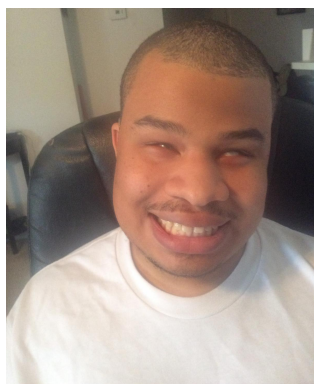




**A Quarterly Publication
Produced BY & FOR NC Youth with Disabilities**

**Social and Mobile- Acceptance and Access
Part Three**



by Billy Pickens, ECAC Youth Outreach Coordinator

I believe one of the most prominent conversations brought to the forefront of our public awareness during the pandemic revolved around topics of diversity and inclusion. As difficult and nuanced as many of these discussions are, one thing I feel we could all agree on is a need for growth not just as a collective but as individuals. In addition to this, one common theme I noticed throughout my conversations with others was a desire to help others but a lack of awareness of their life experiences.

In my last article, I offered some tips for persons with disabilities struggling with acceptance. However, creating a more accepting world for all is a collective effort and I want to offer a few tips to those who strive to be a part of this movement for inclusion.

1. Don't just invite, include!

To me, this is of utmost importance. Many people, sometimes with the best intentions, will simply invite people with disabilities to events or other collective experiences assuming that an invitation is

inclusion. However, if you are not including them in activities, asking for their feedback, actively listening and being open to their ideas, it can be viewed as dismissive and passive. This does not mean you have to draw attention to them. You just need to remember that being included does not mean letting someone stand out but letting them fit in.

2. Center conversations about them around them.

While it may be okay and even encouraged to ask someone questions about their disability, try not to let that dominate the conversation! People with disabilities typically want to be seen as people with hobbies and interests so just like you would anyone else, let the person behind the disability be the focus point!

3. Initiate if needed!

Lastly, I encourage all to initiate conversations with those less like them! It is easy to find our own bubbles or be thrown off by those who seem a little off to us. Challenge that thinking by sitting next to the person in the wheelchair at lunch or have the person who is blind over for dinner! Remember that like you, we are humans looking for friends as well!

Learning How to Communicate Better



by Aidan Lampel, ECAC Youth Advisory Team Member

I was born in late January 2005 in New York. When I was born, I thought that I was a regular person like everyone else until the doctors discovered that I have two disabilities. I'm autistic and I'm hard of hearing. I also wear hearing aids. I used to stim a lot when I was in Elementary School, making weird noises, and doing vocal stimming. My parents were concerned about my lack of speech, so they taught me how to speak clearly, and read better. When my parents and I went to an IEP meeting, the teachers and my parents talked and made a strategy about how I can learn to communicate better.

When I was little, I was still struggling on how to communicate. I felt nervous because I couldn't speak clearly at all, especially in front of the people at school. I was having a hard time communicating to the teachers, so I was placed in a classroom for kids who are deaf and hard of hearing. My teacher of the deaf, Mrs. Brooks, taught me how to communicate better and learn language. We also worked on vocabulary words, reading, and writing in complete sentences. My language facilitators and my speech therapist also taught me how to speak clearly. My parents read books with me every day when I came home from school. They also helped me work on my homework including ELA, social studies, and science. Math is my strength because I find it easy. Now I'm a senior in high school and I'm going to graduate soon. I also made new friends. After all those years of learning how to communicate, I've finally made progress. Although I still struggle sometimes, I really enjoy talking with people.

YAT Members Share What They are Looking Forward to in 2023

Thomas

Hello, my name is Thomas, and I am 19 years old, however, my life only truly begun in 2022. Allow me to explain, the first 18 years of my life, I was always isolated and never did much except play trumpet and make electronic music. No more than 20



people listened but it was whatever; life was boring. However, for the first time ever in 2022, I finally started making friends, and picked up tons of new hobbies. I decided to begin singing and creating rap music and later on, started learning drums, guitar, piano and now I'm trying to lose weight. This year, I am looking forward to growing as a person, continuing getting better at these instruments, and learning how to improve my music. I have made lots of progress over the last 6 months with instruments and learning how to use studio equipment. At the end of November, I started getting serious about losing weight and building muscle. After 1 and a half months of working out, I have managed to lose about 6 pounds which isn't much, but I have no plans to stop anytime soon. Now that I'm finally talking to people, I feel less isolated and more connected with society which has helped me grow a lot.



Nicholas

What I'm looking forward to this year is becoming a commentator for the Kannapolis Cannon Ballers. I have worked for them this past season and am looking forward to the 2023 season with them.



