



LOCAL 12-YEAR OLD - COPING WITH BRAIN INJURY & PARALYSIS RECEIVES REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD FOR GRIT & HELP EMPOWERING OTHERS

TAKES HER MOTTO - I WILL TRY, BUT I MIGHT NEED HELP TO A NEW YOUTUBE CHANNEL, "THROW LEFTIE"

Reagan Bischoff - First Child to Be Honored at Brain Injury Services Award Event

WASHINGTON DC – An organization that helps Northern Virginians of all ages manage their recovery from brain injuries will - for the first time - honor a child for her leadership and grit in living with a brain injury that has caused lifelong paralysis on the left side of her body.

Reagan Bischoff, a 12-year-old 7th grader at Riverbend Middle School, has overcome physical, learning, and emotional challenges since infancy that many cannot begin to fathom. For her, everyday tasks that many take for granted require enormous physical and mental effort. Reagan developed a phrase, "I will try, but I might need help."

She received help with her own customized occupational therapy through a free program, ComPASS (Community Participation and Skill-building Services), provided by Brain Injury Services of Northern Virginia. This helped her build skills and confidence, and she decided to pass along her learnings by starting a [YouTube channel](#), THROW LEFTIE, last year, where she shares tips and hacks for others with paralysis, including styling hair and tying shoes.

Brain Injury Services gives out an annual "Bryant Cohen Empowerment Award" each year. It recognizes individuals who commit to their recovery process while leading and empowering others and maintaining a positive outlook through their journey despite their challenges.

"How many 12-year-olds do you know take the time and have the determination and drive to raise awareness for the disability community," said Cynthia Cross, Reagan's BIS Pediatrics Caseworker.

TO SEE REAGAN RECEIVE THE AWARD:

[Brain Injury Services](#) (BIS) will present Reagan with the award on Monday, May 2. Best to arrive at 4:30 pm for setting up, and between 4:45-5:00 pm, Reagan should receive the award at Country Club of Fairfax, 5110 Ox Road, Fairfax, VA.

MORE ABOUT REAGAN:

- Reagan plays the trumpet and lacrosse; and earned a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, one-handed through extensive work and practice.
- "The partnership between a caregiver and BIS services is critical for success for people like me affected with brain injuries and their families," said Reagan Bischoff. "BIS also allows me to practice, 'I will try, but I might need help.' When I need help, I know BIS and its team of experts will support me," she added.
- Reagan was nominated "Raven of the Week" by teachers at Riverbend Middle School two years in a row because of her great attitude, effort, and meaningful contributions in class. As a 7th grader, she is a Student Ambassador.

- Reagan serves as a role model to other students to demonstrate good school citizenship and support new students transitioning into the school. Reagan is also a Sources of Strength Program Peer Leader, where she participates in open discussions with peer leaders and caring adults about real problems the youth face and the sources of strength in helping others.

REAGAN'S BRAIN INJURY BACKGROUND:

- When Reagan was six weeks old, she began suffering up to 60 seizures daily, requiring brain surgery. Soon after, she was diagnosed with cerebral palsy.
- In addition to physical challenges, Reagan faces ADHD and dyslexia challenges resulting from her brain injury.
- To help with her challenges in school, BIS has helped her utilize noise-canceling headphones and adaptive technology like a smaller keyboard for one-handed typing and computer monitor adjustments. She also adopted strategies like planning tools and has been recognized as a model student.

MORE ABOUT BRAIN INJURY SERVICES:

Brain Injury Services offers free resources for Northern Virginians who have stabilized after their brain injury but need support reentering the world and navigating a new life. They often need to cope with speech, language, and other physical and cognitive challenges. BIS began offering its free life-changing services in 1989. Since 1989, they have helped transform the lives of more than 20,000 brain injury survivors.

- Brain injuries can happen at any time and change your life completely
- An insignificant bump on your head can lead to lifetime cognitive challenges and disability
- Brain injuries are often invisible injuries
- Support groups are a vital recovery component for brain injury survivors
- Diverse and intensive therapies are required to learn to navigate post-brain injury

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