



October 2016

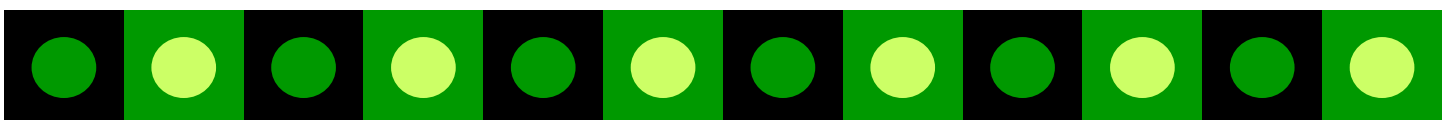
Disability Health and Wellness activities and what it means to them . We hope you will take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to learn about our experiences and enjoy our thoughts and opinions in this October 2016 edition of *The Noodle!*

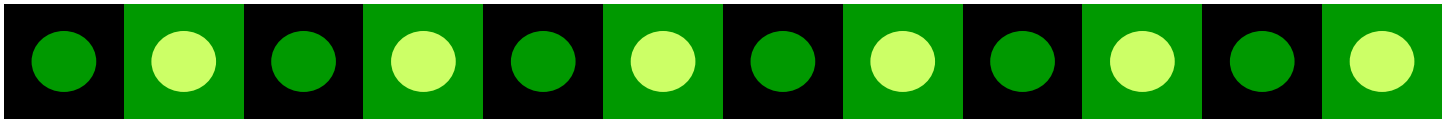
Shevie Barnes
Derek Carraway
Rocky Castro
Megan Germain
Josh Tapia
Christopher Regan
Dakota Smoot
Christina Waldron
Serena Wetmore



THE FLORIDA YOUTH COUNCIL

820 EAST PARK AVENUE, SUITE F-100 TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32301. WWW.FLORIDAYOUTHCOUNCIL.COM .FIND US ON TWITTER FLYOUTHOUNCIL@FLYOUTHOUNCIL .
FIND US ON FACEBOOK FLORIDA YOUTH COUNCIL PAGE .EMAIL NGERMAIN@FAMILYCAFF.NET

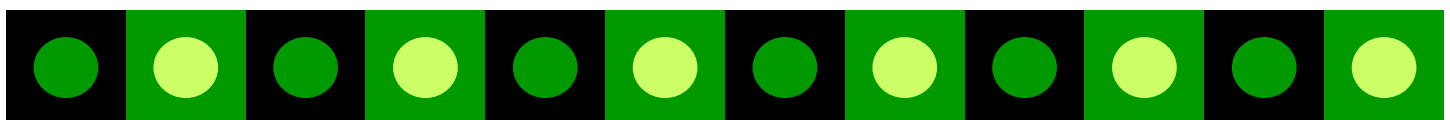




Discrimination or Not?

Ah, it's that time of the year again. October. It's finally starting to feel slightly cooler around these parts, football is fully underway, and here in Florida, Disability History and Awareness Weeks are observed. Disability Employment Awareness is also observed during this time. As we celebrate this time and spread the word around about its importance, it gets me to thinking back about if there were ever a time I felt discrimination due to my disability. After much thought, I honestly couldn't think of a good instance, so I decided to take it from a different angle and discuss a situation I'm currently facing. For the past two years, since graduating from college with a Bachelor's degree I've been searching for a full-time job. I've done all the things everyone does in this situation: got my resume up to par, got some experience to claim through internships while in school, polished up some interviewing skills, but it just makes you wonder if my disability has something to do with it. It shouldn't be considering it is against the law to discriminate or even question a person's disability if they are qualified for the job. It's a hard spot to be in though, and probably is why the unemployment rate among people with disabilities is way higher than the normal rate. If employers would look at us and not our disability, this problem could change for the better. Part of how we can attempt to change this is by spreading the word about the importance of all of these issues, not just during the month of October when these important weeks are observed, but all year long!

