



# The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!

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## 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 November 2015 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by The Florida Youth Council! For this issue of *The Noodle*, members of the Council were asked to write about changes they have made over the past year, or changes they would still like to make in the remaining two months of 2015. This topic allowed members to share their thoughts about how their changes have lead them to

grow as a person and how they are always changing. We wrote about continuing our education, joining groups like The Florida Youth Council and changing our jobs. 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 November 2015 edition of *The Noodle*!

## The Changes

By Josue Tapia Ortiz

The year 2015 has been a year of change for me. It's been a roller coaster of emotions. From quitting a job for the first time, to moving out for the third time, it's been crazy!

At the end of 2014 I felt like I was stuck in a rut and needed a change. I worked for a major animal service company at the time and worked hard to be noticed, to be recognized for my craft, to no avail. I made a decision and quit and it has been the best thing I've done for my career. If I never quit that job I would have never have found the job I have now. My life has grown so

much from such a big decision. I enjoy my job now and I don't have to be something I'm not to please the "higher ups" and their view on animal care. I was able to better provide for myself and move out on my own again. It feels good to go home after a long day's work and be excited to go home to my own place to my girls Sukie and Daisy (my dogs).

I'm planning on 2016 being an even bigger year for changes in my life. I hope to be in an even better place by this time next year. I hope you strive for change as much as I do too!



## Joining the FYC

*By Serena Wetmore*

The biggest change I've made in my life in the last year is joining the Florida Youth Council. They taught me to be proud of the person I am, and not to feel like I need to change for anyone else. I feel that there are some changes that I need to make, but at the same time, at my core, the person I am is unique and special. They also taught me that I should be proud of the things that I have accomplished in spite of my disability.

In terms of advocacy, I've gotten to explore how I think and how others think. I've learned a lot about how different people interpret things, and that people perceive things differently, whether it is due to a disability, or due to their personal experience. I've learned that advocacy is learning what people need or want and helping them to achieve it.

As far as things I'd still like to change, I would like to have more independence. Logistically, I have been trying to get a power chair, and finally have found a controller that works for me. It is like an iPad and that is something that I can control very easily with my finger, rather than my death grip on a joystick! Finally I have a chair on order! This will help me to have more control over my own life: where I sit in the lunch room, social events, and being able to help instead of always being one of the people who needs to be helped. Nobody will be pushing ME around anymore, LOL.

## The Change I Made This Year

*By Derek Carraway*

After thinking about this for a bit, it finally hit me. There is one big change I made this year and it didn't involve your stereotypical New Year's resolution such as weight loss or something like that either. In fact, it wasn't until April that I decided to make this change. I decided to pursue some more education in hopes of helping my resume so I can land a good job. I've already earned a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology, but after almost a year of job searching with no luck, I was meeting with my VR counselor and casually mentioned maybe I should take another class or two and see if it would help me out. Well, she told me about this place in town that offered different classes on a bunch of the subjects that fall in the field I want to get into. I went to meet with the owner of the place and next thing I know, I'm fully in and taking classes, working towards earning a Microsoft Certification. The best part is VR is paying for it. I enjoy the class format more than the traditional university setting. The classes are a weeklong, all day long versus a semester long class. At this point, I only have a couple of more classes I need, then I have a couple of tests I'll have to take and then I'll be done. This is a change I've made this year and hope it will pay off for me in the long run.



## **Becoming Me**

*By Shevie Barnes*

Change is a word that can be taken in many different ways. Some people flee from it, and others become who they are meant to be because of it. In a manner of speaking, one simple word can “change” the world.

This past year for me has been a lot of changes. The first big change was my perspective. The second big change was my job, and the third big change was learning how to trust.

It is a rare thought that anyone admits they needed a change of perspective, but for me it is the reason I am so happy today. Last year around this time things were confusing. Where was I going to live? Would I have a job? Could I really just be patient and wait for things to happen? It was around this time last year that I realized if you see the glass as “half full” instead of “half empty” it makes all the difference. Each day when I woke up I would remind myself to be in a spirit of gratitude. I would remember what I had and where I wanted to be. I wrote a list and I slowly worked to achieve those goals, making me be thankful today for the way I will see the world tomorrow.

Shortly after my big change of perspective came my dream come true job. I'm working somewhere that I am appreciated, and where what I feel matters. I have worked and fallen in love with the potential of greatness in many students before. I have spent more dollars and stressed for the same amount of hours. I am a teacher and true teachers know that this comes with the job. However, there has always been one big missing link, and that is feeling like I get paid enough to

go the extra mile. Where I work now I was given a major opportunity because I was hired as a teacher assistant and then got promoted to teacher. Now I have the biggest class in the school! A change of perspective has made everything amazing for me.

The final change is being able to trust. Trust has always been an issue of mine. However, this past year has allowed me figure out who I can trust. My trust circle has broadened and it has made living a whole lot easier. My friends have shown me dependability that I had never been able to see, and my family connection is out of this world. The most important part of my changes in life is being able to trust those around me. All of the changes in my world have made my becoming more of an independent adult a lot easier, and for this I am truly thankful.

## **There are Three Changes I Made this Year**

*By Dakota Smoot*

One change I made this year was going from not working around tons of nurses and doctors to working in comfort in a hospital. If I would have told my younger self this is what you will enjoy I don't think that I could have believed it, but it is now a very nice part of my life that I love and would never change. The second change is that I can see love clearly, and not just as a word that is meaningless to me. I can see it means so much more. It's truly amazing how lucky I am. The last change is better than I could have imagined it to be and the third change isn't it ironically. It is just the beginning of a new chapter of my life, and I love to see my book of my mysterious life unfold.

## Personal Growth

By Whitney Harris

This past year has been one of my favorites so far. As I've mentioned in a previous *Noodle* article, I've made myself a pretty hefty list of New Year's resolutions. So far I've completed 10 out of my 20 tasks. As this year is wrapping up, I've realized the sorts of things I've learned this past year and how I'd like to format my 2016 resolutions around them.

I've learned that one of the keys to happiness is to have a positive outlook. This is something we each already know, but to actually sit down and practice turning things into a positive is really life changing. I've noticed this a lot with my day to day life. It's very easy to get caught up in so many negatives things in life, but once I've committed to finding the silver lining, it's made me feel happier.

Something else that I've started focus-

ing on, and would like to continue to work on, are my relationships. I'm not speaking about my dating life, but more about my relationships with my friends and family. Taking time to let people know that I care for them, support them and appreciate them has done wonders for my own happiness. In return, I've learned who my friends are that appreciate my friendship as much I do theirs. I feel that there is always more work to be done, and I'd like to see what else I can learn in 2016 from being positive in my relationships.

The most exciting thing that I've been able to grasp this past year is the idea of "What got you here, won't get you there." I've done a lot of things that I'm proud of and learned a lot about myself, but I'm not done yet. Which each new thing I learn, I can use that knowledge to get me another step ahead in my life. It's been an extraordinary life so far, and I know that it's going to keep getting better.

## 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!