

Kentucky Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2026 – Aleah Stigall of Danville, Kentucky, received the 2026 Yes I Can Award for School and Community from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Aleah 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.

Aleah has a Specific Learning Disability of Reading Fluency. She struggled with her speech for many years before being identified in 4th grade. Through support and accommodation, Aleah worked hard and maintained her solid grades. Upon entering high school and taking higher-level courses, she encountered new challenges and began to embrace her learning differences, asking for help and informing her teachers of her struggles.

Through embracing her differences, Aleah has been able to access supports that have enabled her to thrive in her academics, ranking third in her class over a 4.33 GPA and a 35 ACT score.

Aleah also has strong community ties, traveling to numerous elementary schools to talk about the importance of connection and reading books on the topic to children at a local bookstore. She has worked with Boyle County High School to collect thousands of toys for Toys for Tots, modeled for Down with Derby, and volunteered with Camp Kids Can Do.

“Despite having a learning disability, you can still excel academically,” shares Aleah.

Her dedication to community service led to her earning a key to the City of Danville as well as recognition in the Miss Kentucky’s Teen program as a Quality of Life Finalist. She was selected by Washington University in St. Louis as a Rural Scholar and was recently recognized by Youth Salute as one of the top five leaders in Central Kentucky, as well as a Governors Scholar.

“Aleah has utilized her learning differences to help others feel connected and to teach all people, regardless of their abilities, the importance of connection,” shares her nominator.

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/>.

