



For Immediate Release

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## Delaware Student Honored with International Award

**Arlington, Va., February 27, 2023** – Shelby Farris, of Bridgeville, DE, received the 2023 Yes I Can Award for Community & School Activities from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

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.

Shelby has dealt with physical and learning challenges their entire life. Shelby and their family fought for diagnosis and support and once they found their voice – both literally and figuratively – they were determined to help others.

During the pandemic, Shelby founded *Students for Educational Equity in the United States*, where they work with students and families who need support to access an inclusive educational experience. Last year, Shelby was chosen by the Governor of Delaware to serve as the student representative to the state Board of Education. As part of their year of service, Shelby championed trauma informed practices, and held the first *Proud Schools Conference* aimed at building safer and more inclusive classrooms for LGBTQIA+ students and families. Since then, Shelby has worked to create a student-to-student mentoring program, connecting younger students to older, more experienced students in school.

At this year's CEC Convention and Expo, Shelby also had the distinction of being chosen to present a poster session titled "Building Proud Schools", alongside educational leaders from throughout the US and Canada. Their session provided attendees with research-based strategies for supporting exceptional learners and their families who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

"It is important for students to just feel heard, feel supported, to be able to talk things through, and to know that they are not alone with their challenges. Just giving students a community has a great impact," says Shelby. They continue to bring awareness to educational equity issues in their community. Under Shelby's leadership, SEE US currently offers training and support to families across the country.



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!