



For immediate release
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Illinois Student to Receive International Award

Arlington, Va., November 8, 2018 – Sara Patrick, of Winnebago, Ill., will receive a 2019 Yes I Can Award from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

Sara has never let her disabilities stop her from pursuing her goals of getting good grades, getting a high school diploma, and eventually becoming a nurse practitioner. As a young girl she had to spend time in the hospital and was inspired by the nurses that helped her through a difficult time. She is an exceptional student who has learned to advocate for her needs in all parts of her life.

Sara volunteers to help other students who have specific learning disabilities. She often leads a small group of hearing impaired students and offers her support, advice, and understanding. Sara has supported many fundraising activities and has been the team captain in her local "Walk for Hearing" event.

Sara's work to increase awareness for hearing loss at her high school directly contributed to a more inclusive and understanding environment for all students. According to one of her teachers, "Her work in helping us understand how to support students with hearing impairment in the general education classroom has improved universal learning design for all students in our classrooms."

Sara strives for excellence and will keep trying, even when things are not easy for her. She sees problems or challenges and seeks to enlist others to help make changes for the better. Her teachers feel confident that they can send younger students to her for mentoring or advice. Over the past few years Sara has matured into a confident and successful young lady, who today is a freshman in college.

CEC is proud to honor Sara with this award in the self-advocacy category. Sara will receive her award at the Yes I Can Award Ceremony on February 1, 2019, at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, Ind., 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.

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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.