Aidan

What I'm looking forward to in 2023 is to graduate High School. I'm also looking forward to turning 18 years old as I am becoming an adult for the first time. I'm excited to look for my first job!

North Carolina's Got Talent!

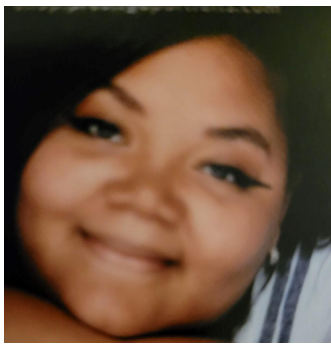
YEP's **NCGT** column is here to put a spotlight on the many talents and abilities of N.C. Youth & Young Adults with Disabilities ages 5 to 26. The format of submissions can be a poem, artwork, blog, video, song, essay, article, presentation, an "About me" article, you name it. ECAC's Youth Advisory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



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

And the Winners Are...

"Joy Cometh in the Morning"



Kaylee B.
Bertie County, NC
Age 17

The name of this work is called "Joy Cometh in the Morning." It is dedicated to my chorus teacher who suffered a stroke last year and was not able to return to school. It symbolizes hope for recovery, love, and life. He helped build my self-confidence and the discovery of my voice to sing.

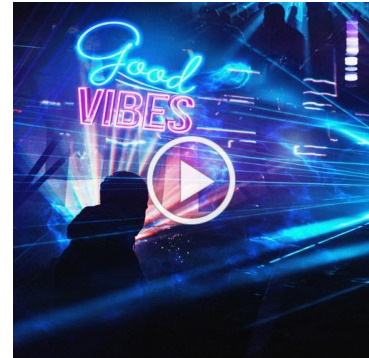


"Good Vibes"



Trevor B.
Cabarrus County, NC
Age 21

I am sending you a single I made myself for many to hear. I make music to inspire others with disabilities or non-disabilities. I hope to be in YEP, so I can inspire many more because we need something good right now in this world to look forward to.



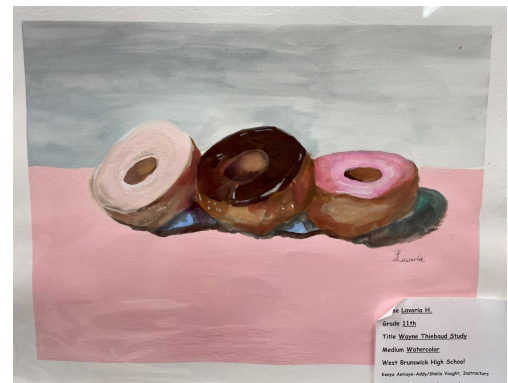
**Click Here for More
of Trevor's Music**

"Wayne Thiebaud Study: Doughnuts"



Lavoria H.
Brunswick County, NC
Age 19

This was a piece I did in my art class this semester. I am proud of this piece. It was on display at the Brunswick County School's Central Office during the holidays. First I used pencil to draw the doughnuts. Then I used watercolor paint to finish it.



"God Never Lost a Battle"

Ariel's mom submitted a video of Ariel dancing to "God Never Lost a Battle." She shares that "Ariel has been a natural- born talent from birth. She's a very gifted dancer, singer and actor. She taught

herself how to dance. Due to her sickness she could never attend dance classes especially after Covid 19. Ariel is highly spiritual. She loves the Lord and is very motivated. She would like to show the world no matter what you are going through in life it doesn't determine your destiny. Ariel is my God sent child. I live through her inspiration. I called her my anointed soul child. She doesn't let her sickness or pains stop her from being great. She inspires me with her determination and everyone around her to be her best."



Ariel Grace R.

Cabarrus County, NC

Age 7

"What If..."

"I wrote a poem called "What if..." It is to help people with anxiety."



Olivia M.

New Hanover County, NC

Age 10

What if...

What if flowers grew
 What if a cold wind brew
 But what if the sun broke through
 What if it was a cold starry night
 But what if there was a blanket in sight
 What if they are lost
 What if he is love bound
 What if anxiety came to you
 But what if you broke through
 What if nobody knew
 What if the truth came through
 What if a heart breaks
 What if this will only create
 Just believe, what if you could do it too.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS!



**CLICK HERE TO LEARN
 MORE & TO REGISTER!**

Self-Advocate Discussion Series

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities' Self-Advocate Discussion Series aims to prepare, organize and mobilize NC self-advocates for influencing social and systems change. The Council emphasizes the value of people with disabilities building and maintaining relationships with NC legislators and decision-makers while bridging connections and a network among NC self-advocates. The webinars will be held on the third Wednesday of the month.

