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For Immediate Release

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St. Petersburg Arts Alliance's New LiFT Program Awards Emerging Artist Vyolette Hastings

Recent Gibbs High School graduate, Vyolette Hastings, is dedicated to creating art that inspires and empowers other foster children. Hastings is the recipient of the LiFT Award, a new initiative from the St Petersburg Arts Alliance (SPAA) to support underserved students in continuing their arts education and professional development after high school.



Thanks to a generous donation from Pilot Bank, Hastings will receive \$1,500 for visual arts courses at The Morean, Dunedin Fine Arts Center, and St Petersburg College. These educational opportunities, plus mentorship from local professional artists connected to SPAA, will tee up Hastings for a professional career as an artist - all through a local education unique to St Petersburg, our City of the Arts.



“My dream career is to be either a filmmaker, character designer, or a storybook artist. One of my strengths as a visual artist is being able to create visual narratives that are unique in their message... As a child who grew up in foster care, playing with and babysitting my young foster siblings motivated me to be a narrative artist. I know how powerful storytelling can be to young people and how it can help us understand that we

matter. I want my art to show that foster children have value.” - **Vyolette Hastings**

“Pilot Bank, A Part of Lake Michigan Credit Union (LMCU) , is dedicated to making a positive impact in the communities we serve. We are honored to support the LiFT program that helps students who want to follow their passion in the arts.”- **Roy Binger, Senior Vice President, Market Executive at Pilot Bank**



“LiFT was created to respond to the needs of those talented students who wanted to pursue higher learning within the arts. We believe that art education should not suddenly stop at High School due to financial challenges. Our community is ready to help. When I discussed this need with Roy Binger, Pilot Bank, he responded on the spot, in the moment. We are grateful to give this first LiFT scholarship out to Vyolette Hastings. It is our hope that many more students will follow in her footsteps and many more community members will stand with us in supporting young and inspiring artists.” - **Terry Marks, CEO**

For information on LiFT go to www.stpeteartsalliance.org/lift. SPAA is hoping to continue offering the LiFT Awards for years to come. Applications will be released for 2023 high school graduates in the spring. Please contact Terry Marks, CEO, terry@stpeteartsalliance.org if you wish to donate in support of programs like LiFT in our community.

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The St. Petersburg Arts Alliance strives to be the umbrella organization for the arts -- advocating for the arts, facilitating the growth of the creative arts community, and driving arts-related economic development in St. Petersburg. www.stpeteartsalliance.org

[Vyolette Hastings headshot](#)

[Vyolette Hastings art sample above 1](#)

[Vyolette Hastings art sample above 2](#)