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## **2016 Advocates in Disability Award Winner Announced**

*Young journalist dedicated to disability awareness honored by national program*

Washington, D.C. (June 9, 2016) – The HSC Foundation and Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation announce that Sara Luterman is the 2016 recipient of the [Advocates in Disability Award](#). A resident of Takoma Park, Md., Luterman, 26, is a strong advocate for young people with disabilities and works to let those voices be heard, particularly by giving people with disabilities a platform to share their stories.

Diagnosed with autism and partial blindness, Luterman’s advocacy work began after graduating from Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland in creative writing. In addition to creating [NOS Magazine](#), a blog about [neurodiversity](#) news, culture and representation, she currently works as a program assistant at the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, sits on the board for the Association for Autistic Community and acts as a part of the Individual Advocacy Group to help protect the rights of adults who need assistance in living independently. Her writing has also been featured in *The Guardian* and *The Atlantic* and she has served as an expert on a HuffPost Live segment about Hillary Clinton’s autism policy.

“Luterman’s efforts have raised awareness for the disability community by working with news outlets around the country to give people with disabilities a stronger voice, and we are proud to honor her accomplishments” said Thomas W. Chapman, EdD, MPH, president and CEO of [The HSC Foundation](#).

The Advocates in Disability Award, co-presented by The HSC Foundation and the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, recognizes an individual between the ages of 14 and 26 who is dedicated to positively affecting the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. The award is open to applicants from across the United States.

Luterman will receive \$3,000 on behalf of her advocacy work, and an additional \$7,000 towards a project to benefit the disability community. As the current sole writer and editor of [NOS Magazine](#) (NOS stands for ‘Not Otherwise Specified,’ a tongue-in-cheek reference to when a condition does not strictly fit diagnostic criteria), she plans to use the award to develop a more dynamic, interactive website with contributing creative writers. This initiative will serve as an opportunity for the disability community to have a central hub for relevant news, as well as provide a community forum in the website’s comments section and social media channels.

“We are proud to continue our partnership with The HSC Foundation in supporting the Advocates in Disability Awards program, which is designed to empower young self-advocates like Luterman, and support her project to create an online channel for the disability community,” said Kevin R. Webb, senior director, [Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation](#).

Past Advocates in Disability Award winners have achieved many accomplishments, from establishing a contest to commemorate the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, to eliminating outdated and stigmatizing language from Virginia state code and being appointed by President Barack Obama to serve as a member of the National Council on Disability.

“I feel very strongly about this project, and intend to keep pushing for its success,” said Sara Luterman, 2016 Advocates in Disability Award recipient. “It has the capacity to change the way conversations in the neurodiversity community take place, and to establish a standard for how disability-oriented news and opinion sites should function.”

The Advocates in Disability Award is a project of the National Youth Transitions Initiative, a signature program of The HSC Foundation. A major focus of the Initiative brings together the collective resources of multiple organizations, known as the [Youth Transitions Collaborative](#), to concentrate on transitions-related services, research, public policy and best practices. Along with The HSC Foundation and the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, its member organizations help young people with disabilities build paths to independence.

The Collaborative’s physical home, the [National Youth Transitions Center](#), also serves as a hub for regional and national disability organizations. Visit [www.thenytc.org](http://www.thenytc.org) to learn more about its commitment to making a difference in the lives of young people with disabilities, or follow it on Twitter at [@The\\_NYTC](#) or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/thenytc](http://www.facebook.com/thenytc).

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### ***About The HSC Foundation***

The HSC Foundation is dedicated to improving access to services for people who face social and health care barriers due to disability, chronic illness or other circumstances that present unique needs. Along with supporting operating companies, it places a particular emphasis on transition-age youth. For more information, visit [www.hscfoundation.org](http://www.hscfoundation.org).

### ***About the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation***

The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, based in the Washington, D.C. area, was established in 1991 by Mitsubishi Electric Corporation and the Mitsubishi Electric U.S. companies, which produce, sell and distribute a wide range of consumer, industrial, commercial and professional electronics products. The Foundation has contributed more than \$13 million to organizations that are empowering young people with disabilities to lead more inclusive and productive lives. To learn more, visit [www.meaf.org](http://www.meaf.org).