

# IMPACT REPORT

APR  
8-18  
2015

#LTABFLA



# LOUDER THAN A BOMB

*Florida!*

THE POINT  
IS NOT THE POINTS  
THE POINT IS THE  
POETRY.



MIAMI DOLPHINS  
FOUNDATION



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN  
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 Knight Foundation



This past school year, the Jason Taylor Foundation, through its Omari Hardwick bluapple Poetry Network, introduced **Louder Than A Bomb Florida** presented by Nova Southeastern University and the Miami Dolphins Foundation - a transformational new program empowering and uniting South Florida's youth and community through the art of the spoken word.

Beginning in September of 2014, teachers and students from schools as far south as Homestead and as far north as Port St. Lucie, often times with the assistance of a bluapple Teaching Artist, began working, learning, creating and sharing within their classrooms, in after-school clubs and through various teen open mics throughout South Florida, developing safe spaces for individual and collective expression on their respective campuses and in their communities.



The culmination of this work manifested in an 11-day festival from April 8-18, 2015, which was highlighted by a friendly competition taking place in dynamic venues throughout Broward County. A diverse group of students, parents, administrators and community members representing nearly 40 schools participated in LTABFLA, creating authentic narratives to re-imagine the self and one another while developing mutual respect and tolerance for difference.







Actor, poet and bluapple Poetry Network co-founder Omari Hardwick works with an aspiring artist at the program's birthplace, the Jason Taylor Reading Room in Miramar.

## Autumn wrote a poem

by Seth Levit, Executive Director of the Jason Taylor Foundation

One could argue that it began in 1992, in Gainesville, on the University of Florida campus when I first met an 18 year-old Marcellus Haynes. There was certainly no earthly way that this Jewish kid from South Florida could have known that the Decatur, Georgia native with dark skin and even darker combat boots would become my closest friend in college and a life-long confidant.

And even if some out-of-world premonition had given me the slightest sign of what was to come, under no circumstance could I ever have dreamed that 19 years later, Marcellus' childhood best friend, then a University of Georgia defensive back with passions far beyond the gridiron, would one day use a laptop from the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah to begin a collaboration with myself and one of the National Football League's most feared and decorated defenders of all time, to change lives through a magical combination of rhythmical composition, similes, metaphors and powerful imagery.

You could make that argument, but again, I would tell you that Autumn wrote a poem.

It was February 2011 and Kevin Sawyer, our unparalleled Educational Director at the Jason Taylor Reading Room, was conducting his unique Black History Month presentation for the students in our after-school literacy program.

During one particular session, a quiet, but bold young 8th grade student by the name of Autumn Williams was so moved by Mr. Sawyer's teachings that she felt compelled to pick up a pen that evening and write a poem. Her first poem. Ever.

Fortunately for all of us, it didn't stop there. See, Autumn wasn't just inspired to write a poem. Once she poured her heart and soul onto page, she was empowered to let others hear her piece, and that is exactly what she did. Upon her arrival at the Reading Room the following day, Autumn asked Mr. Sawyer if she could share her work, and the rest, literally, was history in the making.

Autumn's poem ignited a spark in me that transformed into a flame that, thanks to the courage, creativity, talents, support and influence of so many others, is burning down barriers and building up spirits in a way I have never experienced before. I don't take what I am witnessing lightly and as this movement grows like wildfire, I absolutely refuse to let anyone forget how it began.







## Teaching Artists | bluapple Poetry Network

In Schools throughout Broward County | September through May

An integral part of the bluapple Poetry Network is the Teaching Artist who delivers the programming, pedagogy, and curriculum while they serve as workshop leaders, partner with classroom teachers, mentor student/peers, as well as have opportunities to develop their own workshop/teaching material under the guidance of Director of Poetry Programs, Darius V. Daughtry.

Teaching Artists help carry out the mission of the Jason Taylor Foundation and The Omari Hardwick bluapple Poetry Network by teaching workshops, running bouts, hosting open mics, etc. They are also encouraged to continually develop their craft as artists. Your craft will directly affect your teaching, and your teaching will directly affect your craft.

The ideal Teaching Artist is passionate about poetry, spoken word, social justice, and education in South Florida. He or she has a defined poetic expression and is committed to further developing their craft. The candidate should demonstrate leadership potential and have previous experience teaching poetry and spoken word in a variety of educational settings to middle school and/or high school students.

Teaching Artists are required to teach in a minimum of three long-term (20 week) residencies during each academic year, including in-classroom, after-school, and out-of-school delivery (libraries, community organizations, etc.); Implement program evaluations, maintain an on-going log of teacher observation/comments, manage attendance sheets, distribute/collect information cards, and implement/report of pre and post assessments; Serve as bout staff at Louder Than a Bomb Florida events; Promote all bluapple programming and events.





The original Louder Than a Bomb (LTAB) youth poetry festival was created in 2001 by Young Chicago Authors (YCA) co-founder Kevin Coval when he saw a need for a space that would allow young people—too often marginalized by the adult world—to speak and be heard. YCA, the non-profit home of LTAB, was born in 1991 when teacher Dr. Robert Boone realized that few resources existed in Chicago for teens serious about creative writing. Dr. Boone began holding free workshops on Saturdays for young people looking for mentorship and the company of other student writers.



The mission of YCA is to create a culture that transforms the lives of young people and their communities by bringing together participants through writing, publication, and performance education for civic discourse and community celebration.

LTAB grew rapidly as students found out about the competition and began to organize poetry clubs at their schools. LTAB provided youth with a reason to pursue their writing and a forum in which to convene with other young writers. By 2014, more than 1000 students from over 120 schools and organizations took part in the festival's bouts, workshops, and performances.

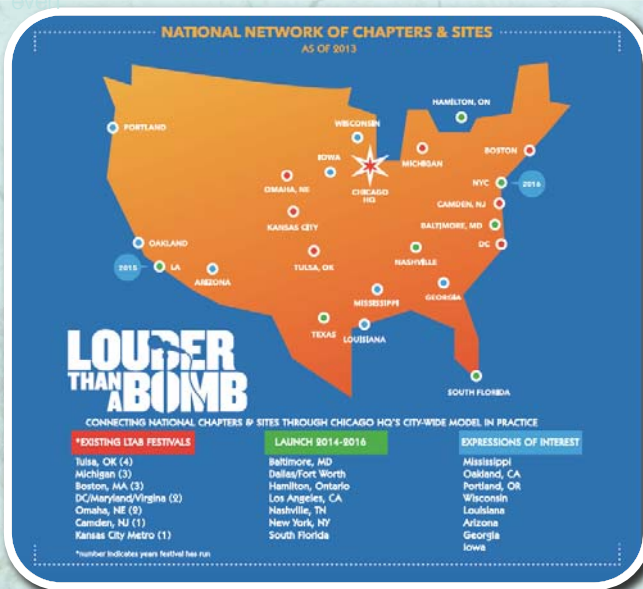
LTAB brings young people together in ways that are unthinkable in most other settings. A shared love of writing and performing creates bonds where typically there are boundaries. Students surmount cultural and socio-economic differences to take part in an experience where young writers learn about themselves while listening to the words of others.

These things are possible because YCA has combined friendly competition with a grounded, contemporary, and populist approach to poetry. YCA's pedagogy informs how the organization's teaching artists approach school residencies and how YCA inculcates its model of teaching in the partnerships it develops with the coaches of LTAB's participating teams and teachers that deliver YCA's in-class curriculum. This approach creates a culture where the telling of honest, authentic stories with the voices of young witnesses is not only valued, but is essential to building bridges between isolated populations.

The experience of LTAB was captured beautifully in Jon Siskel and Greg Jacobs' 2010 award-winning full-length documentary, *Louder Than a Bomb*. The movie screened at film festivals around the country

eventually traveling abroad, exposing tens of thousands of people to the work. It was not long before youth and cultural organizations around the world were in conversation with YCA, asking for help creating LTAB festivals in their own cities.

In addition to South Florida and largely due to the the popularity and reach of the documentary, the LTAB model has been adopted by organizations in cities across the United States and Canada, including Baltimore, Boston, Dallas, and Hamilton, Ontario, with Compton and Harlem coming in 2015 & 2016 respectively and several other cities showing interest and laying the foundation for future adoption of the program.





