



the NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!

Volume 8, Issue 5

June 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 June 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 how the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act changed their lives. This topic allowed members to share their thoughts and opinions on how their

lives may have been different without this revolutionary bill. Council members wrote about their time in the public school system, finding jobs and accessibility. 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 June 2015 edition of *The Noodle*!



A Change in History

By Nick Grabowski

The Americans with Disabilities Act had a large impact on the disability community. What impact it has on the individual changes depending on their disabilities, experiences, and interests. For me, I have a lot of interest in history, so I enjoy seeing the changes in how any people or group acted or were

treated at a different time. The Americans with Disabilities Act provides ones of the closest marks of this to today. Being unable to use my hands to write much, I had to rely on computers all through schooling. At first, due to the ADA I was given a small laptop for note taking. Prior to this I was not really able to take any kind of notes. I generally would just depend on my memory. I probably could have continued by using memory, but it was nice to have an easier way.



Success

By Christopher Regan

The passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 has gracefully afforded me with countless beneficial opportunities throughout my life. Perhaps the most valuable of them have occurred during my time in the K-12 school system, as well as during my undergraduate career in college. Without the amenities that the ADA has provided for, I honestly don't know if I would have become the successful person that I am today.

In middle and high school, the ADA enabled me to receive special accommodations, which I could use in order to make schoolwork and test-taking a lot easier for me. The best part of the accommodations was that they allowed me extended time that I could use when taking major tests, which helped me to take my time when working through the problems.

In college, I was able to take full advantage of all the resources that were available at the University of North Florida's Disability Resource Center (DRC). Not only was I able to actually take exams at the DRC itself with twice the normal time limit, but I was also authorized to use my laptop during class in order to take faster, more effective notes. All of this was incredibly instrumental in enabling me to keep up with the fast-paced, demanding workload of college academics.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

By Megan Atkinson

In 1990, George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA makes it possible for people with disabilities to lead successful and fulfilling lives. This important act went into effect 25 years ago. That's 4 years before I was born. I couldn't imagine my life without the ADA. It makes it possible for me to live my life without being discriminated against due to having cerebral palsy. I can use public transportation thanks to the Americans with Disabilities Act because public buses must be equipped with a wheelchair lift. I can also find services and work and not have to worry about not being able to keep my job as a news correspondent or lose my education because the ADA prohibits discrimination based on a person's disability. I am included in extracurricular activities at my college. Those activities do not exclude sports because my school cannot tell me I cannot play sports for my school because of my physical disability.

With all this being said, I honestly could not imagine my life without the Americans with Disabilities Act. Without it I would not have a fighting chance of leading the life I lead today. The Americans with Disabilities Act has made it possible for me to be independent and successful. The ADA was a huge step in destroying disability discrimination in America and helping people with disabilities like myself and others gain the freedom and independence we need.

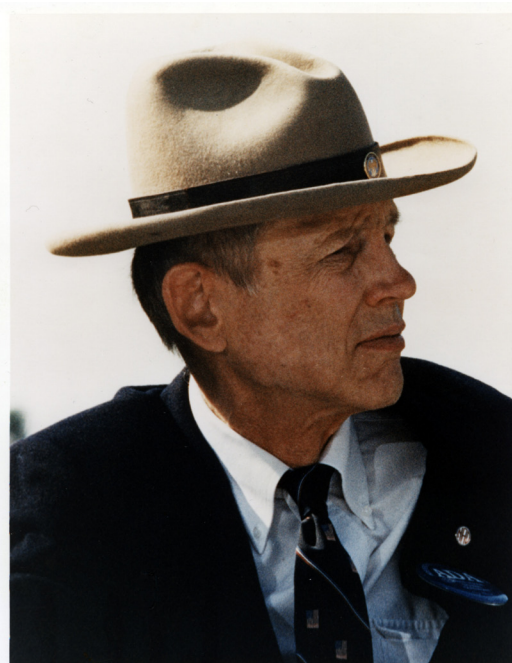
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Spoiled

By Shevie Barnes

I am here. This is my answer as to how the ADA has impacted my life. I am 26 years old. I am educated and an educator. I have freedoms that even I have taken for granted. When I watch movies from a few years before I was born it saddens me. People that had disabilities had no goals and dreams because they were not given the opportunity.