By Derek Carraway





How I Have Faced and Dealt With Disability Discrimination

Throughout my life, I have faced some instances where my disability has resulted in some form of discrimination. I can recall two of them the most vividly. When I was only a year or two old, I stopped talking entirely, and could only say around half a dozen words. Doctors told my parents that I would never be able to succeed in a mainstream school environment, and that I should be sent to a Special Education school. Obviously, my parents would not take no for an answer, and sent me to a speech therapist who specialized in severe speaking disorders. After about a year or two of intense therapy, I was finally able to resume talking normally. Another major incident happened when I was in fifth grade. I had gone to a private Catholic school for all of my elementary school years, and for the most part, I had done relatively well. However, about halfway through fifth grade, I was struggling greatly with succeeding at the standardized tests that they required. The teachers and administrators would not give me any extra help or assistance with trying to pass the material, and my self-esteem and confidence began to plummet. My parents ultimately made the decision to pull me out of the school entirely and homeschool me for the rest of my fifth grade year. After that, they decided to try and see if I would do better in the normal Public School system for middle school, and enrolled me in it. Fortunately, as I grew up and time went on, I was able to discover many different resources that I could use in order to have a greater chance of success. Throughout the rest of grade school and college, I took advantage of their Special-Ed departments so that I would be assured of extra help and accommodations for tests and any material that was difficult for me to master. I am lucky that my disability is not a visible one, so I guess it has ultimately been a little easier for me than for others. However, I still remember all that I had to go through in order to get where I am today, and I'm now more prepared than ever to deal with any more instances that may arise in the future.

By, Chris Regan

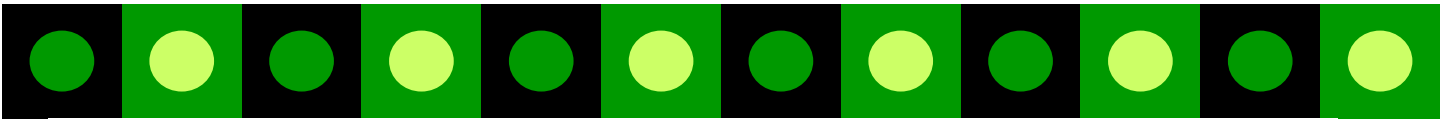


It was A Tough Road



I was born in the Caribbean to a lower class family with my first language being Spanish. I loved living in Puerto Rico, but opportunities to grow there are very slim. As a kid I always dreamed about coming to America and living the life of the kids I saw on TV, and I thought it would be great! Little did I know how my life was going to change forever. We moved to NY when I was five and I started in public school taking English classes. It was so cool because I got to see all the cool stuff I once saw on TV every single day. The nice cars, the cool snacks, and the updated TV shows. But one day I was playing outside and fell and got my hands dirty. At the time I didn't care much about it and continued playing. But suddenly my eyes got itchy so I scratched them. By the next morning, I got a very nasty pink eye infection so bad that mom took me to the doctor. Current treatment at the time wasn't working, and the doctor, not paying attention, prescribed with the wrong dose, causing me to lose my vision the next year. I was blind from age 6 to age 13. Some people think because you can't see it also means you can't hear or think for yourself either. I would have to wait extra time at some restaurants because they didn't have a large print menu, or didn't have the staff to better assist me. I was always picked last, or not picked at all in sports, because they thought I was useless. Teachers would talk very slowly to me, or talk to me like a baby, as if it made my life feel my better. But you know what? Those things changed when I spoke up and worked on myself. I joined track and field in high school and broke every school record I could just to show my legs had nothing to do with my eyes. I took honors classes and passed them just to show my intelligence wasn't measured by my sight. I even memorized the menus of my favorite restaurants so I didn't need to ask for help. I wanted to prove that a disability wasn't an obstacle to me. It was just a harder road to be on, but a road to success nonetheless. People will single you out and make you feel tiny all the time. You will run into some challenges that seem impossible. But just think, if you overcome this you're setting the example for the ones looking up to you for guidance. No one is good at everything. But shouldn't you be the best at that something? To be the inspiration you once looked for? Like I said before, no road is easy, but every road can be taken to the path of success, no matter who or what tries to steer you of course! Happy Disability History and Awareness Weeks! Spread the word!