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Louder Than a Bomb Florida  
2015 Schedule

Preliminary Bouts	April 8-9	Various Locations
Semi-Finals	April 11	NSU
Coaches Slam	April 12	BACA
Indy Finals	April 16	NSU
Urban Art Show	April 17	NSU
College Slam	April 17	NSU
Team Finals	April 18	NSU







## **Louder Than A Bomb Florida Festival | April 8-18, 2015**

**Multiple Locations Across Broward and Palm Beach Counties**

A Mic. A Stage. A Pen. A Page. This is what the art of poetry begins with – the rest is legendary. The Jason Taylor Foundation enabled South Florida to witness the top youth poets in the state compete during a cutting edge event – the Louder Than a Bomb Florida Poetry Festival presented by Nova Southeastern University and The Miami Dolphins Foundation. This highly anticipated event took place from April 8 – 18, 2015. The program was also supported by The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, as part of its Knight Arts Challenge.

"The Jason Taylor Foundation is dedicated to utilizing the art of the spoken word to help provide teens from diverse backgrounds a common vehicle for written and performance-based self-expression," said Seth Levit, Executive Director of the Jason Taylor Foundation. "Louder Than a Bomb empowers and unites youth and their respective communities. I know that it will have a lasting impact."

"Truly successful cities are those where everyone considers themselves a creative being. Louder Than a Bomb helps South Florida students realize that vision by exploring their artistic sides, and sharing their stories and viewpoints with their community," said Dennis Scholl, vice president for arts at Knight Foundation, which helped fund the inaugural festival.

Dubbed the "Super Bowl of poetry," Louder Than a Bomb Florida, a Jason Taylor Foundation arts and education project, featured a friendly spoken-word competition between school-based poetry teams representing local high schools from Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach counties and beyond. Funding from the Miami Dolphins Foundation, Knight Foundation, and countless other corporate and individual supporters has assisted the Jason Taylor Foundation support the schools' efforts by providing year-round, in-class and after-school instruction, which will culminate annually in this poetry festival.



**ST. LUCIE COUNTY**

1. Fort Pierce Central HS, Fort Pierce 34981
2. St. Lucie West Centennial HS, Port St. Lucie 34986

**PALM BEACH COUNTY**

3. Boca Raton Community HS, Boca Raton 33486

**BROWARD COUNTY**

4. Deerfield Beach HS, Deerfield Beach 33064
5. Coral Glades HS, Coral Springs 33065
6. J.P. Taravella HS, Coral Springs 33071
7. Blanche Ely HS, Pompano Beach 33060
8. Northeast HS, Fort Lauderdale 33334
9. Piper HS, Sunrise 33351
10. Fort Lauderdale HS, Fort Lauderdale 33305
11. Plantation HS, Plantation 33313
12. Dillard HS, Fort Lauderdale 33311
13. Stranahan HS, Fort Lauderdale 33312
14. Sheridan Technical HS, Fort Lauderdale 33312
15. McFatter Technical HS, Davie 33317
16. Nova HS, Davie 33314
17. Cypress Bay HS, Weston 33332
18. Hollywood Hills HS, Hollywood 33021
19. Charles W. Flanagan HS, Pembroke Pines 33028
20. West Broward HS, Pembroke Pines 33029
21. McArthur HS, Hollywood 33024
22. Hallandale HS, Hallandale 33009
23. Miramar HS, Miramar 33025
24. Everglades HS, Miramar 33027
30. William Dandy Middle School, Fort Lauderdale 33311
31. New Renaissance Middle School, Miramar 33025
32. Castle Hill Elementary School, Lauderdale 33313
33. Fox Trail Elementary School, Davie 33324

**DADE COUNTY**

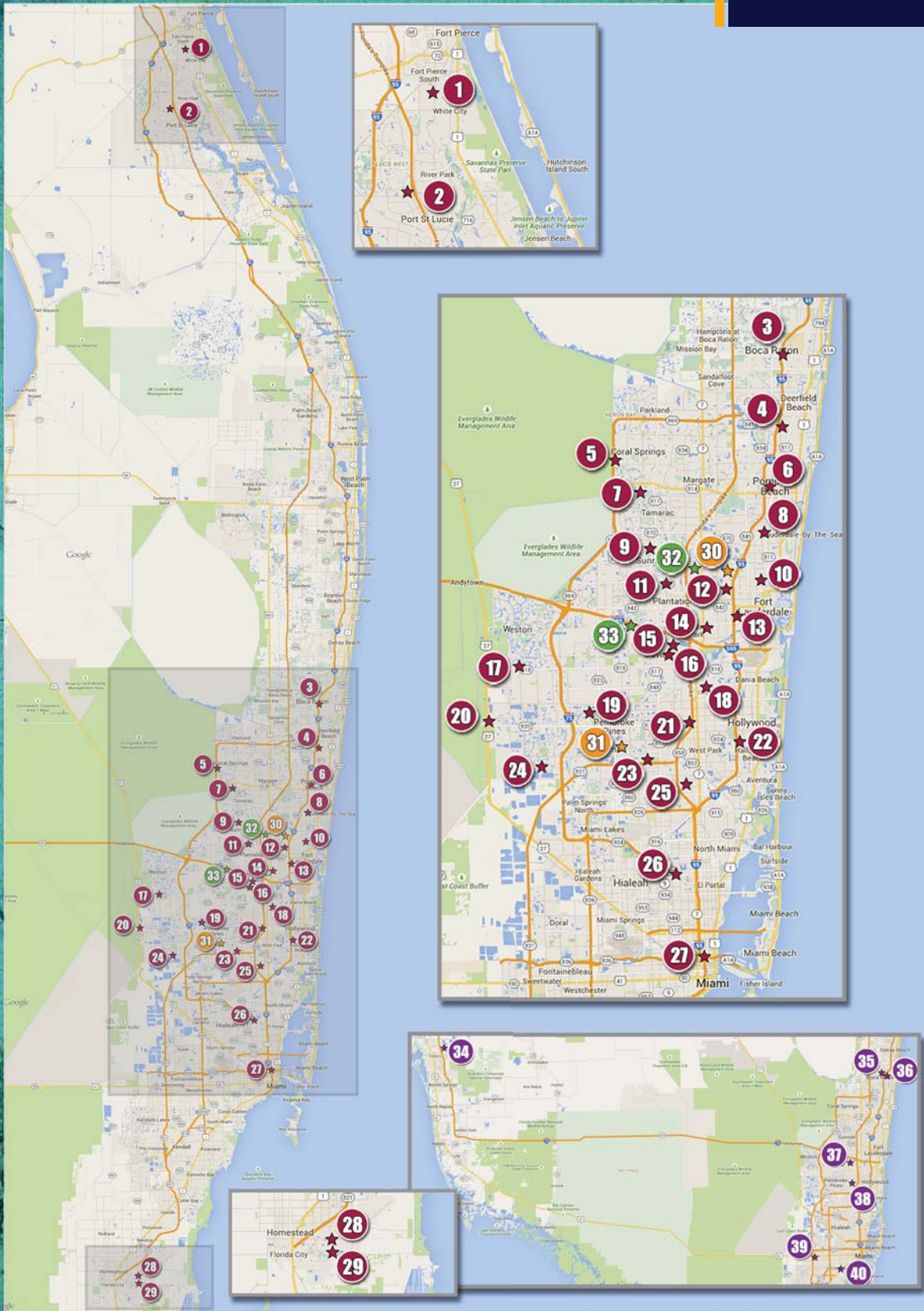
25. Miami Norland Senior HS, Miami 33169
26. C.O.P.E. Center North, Miami 33147
27. Overtown Youth Center, Miami 33136
28. Miami Arts Charter School, Homestead 33035
29. Keys Gate Charter School, Homestead 33035

**COLLEGE SLAM**

34. Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers 33965
35. Lynn University, Boca Raton 33431
36. Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton 33431
37. Nova Southeastern University, Davie 33314
38. Broward College South Campus, Pembroke Pines 33024
39. Florida International University, Miami 33199
40. University of Miami, Coral Gables 33124











## LTABFLA Preliminary Round | April 8-9, 2015

**ArtServe Fort Lauderdale | Cinema Paradiso | Delray Arts Garage  
Miramar Cultural Center | Paradise Live | Sunrise Civic Center**

With much anticipation, the LTABFLA Preliminary Rounds kicked off the festival with a total of 27 high school poetry teams from as far south as Homestead and from as far north as Ft. Pierce (a distance of more than 160 miles!), each competing in two preliminary round bouts in top notch venues across Broward County. The primary logistical goal during scheduling was to ensure that each team shared the stage with a different set of teams for each bout while experiencing varied, non-traditional venues, enabling the students a greater tolerance and understanding of their peers and a stronger familiarity and appreciation for the culture and spaces that make up the communities in which they live.

