
Press Release

For Immediate Release

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San Antonio Student to Receive International Award for Students with Disabilities

ARLINGTON, VA, March 22, 2013—Darien Williams, 21, is a gifted musician, overcoming all obstacles and showing his peers the meaning of dedication. Because of his achievements, Darien 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 Darien with this award in the arts 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. “Darien is most deserving of this award for his hard work and perseverance.”

As with many individuals with autism, Darien’s focus and interest is in the one primary area, his being his love and gift for music. Darien, who was born blind, did not let this stop him from learning how to play multiple instruments—the piano, organ and accordion to name a few. Darien has the rare gift of “perfect pitch” without needing the benefit of any formal musical training.

Darien has performed in more than 20 public and community service recitals each year since moving to San Antonio in 2008. Darien won first place in each of the five festivals he has entered with typically developing peers.

“Darien is one of the strongest performers in the Alamo Angels Accordion Orchestra,” said Mary Kathryn Archuleta, Darien’s nominator and music teacher. “He is able to carry the tenor part of the ensemble and follow the director with the greatest of accuracy, even though he cannot see the conductor! Darien is one of the most dedicated students in his practice, always striving to be the best he can be!”

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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