

Outstanding Youth Award Nomination

Award Description:

The Outstanding Youth Award will be presented to an individual under 18 years old or is still in school and who receives children's services. Nominees should excel in the areas of outstanding personal achievement, community involvement and empowerment.

NOMINEE: Holly Taylor

ORGANIZATION: Rainbows United, Inc.

Provide a narrative including answers to the following questions. You may also attach a maximum of three letters of support. Additional information may be attached if necessary.

- What challenges has this person faced?
- How has he or she met those challenges?
- What are the person's significant accomplishments?
- What supports are in place for this youth?
- Are there other goals this youth is working on achieving?
- Biographical sketch of the youth and his or her family.

NOMINATION NARRATIVE:

A skilled artist with a unique style, Holly Taylor's artwork is always praised by art teachers and others. The detail Holly puts into her art makes her drawings jump off the page. She often gives the finished pieces as gifts to thank and encourage others. While her main media is colored markers on paper, she has a talent for 3D work as well. For instance, she recently made a cap and gown out of paper for one of her dolls.

Born in South Korea with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Holly came to her forever family at age 4. She learned a new language, acclimated to a new country, and adapted to a new home complete with parents and siblings who adore her.

A teenager who enjoys pink, purple, nail polish, dolls and anything sparkly, Holly is learning life skills and has a job. Through Chisholm Life Skills, Holly works in a production center shredding paper and sorting parts for aircraft manufacturing. "She is learning job skills and excited to be earning money," said her mother, Carrie. "Making the transition from high school to job training is a real accomplishment. We are proud of her for staying the course and growing into this phase of her life."

In addition to her art, Holly enjoys everything music. She enjoys listening to music and watching movies with popular music in them. At the Camp Woodchuck Talent Show last summer she performed a solo singing one of her favorite songs on stage in front of the crowd. Holly and her mother sing duets in church. She also is an enthusiastic acolyte on Sundays and enjoys filling in when those scheduled are not available.

Along with her creative skills, Holly can be found telling jokes or "pulling your leg" with some story or tale she makes up. "She has quite a sense of humor," says her dad, Paul. "Holly can make us all smile with her humor. Her face lights up when she knows she's making you laugh."

Holly plans to attend Rainbows' Camp Woodchuck again this summer, she receives Targeted Case Management through Lifeworks in Wichita and will attend Chisholm Life Skills another year. She recently has become interested in the election process and got registered to vote in the presidential election this November. She is proud to be able to exercise her right to vote this year.

She'd like to be an art teacher some day and she is also interested in being elected to an office or to work on elections helping others get elected.

Holly lives with her parents, Paul and Carrie and has 3 brothers ages 22, 21 and 18. At age 19, she is closest to her oldest brother Will, who sometimes picks her up from the bus and takes her on adventures for sweets.

NAME OF PERSON MAKING THIS NOMINATION: Michelle Eastman

ORGANIZATION: Rainbows United, Inc.

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X I have reviewed and agreed to the criteria for filming the awards video.

X I have obtained approval for this nomination from the submitting agency's Executive Director.

Send this form via email to mshreve@interhab.org

**The deadline to submit award nominations
is June 7!**



Letter of Support
Outstanding Youth Award: Holly Taylor

Rainbows United would like to provide a Letter to give a recommendation for Holly Taylor for the 2024 Outstanding Youth Award. She lives in Wichita, Kansas with her mother, father, and siblings. Holly has been a part of the Rainbows' family for many years. Holly attends Camp Woodchuck and has In-Home Respite Services. The staff can take Holly out in the community to work on her social skills. Her communication has improved, and she has become more independent. Holly is very sweet, loving, caring and a little sassy just like any other teenage girl.

She has grown so much over the last several years while participating in Camp Woodchuck. She enjoys hanging out with her friends. Holly participates in the Talent Show every year at Camp Woodchuck. She will get in front of the entire camp and sing her little heart out. She is also one of the leaders in our Rainbows Choir. Another thing that Holly likes to do is put makeup and nail polish on. She enjoys doing crafts. At the Art show last year, she made a big portrait with gems.

Some challenges that Holly has been working through are dealing with regulating her emotions. With the help of her Direct Support Professional Holly has learned to communicate how she is feeling. She does not like people in her space and she is able to communicate by telling people that she doesn't like them in her space. This is a huge accomplishment for her.

Those of us who know Holly could not be more thrilled, and happy for her. Rainbows is grateful to be a part of Holly's journey and we look forward to all the great things Holly will do in the future.

Tiffany Graf
Family Support Services Coordinator



To whom it may concern,

My name is Jordan Geer, and I have been a Targeted Case Manager (TCM) at Rainbows United, Inc for about 3.5 years. As a TCM, I have served countless families, assisting them with locating and accessing resources within the Sedgwick and Butler County communities that may aid the needs of their child or children with developmental disabilities.

During my time here, one of the families I served was that of Holly Taylor. Holly came onto my caseload from my first day at Rainbows, and stayed in my services until she aged out of Rainbows on her 18th birthday in November 2022. While I served her and her family, I had the privilege of hearing about Holly's growth into the wonderful young woman she is today. It gives me so much joy to know that she has been nominated for the Interhab Award for Outstanding Youth.

Holly overcame many challenges as a client of Rainbows, with the help of her entire support team, including her care coordinator Karen Ternes, and of course her loving parents Carrie and Paul, who were my firsthand source for all the stories of Holly's successes. In addition to learning life skills such as simple math and getting dressed (including tying her own shoes!), Holly also learned how to identify her emotions when she was emotionally triggered and applied calming skills independently. Holly also knows how to self-advocate, something many teens in my services work on as a years-long goal. She is able to set boundaries for herself and let others know when she needs some space for herself. Holly has grown into a creative, detail oriented and successful young woman that we are all proud of.

By the time Holly aged out of my services, she loved to use adult coloring books, and knew how to apply calming techniques she had learned in her therapies during school hours when she felt triggered. These milestones were a joy to hear about, and the pride I felt for Holly was not simply vicarious, but truly genuine and I am grateful for the small part I was allowed to play in her successes. Holly would frequently change her mind about where she wants to work when she grows up, showing her belief that her possibilities are endless. I believe that to be true for her.

I am overjoyed at the opportunity to write this letter of support on Holly's behalf and would strongly urge you to not overlook this sterling candidate for the Outstanding Youth Award.

Thank you for considering this amazing young woman.

Sincerely,

Jordan Geer, TCM, Rainbows United, Inc