

The logo for ECCL, with the letters 'E', 'C', 'C', and 'L' in a stylized font. The 'E' and 'C's are green, and the 'C' and 'L' are blue. A thin blue horizontal line is positioned below the letters.

ECCL

A CIVIC ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION

Exceptional Talent

in the Greater Estero Area

First Quarter 2022

Greater Estero Community Report



EXCEPTIONAL TALENT



The ECCL's Board of Directors and Executive Management Team wish all our readers a Very Happy New Year. We are pleased to provide you with the first Greater Estero Community Report (GECR) of 2022.

In the 2019 ECCL survey completed by residents in Greater Estero, many indicated their interest in having more concerts and theatre performances in our area. There was also considerable support for building a Multi-Purpose Community Theatre. The Village Council and other local organizations are seriously considering this latter issue.

Since the survey was published, we have seen the establishment of Gulfshore Opera in Estero, which has an excellent program of events for 2022. In addition, The Bower School of Music and the Arts at FGCU, which celebrates its' 15th Anniversary this year, has a state-of-the-art concert venue that offers a wide range of music and plays for 2022.

The Bower School has exceptional history of encouraging students to excel at what they do. Many have become internationally

Introduction

recognized stars! Please read about the achievements of their students in the accompanying article and go to FGCU's 25th Anniversary Day of Events being held on February 12 to become acquainted with the many excellent programs and initiatives that are taking place on your doorstep. See the details attached - you will be surprised by the remarkably exacting standards of each event.

For many years, the ECCL has provided considerable support for our teachers and local schools. We are considering other ways to assist our students and teachers by implementing other initiatives. Please look at the details in our GECR of the upcoming Essay Competition open to students in Greater Estero and let us know what other ideas you may have on what else we can do to support our students and teachers.

Enhancing the range of cultural events and supporting our schools and teachers is an essential part of helping to make the greater Estero area the best place to visit, live, work and play!

SUPPORT THE WORLD-CLASS MUSICAL TALENT ON OUR DOORSTEP



If you have not attended any concerts at FGCU's Bower School of Music & the Arts, which celebrates its 15th Anniversary this year, you should! The 196-seat recital hall boasts a soaring ceiling, buffeted by honey-stained, wood-paneled walls that have been angled to create peaks and valleys. They resemble giant origami pieces, with the angles designed to cradle sound and gently reverberate it back to the audience—the State of Florida allocation of \$11.6 million funded this beautiful and highly functional facility.

The Bower School of Music & the Arts hosts more than 150 local and visiting art events open to the public each year! A number of these events are free and available on a first-come basis. Many residents have mentioned that they would like to increase cultural activities such as classical music concerts, jazz, and theater performances. Sadly, few realize the fantastic talent here in the Greater Estero area. The concerts available at the Bower School and other local venues can be seen by visiting their website: <https://www.fgcu.edu/cas/bsma/>.

By visiting and supporting the work of the Bower School of Music & the Arts, the chances are you could well be attending the performances of future world stars!

The Bower School serves as the hub of FGCU's campus cultural life while preparing students to excel as professionals in the arts and related fields. It collaborates with other academic disciplines through innovative programs like the Crossroads of Art and Science Residency.

For example, the Bower School's B.A. in Music-Performance offers students musical and academic preparation for a music career.

Dr. Krzysztof Biernacki, Director at the Bower School, is a highly accomplished internationally recognized vocalist. His recent engagements include solo recitals at international music festivals in Spain, Italy, Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, France, Norway, and Canada.



As an opera singer, Dr. Biernacki appeared in principal roles with Vancouver Opera, Manitoba Opera, Calgary Opera, Orchestra London Canada, and Banff Center for Performing Arts. His concert appearances have included Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, North Czech Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique du Nouveau Monde in Montreal, and Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra. As an opera stage director, he has directed over 30 opera productions.

The Bower School of Music & the Arts has built up an impressive reputation for identifying and encouraging the talents of many musicians that have become nationally and internationally recognized.

This academic year 2021/22, four students (Arturo Fernandez, Jair Zacarias, Victoria Paulino, and Alejandra Rivero) were among the semifinalists in the Parnassus Piano Competition for all citizens of all South and Central America, with three chosen in 1st, 2nd and 3rd place! Additionally, four Bower School piano students were chosen out of the world's talented student pianists for only 12 spots in the 8th Ian Hobson International Piano Festival in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Three of these students have won the MTNA Piano Competition for the state of Florida for the last three consecutive years. This competition chooses the top pianist in the state from all undergraduate and graduate programs. These achievements underscore the excellence of the musical talent and the work of the staff at the Bower School here on our doorstep.

Priscila Navarro: She began her piano studies at nine at the National Conservatory of Music (now University of Music) in Lima, Peru¹. After being identified as a potential rising star, she was offered a scholarship at the Bower School of Music & the Arts at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) in Fort Myers at the age of 16.

