



IN PRESS RELEASES

TAGS NAA LTL TOP WINNER

MARA SCHEIN WINS LEARNING ALLY NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Baltimore resident, a freshman at Cornell University, proves dyslexia is no obstacle to educational success

PRINCETON, NJ – Learning Ally, a 66-year-old nonprofit serving individuals with learning and visual disabilities, has bestowed its highest award to [Mara Schein](#) of Baltimore, MD. Schein is one of six students from across the U.S. who will receive cash awards and travel with their families to be honored at Learning Ally’s National Gala celebration in Washington, DC in April.

You would never guess that Schein, a freshman at Cornell University with a passion for public policy, was at one point in her life resigned to being a non-reader and poor student. During elementary school, she recalls that “her classmates effortlessly flittered through the pages of novels, while I struggled to get through picture books.” As a 4th grader diagnosed with dyslexia, she flunked spelling and her parents had to “bribe” her to even open a book. Because of her learning differences, her confidence plummeted as she struggled in vain to keep up with her peers in reading.

Schein turned a major corner when she discovered tools that could help her access and enjoy reading. By using human-narrated audiobooks from Learning Ally and other assistive

technology resources, she was able to take in books at the same speed and grade level as her classmates. “With the new tools at my disposal, I unearthed the joys of reading and acquired a profound respect for the written word I was previously unaware that I lacked,” she says.

With newfound confidence and a world of literature at her fingertips, Schein excelled in school, graduating high school as a straight-A student with research experience at Johns Hopkins Hospital. She also spent several years tutoring 5th grade students at a local inner city charter school in Baltimore.

In only her first semester as a freshman at Cornell University, Schein pulled off a 4.28 GPA. The huge challenges she has faced from her dyslexia have ultimately pushed her to be a driven, engaged student. “What I once saw as my greatest academic obstacle is now the driving force behind my education,” she says.

About the National Achievement Awards

Each year, Learning Ally honors exceptional students through the Marion Huber Learning Through Listening Awards, which were instituted in 1991 for high school seniors with learning differences such as dyslexia. Hundreds of students apply for these prestigious awards each year and are selected by committees of Learning Ally volunteers, board members, parents, educators, donors and staff. Students are recognized for their academic excellence, extraordinary leadership, and service to others; and they have thrived on their education paths thanks in part to their extensive use of accessible educational content and assistive technology provided by Learning Ally. Each award winner has a long list of honors and accomplishments, and has graduated with a GPA above 3.0, with most near the 4.0 mark. For more information, visit <http://naa.LearningAlly.org>.

About Learning Ally

Founded in 1948, Learning Ally helps K-12, college and graduate students, veterans and lifelong learners – all of whom read and learn differently due to blindness, visual impairment, dyslexia, or other learning disabilities. Through its support programs and audiobooks, Learning Ally enables families and teachers to help students thrive and succeed. The organization provides support to parents and students through events, webinars, personal consultations and other tools; and integrated learning management systems and professional development for teachers. In addition, Learning Ally’s collection of more than 80,000 human-narrated audio textbooks and literature titles can be downloaded on mainstream smartphones and tablets, and is the largest of its kind in the world. Several thousand volunteers help to produce the educational materials, which students rely on to achieve academic and professional success. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, Learning Ally is partially funded by grants from state and local education programs, and the generous contributions of individuals, foundations and corporations. For more information, visit <http://LearningAlly.org>.