Each of these bouts were scored by 5 impartial judges on a scale of 1-10, with a penalty structure for exceeding the three-minute time limit. Bouts consisted of four individual rounds during which each team was represented by one of the seven individual poets from their roster, followed by the team round where four poets from each school performed a collaborative piece. The cumulative scores from each team's individual and group performances resulted in the teams being ranked first through fourth place. After all bouts were completed and rankings were tabulated for both days of the preliminary rounds, the 16 teams with the lowest combined bout rankings advanced to the Semifinal Round that took place just a few days later on Saturday, April 11th.







## **LTABFLA Firecracker Slam | Friday, April 10, 2015**

**Dillard Center for the Arts | Dillard High School | Fort Lauderdale**

The Omari Hardwick blueapple Poetry Network primarily consists of high schools but there are a growing number of elementary and middle schools that are incorporating blueapple curriculum into not only club activities, but often as an extension of the required language arts studies presented to students on a daily basis. Participating schools were selected based on their proximity to existing Network high schools in an effort to develop a continuous feeder pattern within their respective communities. These students had the opportunity to participate in Louder Than A Bomb Florida through the Firecracker Slam, held at Dillard High School for the Performing Arts.

Hosted by Jason Taylor Foundation Director of blueapple Poetry Programs, Darius Daughtry and blueapple Elementary School Coordinator, Lesley Kluchin, the Firecracker Slam featured students from local elementary and middle schools including Castle Hill Elementary, Fox Trail Elementary, Dillard Middle, New Renaissance Middle and William Dandy Middle School. Those in attendance were even treated to an original piece, "Ode to Carrots" recited by a 5 year-old student, the festival's youngest performer.

The Firecracker Slam also featured high energy entertainment compliments of DJ Jason Bank, certificates of accomplishment signed by Jason Taylor and a special visit by TD, the Miami Dolphins mascot, who delivered a poem of his own. Based on the success of this year's programming for elementary and middle school students, the blueapple Poetry Network expects the number of participating schools to triple for these grade levels this school year.







## LTABFLA Semifinal Round | Saturday, April 11, 2015

Epstein Center for the Arts | University School | Nova Southeastern University

Bout #1 – 10:00am | Bout #2 – 1:00pm | Bout #3 – 4:00pm | Bout #4 – 7:00pm

After the dust settled from the preliminary round, the top 16 teams were seeded and scheduled accordingly. The bouts were as follows:

**Bout #1:** Boca Raton Community HS; Flanagan HS; Stranahan HS; Taravella HS

**Bout #2:** Dillard HS; Miramar HS; Northeast HS; Piper HS

**Bout #3:** Fort Pierce Central HS; McFatter HS; Plantation HS; West Broward HS

**Bout #4:** Cypress Bay HS; McArthur HS; Miami Norland Senior HS; St. Lucie West HS

The diversity of the top 16 teams was one of the biggest yet most pleasant surprises of the festival. Competing in the semifinal round bouts were 10 teams from Broward, one team from Miami-Dade, one team from Palm Beach and two teams from St. Lucie. The representation of schools over such a large geographical footprint just reinforced the need for expanded programming and coverage by the Omari Hardwick blueapple Poetry Network.

Following the same exact structure from the preliminary round, each semifinal round bout was held with only the top team advancing to the team finals to be held the following week on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>.





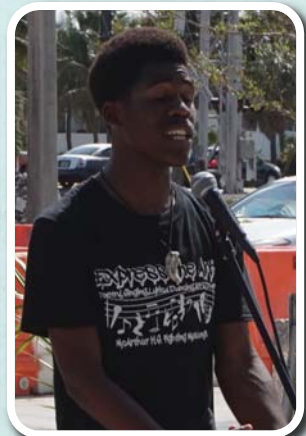


## **Food for Thought Coaches' Slam | Sunday, April 12, 2015**

**Bailey Contemporary Arts (BaCA) | Creative City Collaborative | Pompano Beach**

Each participating team in LTABFLA is required to have a “Coach” who teaches, mentors and organizes the group. Typically a teacher at the respective teams’ schools, but sometimes a volunteer artist or local poet, the LTABFLA Coaches are truly the un-sung heroes of the program. These individuals have participated in the Coaches meeting at the beginning of the year, meet weekly with their poets and serve as their team’s liaison to the Jason Taylor Foundation for all pertinent blueapple and LTABFLA information throughout the school year, preparing their team for the April festival. On Sunday, April 12, however the focus was shifted from the students to the teachers for the LTABFLA Coaches’ Slam at Bailey Contemporary Arts in Pompano Beach.

Hosted by Miami Heat broadcaster, Jason Jackson, the Coaches’ Slam featured seven individuals representing four school districts competing in a two-round bout. The poetry was judged by LTABFLA Teaching Artists and when all was said and done, Bertrand Boyd, Coach of the Overtown Youth Center team and local poet, proved victorious. The slam was the highlight of a full day of artistic brilliance that also featured local youth singing, dancing and creating live visual art pieces.







## **Town Hall: “Art in Education” | Monday, April 13, 2015**

**Knight Auditorium | Carl DeSantis Building | Nova Southeastern University**

Spoken Word Poetry, at its core, serves as an outlet for individuals to express their views, emotions and life experiences, while provoking thought and conversation among its audience. On Monday, April 13, the LTABFLA Town Hall was held at Nova Southeastern University’s Knight Auditorium to provide community members of all ages an opportunity to have a voice of their own, and to discuss issues centering around arts in education. NBC-6’s Jawan Strader moderated a panel made up of poets, artists, college professors and government officials who led an intergenerational dialogue that was both informative and passionate.

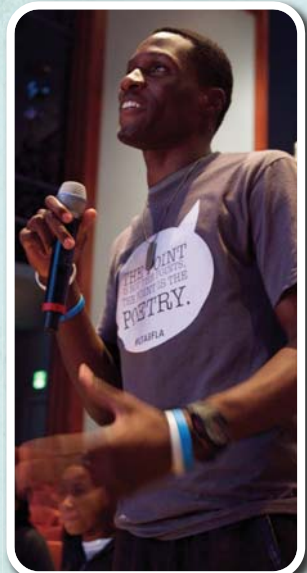






**Art Speaks . . . Join the Conversation | Wednesday, April 15, 2015**  
**Miramar Cultural Center | Miramar Cultural Trust | Miramar**

The Jason Taylor Foundation and the Miramar Cultural Trust established a partnership to increase program effectiveness and enhance community impact. Each organization is committed to mission advancement, program effectiveness and compelling outcomes, supporting a shared vision for innovative community advancement through the arts. This partnership was highlighted during the LTABFLA festival on April 15 when Jason Taylor was joined by JTF Executive Director, Seth Levit, blueapple Poetry Programs Director, Darius Daughtry and four teen blueapple Poetry Network, Amorette Lormil and Douglas Goodridge from Dillard HS, Peter Lange from Northeast HS, and Zoharian Williams of Piper HS, to discuss what inspired Jason to launch the “Super Bowl of poetry” in South Florida, how the program is impacting young people throughout multiple communities and how LTABFLA will continue to grow. Additionally, audience members had the opportunity to “join the conversation” and also heard spectacular original poems from the young performers.







## LTABFLA Indy Finals | Thursday, April 16, 2015

Rose & Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center | Nova Southeastern University | Davie

While LTABFLA is indeed centered on the team concept, the preliminary rounds of competition featured more than 200 individual performances by poets representing their respective schools in an effort to score points for their team. After team scores had been tallied and semi-finalists had been announced, one of the most anticipated results of the festival was the announcement of the top 13 individual poets, determined by their scores in the preliminary bouts.

On Thursday, April 16, 13 talented teens representing 10 different schools across four counties graced the stage of the Rose & Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center at Nova Southeastern University for a three-round bout in front of a crowd of nearly 400 people, as well as thousands at home thanks to NBC-6, who live streamed the event on their website. Throughout the evening, the poets magnificently delivered heartfelt poetry covering a wide range of topics including social injustice, female empowerment, abuse, senseless violence, family values, and the importance of education. By night's end, Piper High School's Zoharian Williams narrowly edged out Dillard High School's Amorette Lormil to earn the title of the inaugural LTABFLA Indy Champion.







