

# Pinecrest

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## Positive PEOPLE in Pinecrest

When her younger cousin was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes, St. Brendan's High School senior Ashton Rae Barnes Sanchez went into action. She started Gabriella's Group to raise money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation by taking part in the Juvenile Diabetes Walk. She put the group together in three months and raised approximately \$1,000 in the first year.

"We got donations and we all just walked together," Sanchez says. "We had 30-something people."

The second year, they walked again, but they doubled the donations. Sanchez expects to begin work on the next walk after the holiday season.

"Last year I got a group of people come to dinner at my house and we got donations and got people to sign up right there," she says.

Gabriella's Group is Sanchez's major community service project, but she's done enough volunteering to earn about 600 community service hours. She also volunteered at a summer camp for a couple of years.

"I worked at a summer camp in my freshman and sophomore years," she says. "Camp Rejoice was at my old middle school - St. John Neumann Catholic School."

There she worked with the kids, primarily helping with arts and crafts and organizing events.

At St. Brendan's, she is a member of the Respect Life Club and Generating Respect and Acceptance for Children with Exceptionalities (GRACE).

"For the first project, we taught other



**ASHTON BARNES SANCHEZ**

students about famous people that have exceptionalities," she says. "We work with other organizations."

She's a member of the Business Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta and Tri M, the music honor society.

"I play piano and I play a little bit of violin," she says. "We don't have a music program at school. We're trying to start one, but I don't think it will be ready by the time I graduate."

Sanchez is heavily involved in Campus Ministry, which runs the masses and retreats done at the school.

"Instead of taking Religion Four, I've

taken Campus Ministry," she says. "More than 100 students apply and only 30 are selected."

Her responsibility includes the monthly mass that's held for the entire school, then the masses that are done for the freshman class, the sophomore class, the junior class and the senior class.

"And then we start all over again," she says. "We do the readings, the offertory and the alter servings. It's set readings every week, but we choose who is going to read them and who is going to bring up the Eucharist and wine."

As for her future, she is considering two plans — one would send her to Florida State University and the other has her attending Miami-Dade College for two years and then going to New York to study fashion.

"I like more of the business of the fashion world," she says. "I want to be a buyer, I want to go to the fashion shows and buy what's going to be in the stores,"

She is working toward that goal by taking a fashion class at a couture house near Miracle Mile in Coral Gables.

"They are teaching me how to hand sew, how to use a sewing machine," she says. "We learn how to make a collection, how to draw our designs."

While most people who are looking to go into the fashion world want to design, she is more interested in the financial end of the business.

"My strong suit is math; I like putting the two together, the fashion and the math," she says.

By Linda Rodriguez Bernfeld