Among many accomplishments, she was awarded a full scholarship to study at the prestigious Tanglewood Music Festival in Massachusetts. In 2011, she won the South American Chopin Competition, in which she competed against all eligible pianists up to the age of 30 in South America.

On March 7, 2013, she showed the performing-arts world the potential of what was then the Bower School of Music (now Music & the Arts) on the concert stage at hallowed Carnegie Hall² when she presented a solo recital. Her appearance culminated in a triumphant series of state, national and international competition wins in 2011. These achievements included the International Chopin Competition in Texas, earning her the spotlight in New York City. She is now a world-renowned pianist, and yes, she was here on our doorstep several years ago!

On March 21 this year, Priscila and Dr. Michael Baron (Professor, Bower School of Music & the Arts) will play at Carnegie Hall. This concert is in celebration of their recently internationally released CD of "French Music for Two Pianos". Here is the link to the FGCU page about the Carnegie concert.
<https://www.fgcu.edu/concerts/baronnavarro.aspx>

No supporter was more significant than her mentor and still collaborator, Dr. Michael Baron, the Myra and Van Williams Distinguished Professor of Music and head of keyboard studies at FGCU. "Priscila's Carnegie Hall solo recital was very important to Priscila and the Bower School of Music & the Arts," Baron said. "We have had an enormous number of successes in our young life, but one of the difficulties of beginning a new school is getting your name out. We are all enormously proud of Priscila's continuing successes since that time." She performs a wide range of styles,



If interested, details of the recent CD recording from Priscila Navarro and Dr. Michael Baron featuring FRENCH MUSIC FOR PIANO DUO (Claude Debussy, Francis Poulenc, Maurice Ravel, Camille Saint-Saëns) BARON & NAVARRO PIANO DUO, can be found by clicking the link here:
[https://www.msacd.com/catalog/cd/MS1](https://www.msacd.com/catalog/cd/MS1732)

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from the 20th and 21st Century, ranging from J.S. Bach to Rachmaninoff, and continues locally to solo with the Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra.



Jade and Sapphire Gibson: Using the knowledge and advice she received in Daveler & Kauanui School of Entrepreneurship (<https://www.fgcu.edu/soe/>) and the skills refined in the music program, Jade Gibson started her own business, [Jade Strings](#).³

With Jade on violin, Sapphire on harp, and a mix of string musicians, many from FGCU filling out the group, they have played for over 200 clients and racked up \$80,000 in revenue playing at weddings and special events in

2018. (Photo courtesy of Ashlee Nicole Photography.)

Jade picked up the violin at age seven and five years later was playing with the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra Youth Orchestra! She has taken playing the viola to the highest levels, playing with Itzhak Perlman, Cirque du Soleil, Electric Light Orchestra, the Alan Parsons Project, Frankie Valli, and Amy Grant. Jade has also been featured in the "Game of Thrones" TV series orchestra performances.

Lisa Hamman: despite all the despair that life has thrown at her (life-threatening cancer), Hamman has an inner strength to help lift her spirits:

"I remember being in the grocery store with my mother as a young girl, singing up and down the aisles," Lisa Hamman says. The songs she always carried in her heart, even when she was too sick to sing them. That is how a talented coloratura lyric soprano deals with a potentially life-threatening situation.

And that is what helped Hamman seamlessly transfer from FSU back home to familiar mentors at FGCU and the Bower School of Music & the Arts. Now cancer-free and returning to peak vocal form — she gave a solo performance in November at the [U. Tobe Recital Hall](#). (Photo: James Greco/FGCU)



The first half of her recital included French and German art songs, a baroque piece by Bach and an Italian aria by Mozart, while the English portion of her performance featured two songs — "A Night of Dreams" and "You're Making My Dream Come True" — written and published by her great-grandparents. "It was stuff you would hear on the radio back then, like a ballad ... jazzy,

romantic pieces," Hamman said. She was accompanied on piano by Professor Mary Seal and flutist Jacob Cowley.

"She has always been a superb student and very serious about her preparation and artistry," said Darnell, an internationally acclaimed soprano and voice instructor. "When she was a student at North Fort Myers, I knew of her great skill as a singer," said Trent Brown, associate professor of music and director of choral activities at FGCU. "She had already developed a strong vocal technique⁴."



The Bower School's Symphony Orchestra is a large, auditioned ensemble performing standard symphonic literature. Regular collaborations with FGCU choral ensembles include an annual holiday concert and major works such as Mozart's Requiem and Handel's Messiah.

The Chamber String Quartet ensemble frequently tours off-campus and was a featured guest ensemble in Tampa at the 2018 FMEA All-State Convention. This versatile ensemble performs works from Baroque masterpieces with period instruments to contemporary works by living composers.

