

## 2020 Outstanding Youth Award Presentation Script

### John Dixon: Courage

John Dixon is the 2020 recipient of the Outstanding Youth Award for **Courage**, a quality this Tabb High senior has demonstrated his entire life. As a toddler, John was diagnosed with autism, and later an acute auditory processing disorder--causing a 45-second delay between hearing words and fully processing them. John dedicated himself to listening therapies for three years, which ultimately corrected his auditory processing. He worked hard in school and astounded all with his artistic talent.

John's adoptive mother and co-nominator, Mary Ellen, attests that it is hard to understand the courage it takes someone with autism to enter a foreign social world each day. But, John enters it lovingly and forgivingly, and commands respect with his tenacious desire to succeed. In spite of his struggles with anxieties, especially when he doesn't do well, he never quits and works even harder. He excels in history, animation, and cinema, and enjoys summer educational programs and family trips to museums with his younger brother, Andrew. This year, he also studied animation online, graduating from the prestigious Don Bluth ("Blooht") 2D Animation University, which fueled his dream of using his art to address issues such as autism and ocean pollution. John also earned membership into the National Honor Society, participated in clubs and a play, and will attend college to study Animation. His co-nominator and adopted grandfather, John Mrzyglod ("Marsglod"), states that in spite of John's achievements, he knows that the Autism label still causes many to see him differently. But John patiently wants to educate people so that he and others with autism are treated like anyone else.

**John**, you are publicly recognized as a most worthy recipient of the Outstanding Youth Award for Courage, and are extended the utmost admiration of the Board of Supervisors for your tremendous inspiration and example to us all. The Board's best wishes go with you for a most rewarding and blessed life, and a bright future filled with continued triumph!