
Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Woodmere Teen to Receive International Award for Students with Disabilities

ARLINGTON, VA, March 22, 2013—Raquel Bernstein, 18, has overcome adversity to achieve independence and give back to her community. Because of her achievements, Raquel will receive a 2013 Yes I Can! Award from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) at the Yes I Can! Award Ceremony on Friday, April 5, at the Grand Hyatt in San Antonio, as part of the CEC 2013 Convention & Expo.

CEC is an international membership organization composed of special and gifted education professionals who work to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy.

Each year, the Yes I Can! program recognizes the accomplishments of 21 students. Awards are given in seven categories: academics, arts, athletics, school and community activities, self-advocacy, technology, and transition. CEC is proud to honor Raquel with this award in the transition category.

“The Yes I Can! Awards were developed to recognize the accomplishments of students with disabilities who have achieved remarkable things,” says CEC President Christy A. Chambers. “Raquel is most deserving of this award for her hard work and perseverance.”

To become independent, Raquel, who was born with Arthrogryposis and whose disability affects her arms, researched and found a special center in Manhattan where they make custom adaptations out of cardboard and household objects. Raquel worked tirelessly with the Center to create and modify devices that could help her become independent with daily life skills.

Raquel does not only set goals that apply to herself, she was a volunteer counselor at Camp Discovery, a camp for children with disabilities. The camp directors selected Raquel for their “Friendship Award.” They also invited her to be a Sunday volunteer at their recreational program, where she will be working throughout the year. Raquel continues to set high goals for herself.

“The courage that she shows in skiing with no ability to break a fall or protect herself or balance with her arms defies reality,” said Raquel’s mother, Heidi Bernstein-Krantz. “When I watch her, I vacillate between crying from pride and joy, and covering my eyes and crying in fear. I mostly hide the latter from Raquel. In my entire life, I have never met a person with a more independent and adventurous nature than her.”

For more information about CEC’s annual convention, please visit www.cec.sped.org/convention. For more information about the Yes I Can! Awards, please visit www.cec.sped.org/yesican.

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