The ADA has allowed me to be “spoiled” in a sense. Maybe not spoiled, but sheltered. I went on vacation with my family and it was not only a culture shock, it was a life changing event. In the country we visited people with disabilities are viewed as mistakes. People stopped me with forlorn looks on their faces. Old women tried to cast devils out of me. The whole experience made me grateful. Grateful for the ADA that is. The ADA is like the big brother or sister for people with disabilities. Each day I leave my house and travel to work. Each night I scooter into my house and I scooter proudly into my room. All things that I do not think would have been possible without the ADA. The ADA not only offered people with disabilities freedoms. By the ADA being in effect, employers, employees, families, friends etc. wanted to be educated about people with disabilities. The ADA was a big part of creating the disability community of today. It opened the world’s eyes to a brand new perspective. For that perspective I am forever thankful. In short, I can honestly say I would not be where I am today without the passing of this law.



Right to Work

By Dakota Smoot

The ADA has changed my life greatly. The law helps me be free of disability judgment by a future employer or current employer. I’m not sure how it works, but all I know is it’s a great law that has been invented in the American government and it’s a great thing to have, because you are allowed lawyers if you get fired because of your own disability. I have no idea why I get seizures, and I’m not a fan of this reality. It is not killing me but it could have been a great deal of pain if I never knew how to control them. I love the fact I have a real chance of getting a job like any other person in this country. The hardest part about working is not being able to do anything about the loss of a great job with no warning. Under the ADA I can get a lawyer if this was ever to happen to me because that is one of my rights I have in this country because I have seizures. It doesn’t matter if you’re going to get a job or not. The fact is that rights under the ADA are not going anywhere and are free to Americans who have disabilities. That is all about that describes my feelings for the ADA and how it changed my life.



The ADA and Me

By Josue Tapia Ortiz

Having a disability is a very difficult thing to come to terms with. Having a disability in America is an even harder thing to live with. Some people don't understand how hard we work as a community to make things fair for each other. Thankfully, we have the Americans with Disabilities Act to back us up when some battles are difficult.

I'm visually impaired myself. That doesn't mean I'm blind, but it means visually I'm not at 100% compared to the next hard worker. That doesn't mean that I can't put in the effort to work as good as that coworker who isn't limited. Back in the day, I would just be just another person who wasn't given a chance, because people

would have felt I couldn't keep up. But again, these battles still go on today and I probably deal with the ignorance of the few from time to time, but having the ADA in my life as a citizen with a disability, it sure makes things a little less stressful. You can show people you are there because you were given the chance, like the chance anyone else deserves, and earn the right to be there.

My job is a dream come true to me. I get to work one-on-one with animals that work as hard as I do to keep me safe. I'm a pet groomer, and I've groomed the same animals that I know are going to be there to protect me and help me with my eyes when I can't do it anymore. I love my job, and I'm grateful that I got the opportunity to show my skill and my passion for it. I'm grateful to my job and I'm grateful to the ADA. Thank you both!!!

The Secondary Impact of The ADA

By Alex Brown

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive piece of federal legislation that has impacted my life in many subtle ways. This falls within the scope of what the ADA was designed to accomplish. It was designed to allow persons with disabilities to live a life free of discrimination based on their disability. For most persons with a disability, this means slight accommodation in their work place or at the stores they shop at. There are bigger issues of discrimination that the ADA prohibits, specifically when it comes to hiring and firing persons with disabilities, but the ADA has subtle implication for all people.