Unique opportunity for youth and young

Are you a Black young adult (18 years or older) with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

A VIRTUAL FEEDBACK SESSION
WILL BE HELD ON
MONDAY, JANUARY 23RD
6-7:30 PM EST

This will be a conversation for Black young adults (ages 18 or older) with I/DD (such as Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, and other developmental or intellectual disabilities). You will connect with other young adults about the challenges and supports you experience as you transition to adulthood and how research can support the needs of young adult self-advocates.

Payment is a \$60 store gift card to participate in the 90-minute session via Zoom.

3 Ways to Register:

1. Scan the QR code
2. Email: thrivingproject@duke.edu
3. Call: (919) 660-0520



Duke University School of Medicine



adults of color, ages 18 and up, with a disability!

The **Thriving in Transition Project** at Duke University School of Medicine is seeking participants for a virtual community feedback session. Those that participate in the 90 minute zoom session will receive payment in the form of a \$60 store gift card!

[CLICK HERE FOR THE EVENT FLYER](#)



Explore Leadership Opportunities on The Arc's Councils

The Arc has exciting leadership opportunities for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD), siblings of people with IDD, and alumni of The Arc.

The deadline to apply is
February 5, 2023.

[APPLY
HERE!](#)

Become an Officer of the National Council of Self-Advocates

The Arc's [National Council of Self-Advocates](#) is looking for new officers to lead the council in 2023 and 2024. The National Council of Self-Advocates is led by people with IDD, and members are people with disabilities nationwide. Our officers advise The Arc on our advocacy, programs, and services. They also often take part in our federal advocacy efforts and share their stories with our network! Contact nlsa@thearc.org with any questions.

TRANSITION RESOURCES

Top 10 Mistakes to Avoid in Transition Planning

Check out PEATC's "*Top 10 Mistakes to Avoid in Transition Planning*," a resource for parents and professionals. The resource reviews common mistakes made when it comes to planning for the future of students with disabilities.

[Top 10 Mistakes to Avoid in Transition Planning - English \[PDF\]](#)

TOP 10 MISTAKES TO AVOID IN TRANSITION PLANNING

1

Goals are too broad

Goals don't include the specific steps a student needs to take to meet that goal.

Example: Bob will go to college when he graduates.

2

Goals are too specific

Goals focus on a minute detail which may not have an impact on what the student needs.

Example: Jannette will not wear blue clothing more than 3 days in a week.

3

Goals disregard student's actual functioning

Goals need to be challenging, but should also be relevant/realistic based on their current academic, physical, or cognitive challenges.

Example: Clark wants to be a brain surgeon but has a 3rd grade reading level at age 14 and would most likely not be able to pass the entrance exam. In this case, the team may want to further explore why Clark wants to be a brain surgeon and what the alternatives may be that still involve his interests.

4

Goals are focused solely on academics

Goals don't include post-secondary employment or independent living needs as appropriate. Academics should not be the only focus.

Example: Denise is 17 and has a goal of successfully answering 7 out of 10 Algebra questions correctly, but her mother dresses her daily. Denise may benefit from goals to address daily living skills in order to maximize independence after high school.

UPCOMING EVENTS!



**Monday, January 30th
7pm to 8:30 pm**

Alternatives to Guardianship

This webinar will cover:

- *The purpose of guardianship-who needs guardianship and why do they need guardianship?*
- *How to determine when guardianship is no longer in the best interest of the individual I support.*
- *The alternatives to guardianship such as: Powers of Attorney; Healthcare or Medical Power of Attorney or Emergency medical doctrine or Durable Power of Attorney; Representative Payee; Special needs trust; Special bank accounts; Limited Guardianship/Restoration; Supported Decision-Making Agreement*

Presented by: **Tameka Lee, BS, QP, NCG**
Director of LIFEguardianship, The Arc of NC

**CLICK HERE TO
REGISTER**



**Tuesday, January 31st
6pm to 7:30 pm**

Adulthood Happens

This webinar will help North Carolina parents and students with disabilities to navigate the transition to adulthood. Beginning at age 14, students and schools must begin the journey in planning for life after high school. Join us to learn more about transition planning and preparing students for further education, employment, and independent living.

Upon completion of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- *Summarize the purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*
- *Recognize what is included in the secondary transition component of the IEP*
- *Describe how turning 18 impacts the rights of students and their parents.*
- *Identify key resources that can support youth and young adults as they transition to life after high school*

**CLICK HERE TO
REGISTER**

CLICK HERE FOR A PDF VERSION OF YEP



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