## **LTABFLA College Slam | Friday, April 17, 2015**

**Rose & Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center | Nova Southeastern University | Davie**

Though the Omari Hardwick blueapple Poetry Network focuses primarily on students in elementary, middle and high schools, LTABFLA allowed for college students to get in on the action with the Rick Case Automotive Group College Slam. Held at the Miniaci Performing Arts Center at NSU, representatives from seven different colleges across the state competed in a three-round bout after initially winning a slam on their own campus. Hosting the event was Asia Samson, three-time College Spoken Word Artist of the Year.

As youth poets advance through the blueapple Poetry Network and matriculate in colleges and universities throughout Florida, LTABFLA provides them opportunities to remain active and involved within the blueapple community.







## **LTABFLA Art Slam | Friday, April 17, 2015**

**Don Taft University Center | Nova Southeastern University | Davie**

What do you get when you mix dynamic spoken word poetry, beautifully crafted artwork, one of South Florida's hottest DJs, and amazing artists battling it out with live creations? You get ART SLAM, a Jason Taylor Foundation Joint. As a part of Louder Than A Bomb Florida, this one of a kind artistic explosion transformed the student area of NSU's Don Taft Center into a party.

As students and visitors walked around this study area converted into a gallery, they were treated to the amazing ability of some of South Florida's most gifted artists. The installation included work by Surge, Aquarela Sabol, Jafleu, Nate Dee, and many more. As they perused, they were greeted by DJ Fingers spinning everything from the latest hip hop to vintage tunes by Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder.

Occasionally, a young poet would grace the crowd with an impromptu performance that reminded everyone that this was a blueapple/Louder Than Bomb Florida event. But the pinnacle of the Art Slam was the live painting battle. Artists Surge, Nate Dee, and CHNK, started with blank canvases and by the end of the night, had each created a masterpiece of their own design. The winner, determined by rousing crowd applause, was Nate Dee with a breath-taking black and white creation.

The ART SLAM was an integral component of Louder Than A Bomb Florida. It served to connect the artistic community and to expose all in attendance to the vibrancy of art located in their local community.







## **LTABFLA Team Finals | Saturday, April 18, 2015**

**Rose & Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center | Nova Southeastern University | Davie**

Considered the “Main Event” of Louder Than A Bomb Florida, the Team Finals concluded 11 days of the festival in spectacular fashion. Following seven months of preparation, two days of preliminary bouts and a 16-team semi-final round, four schools earned the right to grace the finals stage. The poets from Boca Raton Community HS, Ft. Pierce Central HS, Miami Norland Senior HS and Miramar HS not only proudly represented their schools, but their entire districts as more than 400 friends, family and community members from four different counties flocked to the campus of Nova Southeastern University to support these amazing youth. The event, which was live streamed by NBC-6, certainly lived up to its billing, featuring musical performances, guest poets, a video message from Omari Hardwick and Miami Dolphins legend, Jason Taylor, supporting the poets throughout the evening. A panel of celebrity judges included State Representative Bobby DuBose, Louder Than A Bomb founder Kevin Coval, Dolphins All-Pro Brent Grimes, community activist Tracy Martin and NSU Executive Director of Advancement & Alumni Relations, Sharon Sullivan. More than anything, however, it was the spectacular poets who proved the stars of the evening, with one powerful performance after the next. The Miramar poets were ultimately crowned LTABFLA Champions, however the obvious bonding between this diverse group of young people, the overwhelming support from disparate communities throughout Florida, the wide array of emotions felt by all who listened to these brave and powerful voices, and the overall building of an open, understanding and loving community proved that the point is not the points; the point is the poetry.







## Open Mics | Across Broward County

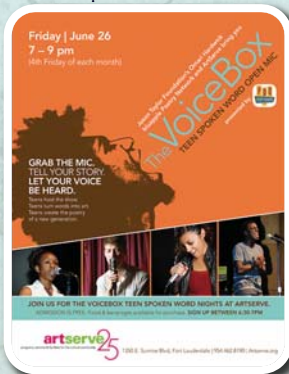
#VoiceBox | #LyricalLounge | #BlazeTheStage | #PDQPoetry

LTABFLA, particularly the competition, proves to be a tremendous catalyst for young people expressing themselves by sharing their unique and personal narratives. The purpose of this program, however, goes far beyond an 11-day festival and requires that youth have safe and open spaces to gather, share and institute change in their communities year-round. This continual platform for expression often takes place in the form of "Open Mic" poetry events. Thanks to several important partnerships, blueapple Poetry Open Mics occur in multiple facilities across Broward County throughout the year.

Twice a month, young poets from throughout South Florida grace stages to sharpen their skills, perfect a new poem, or offer a spontaneous piece about societal concerns or the latest trend. These "Open Mics" are hosted by blueapple poets and Teaching Artists who make the students feel comfortable enough to share their souls on the mic.

The Lyrical Lounge is housed at the Art Gallery on the campus of the City of Sunrise, and ArtServe, in downtown Fort Lauderdale, is the home of The VoiceBox. Once a month, each of these wonderful spaces is transformed into an inspiring cacophony of creativity and youthful exuberance. While the majority of the performers offer their poetic stylings, one is bound to witness vocalists, dancers, and even an occasional comedian.

It is in these non-competitive environments that respect and empathy are fostered. Strangers become supporters; acquaintances become friends. And poets become empowered.







## Poetry & Leadership Conference | “Crossing the Street” McArthur High School | Hollywood, Fla. | Saturday, February 28, 2015

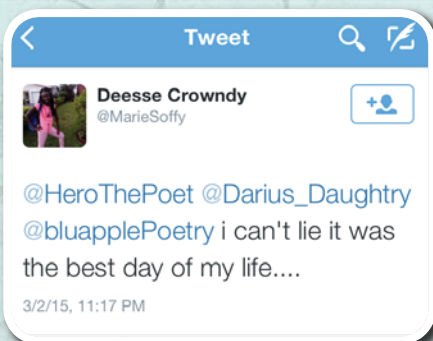
From the opening remarks, the atmosphere was electric at the Omari Hardwick bluapple Poetry Network’s third annual Poetry and Leadership Conference (PLC), which took place on Saturday, February 28th and was hosted at McArthur High School in Hollywood, Fla. Well over 200 students and teachers representing 34 middle and high schools from as far away as Orlando braved the torrential rains to attend the conference, the purpose of which was to bring together poets and artists from different schools and diverse backgrounds, and empower them with a voice and means to be heard in a supportive forum.

Students attended their choice of workshops, selected from six options during each of the two 70-minute sessions, led predominantly by current bluapple Poetry Network teaching artists, educating them on different styles of poetry and performance, challenging them to share their beliefs and original pieces, and connecting them with students across the state of Florida.

Teachers, coaches and club sponsors attended a specialized instructional workshop during the first session which was co-hosted by Darius Daughtry and Jason Taylor Foundation Education Director, Kevin Sawyer. The special session was designed to allow the discussion of best practices, provide detailed information regarding the upcoming Louder Than A Bomb Florida poetry competition, and to encourage the same connection that is inherent in the student association.

Following lunch provided by #LTABFLA partner and bluapple poetry supporter, PDQ, conference attendees were ushered back to the main auditorium for an open mic session and team collaborative showcase. Brave young artists, both familiar and new to the bluapple Poetry Network, dazzled their peers with one inspired poem after the next.

Feedback was immediate, in person, via email, and on social media. The Jason Taylor Foundation is proud that the programming it provides is able to so profoundly impact the lives of our South Florida youth.



“This is an amazing opportunity for both student and teacher to be inspired and transformed through this art form. The instant camaraderie and passion of these students is a testament to the work we are doing and the work that yet needs to be done.”

Darius Daughtry, Director  
bluapple Poetry Programs  
Jason Taylor Foundation





# Knight Foundation

*Informed & Engaged Communities*

**Knight Foundation | [www.knightfoundation.org](http://www.knightfoundation.org)**

**200 S. Biscayne Boulevard, Suite 3300, Miami, FL 33131 | (305) 908-2600**

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. Knight believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.

Knight Foundation's goal is to weave the arts into the fabric of Knight resident communities to engage and inspire the people living in them. The foundation believes that the arts are a catalyst for public dialogue and that shared cultural experiences contribute to a sense of place and communal identity.

