



A Quarterly Publication
Produced BY & FOR NC Youth with Disabilities



Youth Team Spotlight

Matthew Markus

My favorite fall activity, especially before the weather gets too hot or cold, is running cross-country. There's something about those cool mornings and all the fall colors that makes each run feel special. I love challenging myself to improve my time, getting outside, and enjoying everything the fall season has to offer.

One tip I want to share with everyone is something that's helped me a lot is if you're facing a hard problem, try breaking it down into smaller steps. Whether it's a tough assignment or something stressful in daily life, just focusing on one step at a time makes it way less overwhelming.

Recruiting

Junior Youth Advisory Team Members

ECAC recognizes the power and value of the voice and ideas of young people.



ECAC's Junior Youth Advisory Team (JYAT) helps us design projects, programs, and resources that are created for youth, by youth. ECAC staff work in partnership with the group to coordinate opportunities and trainings that support the interests and personal development of the JYAT members.

JYAT meets virtually two times per month for approximately one hour - participants will receive a \$25 compensation for each meeting they attend!! You must live in

North Carolina, have a disability or special healthcare need and be between the ages of 10 and 13. [Read more and join us!](#)

North Carolina's Got Talent

YEP's **NCGT** column is here to put a spotlight on the many talents and abilities of N.C. Youth & Young Adults with Disabilities ages 5 to 26. The format of submissions can be a poem, artwork, blog, video, song, essay, article, presentation, an "About me" article, you name it. ECAC's Youth Advisory Team then reviews the submissions and chooses which ones to feature.



Selected entries receive a \$25 gift card in the mail!

And the Winners Are...

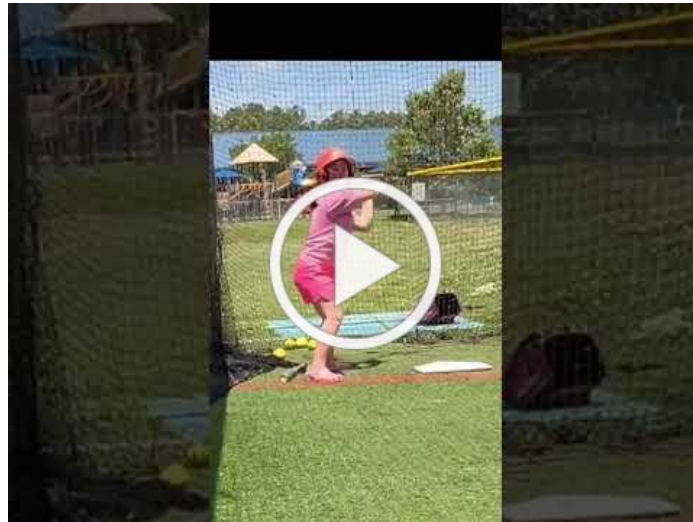
"Softball Champ"

Clara J.

Iredell County, NC

Age 12

"Clara has been playing softball with our local rec league for five years She has earned several game balls for her performance at the plate. Her team, The Pickles, were league champions for the Spring 2025 season!"



"The Raven"



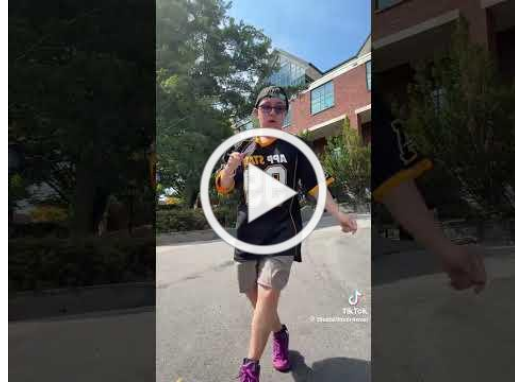
Gabriella M.
Harnett County, NC
Age 16

"Ravens can mimic human speech and other sounds. I also have a tic disorder where sometimes I need to hear myself vocalize at just the right sound. Ravens are among the smartest animals on Earth. I sometimes get judged by my disabilities first and people assume a lack



of intelligence. I try to show it through my artwork."

"Game Day"



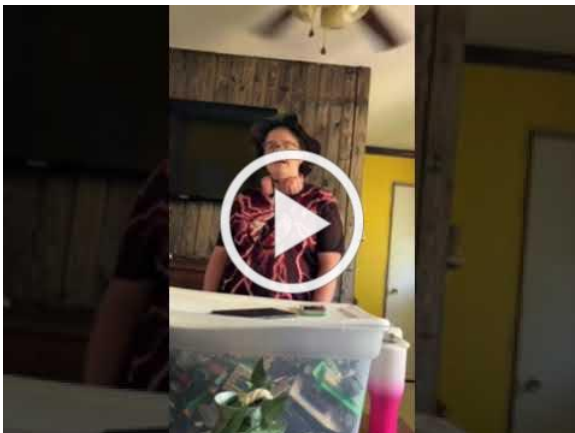
Kadin B.
Person County, NC
Age 20

"I am sharing a video of my dancing before our first App State game. I have been working on increasing my following as a creator on Tik Tok. This video received 32.5k views. I have increased my followers to 3,551 and have earned 52.4k likes. This platform allows me to showcase my talents like dancing and singing while improving my social interactions with others because now all of my peers want to interact with me and take photos."

