



For Immediate Release

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Texas Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2024 – Zachary LaViola of Austin, Texas, received the 2024 Yes I Can Award for Art from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Zachary will be honored this March along with other Yes I Can recipients at the CEC Convention and Expo in San Antonio, Texas.

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

Zachary lives with autism, a communication disorder, Deafblindness, and cerebral palsy. As a toddler, Zachary showed a proclivity toward music, singing before he began to speak and teaching himself to play the piano at a college level by middle school. He wanted to share his passion for music with others and underwent formal piano training.

In his first year of training, Zachary started competing, earning gold medals at regional and state competitions. He was awarded Musician of the Year after his first full year at the Texas School for the Blind.

Zachary is an active and contributing member of his community, volunteering his musical abilities at numerous events, where he advocates for inclusion and combats prejudice. Zachary is currently enrolled at the Perkins School for the Blind and is studying at the Berklee College of Music.

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/>.