Knight seeks innovative ways to reach, engage and increase audiences for the arts, including through the use of technology.



Over a three-year period, Knight funded 1,000 "Random Acts of Culture" to bring artists out of the performance halls and into people's everyday lives.

As a way to solicit fresh and innovative ideas, Knight Foundation launched the Knight Arts Challenge, an open call for ideas that is now in Akron, Detroit, Miami and St. Paul, Minn. The challenge seeks to find and fund the best ideas for the arts. Winners range from individual artists to anchor cultural institutions.

Out of nearly 1,200 ideas submitted to Knight Foundation for the 2014 Knight Arts Challenge, the Jason Taylor Foundation's *Louder Than A Bomb* Florida was one of only 47 over all, and one of only four in Broward County, to be honored as a Challenge winner. The matching grant awarded by Knight Foundation assisted the Jason Taylor Foundation in making this dream of "The Super Bowl of Poetry" a reality for the South Florida community.

"Every true artist would be a practitioner of their art despite anyone ever giving them a dollar, but to have organizations provide much-needed support is every artist's dream. This grant is destined to help a generation of young artists fulfill their destinies," said Darius Daughtry, JTF Director of blueapple Poetry Programs.

*"We are honored and excited to receive this grant from the Knight Foundation. We are beginning to see transformational results in the lives of young people through our poetry programs and we hope that Louder Than a Bomb Florida will leave a lasting impact in the community."*

*Jason Taylor, Miami Dolphins Legend  
Founder, Jason Taylor Foundation*





## Miami Dolphins Foundation | [Click Here for Official Website](#)

7500 SW 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Davie, FL 33314 | (305) 943-8000

The Miami Dolphins Foundation is devoted to providing and supporting signature education, health, youth athletic programs and volunteer activities that inspire and engage communities throughout Florida. Serving as a Co-Presenting Partner of Louder Than A Bomb Florida, the Miami Dolphins Foundation was instrumental in assisting the Jason Taylor Foundation in launching the state-wide youth poetry festival within South Florida schools. Miami Dolphins players, coaches and administrative staff displayed a hands-on approach to supporting the festival, taking a leadership role in LTABFLA's growth, visibility and reach.

“The Miami Dolphins Foundation is excited to partner with the Jason Taylor Foundation and the great work they do in the community. Education is one of our three community pillars and initiatives like these that promote creativity, hard work and collaboration are important in the development of our students.”

Jason Jenkins, Senior VP  
Communications & Community Affairs  
Miami Dolphins, LTD



## Miami Dolphins Special Teams | Volunteer Base

**Provided LTABFLA with volunteers throughout the duration of the festival**

The Miami Dolphins Special Teams is a unique volunteer organization created to enlist and mobilize the ongoing services of the community with the Miami Dolphins staff, players and alumni. The mission of the Special Teams is to offer hands-on services to communities and families in need, to partner with existing organizations on worthwhile social, civic and charitable programs, to provide assistance at Miami Dolphins Foundation events, and to support community efforts in times of emergency.





## LTABFLA Coaches' Meeting | Dolphins Headquarters

With Opening Comments by Head Coach Joe Philbin | Monday, October 13, 2014

The Miami Dolphins opened the doors to their team meeting room and allowed teachers and advisors representing schools from across the blueapple Poetry Network the opportunity to get "coached up" on the programming and procedures associated with the inaugural Louder Than A Bomb Florida festival. Following a surprise welcome by Dolphins Head Coach, Joe Philbin, teachers received a program overview, instruction and professional development from Jason Taylor Foundation Director of blueapple Poetry Programs, Darius Daughtry. The meeting also featured live spoken word poetry and excerpts from the the original Louder Than A Bomb documentary film.



## "Stronger Together" Video | Sun Life Stadium

Shot on Location in Dolphins Gameday Locker Room | Tuesday, November 25, 2014

blueapple Poets Zoharian Williams, Douglas Goodridge and Peter Lange were invited by the Miami Dolphins to the team's state of the art locker room at Sun Life Stadium to film a video featuring their original poem dedicated to the South Florida gridiron staple. Produced by the Dolphins' Entertainment Division, the "Stronger Together: Poetry in Motion" video was a true collaborative effort, the end of which was both groundbreaking and breathtaking.

Reinforcing the Dolphins mantra for the 2014 season, the finished product brought together the present day with the rich and storied history of the Miami Dolphins franchise. It was ultimately used as a pre game anthem shown on the Sun Life Stadium big screens on game day. To see for yourself, click on the following link: <https://youtu.be/HDFVqx0PGJU>





Photo Credit: Sonshine Communications



Photo Credit: Sonshine Communications

## LTABFLA Press Conference | Nova Southeastern

With Support by Dolphins Sr. Director Twan Russell | Tuesday, April 7, 2015

The Miami Dolphins Foundation helped to kick off Louder Than A Bomb Florida by participating in the festival's opening press conference held on the campus of Co-Presenting Partner Nova Southeastern University. "We are proud to be a part of this," said Twan Russell, the Dolphins Senior Director of Community Affairs. "Anytime we can support our esteemed alumni in Jason Taylor and his foundation, and all of the good things they do in the community, we're proud to be a part of that." Russell and other members of the Dolphins management team joined dignitaries from NSU and the Jason Taylor Foundation in introducing LTABFLA to the South Florida community and unveiling the program's mobile billboard.



Photo Credit: Gerlinde & Michael Photography



Photo Credit: Gerlinde & Michael Photography

## Hands On | Various Locations

Miami Dolphins Players & Staff Judge the Poetry | April 8 - April 18, 2015

The support of Louder Than A Bomb Florida by the Miami Dolphins Foundation went far beyond a financial contribution. Throughout the festival, current and former Dolphins players, as well as key members of the organization, served as judges for bouts from the preliminary rounds to the main event, where Pro Bowl cornerback Brent Grimes was one of 5 celebrity judges for the Team Finals. Additionally, members of the Miami Dolphins Special Teams, the club's unique volunteer organization, provided man power at a multitude of events over the course of the 11-day festival.

The judges and volunteers, some of whom were exposed to the power of spoken word for the first time through this experience, learned first-hand the meaning behind the LTAB slogan, ***"The point is not the points. The point is the poetry."***





## South Florida Your Poet Laureate |

**Presenting Partner, Miami Dolphins Foundation | Summer 2015**

The South Florida Youth Poet Laureate is a joint program of The Jason Taylor Foundation and Urban Word, supported by the Miami Dolphins Foundation, PEN Center USA and the Academy of American Poets. Through The Jason Taylor Foundation's Omari Hardwick bluapple Poetry Network, The South Florida Youth Poet Laureate program aims to identify young writers and leaders who are committed to civic and community engagement, poetry and performance, and social justice across South Florida.

This Fall, The Jason Taylor Foundation accepted submissions from young poets, rappers, leaders and activists ages 13-19 from across Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties who were interested in representing South Florida as the inaugural South Florida Youth Poet Laureate. A group of esteemed judges will choose 12 Finalists with the top 3 given the distinction of South Florida Youth Poet Ambassador, and one youth will be honored with the title of South Florida Youth Poet Laureate in Fall 2015.



Along with winning the prestigious title of South Florida Youth Poet Laureate, the winning poet will also win a book deal from Penmanship Books to publish their first collection of poems, as well as a library tour. The South Florida Youth Poet Laureate and the South Florida Youth Poet Ambassadors will have numerous opportunities and platforms to share their powerful voices, their leadership, and love of South Florida at numerous events across the area. The Jason Taylor Foundation, Urban Word, the Miami Dolphins Foundation and our many other partners recognize that youth voice and community engagement are vital for empowering young people to effect positive changes in their communities and beyond. Local and national partners also include Nova Southeastern University, UPS, Superfan, Penmanship Books, Academy of American Poets and PEN USA.





## Nova Southeastern University | [www.nova.edu](http://www.nova.edu)

3301 College Ave, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314 | (800) 541-6682

Located in beautiful Fort Lauderdale, Florida, NSU is a dynamic research institution dedicated to providing high-quality educational programs at the undergraduate, graduate and first-professional degrees levels. An independent, not-for-profit institution with approximately 25,000 students, NSU has campuses in Fort Lauderdale, Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Miami, Miramar, Orlando, Palm Beach and Tampa, Florida as well as San Juan, Puerto Rico and online globally. For more than 50 years, NSU has been awarding degrees in a wide range of fields, while fostering groundbreaking research and an impactful commitment to community. Classified as a research university with “high research activity” by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, NSU is one of only 37 universities nationwide to also be awarded Carnegie’s Community Engagement Classification.

