



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 February 2016 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 Valentine's Day. This topic allowed members to share their thoughts about Valentine's Day and what it means to them. 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 February 2016 edition of *The Noodle!*

Family and Candy

By Nick Grabowski

I don't really celebrate Valentine's Day. I've always found it either pointless or sad. When I say sad, I mean that some of my family members have died on this day in particular. There have been points in my life where I've needed to attempt something regarding Valentine's Day for the sake of cultural norms. However, I usually just do some-



thing different to get around it as best I can. All and all I've never been a fan of this holiday, but I do like the cheap candy that comes after it.





Not So Different

By Christina Waldron

Many countries celebrate Valentine's the same way as America does. Britain has people expressing their love with flowers and chocolates and cards and other special items. Italy celebrates by letting their young people listen to music and poetry. Denmark has their celebrations involving sending flowers. Japan and Korea celebrate by having the women send gifts to the men, mainly chocolates. Some women make the chocolate themselves. Germany celebrates by having the men send gifts to the women. North America celebrates with men and women and children sending gifts to their teachers and family and friends. Many people celebrate Valentine's Day in many different ways.

Act of Love

By Shevie Barnes

Valentine's Day is supposed to be a day where love is celebrated across the United States.

Some chalk it up to a "retail" created holiday while others experience things they couldn't imagine life without. To answer the question, "What does Valentine's Day mean to me?" I have to flash back to my first Valentine's Day (well the 1st one I remember). I was around eight or nine years old, and I woke up to my dad and a gift. It was a diary and a card that read "Daddy loves you." I can remember thinking my dad was awesome and my hero. Over the years more gifts have emerged, but what I remember most is the act of love shown by a father to his daughter. It's the memory that has reminded me of my self-worth over the years as I have become a woman.

Valentine's Day means so much to a lot of people, or nothing to some. For me it's the day that I get to spread the love, confidence, and belief that I was given on this day. My family began the legacy to share and give on this holiday and I intend on passing it on. When Valentine's Day comes around this year you should accept and also give a little love.



Around the World

By Serena Wetmore

Valentine's Day is celebrated in America, usually by cards or gift giving. However, in other countries, they have some interesting traditions. For example, in Korea they have a celebration of love on the 14th day of each month. On February 14th, the women give the gifts, then on March 14th, the men give the ladies the gifts. April 14th is where single people get together to celebrate their single lifestyle so that everyone is included. On June 14th, they have Kiss Day, and on December 14th they have Hug Day. I like this because it is spread out through the year and it is different every month.

Britain has a lot of varied ways to celebrate. Sometimes the children sing songs to people and in exchange they are given candy, fruit, or money. In Denmark, men write rhymes to ladies, anonymously, signing their names with dots matching the number of letters in their names. If the lady guesses who sent it, she gets an Easter egg from him for Easter. Many countries are very similar to our traditions of buying flowers and candy.

In Spain, the couples exchange gifts, and the husbands traditionally buy roses. In Italy chocolate is the popular gift and bigger boxes of candy are an indicator of your strong love. In Taiwan, the number of roses is an indicator of what you are trying to say to your beloved. In France, dining out is the tradition and often the time to make a marriage proposal.

I like the traditions that vary around the world because they are expressions of their cultures and values. In my opinion, it is important to celebrate differences instead of just being the same. I think I would like some of these traditions as part of my Valentine's celebrations.



Happy
Valentine's Day!

Do it for Others

By Dakota Smoot

Valentine's Day is a very nice holiday in America, and to be honest I don't know how it was intended to be back when it was created. As for me, I love Valentine's Day, so I celebrate it with chocolate and more chocolate.

The fact is that sometimes it's hard to celebrate the day when someone hurts you or leaves you with no warning of any kind. That is not a good way for people to understand the feelings other people have. It has

consequences for the way you or another person treats each other. But it doesn't matter if you're not a fan of Valentine's Day. Try going out of your way for another and I promise you'll never regret that decision.

I don't have problems with the way I try to make the most beautiful thing a blessing to others who need a good time or another friend. The point is that I am completely different from others, and I don't care if you have the desire to celebrate or not, but it is a day of peace and love. The way I see Valentine's Day, it is a very special day for the whole world.



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!