



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

iCare Video Contest Winner Builds Upon Success

(Milwaukee, May 2010) Tenth grade Professional Learning Institute (PLI) student Darrious Farrow, 15, was announced the winner of [iCare's Overcoming Obstacles on the Road to Independence Video Challenge](#) on May 17th. Standing next to his teacher Tanya Arentsen, Darrious was presented a \$1,000 check from iCare for his video "Why You Always Bothering Me?" which is about students with disabilities who are teased by their fellow classmates. "I was happy to get a chance to win \$1,000," stated Darrious.



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Darrious is in a special needs classroom at PLI. He has a speech impediment and reduced mobile and cognitive abilities due to an auto accident he suffered in 2007. PLI is a project-based MPS charter school where students can follow their personal and career interests through research and application of knowledge. Arentsen is a second year instructor at PLI.

Darrious indicated he was motivated to participate in the contest after viewing a video made by students at another school. Arentsen used the video as a conduit to introducing iCare's video contest to her class. After watching the video Darrious asked, "Can I make one?"

With Arentsen's guidance, Darrious learned how to edit audio and video using software such as Apple's GarageBand and iMovie. Arentsen indicated that mastering the software was a learning experience for both of them as they encountered and overcame various production problems. Darrious also rewrote the lyrics of a Mariah Carey pop song and provided the audio recording to insert into the video. Darrious indicated it took him two months to write the lyrics. Using a digital camera supplied by Arentsen, the video was shot in the classroom with the participation of his classmates. As required for the contest, Arentsen uploaded the video to iCare's group page on YouTube.

A dedicated teacher in the MPS Special Education Program, Arentsen received her bachelor's degree in sociology from St. Norbert College in Dec. 2007. She is currently attending Cardinal Stritch University to obtain a Masters of Urban Education (MUE) degree. Originally on the path to becoming a music teacher, undergraduate internships with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Salvation Army's



Emergency Services helped alter her route to working with special needs children.

Arentsen explained:

“I really have a heart for children and for those in poverty. When I had the opportunity to become a teacher here in Milwaukee working with children with special needs, I thought I would just try it out. Now that I am two years into my position, I cannot imagine doing anything else. These students need to be held to high expectations, and before I came into my classroom, these students were not growing academically. In addition to being able to help them reach their fullest potential, I get to use my human service skills as well so that when these students leave me, they are able to function in society with all the supports they need.”

Darrious presented his video project as a PowerPoint presentation during the May 20th Great Lakes Constructivist Consortium (GLCC) event held at the Kern Center in downtown Milwaukee. The daylong event was focused on constructivist and project-based learning. Competing with children from MPS and other school districts in Wisconsin and Minnesota, Darrious outlined the steps he took to produce the video and why it mattered, explaining:

“It matters to me because I want people to stop bullying and help people with disabilities overcome the fear in life. This movie proves to other people they can do whatever they want if they put their mind to it. It doesn’t matter if they have a disability or not.”

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Using information from online sources, Darrious noted, “Nearly one in three people with learning disabilities said someone had been rude or offensive to them in the last year. In most cases, the person who bullied them was a stranger.”

<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/information/learning-disabilities-statistics/>



Another source he cited indicated that students with disabilities have a greater likelihood of being bullied than non-disabled students (Flynt, S. Morton, R. (2004) Bullying and children with disabilities. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 31(4), 330-333). His presentation won first place at the GLCC event, where he received a new iPod Touch. He was also invited to give his presentation at Cardinal Stritch for their education classes on bullying.

Independent Care’s Road to Independence Video Challenge was established to highlight issues faced by people with disabilities and to focus on individual efforts to succeed in the face of adversity. The contest involved MPS high school students creating a contest themed video, and uploading it to YouTube. In establishing the Road to Independence Video Challenge, iCare is building upon its mission of serving people with special needs by reaching out to Milwaukee’s youth; helping them to recognize the challenges faced by people with disabilities to promote a better understanding of their needs, and assist in removing obstacles for realizing a life of independence and self-fulfillment.

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Formed in 1994, part of *iCare*'s mission is to operate a program allowing for improved quality and access to care for individuals with special needs. Independent Care's outreach to people with disabilities extends into the community through participation in programs such as MPS's School-to-Work Transition Program and the establishment of a scholarship fund intended for MPS Special Education Program students to attend the Milwaukee Area Technical College.

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