Nova Southeastern University’s support of the Jason Taylor Foundation’s Omari Hardwick blueapple Poetry Network dates back to 2013 when the first District Wide Poetry Slam was held at the Rose and Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center. Since that inaugural event, NSU has played a critical role in the growth and development of blueapple Poetry, its students and teachers. From the use of state of the art facilities, faculty involvement and administrative support, NSU has embraced the transformational effect blueapple Poetry has on South Florida’s young people and has helped to cultivate them as poets, students and community leaders.

“LTABFLA gives young people a chance to find their voice and to express their feelings for others to hear. It is a powerful learning experience for NSU students and an opportunity to see their collective strength.”

*Jennifer O’Flannery Anderson Ph.D.  
V.P. Advancement and Community Relations  
Nova Southeastern University*





## Epstein Center for the Arts | University School

**Site of the LTABFLA Team Semifinals | Saturday, April 11, 2015**

The Epstein Center for the Arts houses two levels of academic space for the art departments of the Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools. It also includes a state-of-the-art 750-seat theater with an orchestra pit, scene shop and costume design studio, instrument classroom with sound-proof practice rooms, a MAC lab, choral and dance studios, a forensics suite, wet and dry visual art studios, a television studio, and more! This virtual tour shows the Silverman Auditorium where various student performances are held, including dramas and musicals, dance, choral, and band concerts, and weekly divisional assemblies.

*“It was so exciting to see students from around the state come together at NSU to share their love for spoken word poetry. We were proud to host the inaugural LTABFLA and look forward to watching it grow and reach even more of our communities’ youth in 2016.”*

*Sharon Sullivan, Executive Director  
Advancement & Alumni Relations  
Nova Southeastern University*



## Knight Auditorium | Carl DeSantis Building

**Site of the LTABFLA Town Hall “Art in Education” | Monday, April 13, 2015**

The Julian and Ellen Knight Lecture Hall provides a venue for Huizenga College events, including the Distinguished Lecture Series.





## **Miniaci Center for the Arts | Alvin Sherman Library**

**Site of the LTABFLA College Slam, Indy & Team Finals | April 16-18, 2015**

The Rose and Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center is part of the Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center on the Nova Southeastern University main campus. This exceptional, 498-seat auditorium is equipped with state-of-the-art lighting and acoustics. The Performing Arts Center enhances both the academic experience at NSU, as well as the cultural life of the community at large, through its academic seminars and arts programming.



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Lounge | Don Taft University Center**

**Site of the LTABFLA Urban Art Show / Art Slam | Friday, April 17, 2015**

Nova Southeastern's Don Taft University Center, was completed in August of 2006. The revolutionary 366,000 square-foot, multi-use facility serves as a central hub for the NSU student community. The main arena, which seats up to 4,500 spectators, is the home for NSU's intercollegiate athletic program, and hosts all of NSU's volleyball and men's and women's basketball home games. With one main game court, the arena has two practice/game-ready auxiliary courts on the upper level.

The facility also has a fitness and wellness center, a two-court multipurpose gym, three indoor racquetball courts; one convertible Squash Court, an Outdoor Swimming Pool (heated for the winter months), an Indoor 27-foot rock climbing wall and three multipurpose studios for group exercise and martial arts.





## ArtServe, Inc. | [www.artserve.org](http://www.artserve.org)

1350 E. Sunrise Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304 | (954) 462-8190

Preliminary Round Site for LTABFLA | Home of blueapple Poetry open mic, The VoiceBox

The purpose of ArtServe is to create valuable cultural experiences for artists as a means to creating vibrant communities and creative place making. ArtServe empowers local artists and cultural entities to achieve their vision, improve the cultural fabric of our community and discover innovations in the arts by providing ongoing programs, facilities and services that allow them to exhibit, promote, educate, instruct, collaborate and conduct business.

“A room full of talented students cheering each other on. A platform for young adults to express themselves while also learning teamwork, discipline and the rigors of working under deadline pressure. A vehicle for teens to work together for a common goal. These are the elements needed to be a harbinger of positive change in our community, and they are precisely the elements that the Louder than a Bomb competition delivered. ArtServe is so proud to have been a host venue for this wonderful competition. Programs that are as well-run and impactful as LTAB make my job of running a non-profit such a rewarding experience. We look forward to throwing our full support behind the growth of Louder than a Bomb, and our doors are open to being a host venue once again.”

Jaye Abbate, ArtServe President & CEO







## Bailey Contemporary Arts | [www.bacapompano.org](http://www.bacapompano.org)

41 NE 1st Street, Pompano Beach, FL 33060 | (954) 284-0141

Site of the LTABFLA “Food For Thought” Coaches’ Slam | Sunday, April 12, 2015

At the Bailey Contemporary Arts (BaCA) in Pompano Beach, emerging artists work with innovative art thinkers from across the globe to create cutting-edge art. Children and their parents take workshops on playing musical instruments and learning to make contemporary art of their own, all just a few blocks from their homes. Art enthusiasts visit to explore inspiring exhibitions made by up-and-coming artists from across the region.

“We were very fortunate to collaborate with the Jason Taylor Foundation on showcasing LTABFLA in Pompano Beach and Delray Beach. All the performances were exceptionally powerful and transformative for the young people on stage and in the audience. The impact of the powerful tools for self expression that LTABFLA provides to our youth is invaluable and inspiring. We look forward to getting more involved with the program.”

— Alyona Aleksandra Ushe, BaCA President/CEO & Czarina

## Delray Arts Garage | [www.artsgarage.org](http://www.artsgarage.org)

180 NE 1st Street, Delray Beach, FL 33444 | (561) 450-6357

Preliminary Round Site for LTABFLA | Thursday, April 9, 2015

Arts Garage has been called a “cultural powerhouse” by the Sun-Sentinel. We’ve been referred to as “one of the most popular cultural destinations in South Florida” by South Florida Gay News. We’ve won the first-ever People’s Choice award from the Knight Foundation. These are great praises and honors, but we like to think of ourselves a little differently: We’re a highly professional, culturally ambitious hub for visual artists, musicians, and educators with a transformative spirit for bringing people together to enjoy the cultural arts in the heart of Delray Beach’s vibrant downtown. Arts Garage is where you can meet a new friend while sipping wine, noshing on cheese and crackers, and enjoying some of the world’s best jazz, blues, soul, reggae, classical, and spoken-word recording artists. We’re also a place where you can expand your horizons and enrich your life by taking a theater class or piano lessons from seasoned performers.







## Cinema Paradiso | [www.fliff.com/Cinema\\_Paradiso](http://www.fliff.com/Cinema_Paradiso)

503 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 | (954) 760-9898

Preliminary Round Site for LTABFLA | April 8 & 9, 2015

Cinema Paradiso and The Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival (FLIFF), Florida's most storied and traveled motion picture event in the Southeast United States are actively seeking community partners to broaden their demographic, bring education in filmmaking and independent film to more and more and strengthen community relationships FLIFF is also committed to engaging the art and craft of film to local students and their families. Their mission in working with students year round is to educate, inspire and entertain youth to promote creativity, collaboration and the value of community involvement.

“Cinema Paradiso, home of the 30th Annual Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival (FLIFF) celebrates the art of independent film and creates an exciting cultural and entertainment venue for South Florida, which is why it was such a great pleasure to host two days of preliminary rounds for the LTABFLA festival. We truly value the efforts by the Jason Taylor Foundation promoting art through poetry among the youth in the community, showcasing the impressive talent of all these students. It would be an honor to continue this partnership in the future for such a important cause.”

Michelle Filippi  
Operations Director, FLIFF







## Miramar Cultural Center | [www.miramarculturalcenter.org](http://www.miramarculturalcenter.org)

2400 Civic Center Place, Miramar, FL 33025 | (954) 602-4500

Preliminary Round Site for LTABFLA; ArtSpeaks | April 8 & 15, 2015

The Miramar Cultural Center/ArtsPark was created to celebrate creativity and diversity within the city. This landmark is a vibrant, urban destination located in the heart of the Miramar Town Center, situated adjacent to our City Hall. Centrally located, the Center is visible and accessible from Red Road, Miramar Boulevard and Hiatus Road. The Miramar Cultural Center/ArtsPark is a collaborative effort of many who share a fundamental commitment to the arts as essential to building a strong and vibrant community.

