



For immediate release

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Delaware Student to Receive International Award

Arlington, Va., November 6, 2018 – Harrison Barnes, of Bridgeville, Del., will receive a 2019 Yes I Can Award from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

Despite Harrison's exceptionalities, he has found a way to not only live with them, but to thrive. When very young, his parents were once told he might never be independent. Today, Harrison is a dual sport state champion, honor student running a non-profit, crafting and influencing legislation, mentoring children with exceptionalities, working as a lifeguard, and a candidate for the Congressional Award.

By working with a phenomenal support network made up of family, friends, and professionals, Harrison has become a very successful and flourishing young man. At the age of 13, he discovered BMX racing and quickly found a passion. Harrison won his first state championship in 2014 and would again be the state champion in 2017. In 2017, Harrison won races in nine states and finished second in overall District Points.

Harrison has turned his passion for BMX racing into inspirational work for non-profits. He founded the organization GearUP with a mission to help "Get kids on bikes." Since its founding, GearUp has run several programs nationally with great results. Their namesake program is a mentorship program that matches people who are looking for help getting their child with exceptionalities on a bike with local resources such as a BMX track, bike shop or local volunteer mentor.

Harrison has also coordinated the "Bikes for Kids" program which takes old, used bikes and refurbishes them to donate to foster and military children in need of bicycles. Harrison both refurbishes bikes himself and teaches others how to administer this program in their own communities. Another program being coordinated by Harrison and GearUp is the "Grab Life by the Bars" program which is a single day clinic held at a BMX track or other local cycling venue that will allow for a targeted group of children to receive group instruction in riding, bike safety, bike maintenance, and an introduction to bicycle sports. Several "Grab Life by the Bars" events were held last fall with an estimated impact of over 1,100 children being served by more than 400 volunteers in nine states.

After an experience where Harrison was attacked at a youth sports event last year, he learned that Delaware does not require volunteers at youth sports events to have background checks. He and his parents worked to craft a piece of legislation that would close that loophole. They shared this with their state Senator and this legislation is currently in committee.

Harrison has performed more than 1,000 hours of volunteer service and this year received a Delaware Governor's Youth Volunteer Service Award. He's done all this while still maintaining a 3.2 GPA in honors classes. However, what endears Harrison to the hearts of so many people is the amount of consideration Harrison puts into being a role model for the younger kids he sees. Whenever Harrison is at the track, he is looking out for the "little Timmy's" as he calls them. Every child smaller than he is, is a "Timmy" and he wants to help them all.

CEC is proud to honor Harrison with this award in the school and community activities category. Harrison will receive his award at the Yes I Can Award Ceremony on February 1, 2019, at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, IN, as part of the CEC 2019 Convention & Expo. The Yes I Can program recognizes the accomplishments of 12 students with exceptionalities in six categories: academics, arts, school and community activities, self-advocacy, technology, and transition.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the educational success of children and youth with exceptionalities that accomplishes its mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development. Learn more about CEC at www.cec.sped.org.

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