



# The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!



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Welcome to the September 2016 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by the Florida Youth Council! For this issue of *The Noodle*, members of the FYC were asked to write about Wellness Week - Disability Health and Wellness. This topic allowed members to share their

thoughts about Wellness Week - Disability Health and Wellness activities 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 September 2016 edition of *The Noodle*!

### Current Members:

Shevie Barnes  
Derek Carraway  
Megan Germain  
Josh Tapia  
Christopher Regan  
Dakota Smoot  
Christina Waldron  
Serena Wetmore



HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR  
\* Let's Get Active! \*





## Disability Health and Wellness Week is a week

Disability Health and Wellness Week is a week to help people learn more about disabilities and health. Disability health and wellness lets people know about different types of disabilities and how to take care of that type of disability. There are many types of disabilities and many ways to help people with their health needs for their disability.

For example, when my uncle was born with Down syndrome, the doctor gently laid him in my grandmother's arms and said "I am sorry." She could not have known what a joy he would be to his parents and how much they would learn from him. They became active in many advocacy groups and made many friends among other parents. Each goal he met was a victory, and there were many. The lesson you learn is that everyone does not develop at the same rate and you accept and take pride in those accomplishments, and everyone's health and wellness is important. Our family will always be grateful for the blessings we received on the day he was born.

*By, Christina*



## Disability Health and Fitness is a joke

Disability Health and Fitness is a joke. At least this is what I was told a speaker at a "disability conference." I remember like it was yesterday him explaining that "most of us" were under/overweight but there is nothing that can be done.

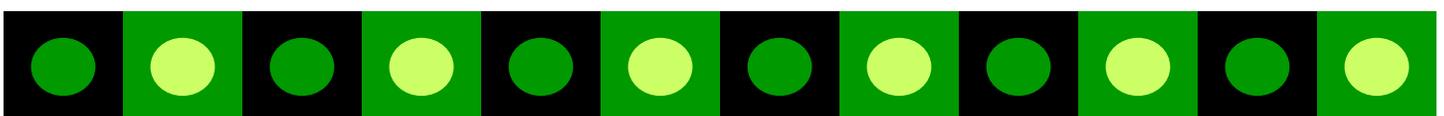
This speaker then went on to exclaim to one of my friends who is a wheelchair user that she gets enough exercise while moving the joystick of her electric chair. (Way to go thumb exercise.)

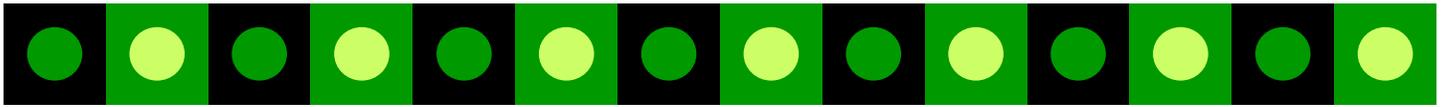
After a while you can understand why my group of friends and I just look back and laugh because he was clearly ignorant.

People with disabilities can exercise and should keep their bodies healthy. There are now so many avenues. The truth is, however, people with disabilities are often approached with the "question face."

It's imperative for gyms and workout centers to have an adaptive plan for those with disabilities to use. My own workout plan adapts to me not having a car. I use the video game *Just Dance* to work my body upper and lower parts. On occasion I go to the gym, but it works for me in my home. The moral: with/without or without disability, keep your body fit, healthy and well.

*By, Shevie Barnes*





## **Be Aware of Us . . . But Not Really**

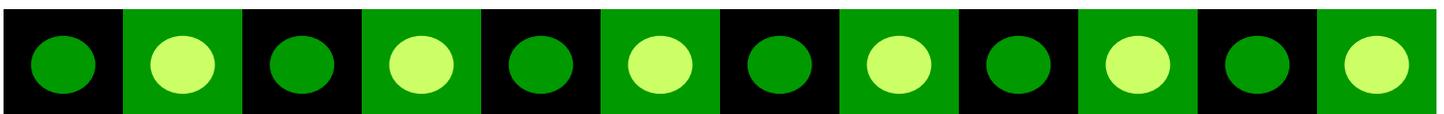
Disability Wellness Weeks are coming up and you couldn't be more excited. People say they enjoy celebrations based on their cultures or upbringing. We like to celebrate the things that celebrate us as individuals and show others who we are. But honestly, I have my reasons to be excited, and also to be a little skeptical. . . .

