



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 January 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 their reflections on the past year and their resolutions for 2016. This topic allowed members to share their thoughts about creating New Year's resolutions

and how exciting 2015 was for them. We wrote about getting new jobs, living independently and learning new things about ourselves. 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 January 2016 edition of *The Noodle*!

New Year's Resolutions

By Derek Carraway

Well, it's that time again. Christmas is over and the New Year has begun. With that, people everywhere are making New Year's resolutions about things they hope to accomplish. To be perfectly honest, I'm not usually that big on making these resolutions, and I know this is one a lot of people tend to pick, but this year I've decided I'm going to make one to try and drop a couple of pounds. I had lost a few last year but I've slowly put some of it back on and I'd like to get it back off. I'd like to do this for a couple of reasons. First, I have a pair of pants I'd really like to get back into that have become a little too tight for comfort. The other reason is for my overall health. Being overweight can lead to other problems and health conditions, and I want to try and

be as healthy as possible. Plus, with the disabilities I already have, I don't need any more problems to develop, and getting and keeping the weight off can help promote a healthy life. These are the reasons this will be my New Year's resolution as this New Year gets started.



2015 in a Nutshell

By Josue Tapia Ortiz

2015 was a big year for me. A lot of big changes happened and a lot of people have come and gone already too. I was able to move out again, lose a chunk of weight, and work at my dream job, and I even got a new pet!

Moving out was a huge thing for me. 2014 was a very tough year for me on a personal level. I lost a lot that year, including my old place. I never thought I was going to be able to find a place for myself ever again, and then I did. It was one of the best feelings in the world to get handed that key. It was amazing.

Starting my dream job was an amazing feeling too. I enjoy every day I work and I enjoy that I get to be myself at my job. Being a dog groomer is such an emotional rollercoaster of a job that I get asked a lot, why do I risk it? Why do I do it, knowing the danger? Every job has its dangers and risks. I love my job because it keeps me leveled, and ready for anything. Little Bella the yorkie could want to drown me with kisses or chew me up and spit me out. I've got to be ready!

2015 was a big year of successes for me. I learned a lot in that short time that I was 2015. And I say short because man did last year blow by. I hope 2016 is a year that I get to grow from the things I accomplished in 2015. I want to wish you a Happy New Year, and for all your resolutions to come true. Be safe in 2016!

A Brand New Year

By Whitney Harris

Last year, I was extremely ambitious in my pursuit of New Year's Resolutions. As 2016 quickly approached, I decided to look at what my values were and build my new set of resolutions from them.

One of my goals of last year was to wear my prosthetic arm more, and depending on what your definition of "more" is, I accomplished that goal. But this year, I bumped it up a notch and got more specific. My goal is to wear my arm at least once a week. So far, so good! I wore my prosthetic arm while doing laundry this week. Turns out it's not very helpful when it comes to folding.

Another goal last year was to get my finances in order and spend less money. Well, surprisingly enough, I didn't succeed in this goal as much as I had wanted to. In 2016, I have great ambitions to stop eating out for meals and cooking more at home. Outside of food purchases, travelling was my second biggest expense of 2015. Most of my travel tends to be for the opportunity to volunteer, so I can't imagine slowing down! I do plan to prioritize which trips are more important to me over others, in the hopes that it will have me spending less money.

2016 is going to be a great year, I just know it! Happy New Year to everyone reading our Noodle!



New Year's Resolutions

By Christopher Regan

As the year 2016 begins, I have taken a moment to stop and wonder about what challenges, goals, and achievements will await me. I am now officially an MBA graduate student at the University of North Florida, and I have secured a special internship opportunity with Axia Public Relations. I feel like I am actually in full control of my life for the first time ever, and it is most wonderful indeed. I know all about New Year's Resolutions, as well as the fact that it's really hard to fully maintain them for an entire year. However, I plan to do just that, because my goals are much too valuable to waste.

My New Year's Resolutions for 2016 are within the mold of "Keeping It Simple, But Not Stupid." I plan to take two graduate classes each semester at UNF, for a total of six for the entire year. This will allow me to satisfy a greater number of credit requirements, which will shorten my time to graduate considerably. I also am planning to hopefully stay with Axia Public Relations for an entire year, in order to play a more valuable part in bringing their proposed plans to light. If everything goes well, then it's possible they might actually offer me a full-time position as one of their main E-Commerce specialists.

I am incredibly proud of myself for all that I have accomplished, and even more so because I have done most of it on my own. All of this is happening because I want it to, not because someone else is forcing me to do it. There is no greater feeling than that, and I plan to fulfill many more New Year's Resolutions for countless years to come.

New Year's Resolutions

By Serena Wetmore

I don't usually do resolutions for New Year's, so this is very new for me. For my first resolution this year, I am going to try to be more positive about my life in general. I think that this is a hard thing to do for a lot of people, especially for those that have a disability. We have a lot of challenges in our lives that most non-disabled people don't have. I think that these challenges we go through let us have experiences that we wouldn't have if we weren't disabled. For example, I have met so many kind, wonderful people who I wouldn't have met otherwise.

Recently I've been having some hard times being positive because of the challenges my disability has created. It frustrates me that I don't have as big of a social life as I would like to have. Also with school, I get frustrated because of grades and trying to communicate with the adults in the school. I'm also frustrated that I could be doing more for the world in general if I were more physically able.

What can I do to ease the frustration that I feel? Reading, listening to music or playing video games helps me forget about my problems for a little while until I can deal with them again. I've resolved to do meditations that I find on You Tube, and concentrate on my breathing and relaxation techniques. Instead of dwelling on my problems and worrying about them I will try to come up with positive solutions that I think will help fix the problems that I have.

Happy New Year



What a Big Year!

By Megan Germain

I am not the kind of person that likes to set one large goal to accomplish by the end of the year. I am the type of person that will set multiple goals throughout the year as my life changes. 2015 was an amazing year. I was able to meet some extraordinary people, as well as reaching some pretty important milestones in my life. I became more independent due to the fact that I am no longer living with my parents. I now live on my own with my spouse and our pets. This was also the year I got married to the person I would like to spend the rest of my life with. I have also continued to enrich my life by traveling a lot more. I believe happiness is what you make it and happiness for me is being around people I love and seeing the world. And step-by-step



I made that happen in 2015, and will continue to do so this year (2016). So, as of right now, my sets of goals for this year are to obtain my Associates of Arts degree by finishing school, followed by starting my career in the field of serving people with disabilities. Hopefully, I will be able to accomplish that goal rather quickly after finishing school. But, if I do not, I will probably choose to return to school and get my 2nd degree in the field of social work. However, above all else, I would like to just be happy and continue to travel.

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!