since 1993 in support of The Education Fund's Ocean Bank Center for Educational Materials and its art programs. This investment has leveraged in excess of \$5.4 million in goods donated to the Ocean Bank Center by companies throughout South Florida and the United States. Teachers from nearly every public school in the district visit The Education Fund's Ocean Bank Center on a weekly basis to obtain classroom materials such as paper, incentive items, books, tapes and art materials for their students.

The Ocean Bank Center for Educational Materials is a warehouse and distribution program sponsored by Ocean Bank and run by The Education Fund. The Ocean Bank Center collects surplus inventory and supplies from the business community and makes them available for free to Miami-Dade County Public Schools' teachers for their students. The OBCEM is located at 6890 NW 76th Street in Medley, FL.

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The Education Fund is an independent non-profit organization established in 1985. The Education Fund's mission is to design and implement initiatives that involve the private sector in improving public education. Since its inception, The Education Fund has raised more than \$30 million to support and improve our local public schools. For more information, log on to www.educationfund.org.

Ocean Bank: Chartered in 1982, Ocean Bank is the largest independent commercial bank headquartered in Florida. It operates a network of 21 branches throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties. The community bank is recognized as a leader in fueling South Florida's economic growth by providing its customers with quality financial products like commercial real estate lending, corporate lending and small business lending all of which have attributed to growth and new employment opportunities in our community. With more than \$5.9 billion in assets and \$5 billion in deposits, Ocean Bank is a true local bank that re-invests 100 percent of local and foreign deposits in South Florida. It has received numerous recognitions for its support of local charitable organizations and its commitment to helping those who are most in need. For more information log on to www.oceanbank.com.

Student Winners

Grand Prize (Regular Category):

Mr. G's Art Class

By: Eduardo Perez, Jessica Swackhammer

Grade: 8th

School: Centennial Middle

Art Teacher: Frederic Gabriel

OBCEM Materials: Cardboard tubes and various cardboard stock

Grand Prize (25th Anniversary Category):

Ocean Bank, #1 Painting Team

By: Karla Chavez, Sabrina Darias, Iman del Rosario, Jose del Rosario, Alain Diaz, Jennifer Garcia, Johnjon Gonzalez, Camila Hernandez, Lucero Hurtado, Andy Luis, Cassandra Medina, Michelle Oliva, Naomi Olmo, Eliecer Palenzuela, Noelia Rivera, Florencia Rodriguez, Pedro Rodriguez, Michael Santos

Grade: 3rd, 4th & 5th

School: Hialeah Elementary

Art Teacher: Ray Jui

OBCEM Materials: Boxes, rulers, brown paper, CDs, wire, brushes, folders, wire hose, card board, chalk box and metal pieces

Best of the Best (Regular Category):

Tree of Creativity

By: Melanie Hernandez, Camila Leonor, Maria Sol Polenzoni, and Leonel Santos

Grade: 5th

School: Doral Academy Charter Elementary

Art Teacher: Erika Reboucas

OBCEM Materials: Styrofoam, telephone wire, plastic folders

Best of the Best (25th Anniversary Category):

25 Freshly Boxed

By: Antoinette Avila, Jennifer Bahamonde, Manuel Corotiza, Jazlene Cruz, Patrick Fals, Krystal Farinas, Leonel Garcia, Nikulus Garcia, Yerly Jorge, Aileen Martinez, James Meneses, Anthony Monroy, Daniel Ochoa, Amanda Perez, Nicholas Rosales, Feliz Toral

Grade: 5th

School: Banyan Elementary

Art Teacher: Peter DeMercado

OBCEM Materials: Black paper and 25 plastic boxes

Award of Merit (Regular Category):

The Rumba Frogs

By: Karla Chavez, Jennifer Garcia, Camila Hernandez

Grade: 4th

School: Hialeah Elementary

Art Teacher: Ray Jui

OBCEM Materials: Boxes, folders, mouse pads, wire, metallic paper, wavy strips and cardboard.