I am a person who has a disability. I have my steps that help me get through my daily routine. I am visually impaired and there are certain things I do to make my day a little easier. I put in my eye drops, listen to music to calm my thoughts, and let my senses relax. It's all my way to cope with the daily grind of the limitations of my disability.

In celebrating Disability Wellness Weeks we get to show people and educate them on what we go through. What we see, what we think, and how we feel. At the same time, we as a community don't want to be singled out to be celebrated because that's the idea we want to change. Celebrate us because of what we can do and what we've done. Don't single us out for the things that we can't do.

Be aware of us for all that we are and yet to become!!!!

*By, Josue Tapia*





## Disability Health and Wellness

As you are probably aware, people with disabilities are usually not as active as their non-disabled peers. It usually has to do with the fact that their disability may affect their ability to be as active or to participate in physical activities, whether it is sports, running, walking, exercises, or any number of other activities. As a result, many people with disabilities tend to put on extra weight that they don't need due to inactivity and this extra weight can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes and many other physical ailments, and in addition can add to the issues they already have with mobility. Because of this, it is even more important that people with disabilities take extra effort to try and eat healthier and avoid overeating, and try to get any type of exercise they are capable of. It would be a great idea to visit with a dietician in order to gain information on changes they could make to their eating habits that would benefit their health and wellness. It is also important that they make and keep regular appointments with their health care provider in order to catch any issues early and address them.

*By, Derek Carraway*



## **Your Health is the Most Important Aspect of Your Life.**

I like to think of myself as a generally healthy person. I'm a vegetarian (kind of) and I go to the gym twice a week (sometimes). As you can see by the words in parenthesis I use the terms vegetarian and gym loosely. However, even though I may slip up and eat meat every now and then or skip a couple of gym sessions, I still try to stick to my diet and exercise. Honestly, that is all that matters. As long as you make a change and try to stick to it. It is better than doing nothing. It is very important to be right and exercise to maintain your good health. As a person with a physical disability, I know it can be hard to find exercises that work for you. But, get creative and make something up. It could be as simple or as difficult as making a fist. As long as it works for you and it is safe. There is no wrong way to exercise. So get moving and get healthy!

*By, Megan Germain*



## Health and Wellness: The Key

Health And Wellness is definitely a topic that is important for everybody, regardless of who they are. However, it is especially important for people with disabilities, physical or mental. Whether it is physical exercise or eating healthy, it should play a very important part in their lives. Given that people with disabilities generally have more obstacles in their way, they should make sure that they are in prime condition so that they have a higher chance of overcoming them.

When it comes to eating healthy, it is extremely vital that people with disabilities learn to cook for themselves. Not only will it save them large amounts of money from not eating out all the time, it will also allow them to combine many different ingredients to create lots of custom dishes. For example, a nice fruit salad can be made from vegetables like spinach, lettuce, and carrots, and fruits like grapes, strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries.

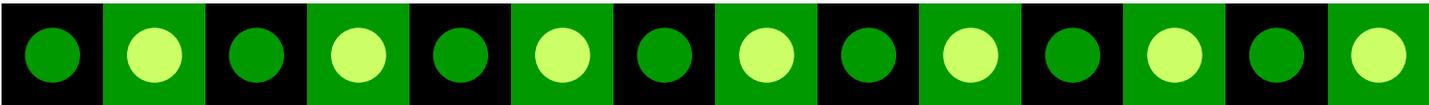
Exercise is another important cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle for people with disabilities, especially those with physical disabilities. Muscles that are not used will slowly begin to atrophy and break down over time. That is why they must be constantly maintained, which feeds into the social aspect of exercise with friends or caregivers. There are many activities that are suited to this, including swimming, wheelchair basketball, and weight-lifting.

Above all else, people with disabilities who want to live a life filled with health and wellness need to have motivation and self-discipline. After all, if they want to live an independent and fulfilling life, they have to take charge of their bodies as well.

*By, Christopher Regan*



The Florida Youth  
Council is a program of  
The Family Café



## 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 discuss those issues in their state and local communities, and to develop strategies to address 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!



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