



# The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!

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## Welcome To The Noodle!

This is the November 2014 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by The Florida Youth Council (FYC). In this issue of *The Noodle*, members of The Council were asked to write about their favorite animal and what characteristics they like most about that animal. This topic led to a lot of creativity in their choices of their

favorite animal. Members wrote about a mythological creature, while another wrote about their dog they rescued in a moving story. The FYC members truly hope you will take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to read their articles and celebrate their accomplishments and life changes in this November 2014 edition of *The Noodle*.

### Florida Youth Council

Megan Atkinson  
Shevie Barnes  
Alex Brown  
Derek Carraway  
Nick Grabowski  
Whitney Harris  
Christopher Regan  
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Josue Tapia Ortiz  
Christina Waldron



## A Girl's Best Friend

By Megan Atkinson

Whoever said diamonds are a girl's best friend never had a dog as a pet. Growing up, I always had a dog by my side. So naturally they are my favorite animal. I have always liked bigger breeds more than smaller breeds because I tend to fall a lot. So having a bigger breed of dog just made more sense. If I fall a bigger breed, it's not going to hurt the dog as badly if it was a smaller breed. In my opinion, everyone needs a dog because dogs are the only

thing in the world that will love you more than it ever loves itself (Not including your parents). Dogs are loyal and protective. You are their human rather than them being your dog. And they always know when something is wrong; giving you doggie kisses to fix it, not to mention they are the best secret keepers in the world. You can tell them anything and everything and they won't tell a living soul. They will stay by your side no matter what because to a dog you are the only thing matters.



The Florida Youth Council is a program of The Family Cafe

## My Favorite Animal

*By Derek Carraway*

There are countless animals of all kinds on our planet; however my favorite might be one of your most common house pets. Yep, you guessed it. Dogs are my favorite animal. I've had a dog for many years of my life. In fact, I've had four altogether. The first two we wound up not keeping though because the first one barked non-stop (that got old real quick), and the other was just too wild and aggressive for comfort. Finally though, as the old saying goes, third time's the charm. We got another and she was a keeper.

Her name was Scooby and she was a bigger dog. In fact, we kept her for 13 years until she passed away. She was wonderful and was truly considered a member of the family and is missed. About four months after that we got another dog. Her name is Khloe and she is a smaller dog but just as loving and playful as Scooby was. Because she is smaller, she can sit in my lap and has a lot more energy to burn which is fun at times. She also enjoys playing with her toys and it is fun and comical watching her play with them.

As you can see from this, I obviously like dogs. They are loving, affectionate and fun to be around. All of this is why dogs are my favorite animal.

## Turtles Aren't Just Ninja's

*By Nick Grabowski*

I've always known my animal of choice. When I look back at my youth, I think about the animals I kept, what I would watch on TV, or even pretend I was. It's turtles! I loved the Teenage Mutant Ninja turtles show as a kid and I kept pet turtles while they recovered a couple of times in my life. I like that turtles are intelligent, yet know when to fight for something or run (slowly) from something. They are naturally most happy when in the water (most of them away). Swimming, being one of

## What Happens When You Believe

*By Shevie Barnes*

Someone once told me I reminded them of a penguin: the strong alpha female who would go out and find food for everyone. People have always said that I am cute like a bunny or a kitten. I think that I am most like MY pet chiwawa, Phoebe.

Phoebe is a rescue dog, who was found underneath a trailer where she sat on an anthill in fear of her life. She was malnourished and frightened of everything. It was sad and scary as we took her out for walks she would fall back in surrender position. Phoebe has been a part of my family for 2yrs now, and she's overweight, friendly, well-trained and it seems our instincts were right: she was a loveable dog in disguise.

I too felt like the underdog. I used to say to myself that I was a "leader in disguise." I had ideas but kept them to myself. I had a lot to say but said nothing, until someone gave me the chance to shine. Now as you can guess, people cannot get me to be quiet. I was rescued just like Phoebe by someone who chose to believe in me.



my favorite things in life, I can relate. A turtle can also withdraw from the outer world and be safe from most of it's issues. While I can't really do this physically; I can mentally, and it's a great way to put things in perspective.

## The Black Fish of Greatness

By Whitney Harris

I have never really been a big fan of animals. My Grandmother tells me it's genetic since she feels the same. It's not that I dislike critters by any means, I just don't want to have the responsibility to care for them. Luckily, my favorite animal cannot be had as a pet!