One of the biggest ways that the ADA has impacted my life has been its effect on building codes. Essentially the ADA requires that all public buildings built after the ADA was passed be accessible for all persons. Having a wheel ramp from the outside of the building, automatic doors, and having an elevator if there is more than one floor normally achieves this. There are other ways, such as wheelchair lifts, but one way or another, buildings need to be accessible. Now for those who know me, you know

that I don't use a wheelchair or walker or need to use a ramp to access a building. However, without these requirements within the ADA, I would more than likely not have become friends with some of my best friends. How this looks is that without this requirement it would have been really difficult for my friends Carly, who uses a walker, and Megan, who uses a wheelchair, to attend and fully participate in meeting with the FYC. It was at these meetings that I really began to become friends with them. Then there is my friend Austin, who was in a powered wheel chair. Without the ADA, he would not have been able to attend college. It was while he was in college that I really got to know him and call him my best friend.

I know the example that I gave is a secondary effect of the ADA, but it is such an important part of the ADA's impact on me. These three people I mentioned have helped to make me the person I am today. They have made me more conscious of how important the ADA is. The ADA was passed to help to improve the everyday lives of all persons with disabilities. That is what the ADA has done for me. By allowing these individuals to have access to buildings, it not only had a positive impact on them, but it had positive impacts for me and other people that know them too.



How the Passage of the ADA has Changed my Life

By Serena Wetmore

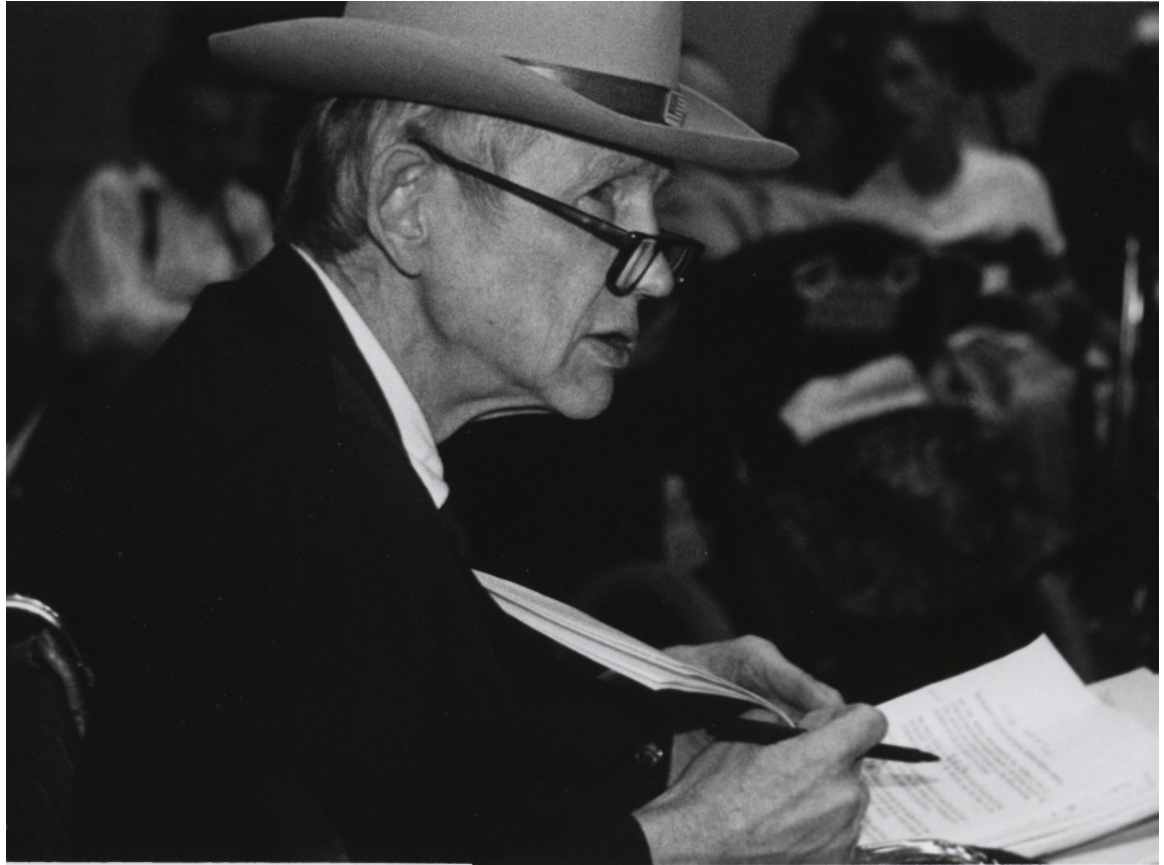
Accessibility is probably the first thing you think about when you hear the acronym ADA. It truly is one of the biggest issues for people who use wheelchairs. If there were no ramps, elevators, power doors, or disabled parking, I would be excluded from pretty much everything out there in the world. When I was little, I used to be able to ride a special needs bus with the wheelchair lift. I didn't have to ride the bus, but like other kids, it gave me a sense of independence. It also helped my mom so she didn't have to spend so much time driving back and forth.