<https://www.fgcu.edu/cas/bsma/music/musicensembles/orchestra#Spring2022>

The Chamber Choir is recognized for its remarkable versatility. The ensemble performs choral music from the Renaissance to newly commissioned works, including premieres by Z. Randall Stroope and Jason Bahr. The ensemble tours Florida annually and tours internationally every three years.

The Chamber Choir was featured in an international choral festival held in Lithuania called the "Kaunas Kantat" during their 2017 tour of the Baltic States, and in 2014 the choir sang as the featured ensemble at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna as part of the Kunst & Kultur series. The choir regularly collaborates with community ensembles, including Elijah with Opera Naples (2013), Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra (2015), Bach's St. Matthew Passion with Gulfshore Opera (2016), and in 2017 with the Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra in an all-Baroque program.

<https://www.fgcu.edu/cas/bsma/music/musicensembles/choir#Spring2022>



The FGCU Wind Orchestra is one of the premier ensembles in the Bower School of Music & the Arts and Florida Gulf Coast University. Since forming in 2008, the FGCU Wind Orchestra has had the opportunity to premiere works for wind bands by leading composers. The Wind Orchestra has performed at national venues, including appearances at Carnegie Hall in New York City in 2015 and The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC in 2018. Every student in the ensemble is given the opportunity to learn from outstanding studio instructors who emphasize expressive musicianship and artistry.

<https://www.fgcu.edu/cas/bsma/music/musicensembles/band#Spring2022>

The Symphonic Band is a 60-member ensemble that frequently performs significant band literature of varied musical styles and genres. Since its establishment in 2009, The Symphonic Band has garnered a reputation as a collegiate ensemble of noteworthy distinction.



With **Gulfshore Opera** having found its home in Estero offering its excellent program (www.GulfshoreOpera.org), the Greater Estero area is blessed with an amazing array of World Class talent. With the decline in the threat of serious illness from COVID and the increased precautions being taken, the opportunities for taking advantage of the range of cultural events in the Estero area has never been so extensive and impressive. Don't forget to look up the upcoming events page on the ECCL's website (<https://esterotoday.com/events/>) as well as looking at those of the Bower School of Music & the Arts <https://www.fgcu.edu/cas/bsma/> and Gulfshore Opera (www.GulfshoreOpera.org). To continue expanding the range of cultural events requested in the 2019 ECCL Residents Survey, we need to support these fantastic events planned for 2022!

References

- 1 Bach Cantatas Website <https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Navarro-Priscila.htm>
- 2 Pianist Priscila Navarro plays Carnegie Hall in the 2013 prelude to 'Dunk City'-The Way We Were, By Keith Gibson. <https://fgcu360.com/2020/11/14/pianist-priscila-navarro-plays-carnegie-hall-in-the-2013-prelude-to-dunk-city/>
- 3 Entrepreneur turns musical passion into business profit By Rick Weber. <https://fgcu360.com/2019/04/02/entrepreneur-turns-musical-passion-business-profit/>
- 4 Student triumphs over illness with a song in her heart, Music education major overcomes obstacles in her greatest performance. By Keith Gibson. January 14, 2020, <https://fgcu360.com/2020/01/14/student-triumphs-over-illness-with-a-song-in-her-heart/>



**FGCU DAY IS FEBRUARY 12, 2022
FROM 9 AM - 3 PM,
AND EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

From idea to impact

Education inspires growth, creates prosperity, strengthens community. With that idea, FGCU launched a new university 25 years ago for Southwest Florida. They created a pipeline of teachers, nurses, social workers, scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs.

For 25 years, FGCU students have served the community; bringing a community together with the arts, athletics, and advocacy. FGCU students interned at local businesses and started their own.

Together, we built a stronger Southwest Florida. From idea to impact in just 25 years. Imagine what we can do in the next 25. Click on the link to view all the events taking place together with a map of the campus and how to get around. <https://www.fgcu.edu/fgcuday/>.

Plan Your Day:

It's a whole day of family-friendly fun, beginning with a 5k walk/run and a pancake cookoff featuring some of FGCU's top leaders.

Plan your itinerary for activities all across our beautiful campus. Learn about research by touring labs. Watch for wildlife as you walk the nature trails. Enjoy live music and other performances while savoring campus dining options.

DINING OPTIONS ON CAMPUS

Visit the beautiful Bower School of Music & the Arts and check out the U.Tobe Recital Hall. Stick around as FGCU Day leads into the annual Homecoming festivities, including tailgate parties and basketball games. Make the most of FGCU Day!

Download the complete Event Guide in the App Store or Google Play to see details of 150-plus activities and plan your itinerary. Event times, food spots, parking options — it's all mapped in the app.

