

Kentucky Student Posthumously Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2026 – Justice Slayton of La Grange, Kentucky, received the 2026 Yes I Can Award for Technology from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Justice unfortunately passed away in September of 2025, at the age of 14. Her memory will be honored this March 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.

Justice lived with Alpers-Huttenlocher Syndrome (AHS), a rare and progressive mitochondrial disorder that causes developmental regression, including vision loss, muscle weakness, and seizures.

She received homebound special education services, though she struggled to stay alert and engage with learning. The COVID-19 pandemic further hampered her learning. However, once in-person instruction resumed in 2022, Justice was able to trial cortical visual impairment strategies using an iPad and began to flourish. Within one year, she was able to demonstrate sustained attention and engagement.

Through her engagement with technology, Justice was able to actively learn and express her thoughts, as well as socialize. She enjoyed spending time with her friend Evelyn, reading books, listening to Justin Timberlake, and watching scary movies. Justice went on to win the 2024 Tenn Miss Oldham County Fair Stars Pageant.

Her nominator shares, “These accomplishments have had a profound impact not only on Justice, but also on everyone who supports her. She has redefined what is possible for students with complex medical needs, demonstrating that with the right tools and support, meaningful progress can be made. Her determination has inspired her educational team, peers, and broader community. Justice’s story is one of resilience, innovation, and hope.”

CEC mourns the loss of Justice and sends her family, friends, and community our condolences.

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



For Immediate Release

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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/>.

