

**PRESS RELEASE**  
*For Immediate Release*

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## **Mill Neck Student Draws Fans in the New School Year**

As many teens do, Rachel Ponce de Leon, a Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf student, wore a new shirt on the first day of school. Stepping off the bus, she joined friends to catch up, show off new hairstyles and accessories and prepare for the opening day of a new school year. But unlike her comrades, Rachel was wearing a shirt with her own artwork - a trio of characters she drew inspired by the Japanese-style "anime" genre. The drawing amazed students and staff alike with its bright colors, gestural lines and utter coolness.

The eighteen-year-old, who draws primarily with crayons and markers, titled her illustration "wolf moon," a name based on her love of werewolf lore. The trio of characters is actually herself and two friends, drawn with the large eyes and cartoony structure typical of the genre. It was Rachel's mother, and her mother's artist friend, who encouraged her to create a design for a tee-shirt. The only downside? Lots of illustration requests from friends and family...and not enough time to design them all! But overall, Rachel is thrilled with the response and glows with excitement when asked about her artwork.

"No one taught me how to draw," said Rachel. "I bought a book and became so inspired to start illustrating. I learned styles on my own, and now I draw every day!" Rachel plans to attend college after she graduates, where she'll study fine art, and perhaps take her interests in a different direction with graphic art. Gallaudet University, in Washington DC, is a top choice at the moment, but the junior will continue looking at various colleges until she makes a decision.

"I'll definitely study art. I love it! I love creating...it's something I truly enjoy!" explained Rachel. The eleventh grader loves drawing people, but also illustrates other subjects such as "anything 'anime' and the things around me." While she doesn't have a specific favorite artist yet, she likes to study art history and learn new techniques.

Looking forward to art projects, Rachel plans to actively take part in creative lessons this school year. She'll also design a logo for an upcoming "Hopes and Dreams" Walk-a-Thon water bottle. The event will be held on October 22, 2011 as a fundraiser for a Mill Neck Manor Early Childhood Center renovation project. Rachel is excited to be part of the event and is thrilled to be

able to help raise money through bottle sales. “This is so cool!” she exclaimed when asked to share her talents. For more information on the upcoming “Hopes and Dreams” Walk-a-Thon, visit <http://millneck.org/news/calendar/calendar.php>, and scroll by date.

Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf is part of the Mill Neck Family of Organizations, a not-for-profit group dedicated to serving Deaf and hard of hearing individuals through educational, vocational and spiritual programs and services. For more information about any of its programs, please call (516) 922-4100 or visit <http://www.millneck.org>.

*Photo Caption:*

Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf student Rachel Ponce de Leon drew an illustration that was placed on a tee-shirt. The eleventh grader is a gifted artist.

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