Award of Merit (25th Anniversary Category):

Picture This: Ocean Bank and Miami growing together for 25 years.

By: Stanley Crespín, Samuel Gonzalez, Alejandro Lemus-Gomez, Jonathan Martin, Andrea Mecias, Sebina Mendinilla, Jazlyn Merida, Ashley Pena, Mara Tablada, Stephen Vega, Yinam Zhang

Grade: 4th

School: Rockway Elementary

Art Teacher: Kathy Hull

OBCEM Materials: Calendars and paper

Honorable Mention (Regular Category):

The Fish

By: Alex Aguirre

Grade: 2nd

School: Renaissance Elementary / Middle Charter

Art Teacher: Sara Alfaro

OBCEM Materials: Paper and paint.

Untitled

By: Sana Khan

Grade: 5th

School: Banyan Elementary

Art Teacher: Peter DeMercado

OBCEM Materials: Wire and yellow signals

Rainbow Park Elementary Checkers Game

By: Leslie Alvarez, Luis Gonzalez, Robin McFarlane, Emeling Navas; Eva Saens, Myesha Smith;

Grade: 5th

School: Rainbow Park Elementary

Art Teacher: Elena V. Rodriguez

OBCEM Materials: Vinyl, jar tops and boxes

Honorable Mention (25th Anniversary Category):

Moroccan Palace

By: Elsa Aguilar, Cristina Alfonso, Stephanie Arguez, Sam Capote, Simon Capote, Jonathan Fennel, Cristina Fernandez, Gabriel Fleites, Adrian Garcia, Adrien Gilley, Emerick Ligonde, Anthony Osorio, Ligia Pinto, Dana Pittman, Kenny Postigo, Lupita Salgado, Nick Rodriguez, Danielle Rodriguez, Jonathan Rubio, Mateo Vergara

Grade: 5th

School: Jack D. Gordon Elementary

Art Teachers: Michael Flaum, Maite Vallejo, and Marcy Werner

OBCEM Materials: Styrofoam, cardboard cylinders, ceramic tiles (kids designed landscapes on them with glaze)

The 25 years of Ocean Bank

By: Nazlim Bilgi

Grade: 3rd

School: Ojus Elementary

Art Teacher: Ana Karilshtadt

OBCEM Materials: Poster, various paper and fabric

Ocean Bank, 25 Years Delivering Creativity

By: Melvin Saens

Grade: 5th

School: Rainbow Park Elementary

Art Teacher: Elena V. Rodriguez

OBCEM Materials: Cap and plastic

Teacher Winners

Grand Prize (Regular Category):

Breaking Through

By: Ray Jui

School: Hialeah Elementary

OBCEM Materials: Brown paper, styrofoam, tape, metallic paper, folders, hole puncher, plastic pieces and teeth

Grand Prize (25th Anniversary Category):

OB25

By: Ray Jui

School: Hialeah Elementary

OBCEM Materials: Cardboard, posters, boxes, wire, folders, paint bottles, brushes, brown paper and pieces of paper

Best of the Best (Regular Category):

The Balancing Act

By: Erika Reboucas

School: Doral Academy Charter Elementary

OBCEM Materials: Wooden spool, telephone wire and rubber cable wrap

Best of the Best (25th Anniversary Category):

21 in 25

By: Peter DeMercado

School: Banyan Elementary

OBCEM Materials: Hp2500c wide format printer

Award of Merit (Regular Category):

Mad Rocker

By: Ray Jui

School: Hialeah Elementary

OBCEM Materials: Metal piece, blue paper, cardboard, boxes, posters, folders, fibers and metallic paper

Award of Merit (25th Anniversary Category):

Ocean Bank's 25

By: Laura Campbell

School: Miami Springs Senior High

OBCEM Materials: Wire from telephone cable and brochure/folder cards

Top School Awards

Centennial Middle

Banyan Elementary

Doral Academy Charter Elementary

Hialeah Elementary

Rainbow Park Elementary

Rockway Elementary