“After talking with the staff of the Jason Taylor Foundation, meeting many of the young poets and watching them perform their original poems, I was definitely inspired. The creativity and self-expression that was showcased in the poems exceeded my expectations and prompted me to learn more about the organization and opportunities to support the program. Hosting a LTABFLA event at the MCC was an opportunity to promote the impact that poetry is having on the youth of our community, be part of a unique cultural festival, expand a partnership and showcase the art form of poetry. It is my hope that the Miramar Cultural Trust will continue to be a partner for this worthwhile event.”

Maureen Kohler, Executive Director  
Miramar Cultural Trust







## Paradise Live | [www.miramarculturalcenter.org](http://www.miramarculturalcenter.org)

2400 Civic Center Place, Miramar, FL 33025 | (954) 602-4500

Preliminary Round Site for LTABFLA | Site of LTABFLA Kickoff Event

The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino has been a tremendous supporter of the Jason Taylor Foundation and its programs since the property opened in 2004. Whether through funding, personnel support or their first class venues, the Hard Rock has always been a believer in the JTF and its mission. One such venue that became a home for Louder Than A Bomb Florida events was Paradise Live.

“The Seminole Hard Rock supports numerous events in the South Florida community. One we especially follow are the efforts of the Jason Taylor Foundation and the diverse and many ways they are changing the lives of children. I was fortunate to be a judge in one of the Louder Than A Bomb series. I saw first hand the enthusiasm, passion and fortitude of the students and staff involved in this program. Very, very impressive on many levels. We will continue to support this effort as well as others put forth by this amazing Foundation.”

Susan Renneisen

VP Community Affairs and Special Events  
Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino







## Sunrise Civic Center | [www.sunrisefl.gov](http://www.sunrisefl.gov)

10610 W. Oakland Park Boulevard, Sunrise, FL 33351 | (954) 747-4646

**Preliminary Round Site for LTABFLA | Home of The Lyrical Lounge, a bluapple Poetry open mic program in association with the City of Sunrise**

The City's intimate 300-seat theatre with mezzanine features a full production-size stage, an orchestra pit and state-of-the-art sound and lighting. Simply put, there's not a bad seat in the house. Make the Civic Center Theatre your first choice for quality, affordable entertainment, including theatrical presentations, musical performances and children's programming. The Civic Center is also home to a beautiful outdoor amphitheatre with professional sound and lighting equipment - and seating for 750. Ideal for musical and theatrical performances, it's the site of the City's popular "Sunrise at Sunset" concert series, which runs annually from January through May.

*“As a long-time program partner of the Jason Taylor Foundation and Omari Hardwick bluapple Poetry Network, the City of Sunrise was proud to be part of the inaugural Louder Than A Bomb Florida festival. We believe that youth voices must be heard – and LTABFLA provides a powerful forum for self-expression.”*

*Christine Pfeffer  
Communications Director  
City of Sunrise*







## WTVJ NBC 6 South Florida | [www.nbcmiami.com](http://www.nbcmiami.com)

15000 SW 27th Street, Miramar, FL 33027 | (305) 379-6666

Louder Than A Bomb Florida provides a vehicle for young people to create authentic narratives to re-imagine the self and one another while artistically sharing their real-life experiences. Ensuring that these stories are heard is central to the programs purpose and impact. Through unique partnerships, traditional media outlets and social media platforms, young voices reverberated in communities throughout South Florida, making their way into non-traditional spaces, and being heard by individuals who typically might not be in a position to listen. This charge was led by unprecedented support from NBC-6, which utilized all of its extensive platforms and channels to provide that the teen poets participating in this initiative were truly more powerful, and Louder Than A Bomb.



An LTABFLA-specific website was constructed and hosted on the NBC 6 website. This site listed all the Louder Than A Bomb Florida events, showed videos of on-air segments and even live streamed both the Indy and Team Finals.

In addition, NBC 6 produced and aired the LTABFLA PSA spot an amazing 23 times in the days leading up to and during the Louder Than A Bomb Florida Festival.



Coverage of the LTABFLA Press Conference



NBC 6's Ari Odzer profiles Miami Norland Senior High School's "Viking Freedom Writers" (April 15) on a segment for the "Ari's Education on 6" initiative.





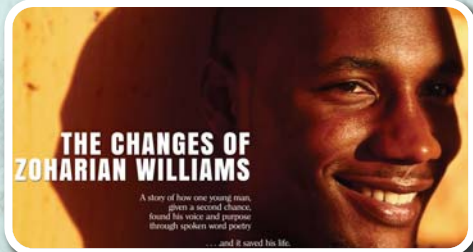
On Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, NBC 6 news anchor Jawan Strader moderated the LTABFLA Town Hall discussion hosted at Nova Southeastern University. The topic was Arts in Education.



Representatives from LTABFLA and the Omari Hardwick blupple Poetry Network have twice appeared on NBC 6 in the Mix (January 21<sup>st</sup> & April 13<sup>th</sup>), a lifestyle and entertainment show hosted by Roxanne Vargas.



NBC 6's unprecedented coverage of LTABFLA included the professionally filmed and produced live streaming of both the Indy Finals on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> and the Team Finals on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>.



NBC 6's Chris Clark and Erik Rodriguez produced an original documentary centered around the inspiring story of Piper High School senior and eventual LTABFLA "Indy" Champion, Zoharian Williams. This special story first aired during prime time on Friday, April 17. Several weeks later, a red carpet screening of the film was held at the Sunrise Civic center. Following the screening, FM 104.3 The Ticket's Morning Show host, Joy Taylor, moderated a panel featuring the filmmakers, Williams and other key contributors before Sunrise Mayor Michael J. Ryan made a special presentation.





## **TC Palm**

April 24, 2015 - LTABFLA  
[www.tcpalm.com](http://www.tcpalm.com)

## **The Miami Times**

April 22, 2015 – LTABFLA  
[www.miamitimesonline.com](http://www.miamitimesonline.com)

## **NBC 6**

April 18, 2015 – LTABFLA  
[www.nbcmiami.com](http://www.nbcmiami.com)  
April 9, 2015 – LTABFLA  
[www.nbcmiami.com](http://www.nbcmiami.com)

## **Legacy South Florida – Broward & Palm Beach**

April 17, 2015 – JTF  
[www.readoz.com](http://www.readoz.com)

## **U.S. News Hub**

April 9, 2015 – LTABFLA  
[www.florida.newshub.us](http://www.florida.newshub.us)

## **New England Informer**

April 2015 - Clear Channel Partners  
with JTF and LTABFLA  
[www.neinformer.net](http://www.neinformer.net)

## **Caribbean Today**

April 8, 2015 - Clear Channel Partners  
with JTF and LTABFLA  
[www.caribbeantoday.com](http://www.caribbeantoday.com)

## **Black PR Wire**

April 8, 2015 - Clear Channel Partners  
with JTF and LTABFLA  
[www.blackprwire.com](http://www.blackprwire.com)  
April 2, 2015 - News Conference  
[www.blackprwire.com](http://www.blackprwire.com)

## **PHINMANIACS**

April 7, 2015 - News Conference  
[www.phinmaniacs.com](http://www.phinmaniacs.com)

## **NSU News**

April 7, 2015 - News Conference &  
LTABFLA events  
[www.nsunews.nova.edu](http://www.nsunews.nova.edu)

## **Pineapple Newspaper**

April 2, 2015 – LTABFLA  
[www.pineapplenewspaper.com](http://www.pineapplenewspaper.com)

## **KnightArts**

April 1, 2015 – LTABFLA  
[www.knightarts.org](http://www.knightarts.org)

## **Magic 102.7**

April 2015 – LTABFLA  
[www.magicmiami.com](http://www.magicmiami.com)

## **Pompano Today**

February 22, 2015 – LTABFLA  
[www.pompanotoday.com](http://www.pompanotoday.com)

## **Premier Guide Miami**

N/A – LTABFLA  
[www.premierguidemiami.com](http://www.premierguidemiami.com)

## **Pompano Beach Arts**

N/A – LTABFLA  
[www.pompanobeacharts.org](http://www.pompanobeacharts.org)

## **Baileys Contemporary Arts**

N/A – LTABFLA  
[www.bacapompano.org](http://www.bacapompano.org)













## THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Piper High School  
Angel M. Gomez, Principal  
8000 NW 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Sunrise, FL 33351  
Ph: 754-322-1700 Fax: 754-322-1705

### SCHOOL BOARD

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ROBERT W. RUNCIE  
Superintendent of Schools

August 6, 2015

*"Poetry saved my Life." ~Zoharian Williams*

Dear Esteemed Colleagues and Educational Leaders,

As a part of the vision of Broward Schools, we wish to take a moment to share Best Practices about a movement that has positively impacted our own campus and school community. This relates to the blueapple Poetry Network, spear-headed by our Partner In Excellence, The Jason Taylor Foundation.

