

Press Release: Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities Announces 2025 Shriver-Kennedy Student Achievement Award Recipient

(For Immediate Release)

January 7, 2025

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities is pleased to announce Pilar Rivera as the recipient of the 2025 Shriver-Kennedy Student Achievement Award. This award recognizes individuals with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities who excel in one of the following areas: academics, arts, athletics, community service, employment, extracurricular activities, independent activities, technology, and self-advocacy.

Pilar, a junior at the University of North Texas, excels academically and is actively involved in various extracurricular activities, including Special Olympics and the UNT dance team. Pilar is studying education, building on her own experience as a student to what she believes a classroom should be to best serve all students. She is gaining hands-on experience working at UNT's Center for Young Children, preparing for a career supporting young students.

A dedicated leader and advocate, Pilar is passionate about making a positive community impact. She participates in the UNT Peer Ally program and serves on UNT's University Program Council, which helps students engage in community events. "She is genuine in her connections with others, intentional in her relationships, and true to her values," says nominator Daphne Lynd. Another nominator, Pam Trocki-Ables, adds, "She has remarkable enthusiasm and embodies everything described in the Shriver-Kennedy Student Achievement Award."

This distinguished award is presented by The Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD), a special interest association within the Council for Exceptional Children—the largest international professional organization dedicated to supporting the needs of students with disabilities. Since its establishment in 1963, DADD has been a leading voice in the field of education for students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities, actively contributing to research dissemination, the creation of nationally recognized professional practice standards, and fostering robust professional networking.

The award ceremony is scheduled for January 22, 2025, at DADD's annual conference in Clearwater Beach, Florida. For further information, please contact Dr. Melissa Savage, DADD Awards Chair, at mns029@uark.edu. Additional details about the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities can be found at <http://www.daddcec.com/>.