

## Indiana Student Honored With International Award

**Arlington, Va., March 1, 2020** — In February, **Emma Dillon** of Franklin, Ind., received the **2020 Yes I Can Award** from the **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**.



A senior at Franklin Community High School, Emma was born with severe hearing loss and has worked hard to overcome her exceptionality, becoming an accomplished entrepreneur and excellent student who participates in many extracurricular activities.

Over the years, Emma has benefited from accommodations and numerous technologies, and received direct support from teachers for the deaf, speech therapists, and even oral language facilitators. When her longtime teacher for the deaf and hard of hearing, Jane Ellen Watkins, was diagnosed with cancer, Emma founded Emma's Bows for a Cure in the summer of 2013. Out of tremendous respect and admiration for Jane Ellen, she searched for a way in which to make a difference. She began making bows and selling them to raise funds for donations to the American Cancer Society.

Emma has grown significantly in the six years that have passed since her initial idea for Emma's Bows for a Cure, and so has her business. To date, she has donated \$42,000 towards cancer research and various missions in Haiti through merchandise sales and her Relay for Life team, "Tiny People, Big Hearts."

"From such a young age, Emma set forth to make a difference in people's lives," says nominator Tai Botkin, who teaches Emma and other students who are hard of hearing. "It started by raising money for cancer research, but it has allowed her to make connections within our community as a role model for so many children and adults. She is an incredible student, a truly kind and wonderful person, and her hearing loss is often forgotten because of all that she has been able to accomplish."

Emma also maintains an exceptional 4.1 GPA, participates in cheerleading, is a competitive power-lifter, volunteers as a mentor for students with hearing loss in her community, was nominated to the Homecoming and Prom Courts, has received numerous community and academic accolades, won several Relay for Life Awards, and is a member of her school's Superintendent Council and National Honor Society.

Next year, she will start school at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business with the goal of working for a non-profit organization in the future.

CEC is proud to honor Emma with this award in the School & Community Activities category. She received the award at the Yes I Can Award Ceremony on February 7, 2020, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Ore., as part of the CEC 2020 Convention & Expo. The Yes I Can program recognizes the accomplishments of 12 students with exceptionalities in six categories: Academics, Arts, School & Community Activities, Self-Advocacy, Technology, and Transition.



---

---

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the educational success of children and youth with exceptionalities that accomplishes its mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development. Learn more about CEC at [cec.sped.org](http://cec.sped.org).

###