



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Able Trust

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Tallahassee, May 1 – The Able Trust, with headquarters in Tallahassee, is proud to announce the winners of the first High School High Tech Research and Speech Contest. Isaac Reyes, 17, won the first place prize and the \$400 award in the statewide contest. De’Adria Stewart, 18, won second place and the \$200 award. Danetha Scott, 17, won third place and the \$100 award.

Reyes is from Orlando and is completing his high school education at the Escambia Boys Base where he participates in the High School High Tech program. He chose to research and speak on the topic of “Quality of Life and Quality of Place.” Reyes’ speech focused on how more community based activities, lower crime rates, and support for local businesses could achieve an overall better quality of life for Floridians. “Ultimately it is up to us to make Florida a better place to live and grow,” Reyes said. “It is extremely important that we all make an effort to make Florida a better place.”

Stewart is from the Brevard Heritage High School High Tech program. She spoke on the topic of “Water Quality and Supply.” Scott is from the Charlotte High School High Tech program and spoke on the topic of “Compensation of College Athletes.”

The competition is the first in what is anticipated to become an annual event. It was available to all participating High School High Tech students. Students were given 3 topics to choose from and asked to research the topic, turn in a 1 page research paper and then give a speech on their selected topic. 68 participants were first judged at a local level based on all three criteria. 9 winners from the local competitions were then invited to regionals where 3 were chosen to move on to the statewide competition. The 3 finalists presented to The Able Trust Board of Directors on March 11, 2016. The Directors evaluated the winners using several criteria including speaking skills, command of audience, topic analysis and conclusions as well as poise, mannerisms and gestures, and eye contact.

Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) is a youth program of The Able Trust. It is a year-round program for youth with disabilities ages 14-22. HSHT encourages students to explore STEM careers (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and prepares students for life after

high school through real world experiences. The program achieves a 99% graduation rate for participating seniors. That is twice the graduation rate of all other students with disabilities in Florida. Eighty-three percent of Florida HSHT graduates enter postsecondary education, continuing education or employment compared to 50% of other graduates with disabilities in Florida.

The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, is a 501(c)(3) foundation established by the Florida Legislature in 1990. Its mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. The Able Trust is celebrating 25 years of making a positive impact on the state of Florida. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$35 million in grants throughout Florida, enabling thousands of Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce.

Note: Photo Attached. From left to right: Dr. Susanne Homant, The Able Trust President & CEO; Danetha Scott, 3rd place winner; Isaac Reyes, 1st place winner; De'Adria Stewart, 2nd place winner; Richard Cole, The Able Trust Board of Directors Chairman.