

California Student Honored With International Award

Arlington, Va., March 1, 2020 — In February, **Jonathan Fratz** of Harbor City, Cal., received the **2020 Yes I Can Award** from the **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**.



Jonathan is an example of how, with hard work and determination, one can accomplish anything. A bright, enthusiastic, and creative eighth-grader, he has succeeded in nearly everything he has set out to do – from giving the culmination speech for his fifth-grade graduation; to speaking in front of the school board to request fair representation of student input; to being selected to represent his fellow students as part of the Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council; to running a successful campaign for student body president of Alexander Fleming Middle School.

At the age of 3 and a half, Jonathan was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and did not speak until he was 6 years old. Despite these challenges, Jonathan has overcome many setbacks to get to where he is today.

“Autism is my superpower,” says Jonathan. “Although I face many obstacles, I continue to overcome them with determination and hard work. It doesn’t stop me from advocating for my fellow students with disabilities or pursuing my dreams of going to UCLA and becoming the first autistic president of the United States.”

Jonathan believes that all students deserve to have their voices heard and has worked diligently to make this a reality. He continues to work within his school and district to raise awareness around the importance of student input in order to make education equitable. His drive to be in public service has inspired others in his school to participate, even helping his fellow candidates with their campaigns and speeches and offering advice. In the words of his teachers, he is a great leader and an amazing representative of his school.

CEC is proud to honor Jonathan with this award in the School & Community Activities category. He 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.

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