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ART: on the chopping block

Many classes and 84 arts teachers may get the ax in Lee County

BY EVAN WILLIAMS
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CATHY LOGAN, AN ART TEACHER AT CAPE Elementary school, said her classes teach children “a level of abstraction and open-mindedness that they’ll be able to use for the rest of their lives.”

And it’s something they come to school looking forward to.

“They are so excited when they come in for art,” she said. “The first thing I have to do is calm them down. They are so excited to have that opportunity to be creative.”

But those opportunities to produce paintings and prints, bake pottery, read music, sing and solve creative dilemmas, could disappear. Kindergarten through 5th grade students here may return next fall to find their art and music classes canceled and their teachers — 84 of them — gone. It’s the only part of the school district’s curriculum which ended up on the chopping block when large budget shortfalls were predicted.

Reading, writing, math, science, social studies and foreign language classes are safe because they’re funded with state dollars. Physical education is

“Art and music are not something we’re given money for. We have to pay for that above (state funding).” — Dr. James Browder, Lee school superintendent



SEE SCHOOLS, A8 ►

>>inside:
The community reacts to the proposed cuts.
A8

Children’s Home Society gives ‘at-risk’ families a leg up

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

BY STEPHANIE WESTENDORF
Special to Florida Weekly

Two-year old Adam smiled, his curly brown hair bouncing as he laughed. He alternated between toy planes and markers, playing on the living room floor.

Before Adam’s mother became pregnant at 37, she lived “in a different world.”

“My lifestyle was definitely darker before,” said Faith Percuoco, who was involved in an emotionally abusive relationship.

Three months pregnant, Ms. Percuoco struggled to quit smoking, felt lonely, and suffered from depression and anxiety.

Literally, faith seemed lost.

But then she met her first Family Support Worker through the Children’s Home Society, a statewide nonprofit organization that helps vulnerable



COURTESY PHOTO

Faith Percuoco and her son Adam in their Southwest Florida home.

SEE PREVENTION, A12 ►

INSIDE



Falling in love

“The Last Romance,” opening at Florida Rep on April 24, proves you’re never too old for love. C1 ►



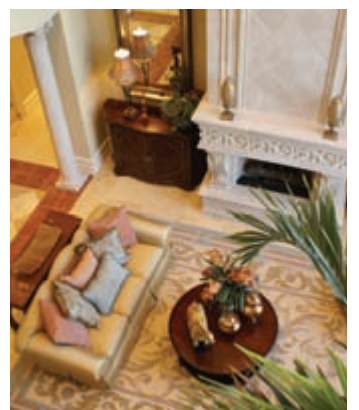
Incandescent Evening

And other society events in Lee County. C27, 28, 30 & 31 ►



Fashion biz

How independent boutiques beat a beastly recession. B1 ►



A view of Vizcaya

Grand estate by Gulfshore Homes fits in beautifully at Miramar Lakes. D1 ►

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OPINION A4
15 MINUTES A6
BUSINESS B1

ON THE MOVE B4
NETWORKING B10 & 11
ARTS C1
EVENTS C6&7

NANCY STETSON C8
SOCIETY C27, 28, 30 & 31
CUISINE C35
REAL ESTATE D1

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