



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)

# October is Disability History and Awareness Month

October 2020

Volume 1, Number 1

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## NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (NDEAM)

"Increasing Access and Opportunity" is the 2020 theme for the annual observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) this October.

2020 is the nation's 75th observance of NDEAM, which is administered by the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). The observance culminates the Department's commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## DISABILITY HISTORY AND AWARENESS MONTH GIVEAWAYS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early Childhood providers in childcare centers and home daycares received a special treat this October. The first 50 callers to the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) office were sent an email with resources they can use to share information on Disability History and Awareness Month (DHAM) and two free books, "All My Different Friends at School" and "There's Nothing to Fear" coloring book. Callers were thrilled to be able to get the resource information and stated that they were looking forward to sharing the books with their students.



In June 2014, GACEC launched the new DelDHub.com, a state transition website dedicated to providing accurate, up to date information on all transition issues in one centralized location.

This transition website for people with disabilities in the state and across the nation, helps youth, young adults, parents, caregivers, counselors, school administrators, caseworkers, educators and health care providers to assist students with disabilities going through the transition process.

The teen years can be difficult for the average youth, add a disability to the mix and life scenarios change. Special consideration must be given to education, employment, housing, transportation, healthcare, legal issues, community involvement and so much more. The website does just that by offering many resources to help young adults and their caregivers as they transition from school to work or other programs.

The DelDHub has been totally revamped with enlarged text, a text to voice reader option with a built-in instruction guide and an internal search engine to make the website easier to navigate.

It also now includes a section for parents. "Parents often worry or stress over their child turning into an adult, especially if they are going to live independently. We want parents to have the resources they need to help plan their child's life changes."

The planning categories covered on DelDHub are education, employment, housing, transportation health, legal issues, It's My Life and Understanding My Disability. Each category has videos on related topics and lots of information to help families, educators and students as they move toward greater independence. Check it out!

## MIDDLETOWN TEENAGER'S REACTION TO MAKING CHEERLEADING TEAM GOES VIRAL

**Marina Affo** Delaware News Journal USA TODAY NETWORK (Excerpt – Oct. 9, 2020)



A Middletown teenager has gone viral for her tearful reaction to making the junior varsity cheer team at Middletown High this week.

Kayla Kosmalski, who has Down syndrome, has been dancing since she was 4 years old and was excited for the chance to be on the Middletown cheerleading team. The school normally has a no-cut team for freshmen, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, the school was forced to do tryouts and limit the spots to 20 people. Up against 36 other girls, Kosmalski worked all weekend with her mom, Amy, on the routine and tried out Monday.

Amy filmed Kayla's reaction to making the team and posted it on Facebook, where it has gotten over 1,200 likes, over 600 congratulatory comments and has been shared over 180 times.

The response to the feel-good clip was so great that Kayla and her mom were featured on "Good Morning America" and were also interviewed on the "Today" show with Jenna Bush Hager and Hoda Kotb on Thursday morning.

Kayla also got shoutouts from "America's Got Talent" judges Howie Mandel and Heidi Klum, who saw her video.

Congratulations to Kayla and her family.