

November 25, 2008

CONTACT:

Martha del Valle
Southwest Florida Addiction Services
(239) 338-6937, ext. 111
m_delvalle@swfas.org

Susan Bennett, APR, CPRC
Susan Bennett Marketing & Media, L.C.
(239) 277-5255
sbennett@susanbennett.biz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SWFAS TALENT SHOW
ATTRACTS 23 ACTS**

Middle and high school students danced and sang their way across the stage at the second annual “Every Child Is a Star Talent Show,” produced by Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS) November 15.

More than 150 people attended the talent show at First Christian Church in downtown Fort Myers, which included 23 contestants performing song, dance and instrument solos.

Winners were:

- **First Place** – Noelle Aparte, 7th grader at Saint Andrew Catholic School in Cape Coral, who sang “And I’m Telling You, I’m Not Going” from the musical *Dreamgirls*. Noelle won \$150.
- **Second Place** – Katherine Ines Pinedo, 11th grader at East Lee County High School in Lehigh Acres, who sang “I Can Hear the Bells” from the musical *Hairspray*. Katherine won \$100.
- **Third Place** – Eli Johnson, 12th grader at Cypress Lake High School in Fort Myers, who danced to “African Chill Beats.” Eli was awarded \$50.

Guest performances also were provided by The Shining Stars from the STARS Complex directed by Mr. Deke, and two skits on under-age drinking performed by the Estero boys varsity basketball team.

“One of our patients who is graduating from The Vince Smith Center (a SWFAS adolescent residential treatment facility) also spoke about her personal experience and the consequences of drinking and drugs,” said Martha del Valle, SWFAS talent show coordinator.

“Our goal was to provide teens with a fun, safe venue to express themselves without using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs,” del Valle said.

In addition to the talent show, the afternoon included a silent auction of themed baskets as well as educational material on under-age drinking.

The event was funded through a grant from the Bobby Nichols Fiddlesticks Foundation. Additional support was provided by First Christian Church, which provided the location for the event; the Salvation Army, which cooked and served refreshments; and Hodges University, which hosted a bake sale and donated the proceeds to the event.

SWFAS is the most comprehensive substance abuse treatment and prevention program in Southwest Florida, serving 5,000 people per year from ages 9 to 90. SWFAS offers outpatient and residential programs for both adults and youngsters from seven locations in Lee County and two in Hendry County. In addition, SWFAS provides detoxification services for adults, prevention programming, and an Employee Assistance Program for about 60 Southwest Florida businesses.

SWFAS services are not free. Fees are charged on a sliding scale, based on family income. In many cases, private insurance is accepted. SWFAS is a United Way agency.

For more information about SWFAS prevention services, contact del Valle at 332-6937, ext. 111, or visit www.swfas.org.

Photo: (left to right) Noelle Aparte (first place winner); Katherine Ines Pinedo (second place winner); SWFAS Prevention Director Sheree Beau-Wells; and Eli Johnson (third place winner).