

California Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2024 – Josemaria “Chema” Romo of Riverside, California, received the 2024 Yes I Can Award for Technology from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Josemaria 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.

Chema, who has severe to moderately severe conductive unilateral hearing loss, has been using a Ponto band since the age of three. Since beginning school, Chema has embraced the technology that assists him, such as his Phonak Roger Touchscreen microphone, pass-around mic, a Dynamic Soundfield System speaker that amplifies not only to his Ponto but the classroom, a multimedia hub that connects to media, a mini mic, and a Roger X that syncs all the equipment to his Ponto. He has become a tech wiz, learning how to troubleshoot his equipment, teaching others how to utilize it, and taking care that everything is charged and working.

As a “tech wiz” Chema has learned how to help others and test technology. When he moved to a new setting with two teachers, he was able to come up with a solution to ensure that his technology would be able to follow him throughout the school day. He has proved to be an excellent beta tester, helping his school district pilot new technology that would allow for easier syncing to hearing aids when moving from classroom to classroom. With all of the information and feedback Chema was able to provide, the pilot was successful and led to the district implementing the new technology in the local high school.

Chema’s nominator says, “You have heard of Sunny California. I think it’s a bit “Sunnier” because Chema lives here in Riverside, CA.”

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/>.