

# Actor Diego Mercado Changing Culture of Entertainment Industry by Paving Way for Actors with Disabilities

*Diego is the first teen Amputee to be cast in a Netflix Original Film.*

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, January 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With many media giants taking steps towards ensuring diversity in casting, one young actor is taking further steps to change the culture of the entertainment industry by paving the way for actors with disabilities.

[Diego Mercado](#) is an up-and-coming 15-year-old Amputee Actor, model, and adaptive athlete with European and Puerto-Rican roots. After being featured in a 2016 viral workout video with a Marine Corps veteran amputee, Diego became an internet sensation known for his amazing fitness talent and ability to motivate others. Having captured the hearts of millions of people from around the world, Diego was quickly sought after and cast for multiple reality TV shows and projects, most notably for a role in a Netflix Original Film entitled *Mixtape*. In the movie, Diego plays Steven Gonzalez, a wheelchair-bound bully to the main character, Beverly Moody. Notable castmates include Julie Bowen, who plays Claire Dunphey on *Modern Family*, comedian and musician Nick Thune, and Jackson Rathbone from the *Twilight* series.



Through his role in *Mixtape*, Diego has made remarkable history – being the first teen Amputee to be cast by Netflix for an original film. According to the talented and determined actor, this is a critical step in changing the culture of the entertainment industry and paving a way for other actors with disabilities.

Media companies have made great strides in the last few years to be more diverse and inclusive to actors of different races, backgrounds, live histories, disabilities, and cultures. “Through my role in *Mixtape*, I hope that one day a kid with disabilities will be watching one of my movies and

be inspired to follow their own dreams.” Diego also hopes that media companies will continue to see the importance of being equitable when writing and casting for TV and film.

That being said, “people seem to be interested in understanding the backstory of characters like Steven, the role I play in *Mixtape*,” says Diego. While the film has been a big hit, Diego points out that “not a lot of media is talking about why my character is in a wheelchair and why he is a bully.” We are missing amazing opportunities to talk about these issues to better understand the population they represent. After all, Steven may be a fictional character in the movie, but Netflix chose to include him in the film for a reason – that reason being that there are thousands of Stevens in our world who wish for understanding and acceptance.

Though Diego’s character in *Mixtape* isn’t being talked about much in the media, his profound talent has not been dismissed. Viral video star, Dhar Mann, sought out Diego to appear in a viral video called, [Teens Reject Disabled Runner](#), where he plays the role of Kyle, a young track runner who is bullied by a teammate who lacks confidence in his own abilities. The film has garnered more than 13 million views to date – and counting.

“This is a huge stride for diversity and inclusion in the entertainment industry and, while the roles may seem small, they speak to the aspirations of other entertainers with disabilities who one day want to make it in the industry,” says Talia Perregaux, Senior Director and Head Talent Manager of the renowned MMG in New York. “Additionally, Diego is not acting for his own benefit, but he hopes to one day use his





platform to change military recruitment policies for amputees. In fact, Diego will be featured in other upcoming projects, some of which we can't disclose, and has been courted by the likes of Disney and Nickelodeon."

For more information about Diego Mercado, you can follow him on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok or YouTube by searching handle [@mrdiegomercado](https://www.instagram.com/mrdiegomercado).

### About Diego Mercado

Diego Mercado is a 15-year-old Amputee Actor, model and adaptive athlete who provides authenticity to his characters and promotes inclusion of actors with disabilities in the entertainment industry. Diego was born with amniotic band syndrome, a condition typically caused by damage to the inner layer of the placenta, causing Diego to be born without his right lower tibia and only two fingers on his right hand.

Diego is also an avid advocate of military veterans, and the first known teen amputee fitness enthusiast to train with the US Army, SWAT, and DEA, in addition to supporting the differently-abled community.

Diego Mercado is represented by MMG - Model, Talent & Celebrity Management Group - NY.

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