Painting & Singing

Mary H.
Iredell County, NC
Age 25

"I am sharing my painting and I am also singing Glorious Day by Passion. I think it will be featured in our next issue of YEP because I am a good painter and a good singer."



"At the Zoo"

Rowan H.

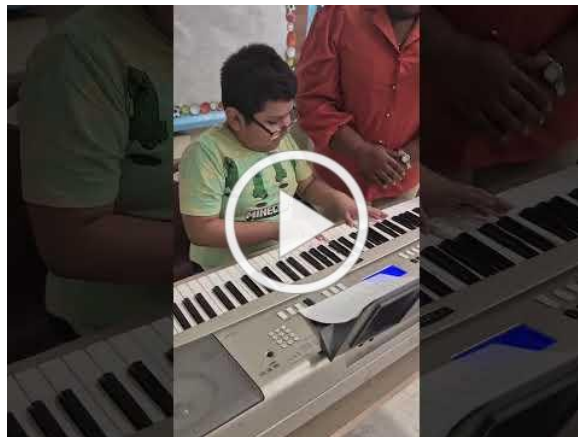


"I sent a colored pencil drawing of a group of animals I got to work with at a meaningful summer zoo internship. This drawing means a lot to me because it reminds me of the friends I made and the animals I met there."

"Ode to Joy"

Saul M.
Robeson County, NC
Age 9

"Saul's talent is often hidden in the self-contained classroom. With close observation, the music teacher, discovered Saul's potential to excel as a musician. He learns musical skills quicker than most students not self-contained. Saul is disciplined and takes direction well. With consistency, he will do great. He deserves to be in the spotlight."



Resources

Preparing for the Future

It is never too early to think about life after high school. Here are some resources to start thinking about alternatives to guardianship.



Turning Rights into Reality



Future Planning for Families of Children with Disabilities



Supporting Choice and Self-Determination in NC



Healthcare transitions to adulthood can start as early as 14.

Transitioning to Adult Health Care: How Students and Families Can Prepare



Young Adult Advocacy Toolkit

Impactful new release from the Mental Health Literacy Collaborative (MHLC) Young Adult Council: The Young Adult Advocacy Toolkit! Download this critical resource here: <https://www.themhlc.org/resources>.

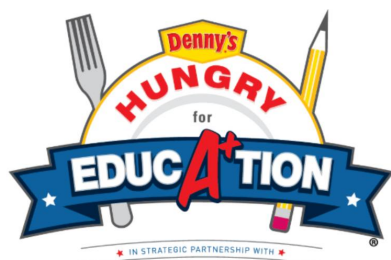
The MHLC Young Adult Advocacy Toolkit thoroughly outlines the importance of Mental Health Literacy (MHL), and includes education on common mental health conditions, stigma reduction strategies, how to participate in individual, community and government advocacy, and how to find support (among many other things)! Please join me in furthering MHL and learn how to become an effective advocate.

Download the toolkit here: <https://www.themhlc.org/resources>



Scholarship Opportunity

Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) and Denny's Hungry for Education scholarship program are teaming up again to award scholarships to deserving high school and college students with disabilities with ideas on helping bring communities together. Scholarships available: \$1,500 high school scholarships, \$1,500 college scholarships. Scholarships can be used toward furthering student education at an accredited US college



or university program, technical course, or certificate program in Fall 2026 or Spring 2027. This scholarship is open to anyone; however, preference is given to PYD participants and volunteers with disabilities. Applications are NOW OPEN through **December 8, 2025**.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more and apply.



Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center

The resource center is funded as a Project of National Significance by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities under the Administration on Disabilities. Their Advisory Committee includes 13 self-advocates from all over the USA who work as a team to oversee the SARTAC project.

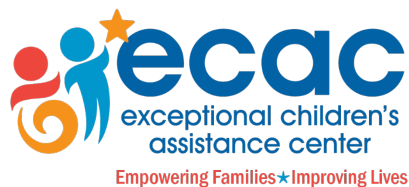
The mission of SARTAC is to strengthen the self-advocacy movement by supporting self advocacy organizations to grow leadership opportunities for all their members.

[Click Here to Learn More About SARTAC](#)

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