

Illinois Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2026 – Dale Jeremiah (DJ) Robinson of Aurora, Illinois, received the 2026 Yes I Can Award for Academics from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). DJ will be honored this March along with other Yes I Can recipients at the CEC Convention and Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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.

DJ is a twice-exceptional student on the autism spectrum, living with anxiety. Diagnosed early in life, his mom became a huge advocate, delving into research and working closely with his schools to ensure DJ had all of the support and accommodations needed to succeed. Through his encouraging school and home environment, he has been able to thrive academically and socially.

DJ's voice can be heard in East Aurora High School classrooms as he delivers the morning announcements. He continues his active involvement through his participation in the National Honor Society and National Society of High School Scholars, in addition to two mentorships through African American Men Of Unity and Guide Right. He's an active member of the NAACP, where he served as a Delegate at the 2025 Illinois State Conference.

DJ's commitment to his academics is evident in his numerous award certificates. Within the past year, he has been awarded 11 certificates, including ones for attendance, academics, High Honor Roll and Leadership. He is focused on preparing for graduation and entering the next phase of his academic career in higher education, having already received several scholarships.

"Throughout my life, I have been taught that having integrity and being inclusive is very important, so I choose to be a kindhearted leader that stands out, instead of just trying to fit in," shares DJ. "I actively participate among my peers within my classes, community service, social events and mentor programs. I do so to encourage myself and others to engage in the lessons being taught to us, and the opportunities offered as a collective. It helps to shift the positivity and dialog among those within the environment. I advocate for myself, as well as my neurodivergent and neurotypical peers."

"Above all of DJ's magnificent accomplishments, his character is the most important quality about him," shares school counselor Monique Mitrani, M.Ed. "His resilience, intelligence, and kind heart make him one of the most remarkable students I have ever worked with."

Thank you to Einstein Advocates for sponsoring the Yes I Can Awards.



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For Immediate Release

Contact: *Annie Drinkard*

703-264-9455

adrinkard@exceptionalchildren.org

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/>.