Directions:

From the north (via I-75)

- Take I-75 south to Alico Road at exit 128.
- Go east (left) on Alico Road for a half-mile.
- Go south (right) on Ben Hill Griffin Parkway for 2 miles.
- Turn left at the stoplight onto FGCU Boulevard at the main entrance (marked by FGCU tower and wall monument).
- Continue in the right lane and stop at the information booth for assistance with parking passes and campus maps.

From the south (via I-75)

- Take I-75 north to Corkscrew Road at Exit 123.
- Go east (right) onto Corkscrew Road for half-mile.
- Turn north (left) onto Ben Hill Griffin Parkway.
- Drive 3 miles to the main entrance (marked by FGCU tower and wall monument) and turn right onto FGCU Boulevard.
- Continue in the right lane and stop at the information booth for assistance with parking passes and campus maps.

The Boardwalk

(Waterfront Way Neighborhood) Serving burgers, pizza, and beer close to the campus beach, 11 am–10 pm.

Howard Hall

(Great Lawn Neighborhood)
The Marketplace deli and BYOB (build your own burrito, burger, and more), 10:30 am–2 pm.

Holmes Hall

(Academic Corridor Neighborhood)
Choose from Dunkin' Donuts or The Marketplace deli, 9:45 am–2 pm.

Bradshaw Library

(Great Lawn Neighborhood)
Starbucks beverages and signature snacks, 8:45 am–2 pm.

South Village

(SoVi Square Neighborhood) SoVi Dining features a diverse array of entrees and sides prepared to order, salad bar, and vegan fare, 9 am-midnight.

Cohen Student Union

(Eagle Central Neighborhood)
Choose from a variety of favorites: Einstein Bros. Bagels, 7:45 am–4 pm; Chick-Fil-A, Jamba Juice, Brahma Express sushi or 239 Burger Bar, all 10:30 am – 2 pm.



HELPING OUR LOCAL STUDENTS

The ECCL's Educational Council, led by Mike Wasson, is focused on enhancing the education of our students in the Greater Estero area. To date, through the tremendous effort of the many volunteers that have taken part in the Junior Achievement initiative, students have learned about Career Success and gained a considerable appreciation of banking and financial issues that will help them in later life.

The ECCL, in conjunction with the Estero Chamber and the Historical Society, has put in place Essay Competitions with awards for the winners. Last year, the ECCL's design

competition for the proposed Veterans Pocket Park was extraordinarily successful.

The ECCL's objective is to engage with our seniors, students, and younger families in Greater Estero. We are always interested in listening to new suggestions and ideas of how we might better help, encourage, and motivate our students in new and interesting ways.

If you have any ideas or suggestions that you feel the ECCL can implement in the months ahead, please do not hesitate to contact Mike Wasson, mikewasson6@gmail.com, via email.

2022 ESTERO ESSAY CONTEST

Three \$1,000 Scholarships for Estero High School Seniors.

Cash prizes for 4th grade students.

Sponsored by:

THE ECCL



ESTERO HISTORICAL SOCIETY



GREATER ESTERO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



REQUIREMENTS

Essays not to exceed **500 Words**, not including references or appendices such as drawings, maps, etc. Essays should address one of the following:

HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF ESTERO – ITS DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY SETTLERS (Focusing on early periods of Estero – between 500BC and 1955).

HISTORY OF GOVERNANCE OF THE VILLAGE OF ESTERO (Focusing on early periods of Estero – between 500BC and 1955).

HISTORY OF BUSINESS IN THE ESTERO AREA (Focusing on early periods of Estero – between 500BC and 1955).



DEADLINE

Submissions are Due March 18, 2022. Students may submit a separate essay for each of the above areas and thus be eligible for 3 awards.

Submission process on the printable flyers at the bottom of the page.



CRITERIA

Essays will be judged based on: Historical accuracy, organization, logical thesis development, English conventions, and inclusion of references.

EXAMPLES OF TOPICS TO GUIDE ESSAY DEVELOPMENT:

1. Choose a notable figure from Estero's history. Write a short biography of that person. Tell WHY you chose that character, WHAT made that person notable, and EXPLAIN the contributions that person made to current-day society.
2. Explain why the Estero River was important to the early settlers and the development of Estero.
3. Search for historical documents, letters, and diaries kept from the early history of Estero. What can we learn about historical events or how people lived during the early periods of Estero, starting 500BC through 1955?

HISTORICAL INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THESE SITES:

- School library or Lee County library
www.leelibrary.net
- Estero Historical Society website
www.esterohistoricalsociety.com
- Estero Historical Society Reading Room
9285 Corkscrew Palms Blvd, Estero, FL
- Koreshan Website
www.friendsofkoreshan.org
- Florida Gulf Coast University library resources
fgcu.edu
- Interviews of local historians or ancestors of early settlers

4TH GRADE PRINTABLE FLYER

HIGH SCHOOL PRINTABLE FLYER



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