New York Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2024 – Mary Ogbo of Jamaica, Queens, New York, received the 2024 Yes I Can Award for School and Community from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Mary 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.

Mary has worked to achieve independence at home and school and has learned strategies that allow her to be self-sufficient in many aspects of her life. She lives with arthrogryposis, which includes stiff joints and weak muscles. She utilizes a power wheelchair and has limited use of her arms and hands.

Mary is a member of her school’s National Honor Society and holds leadership positions, currently as the Vice President of the Student Council. In addition to her academic leadership, she is an advocate for disability awareness in her local schools.

Her knitting and crocheting hobby led to the creation of a range of items that can be attached to wheelchairs, allowing wheelchair users to access their items independently. In her advocacy work, she brings her adaptive stitched creations to other schools and distributes them to students who would benefit from them.

Mary is a mentor to her fellow peers, always willing to lend a hand. She plans to attend college and pursue a career in special education. Her nominator says, “She is the epitome of compassion, selflessness, and humility. I feel privileged to know her and to be part of her journey.”

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/.