

Alessandro Scott



It is my honor to introduce Alessandro Scott. Alessandro is a polite, kind, and exceptional seventh-grade student at Fees College Preparatory Middle School. Alessandro is the type of student who everyone, both teachers and students alike, wish for their classroom. He is a student who works hard and participates often, encourages other students and cares about their feelings, and navigates online learning like it is his job. He is a student who truly lights up the room!

As a student diagnosed with Autism and who was non-verbal until he was five-years-old, Alessandro has made enormous strides in his academic and personal life. When Alessandro came to Cynthia Barricks' classroom as a sixth-grader at Fees, he found himself in a large school among students with more social skills than him.

Alessandro would cry easily and become very upset if he made any kind of mistake. In the beginning of the school year, Alessandro struggled to interact with others and had to go to the cafeteria for lunch before other students did because he was nervous and afraid.

But as the school year progressed, Mrs. Barricks noticed that Alessandro was allowing himself to be okay with making mistakes in class, he began talking with other students and waiting in line for lunch with them, and to top it all off, he even went to the school dance and participated in the school talent show! Alessandro is a courageous individual because of his determination to see the "gray" in a world that often appears as "black and white."

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Mrs. Barricks had this to say about Alessandro – “Every year, I get a student in my class who helps me grow as a teacher, and Alessandro has been that student for me this unprecedented year. He has taught me that it is okay to be brave and to try new things.”

At home, Alessandro participates in a lot of hobbies and activities for fun. Alessandro enjoys researching and drawing dinosaurs, exercising, playing the piano, and singing. He has an exceptional knowledge of prehistoric animals and he can draw them realistically. When you look at Alessandro’s art, you see amazing drawings with an expert amount of detail. What you don't see is the three years of Occupational Therapy teaching him to hold objects like a pencil because he had an immature grasp. You see his knowledge and passion for animals. You don’t see the years of Special Education it took for him to learn how to read. You see a great pianist, but you don't see the years of Applied Behavior Analysis therapy to get him to the point of being able to learn piano.

Alessandro’s mom, Sonny, said – “He doesn't know just how exceptional he is. He knows that he wants to be a great boy, and he wants to make others happy, and because of that, he makes his family proud every day.”

A quote that impacted Alessandro the most is when Mrs. Barricks and Speech Teacher Samantha Hagness once said, “It’s not a big deal, and there are no troubles.” He says that this helped him during tough times, and makes him want to be better in life.

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Alessandro credits all of his teachers, his brothers, his step-dad and mom as his inspiration and would like to thank them for helping him along the way. For his future plans, Alessandro says that he hopes to be married with children, and to become a PE coach one day.

Alessandro Scott, on behalf of the City of Tempe, and in honor of your strength and perseverance, I am proud to present you with this 2021 Youthfest Courage Award.