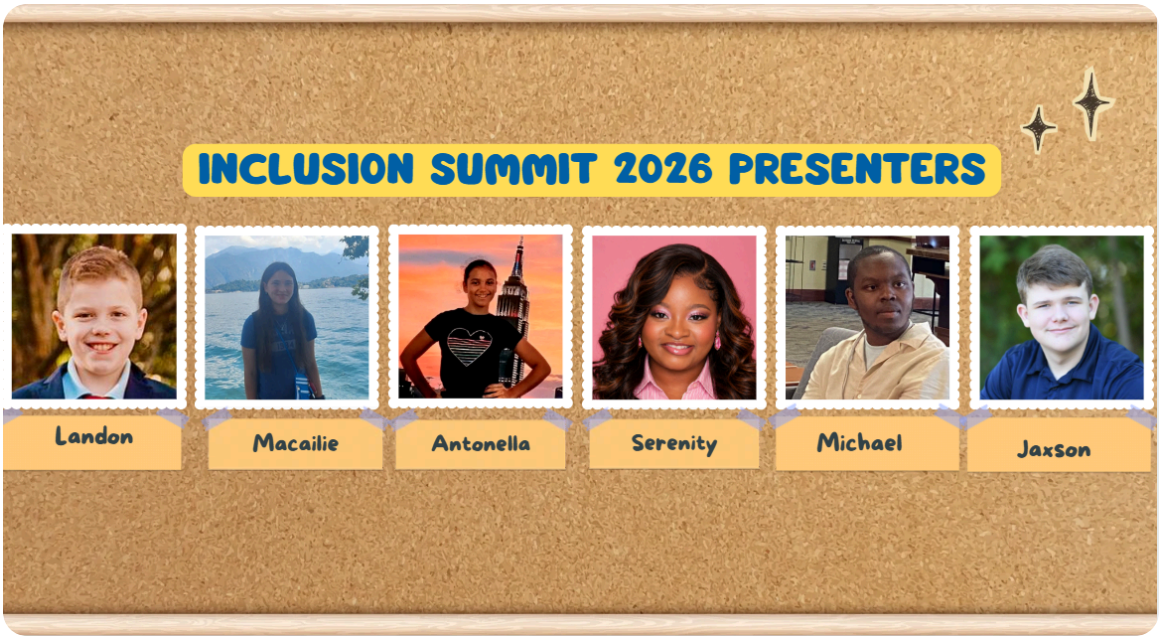
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A Quarterly Publication
Produced BY & FOR NC Youth with Disabilities

Youth Voices Take Center Stage at the Inclusion Summit!



Members of ECAC's Youth Advisory Teams had the opportunity to share their voices, experiences, and perspectives at the recent Inclusion Summit! Youth

participated in a panel discussion highlighting the importance of inclusion, self-advocacy, and having a voice in decisions that affect their lives. Several youth also stepped into leadership roles as presenters during a **Youth-Led IEP/504 session**, helping attendees better understand the importance of meaningful student participation in the IEP and 504 process.

Beyond sharing valuable information with attendees, the experience gave our youth opportunities to build confidence, strengthen their public speaking skills, and connect with others. But don't just take our word for it! Here's what some of our youth had to say about their experiences:

Antonella: "At first, I was really nervous, but by the second time I presented, I felt so much more confident. Everyone in the audience was genuinely there to listen to you and is extremely supportive and understanding." **Click here to watch Antonella's presentation**.

Jaxson: "I enjoyed participating in the panel discussion with my friends, hearing their stories and sharing mine. This was also my first time taking on the role of a presenter. Even though I was nervous, it was a great experience, and it felt good knowing we were making a difference for others." **Click here to watch Jaxson's presentation**.

Landon: "It was great to talk about my differences where everyone understands. Even if I didn't answer every question perfectly or sometimes I talked too long." Landon answers: **What does self-advocacy mean to me?**

And the youth leadership doesn't stop there! We're excited that members of our Youth Advisory Teams will also be presenting at the upcoming **75th NC Conference on Exceptional Children** in November, continuing to share their perspectives and experiences with educators and other professionals who support students with disabilities.

We couldn't be prouder of these young leaders! Their participation is a wonderful reminder that youth voices don't just belong at the table—they have the power to educate, inspire, and lead.



Youth Resources



ECAC's Youth Advisory Teams (YAT) and Junior Youth Advisory Team (JYAT) are looking for new members!

The Youth Advisory Teams are youth-led groups that give students a voice in shaping programs, sharing lived experiences, building leadership skills, and connecting with peers across North Carolina. [Click here to apply]



Self-Advocacy Course

Supportive and interactive course focused on building self-advocacy skills.

LIMITED SPOTS AVAILABLE!

The course starts in January and will be held Wednesdays at 4:00 via Zoom. For students with disabilities ages 14-21 currently enrolled in high school, homeschool or college.

[Click here to view the flyer]

To enroll, contact: Kim Eroh, keroh@ecacmail.org, 704-892-1321.

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...