In my adult life, I have developed a real liking for whales, specifically the orca whale. I'm not really sure what sparked my interest, but I really enjoy watching documentaries on how intelligent and creative orca whales are. One documentary showed that an orca whale had figured out how to catch seals by riding a wave onto the beach, snatching a seal pup, and then wiggling backwards until they are back in deeper water. Orca whales also travel with their families, most time having generations of whales in the same pod.

I think I can relate to orca whales for these reasons. My family is very important to me and I like to stay close with them. I also have had to be very creative with my disability in the past to find new ways to do things, just like the orca and getting his food. I would love to one day be able to see some orca whales in the wild, but for now I'll just entertain myself with documentaries!



## Dragons are Not Real, But Still My Favorite

By Alex Brown



My favorite animal is a little unconventional, but I absolutely have to go with dragons. I love dragons in any form. I love pictures and games and books and I even have a dragon statue collection. I am that nerdy.

Dragons are animals. In fact they are often portrayed as the most intelligent animal around. You have to go no further than the Inheritance Cycle to see this. This set of books is based completely around a dragon and a dragon rider. In that story, dragons are just as intelligent, if not more, than humans, elves, and dwarfs. Dragons are revered for their intelligence and sought out to provide guidance. They are thoughtful about every response they give. That is what I would like to emulate. I only want to talk and respond in a thoughtful manner.

Dragons are perhaps best known for their ferocity in battle. Many stories tell of soldiers who quake with fear at the mere thought of fighting a dragon, and they should. Dragons rain fire down from above and have tails with spikes that swing and impale all who are too close. Not to mention their giant teeth and claws, with which they further rip apart their enemies. I wouldn't want to be known for my ferocity on the battle field, but I want to be known as ferocious in my attitude toward all my other activities, especially competitive things like bowling and board games.

While I know that dragons do not exist, when asked about my favorite animal I am always going to say dragons. I guess now I have to apologize to my cat.

# The Eyes of the Panther

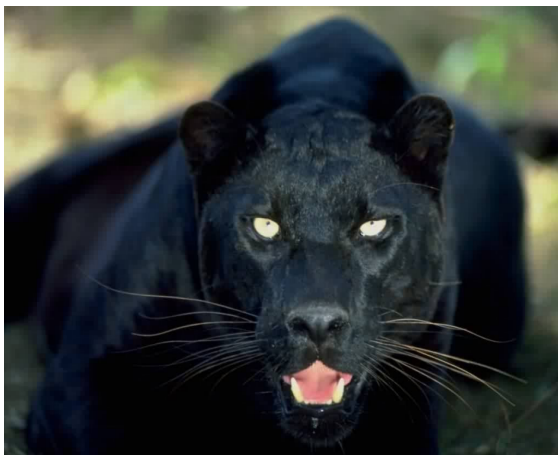
By Josue Tapia Ortiz

There are a lot of animals in this world that run around living their daily lives. Some are big and some are small. Some are dangerous and others wouldn't hurt a fly. But, then there are the animals that people best associate themselves with. Some love dogs, some love cats, some love fish, and others love their reptiles. See me on the other hand I love "loner type" animals, the animals that live by their own rules. That's why my favorite animal is the panther.

A lot of people would think my favorite animal would be the dog or even a wolf, but unlike the dog a panther is an animal that roams alone. He hunts where you can't see and he sleeps where you can't imagine he would. He's also my

favorite because of his eyes. The panther's eyes can be hypnotizing, majestic and violent all at the same time and being visually impaired people tend to not read my emotions well because of the way my eyes look, and I love that quality in myself. Also the panther is very agile and a lot stronger than he looks which is another quality I relate to.

Yes the panther is my favorite animal and I wish they could be domesticated as well as a dog but I'm ok with that never happening and watching them from far. Looking mean and chill at the same time. That reminds me...the Black Panther is the name of my favorite hero also, but that is a topic for another day.



## How Do I Become Part of The Florida Youth Council?

The Florida Youth Council is a group of youth (between the ages of 15 and 17) and emerging leaders (between the ages of 18 and 30) with disabilities or special health care needs that live in Florida.

The Florida Youth Council is all about getting youth and emerging leaders involved in self-advocacy, peer mentoring and other activities that will improve the quality of life for youth and emerging leaders with disabilities in Florida. The program empowers youth and emerging leaders to decide what issues are important to their generation,

to express those issues in their state and local communities, and to develop strategies to solve them.

We are seeking a group of enthusiastic, motivated youth and emerging leaders to participate. If you would like to take a leadership role in advocating for youth and emerging leaders in Florida, please visit The Florida Youth Council website at [www.floridayouthcouncil.com](http://www.floridayouthcouncil.com). The program is open to application year round. We hope to hear from you soon!