



## Governor's Sterling Award Best Practice

### ***Supporting Art Education through the Kids Tag Art Program***

In 2002, as a way to support the local community, the Tax Collector encouraged staff members to participate in the Great American Teach-In where specialty plates were shared with enthusiastic fifth-grade students. Recognizing that tax collector services are not the most riveting topic, the Assistant Tax Collector developed an approach for elementary students, educating them on Florida's specialty plates and inviting them to create their own specialty license plate artwork. By 2006, the Tax Collector for Polk County (TCPC) formalized the annual program for rising fifth graders, and the "Kids Tag Art" program was born.

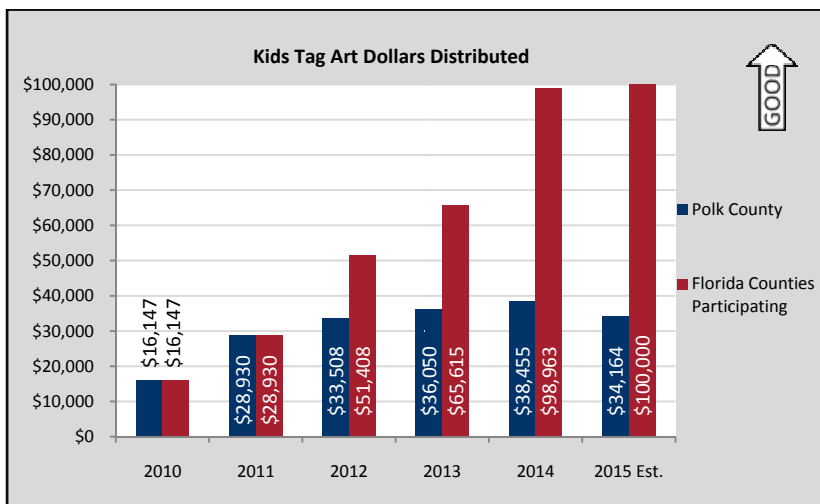
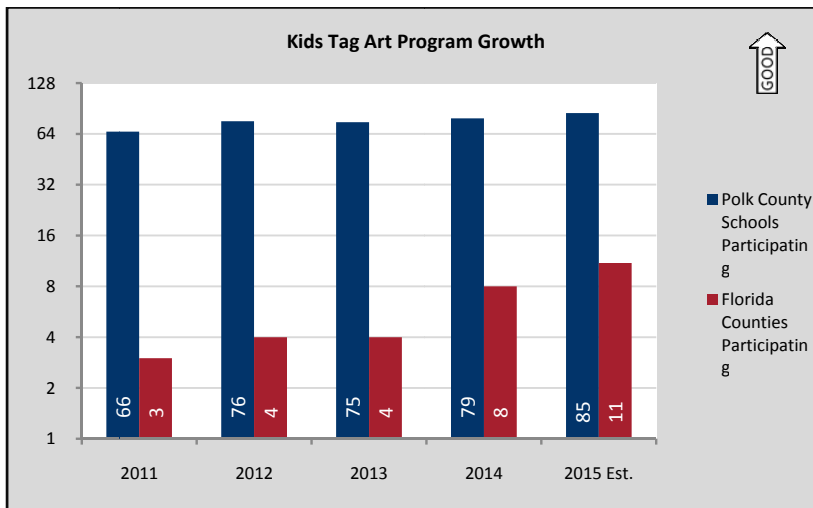
The program encourages art teachers to offer an eight-week curriculum during which the students create their own specialized licensed plate or "tag". Students compete to be one of the top two designs from each school which become the *Awards of Distinction* recipients, and their art becomes part of the traveling Kids Tag Art Exhibit for the remainder of the school year. In the time that this program has been in existence, there have been thousands of license plate designs created and transformed into replica key fobs and front bumper vanity plates for sale. With 100% of the proceeds going back into the classroom, to date over \$230,000 has been raised in Polk County and in excess of \$350,000 for community classroom art supplies across Florida. All proceeds from the sale of tags remain with each school and is put back into the Art Departments' budget, allowing teachers to continuously expand and build educational offerings that enhance the creative classroom experience.

Kids Tag Art teams with local businesses to defray the cost of administering the program and at each year-end, surplus dollars are spread among all participating schools. The program supports a focus on Science, Technical, Engineering, Arts, & Math (STEAM) and is continued evidence of the organization's *Caring Culture* core competency as well as its strong community leadership. Furthermore, the program identifies and begins building a relationship with the Tax Collector's emerging key stakeholder group - youth – with a positive first experience. In addition, this program fosters the student's awareness of the *Creative Industries*, both as a career path and as an important economic engine. Finally, the creative self-expression students are afforded through the Kids Tag Art program seeks to develop innovative thinking and problem-solving among its future leaders.

The program is designed for the public schools, although charter, private and home school groups are encouraged and actively participate in this fun learning experience. Presently, there are eight other counties in the state that are actively participating in the Kids Tag Art program, with several large school districts to be added in the upcoming school year. With an 83% sustained teacher satisfaction score for program administration, and as many as 79 Polk County elementary schools participating, the program continues to evolve and gain momentum with an annual process improvement cycle. Presently, the Public Information Coalition of the Florida Tax Collector's Association has endorsed the Kids Tag Art program and created a special subcommittee to assist any tax collectors wishing to adopt the program for their county.

On a community level, this program provides a footprint of what a public-private-community program can mean to local school districts who seek to engage their citizens in the education of its youth. Now, nine years later, some of the first program participants are tax collector customers of driving age, whose first experience with local government was positive. Staff volunteers at all levels in the organization enjoy and take great pride in their participation and support of the Kids Tag Art Program, including offering classroom design assistance to new teachers, coordinating special awards events, and staffing outreach booths at art shows and youth events, as well purchasing student artwork for their own cars.

Other tax collectors or agencies that are responsible for vehicle registration and car tags can easily adopt the Kids Tag Art program in their community, using a “Starter Kit” created to assist in duplicating the program, but allowing each participating county to personalize the program to meet its particular needs and goals. Other organizations can utilize the Kids Tag Art format for fundraising applications, including products with artwork that can be designed by children of all ages.



Survey	2011	2012	2013	2014
Polk Teacher Satisfaction	86%	88%	81%	83%