

Florida High School High Tech Speech & Research Contest

The Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) program is based on the nationally-recognized *Guideposts for Success* developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, and adapted by The Able Trust. The Guideposts provide programmatic framework that focuses on high expectations and successful outcomes for youth with disabilities. This year, The Able Trust developed and implemented a sixth guidepost, *Communication Skills*. Whether applying for a new job or looking for a promotion, good communication skills are important. The ability to communicate both verbally and in writing with a wide variety of people, maintain good eye contact, write clearly and succinctly, demonstrate a varied vocabulary, and tailor language according to the audience, are all essential skills that employers seek out. Good verbal and written communication means getting the message across with less chance of misunderstanding.

For a second year, The Able Trust has hosted a statewide HSHT Speech and Research Contest to promote the development of effective communication skills among HSHT students. The goals of the contest are to develop research, public speaking, and communication skills of students, which are critical to successful employment and self-advocacy. The contest also serves as an introduction for students to policy topics relevant to all Floridians.

The contest has three levels of competition: local, regional, and state. The winner of each regional contest advanced to the state competition held this June at The Able Trust Board of Directors meeting, with the directors acting as contest judges.

The Able Trust is pleased to announce the winners of the 2017 HSHT Speech and Research Contest, and to thank everyone involved who made this year's event a great success! ■



1st Place:
Mackenzie Pugh,
Wakulla HSHT

**Topic: Increasing Civic
Participation Among
Floridians**

2nd Place:
Abria Preyer,
Foster Care HSHT

**Topic: Bullying in
Schools and the
Workplace**



3rd Place:
RJ Curtis,
Pasco HSHT

**Topic: Encouraging
Adoption from the
Foster Care System**

4th Place:
Riley Littlefield,
Leon HSHT

**Topic: Increasing Civic
Participation Among
Floridians**

