



I am an Artist.

We are her advocate.



Mackenzie Cook is a dedicated student and talented artist who does not let autism keep her from pursuing her passions. "I've been dealing with my disability since I was four years old. I can say it hasn't been easy. I struggle daily with anxiety, depression, and sensory and auditory processing disorder," says Mackenzie.

Despite these challenges, Mackenzie is always 100% committed to everything she does. She graduated from Seckman High School special education classes in 2019 with a 4.0 GPA. She's currently a sophomore at Jefferson College where she is pursuing an Associates Degree in Fine Arts. She lives with her mom and grandmother in Arnold.

Last semester, Mackenzie earned a perfect score of 900% in English Composition I and an 835% out of a possible 755% in Graphic Design I. In addition, she made the Dean's List, was invited to become a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society 2020-2021, and received The Board of Trustees Special Opportunity Academic Scholarship Award, which paid for her fall and spring tuition during the 2020-2021 academic year. Mackenzie is also a member of Jefferson College Honors Scholars.

During her freshman year at Jefferson College, Mackenzie received the TRIO Scholarship Award, which made it possible for her to purchase an iMac computer and other equipment to assist her with her art classes. All of the awards and scholarships have not only provided the art supplies she needs to work toward her dream but have also aided her as she continues progressing in her education plan. Upon graduation from Jefferson College, Mackenzie hopes to transfer to Kansas City Art Institute to earn her Bachelors Degree in Animation, Graphic Design, or Illustration, so she can pursue her dream career of working for a company like Disney or DreamWorks.

In addition to completing her digital art class assignments, Mackenzie likes to illustrate characters in her free time, sketching the characters by hand and then transferring them to her iPad where she adds color to bring them to life.

Developmental Disability Advocates continues to support Mackenzie in her endeavors. Her Service Coordinator, Tracey, truly cares about Mackenzie and supports her in numerous ways, including helping Mackenzie apply for Financial Aid and keeping her informed about new services that could be beneficial. But Mackenzie's biggest supporters are her family members. They are very proud of all of Mackenzie's accomplishments and are incredibly excited to see what the future has in store for her.

According to Mackenzie, while it's sometimes hard to hold conversations or make friends, "Deep down I want to connect with people. I push through these challenges every day because I want to have a career."