My physical disability is cerebral palsy, which makes it challenging to do

a lot of things. Because the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibited discrimination, it has allowed me the opportunity to go through school and pursue a standard diploma. The school has provided me with many accommodations, such as a paraprofessional who takes notes for me and transcribes my dictation of answers for schoolwork and tests. They also allow me to have extra time (or sometimes shorter assignments) because I am not the fastest reader in the world, despite vision therapy to help my tracking. It also takes a lot of time to talk my paraprofessional through answers, especially in Algebra!

I think the ADA has allowed me to fulfill my full potential. Hopefully I will be able to go to college and pursue a degree in marketing, which I find really interesting. No one can tell me I can't follow my dreams. Thank you to those who made the ADA possible!





Accessibility

By Whitney Harris

The Americans with Disabilities Act passed on July 26, 1990, just three days after I was born. Being born without one of my arms and one of my legs left my future slightly undetermined mobility-wise. Though I did learn how to walk and become very independent using prosthesis, there is always the option of needing to use my wheelchair. In a world prior to the ADA, many buildings were not accessible to individuals using a wheelchair. I do not enjoy using my wheelchair because I find it very hard to maneuver with only one hand. Some days I really should give myself a break from wearing my prosthesis and use my chair, but my own stubbornness gets in the way. I can imagine it would be even harder if I had to maneuver over curbs, steep ramps or through narrow doorways of every single building I wanted to enter. Luckily, with the passage of the ADA, using my wheelchair is not limited by my surroundings, and only limited by own head.

The ADA for Me

By Christina Waldron

When I transferred schools, they found out that I had several disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act helped me get the necessary equipment to help me with my school work. I used a device called an FM system. It is used by people who have a hard time hearing. One part of the ADA covers transportation. The transportation card that I have mentioned in another article has helped me get to school and other appointments. Before the ADA went into effect, people with disabilities were not able reserve rooms on two major hotel websites if they had a disability. The hotel websites, Expedia.com and hotels.com, were sued because their customers with disabilities had to make substantial extra efforts that people without disabilities did not. The ADA made this possible.



The ADA Changed My Life

By Derek Carraway

Well, considering I have had a disability since birth, I would say the ADA has definitely changed and influenced my life in a positive way. There are probably countless examples I could share on how it personally has affected me over the years, but instead I will just touch on a couple of them that currently affect me at this moment in time. One is the mandate that all public transportation services offer a paratransit service with fixed routes. This allows me to take advantage of the Transportation Disadvantaged service where I live, since my disability prevents me from being able to drive. It's not perfect (believe me it's not) but it's better than nothing, and it is just one way the ADA has changed my life. Without it providing the provisions

for transportation, I'd probably be up the creek.

Another way it has changed my life is the provision that an employer can't discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability and must provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations for them. Since I recently graduated and am now looking for work and have a disability, this definitely affects me and could come into play. The area of work I'm looking for would, for the most part, be indoors sitting at a desk, but if there were to be a lifting requirement or something similar, I would definitely require some assistance and that is where the ADA comes in. I'll always be grateful for the passing of the ADA because it has changed not just my life, but those of all people with disabilities, and allows us to live out our lives as normally as possible without the fear of unlawful discrimination.

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. The program is open to application year round. We hope to hear from you soon!