During the summer of 2013, Executive Director for the JTF, Seth Levit, (Piper c/o '92) approached Piper's Administration with the idea to implement a Spoken Word Program on campus. Additionally, Mr. Levit made us aware of a special young man, a Piper Bengal, who displayed a true gift with the Art of Spoken Word. This student's name is Zoharian Williams.

Zoharian "Zo" Williams is like many of our students who attend our schools. Zo is a young, African-American male. He grew up in a low socioeconomic, inner city, single parent home. Some would perceive, and studies would try to prove, that his future is already predetermined. This talented young man was determined to speak on his own behalf, and write his own future through the power of Poetry. His passion and gift for performing Poetry changed his mind set, his goals, and ultimately his life. Zo's strong network of mentors who supported him through this journey and "Change", shared in celebrating his recent Graduation.

To see, hear, and actually "feel" Zo share his story, of struggle and success, through his original poems, speaks volumes to the opportunities these poetry clubs provide. Piper's own poetry club, the "Standing Stanzas", placed 4<sup>th</sup> overall in the inaugural LOUDER THAN A BOMB FLORIDA Team Poetry Competition. Zoharian earned 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Individual Poetry Competition. A Champion, provided with an opportunity to succeed.

With the awareness and attention of Zoharian's success, this Poetry movement has started to "Scale Up" to our Underclassmen, and among our Innovation Zone Schools. The ability to provide opportunities for young people's voices to be heard allows for empowerment through these programs. We must listen. We must provide an opportunity for this positive outlet. Poetry can change lives. Poetry can save a life. Just ask Zoharian Williams, Piper, Class of 2015.

#### References and Resources:

- [www.blueapplepoetry.org](http://www.blueapplepoetry.org)
- [www.jasontaylorfoundation.org](http://www.jasontaylorfoundation.org) 954-424-0799
- NBC 6 Documentary Special "The Changes of Zoharian Williams" YouTube. Directed by Chris Clark.
- Article highlighting "May 19, 2015 proclaimed as Zoharian Williams Day in the City of Sunrise." ~Mayor Ryan.  
[www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/sunrise/fl-sf-poet-0527-20150522-story.html#navtype=outfit](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/sunrise/fl-sf-poet-0527-20150522-story.html#navtype=outfit)

Sincerely,  
Angel M. Gomez

Matt Dearen

Principal, Piper High School

Assistant Principal, Piper High School

MD/AG

*"Educating Today's Students to Succeed in Tomorrow's World"*  
Broward County Public Schools Is An Equal Opportunity/Equal Access Employer



## “Going Native”

In sociological circles, this expression is used to describe the process during which a researcher ceases to simply observe and, in effect, becomes part of the observed group. Immerse a group of young, talented and growing poets into a culture that embraces the arts and that is what you will get. Now combine that 15 years of history and experience in developing young minds and what you end up with is a completely organic and visceral experience that can truly be life-changing.



In April, each LTABFLA champion was awarded a limited edition, custom made Invicta watch upon their crowning. The grand prize, for the Team and Indy champs, however was a trip to Chicago for the Young Chicago Authors' Summer Writing Institute, *Write to the City*, a “workshop series exploring hip-hop poetics, the tradition(s) of Chicago realist working class portraiture and contemporary visual art practice.”

LTABFLA Team Champs, the Miramar HS Truth Spittahz, sent five poets who were accompanied by Indy Champ Zoharian Williams and blueapple Poetry Network Teaching Artist Marnino Toussaint, who coincidentally is also a Miramar HS grad. The impact of the experience was immediate.

“Chicago was the biggest blessing.. I learned so much and this goes to show what following your dreams and having faith can do.” **Desiray Baptiste, Miramar HS class of ‘16**

“The Chicago trip was so inspirational, it brought a fierce new John out. Ready to tackle on the world and its issues.” **John Persaud, Miramar HS class of ‘15**

“Chicago was the biggest exhale and peace I've had in a while. It reignited my growth, which had stagnated for some time.” **Autumn Williams, Miramar HS class of ‘15**

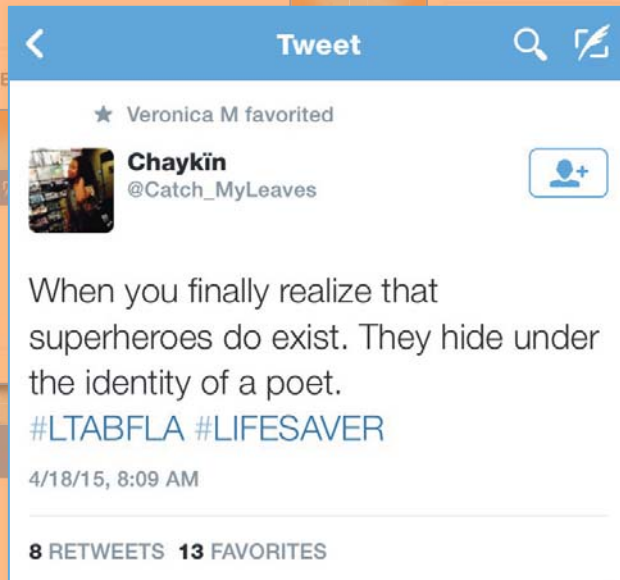
“Chicago has so much culture surrounding it. To be around so many people that have so much talent and emotion it makes you want to be better at what you do. It was refreshing to be a part of something that is not just a hobby but a step for change.” **Hillary Nomes, Miramar HS class of ‘16**



In February, the Jason Taylor Foundation sent a small contingent of poets to participate in Louder Than A Bomb 2015 while staff members participated in an organizers track of informative sessions that was invaluable in the shaping of LTABFLA and in the growth and evolution of the blueapple Poetry Network itself. Peter Lange, Amorette Lormil and Zoharian Williams represented South Florida in the LTAB “Grudge Match” that pits poets from cities across the country in a classic poetry slam. While team South Florida didn’t not technically “win” the competition, they definitely won the night and gave notice to competitors that they were for real!











## KF Knight Foundation

Football legend Jason Taylor and his Jason Taylor Foundation present the "Super Bowl" of poetry, empowering and uniting South Florida's youth and community through the art of spoken word!

Since founding the blueapple Poetry Network with actor and poet, Omari Hardwick, in 2012, the Jason Taylor Foundation has seen more than 50 schools activate this program, with nearly 1,000 participants inspiring their respective communities with self-authored poetry. Louder Than a Bomb Florida will bring school-based poetry teams together from Broward and Miami-Dade counties and beyond, to showcase this art form through a friendly competition taking place in venues throughout Broward, while providing teens from diverse backgrounds a common vehicle for written and performance-based self-expression.

The Jason Taylor Foundation will build upon the powerful, sustainable LTAB model, founded by the Young Chicago Authors in 2001, and currently in more than 10 sites across the country.

The apex of LTAB Florida is this 11-day festival, featuring poetry bouts, workshops, exhibits, and ultimately the crowning of Florida's top youth poetry team. The most critical component, however, is the year-round, meaningful instruction that has taken place inside the classroom and after-school clubs, with teachers and teaching artists who create and facilitate a safe space for individual and collective expression.

While the festival activates programming through a competition, LTAB Florida's purpose is NOT the competition, but rather, it is:

- A vehicle to engage young people and audiences in creating authentic narratives to re-imagine the self and one another.
- A platform for "spoken word" or "Hip-Hop poetry," the voice of this generation's students and writers, providing an opportunity to artistically share their real-life experiences.
- A community of individuals, which brings together students, teachers and audiences from all walks of life, developing mutual respect and tolerance for difference.