



For Immediate Release

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Michigan Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February 27, 2023 – Mason McLean, of Mackinac Island, MI, received the 2023 Yes I Can Award for Self Advocacy from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Mason will be honored this March along with other Yes I Can recipients at the CEC Convention and Expo in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Yes I Can Awards celebrate the achievements of children and youth with exceptionalities, encouraging these individuals to seek their highest potential and increase public awareness of the abilities, aspirations, and personal qualities of those with disabilities.

Mason is a 10th-grade student at Mackinac Island Public School who is exceptional at advocating for himself and his needs. He has Autism Spectrum Disorder and Visual Impairment, so his skills are necessary in and out of school. Living on a tiny island with no cars, except emergency vehicles, makes independence in transportation to school especially important. Mason navigates the route on his bike or snow mobile, ensuring he's on time and ready to learn and socialize.

His teachers love watching him self advocate in and out of the classroom. He enjoys learning and conversing with other students about shared interests in languages, social studies, and current events. He has even been able to take the lead in his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting in 9th grade! The IEP team was very impressed by his ability to answer questions and provide the exact information needed when it was requested. One team member even remarked "that was the best student led IEP that I have ever attended!"

Mason takes his self advocacy outside of school, where he volunteers for his local church group and plays on the school soccer, basketball, and golf teams. Sometimes he needs special accommodations, but he makes sure to speak up and connect with the right folks who will help him get what he needs. Mason says "I continue to help support my local community, and help lead my team and my family, and help advocate for myself. I do it for when I need to or when it is needed to occur."



The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to high-quality education that is inclusive and equitable for individuals with disabilities. Learn more about CEC at <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>.

Thank you to [Pearson](#) for their continued support of the Yes I Can Awards!