

New Jersey Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2026 – Ryan Kovach of Succasunna, New Jersey, received the 2026 Yes I Can Transition to Adult Life award from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Ryan 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.

Ryan was born with a rare chromosome gene deletion, which impacts his intellectual and cognitive functioning. Despite his challenges, he perseveres to achieve his goals and serves as a key member in his community. Inspired by his own love for birch beer, Ryan and his father launched Dad and Ryan's Birch Beer, a homebrew soda company that sells thousands of bottles a year.

Through his business, Ryan has been able to cultivate independence and community connections. He has donated business proceeds to local charities and organizations supporting individuals with rare chromosome disorders.

"A lot of kids who also have problems like me are missing a piece in their puzzle, and I want to help them," Ryan shares.

Ryan is involved in the Rotary Club, Toys for Tots, Tires for Tumors, the Fireman's Home, and the Police Department. He is also a volunteer firefighter at two firehouses. Every week, he helps wash the trucks, checks the equipment, cleans the firehouse, and assists during community events.

His nominator shares, "Even though Ryan isn't fighting fires yet, he's blazing his own path through his business and volunteer work. Ryan's giving nature shines through in everything he does. His generosity has touched those in his school, fundraisers, and community organizations, all while inspiring others to follow his example."

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



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/>.

