

Tennessee Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February 7, 2025 - Grace Falleur of Nashville, Tennessee, received the 2025 Yes I Can Award for Academics from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Grace will be honored this March along with other Yes I Can recipients at the CEC Convention and Expo in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Yes I Can Awards celebrate and honor the achievements of children and youth with exceptionalities while increasing public awareness of the abilities and aspirations of students with disabilities.

Grace is working toward a career as a researcher and advocate. She was three when diagnosed with autism and had unreliable speech. She could speak words but was unable to use words on command. Access to spelling letterboards provided her the opportunity to display her knowledge and excel at school.

Grace graduated with a 4.2 GPA and was accepted to various universities. She chose Belmont University, where she was known as the university advocate. She excels in neuroscience with a 3.62 while advocating for and conducting autism research.

Grace has discussed the negative implications of presumptions of low abilities with pre-service teachers. She was also invited to Harvard University as a panel member to discuss and advocate for accommodations and created two videos as resources for students.

“You have to start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can,” says Grace.

She plans to apply to grad school and be an autism researcher. Focused on self-advocacy and academics, she’s ready to tackle barriers and prejudice.

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/>.