



# The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!

Volume 8, Issue 4

April 2015



#### Florida Youth Council

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The Florida Youth Council is a program of The Family Café

## Welcome To The Noodle!

Welcome to the April 2015 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by The Florida Youth Council! In this issue of *The Noodle*, members of the Council were asked to write about their greatest obstacles for 2015. This topic allowed members to share their goals and describe different ways to overcome their challenges. Council members wrote about sticking with New Year's resolutions, getting jobs and passing the GED test. Also included, is a sneak peek for The Florida Youth



Council's breakout sessions for The 17th Annual Family Cafe this June! We hope you will take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to learn about our experiences and enjoy our thoughts and opinions in this April 2015 edition of *The Noodle*!

## Finding a Steady Job

*By Alex Brown*

The biggest obstacle of 2015, up to this point at least, has been trying to find a full-time, steady job. This last August I went back to school full-time to finish my bachelor's degree. I was able to graduate in December, and since then I have been busy looking for a job within the disability field.

While I have not yet been able to find a steady job, since early January I have been working at The Children's Forum operating their referral line, The Florida Directory for Early Childhood Services. This is a great job where I help direct dozens of individuals to the services that will best help their young children with disabilities every day. The only problem is that the job

is only temporary. As of March 31 the job is ending, and I knew that up front. Unfortunately this is also the case for my boss. She is a long-time friend of my family and has worked at this job for a long time.

The process of looking for a steady job has been difficult and a little foreign to me. I got my first job over the summer when I was 13. Every summer following that I worked, and then when I was 17 I started working during the school year, and I have had a part-time or full-time job ever since then. I have been very blessed to work for the State of Florida and with non-profits. Not having a job has really made me realize how blessed I have been in the past.

I don't know what the rest of 2015 has in store for me, but I do know that I will overcome the obstacle of finding a job, and any other barriers that pop up.

## My Resolutions

*By Whitney Harris*

I had to do a lot of reflecting in order to decide what my biggest obstacle to overcome in 2015 would be. In the late part of last year, I packed up my bags and moved myself to Tallahassee. I completely changed careers for a chance to be closer to my family and to work in a field that I am more passionate about. That was definitely an obstacle, though it wasn't too hard to make happen.

I am starting to believe that my biggest obstacle of 2015 will be to complete my list of New Year's Resolutions. I started 2015 with 20 resolutions. So far, I have taken care of four. I have completed and passed all of the testing needed to become a certified prosthetist, I have gotten the Tallahassee chapter of LIM359 (an activities-based support group for people without limbs) started, I've created a retirement plan and I have been assigned a Girl Scout troop that I'll be able to volunteer with as a leader. Since it's only April, I'm pretty happy with my success!

There are still 16 things on my list of resolutions that I need to work on. Those includes things like sticking to a budget, creating a blog, unpacking the boxes still in my apartment and joining a gym. 2015 is the first year that I'm determined to be productive and accomplish my resolutions. Wish me luck!



## A Day with No TV

*By Nick Grabowski*

For 2015 I have a good idea of what I am doing to move forward. Now it is time to just actually do those things. I'm trying to set aside one day a week for not watching TV, playing games, or doing any of my other normal activities. Instead I'll just be focusing on long term goals and moving forward. I really hope I can keep it going. That is the obstacle for me. I also have my normal obstacle, which is to continually get better at things I am doing. I enjoy continually attempting to get better at things. Things get boring when you cannot get better at them, at least for me.

## Obstacles to Overcome This Year

*By Derek Carraway*

Well, when I sat down to think about this one, only one thing really came to mind right off. The main obstacle I will have to overcome this year is finding a job. I recently graduated and have had a couple of internships along the way, but my goal at this point is to find a full-time job in my degree field. There are many obstacles associated with that, including not having the amount of experience the job ads are looking for, and jobs being hard to come by in our current, still recovering economy. I've been doing everything I can, spending countless hours looking for jobs, and even looking into getting some certifications that could help my resume. I'm also in with Vocational Rehabilitation, and they have been helping me look too. Despite these obstacles within the main obstacle, I know I will find something and conquer the main obstacle I face this year in 2015.

