

# *Press Release*

For Immediate Release

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## **Taylor Mill Teen to Receive International Award for Students with Disabilities**

**ARLINGTON, VA, March 22, 2013**—Samantha Cline, 14, stays fit in order to better manage her autism. Because of her achievements, Samantha 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 Samantha with this award in the athletics 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. “Samantha is most deserving of this award for her hard work and perseverance.”

Samantha prides herself on working out every day and trying to stay healthy. She is challenged with taking medication that increases her weight, as with many children with autism. Samantha has been competing in rhythmic gymnastics since February 2012. Most recently, she participated in the Special Olympics, where she won five gold medals for rope, hoop, ball, ribbon and all around. Samantha also participates in artistic gymnastics and competed in the November Special Olympic Games in Lexington, Ky. Outside of gymnastics, Samantha is an avid athlete, enjoying yoga, basketball, tennis and volleyball.

Laura Winkle, Samantha’s nominator and teacher wrote, “Samantha’s physical activities help her to control her behavior without becoming overwhelmed. It also gives her the confidence that she needs in order to be successful as a teenage girl. She is very social and her awards give her the confidence to continue to grow as a young woman.”

A new adventure for Samantha is an airplane ride to San Antonio for the Yes I Can! Awards. Samantha was able to meet with members of the customer relations group at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport to get an advance look at all the sights and sounds of the airport. She experienced going through security checks, checking in at the gate, boarding the plane and checking out the inside of the plane.

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

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