



Braille instruction at
Miami Lighthouse

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2 STUDENTS SHINE IN BRAILLE LITERACY WITH HELP FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

MIAMI, FL – July 26, 2011 – Marino Flores, 11, a sixth-grader at W.R. Thomas Middle School in Miami-Dade County, Fla., scored the highest level for reading on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test thanks to the skills he learned in Braille.

Visually impaired students like Marino work closely with teachers at Miami Lighthouse for the Blind to learn the lessons and strategies necessary to succeed at the FCAT. Marino is self-motivated, determined and practices his Braille skills every day.

“Marino is a very good Braille reader thanks to the curriculum at Miami Lighthouse, and we focus on the skills they have taught him at home,” says his mother, Mrs. Flores. Marino has studied Braille at Miami Lighthouse since 2004.

Another high-scoring FCAT student Juan Pablo “JP” Paniagua, 11, a sixth-grader at Palmetto Middle School, recently took first place in the South Florida Regional Braille Challenge. He went on to compete at nationals against students from 41 other states and Canada in June in Los Angeles.

The rigorous contest included reading comprehension, Braille speed and accuracy, proofreading, spelling, and reading tactile charts and graphs. Juan Pablo says he loves going to the South Florida Braille Challenge every year and was excited to be one of only 60 finalists out of 855 contestants to make it to nationals. He has been working on his Braille skills at Miami Lighthouse for the Blind since 2003.

For print impaired students taking the reading portion of the FCAT exam, Braille is the only alternative. While a one-year exemption might be granted by the state Department of Education, ultimately passing the FCAT reading section is required for students to progress and receive a standard diploma. Without this, they will not be able to pursue higher education to become the next blind teacher, attorney, or so much more. The Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired is committed to reinforcing Braille Literacy skills that are taught in our public schools. We are proud of the performance of our students taking the exam in Braille.

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MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE MISSION STATEMENT:

*To provide vision rehabilitation
and eye health services
that promote independence,
to educate professionals,
and to conduct research in related fields*