## My Goals for 2015

By Christina Walrdon

One obstacle that I want to overcome in 2015 is being understood despite my being disabled. Another obstacle is finding a job. I also want to complete my GED. I know how important it is to have a high school diploma. Even though I have a special diploma, the GED is vital in finding the right employment for me.

Another goal for 2015 is to continue volunteering. I am a bowling coach for a league for people with disabilities. I am also an altar server at my church. Cooking is not really an obstacle, but it is something I don't like. I need to overcome this dislike in order to share meal preparation with my family.

## Challenges to Overcome in 2015

By Christopher Regan

The year 2015 brings a whole host of new challenges for me. After I graduate from the University of North Florida with my Bachelor's degree, I hope to obtain my Masters in Business Administration (MBA) degree next. I don't know whether I'll be able to go full-time and finish the program in two years, or if I'll have to go part-time and take longer due to financial limitations. Either way, I want to make myself stand out among the endless wave of Bachelor-holding students, and become the second person in my family to pos-



sess a Master's degree. I like school and do well in it, so school is a good place for me to be.

Before I can even be considered as a candidate for Graduate School, I first have to pass the Graduate Readiness Exam (GRE) and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above as an undergraduate. As my final college semester draws to a close, I constantly worry about whether or not I'll drop the ball in some way and ruin my GPA. I have to stay strong and finish triumphantly. This will enable me to have more time to study for the GRE, which I plan to take over the summer. If I pass it, then I hope to enter the graduate program when the fall semester starts.

Finally, I will have to start looking for an actual job as well. It is admittedly frustrating, time-consuming, and random. Looking for a job is never a pleasant experience, but I'm trying to stay positive and hope that I will be able to find something. My ultimate goal is to hopefully land a position with a free-lance public relations firm that offers a tuition reimbursement plan. That way, I will be able to gain experience in my field while covering the cost of graduate school. So, wish me luck!!



# **The Florida Youth Council** **presents their Sneak Peek of breakout sessions** **for The 17th Annual Family Cafe!**

## **Disability Sensitivity**

*Led By Alex Brown*

Having a disability can be a sensitive issue. With that thought in mind, the FYC will do a disability sensitivity session at The 17th Annual Family Café. This session will help participants to become more aware of how to properly interact with people with all types of disabilities. Come and join them for this exciting and interactive session.

## **Come and Chat with The Florida Youth Council**

*Led By Whitney Harris*

The Florida Youth Council wants you to get to know them, and they want to get to know you! Come to this interactive session where the members will share what the Council is doing, a little about what the members are doing individually, and answer some of the questions you might have about the FYC.

## **Assistive Technology Used by Youth**

*Led By Derek Carraway*

Assistive technology is used by many youth with disabilities. In this session, the members of The Florida Youth Council will share their experiences with the assistive technology they use in their lives, and give you more information on what technology may be right for you, and where to find it.



## **Transitioning into The Real World**

*Led By Josue Tapia-Ortiz*

Figuring out what path is right after high school can be difficult. Do you go to college, go to a trade school, or go directly into the workplace? Come join some of The Florida Youth Council Members as they share what went well, what went poorly, and how they became more independent in their own transitions. They will also share advice and ideas on how to take care of yourself as you become independent. At the end, you will have a chance to ask them questions so that you can better prepare yourself for the real world.

## **We're Here to Listen**

*Led By Megan Atkinson*

Life can be hard at times, and some obstacles may seem too hard to overcome. The Florida Youth Council understands how tough life can be. During this session, the audience is in control! The FYC is here to lend you their ears. They would like to hear about everything, good or bad, that's happening in your life, and try to point you in the right direction.

## **It's All About Social Interaction (Youth Only)**

*Led By Shevie Barnes*

Life is all about interacting with peers. This can be very challenging, especially when you have a disability. The members of The Florida Youth Council know just how difficult the prospect of interacting with peers can be. They also know that it is a vital part of life. In this session, they will share their social experiences and insight on how to successfully interact with you peers.

## **Advocates Unite!**

*Led By Nick Grabowski*

Join The Florida Youth Council as we offer insight on starting, continuing, and/or enhancing advocacy, both in your local community and beyond. We're excited to help you get your voice heard! It will be something to see!

**SEE** *You* **THERE**





## **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!