"Rock n Roll Kid - Don't Stop Believin"

Addison A.
Mecklenburg County, NC
Age 14

"As an artist who has triumphed over structural speech, hearing, and learning differences, Addison is sharing his music to inspire peers across North Carolina - proving that with passion, hard work, and a legendary rock-and-roll spirit, no obstacle is too big to conquer. Addison's message to everyone is to never give up on your own "Journey" and always "Don't Stop Believin'."





Don't Stop Believin' by Journey
Live Vocal Solo

"Always Believe in Yourself"





Christian B.
Halifax County, NC
Age 12

Cheer & Dance
Always Believe in Yourself!

"I Love Dragons"

Elijah H.
Buncombe County, NC
Age 7

"I drew a dragon and castle scene. I love dragons!" - Elijah

"Dragons are one of Eli's special interests. We think his drawings are amazing and want to share them with the world." - Elijah's Parents





Happiness & Art

Gavin C.
Alamance County, NC
Age 8

"I have autism and I love art. Drawing and painting make me happy! I love taking art classes at school."





Self-Portrait

Icey B.
Rowan County, NC
Age 15

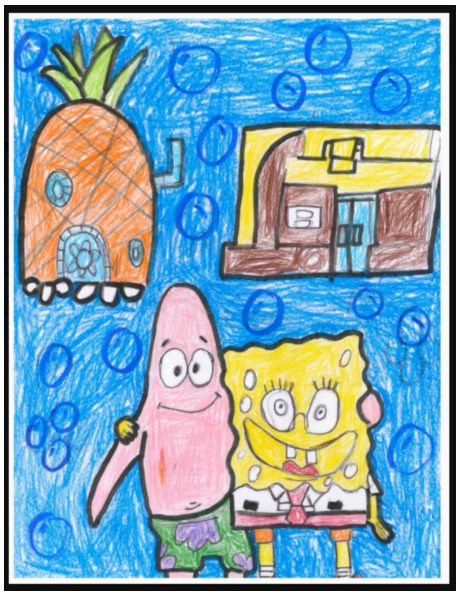
"This is a self-portrait I drew in the spring. It may not look exactly what I look like in the mirror, but it is how I see myself. I am proud of this portrait and of my

artistic abilities."





"Under the Sea Adventures"



Jazaryon D.
Scotland County, NC
Age 10

"I really enjoy SpongeBob and it's my favorite show. I want to share my favorite characters with everyone."

"A Small Piece of Paper. A Bold Pen. A World of His Own."

Karthik A.
Wake County, NC
Age 14

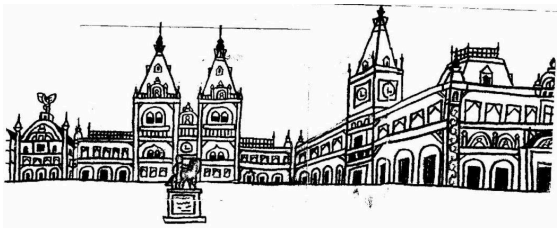
"In under five minutes, Karthik turns small pieces of paper into art entirely from his imagination. Just an ordinary pen - no special art tools, not a single line erased, and every drawing unique. An imagination that reaches far beyond the edges of his paper."











"Mental Math"

Kaushal B..
Mecklenburg County, NC
Age 5

"Kaushal is a curious 5 year old who has a remarkable love for numbers and mental math. Although he is just starting kindergarten, he can solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems mentally, without using pen and paper. He also enjoys reading books, learning new things and challenging himself with numbers."

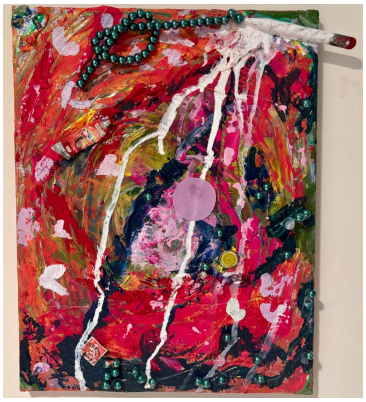




"Works of Art"

Orianna D.
Mecklenburg County, NC
Age 14

"I enjoy working with color, texture and found objects to make my art."







"Healing Spring"

Rowan H.
Alamance County, NC
Age 18

"I would like to share this poem I wrote called Healing Spring. It sends a message of hope, which a lot of us need right now."

Click here to read Rowan's Poem

Healing Spring

I see you at your empty table
And it makes me want to cry
I'd cheer you up if I were able
Alas I can't, but shall I still try?
These pathogens have a sinister scheme
Which many fear, thus they stay away
Yet grime is humbled by your gleam
No germ will scare me today
Meaning I care not if I get this sickness
Were I to keep you from feeling alone
Or maybe show you my nothing accomplishments
Could also leave you to rest on your own

How I wish for a healing spring
To march forth from the ground
With resilient foliage and bees that sting
For they won't let anything bring them down
And may every meadow everywhere
Be rinsed in a cleansing rain
To purge the infection from the air
We need you to be well once again

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