

# COMMUNITY CENTRAL

## Campers enjoy Science at G.WIZ

By RITA MAZER

Special to the Herald-Tribune

Seventeen children, from kindergarten through middle school, are receiving full scholarships to the Summer Science Camps at G.WIZ.

"For the fourth year in a row, the generosity of the Blivas Foundation made dreams come true for these kids from socioeconomically challenged families who otherwise would not have had this opportunity," said Victoria Brown, founder and president of Dollar Dynasty Inc., the beneficiary of the scholarships. "We are deeply grateful."

The camp is in session through Aug. 13.

Brown, who is often referred to as "Miss Vickie," works closely with G.WIZ's education director, **Aleksandra Spalvins**, who said the collaboration has been a wonderful experience for both organizations.

"We've offered 35 different topics this summer, everything from the study of dinosaurs, rockets, bugs, sharks, health and nutrition — you name it," Spalvins said. "We even offered a dive camp and we're getting ready to embark on a movie-making session. The kids have an opportunity to learn in small groups using a hands-on approach."



Matthew Barksdale displays the certificate he received for his participation in rocket camp.

"I can't tell you how much I appreciate this opportunity for Desmond," his mother, **Mamie Johnson**, said. "He has enjoyed every moment of his camp experience thanks to G.WIZ and Dollar Dynasty."

For the past three years, the organizations provided scholarships only to Sarasota County youngsters, but this year they also offered them to three Manatee County middle school students.

"The kids from Manatee really enjoyed our Water Camp," Spalvins said. "We taught them how humans impact watersheds and all about water properties. They



From left, Jakarea Davis, Taliyah Davis, Desmond Johnson and Leeana Flores learned about all sorts of bugs at the G.WIZ camp. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY RITA MAZER



From left, Gray Gordon, Michael Snider, Tyler Mathis, Lorenzo Flores and Oliver Calderon attend rocket camp at G.WIZ.