

Delaware Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2026 – Lilyan Farris of Bridgeville, Delaware, received the 2026 Yes I Can Award for Advocacy from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Lilyan 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.

Lilyan is on the autism spectrum and also lives with epilepsy, dysautonomia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS), and Ehlers Danlos. Despite the numerous challenges her medical conditions place, Lilyan has been dedicated to serving her community since the age of 3. She began her community service journey as the designated cheer volunteer for the local American Red Cross, a duty she took seriously, helping to send more than 500 cards to volunteers.

Lilyan became passionate about preparedness education and got involved with the ARC's smoke alarm installation program.

She started The Lily Project in 2016 to “spread seeds of kindness,” where she launched card-making campaigns for first responders, active-duty soldiers, and veterans. To date, more than 75,000 cards have been sent out.

She has worked in her community to host toy and book drives to create a library and playroom in a center that supports mothers battling addiction. She has also worked to divert over 100,000 items out of landfills, finding new life in repurposing these items.

When faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, children and students like Lilyan struggled to get their needed educational supports. Lilyan and her sister created Students for Educational Equity in the US (SEE US), which provides professional development for educators, information campaigns, speaking engagements, and more to advocate for educational equity. Recently, SEE US has secured funding to promote physical activities and sports for those who may not be able to participate in traditional sports programs.

“Lily has recruited many of her peers at school to work with SEE US, and through this, she has opened doors for many of them to do things they never imagined possible.” shares her nominator. “SEE US is a community for me, not just a project. I’ve always been passionate about social justice, so I created a space where I’m not only making change, but building community along the way,” says Lilyan.

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



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/>.