By, Josue Tapia

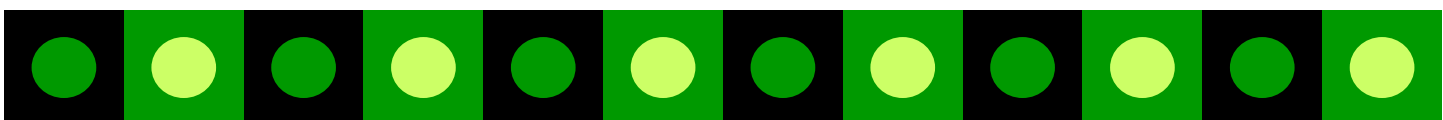


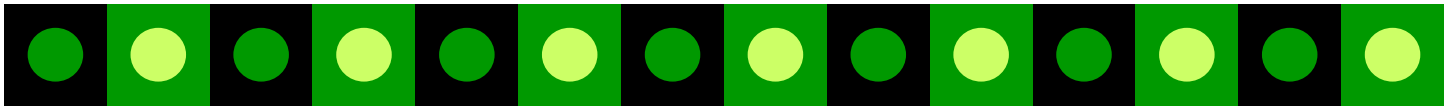
DIFFERENT KINDS OF DISABILITIES

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DOWNSYNDROMELA LAMEFSTRESFRMENTALHEALTHOMKOI
OOJIKIBLINDNESSMIOPADDDMIOPMNBUSADHD J IOMMIJHG
YDYSLEXIAKJOIGHIOTAUTISMKLIOGYUIHUHEARINGLOSSJ
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FGFREWRFTDGHTYUIHFRTYIUYHJKLOIUYLKJHGFDSRTYUBV

ALL ACROSS

EPILEPSY ADD ADHD DYSLEXIA APHASIA CELEBRAL PALSY AUTISM
DOWN SYNDROME SPEECH DEAF LANGUAGE DISORDERS VISION LOSS
BLINDNESS CHRONIC ILLNES HEARING LOSS INTELLECTUAL DIABILITY
MEMORY LOSS MENTAL HEALTH PHYSICAL DISABILTY

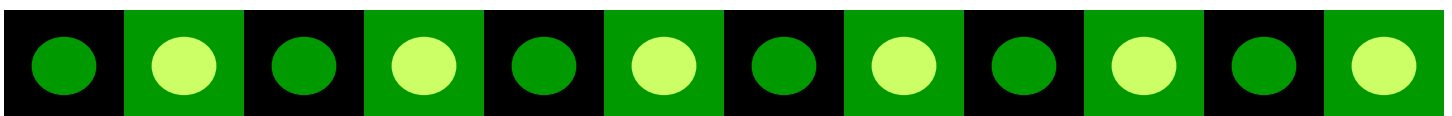


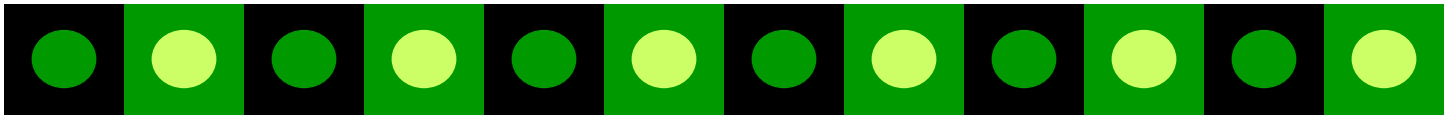


Disability History Awareness - How Have You Faced Disability Discrimination!

I have been disabled from birth. I do not know what it is like to live a so-called “normal life.” I have had over 20 surgeries on various parts of my body, as well as a total of 11 broken bones. Despite all of these hardships, I am a very hardworking, outgoing and social individual. The word “CAN’T” was never part of my vocabulary growing up. One of my passions has always been singing. Even though I have had several surgeries which could have affected my ability to sing and caused hearing impairment, I have sung competitively in classical and traditional venues since I was in fifth grade. I have faced and overcome a number of instances in which I have been discriminated against due to my disability. One example of this occurred in high school when my accapella group (T.A.G.) was nominated to go to the regional sing-off in Georgia. We were so excited, and began raising funds in order to make it to Georgia; in fact we were able to raise enough funds to get a Coach Bus with a wheelchair lift. I was so blessed that my fellow group members would go the extra mile in order for me to get a special bus. Our group was scheduled to leave at 12 a.m. so that the bus could drive through the night and reach Georgia by the morning. Our bus reached our High School around midnight and we all began to pack up and board the bus. This is when it all went down the drain. The bus driver tried over and over again to get the lift down but to no avail. Sadly, the lift was broken, and since it was midnight the company was closed and we could not get a replacement. I was devastated. Our group had worked so hard to raise the funds and now it looked like I wouldn’t be able to make the trip. However, like I mentioned before “CAN’T” is not in my vocabulary! So I sucked it up and I climbed up the steps one by one, dragged my body down the narrow aisle and pulled my body up on the seat. I was not going to give up that easily, and luckily I had my group mates cheering me on the whole way! I wish I could say that was the end of my issues, but unfortunately, that’s not all. I could not climb up and down the bus easily so for a 12+ hour trip I was stuck in the same seat and was not able to use the restroom. Needless to say I was not happy. But all good stories need a good ending; my group and I made it safely to Georgia, competed in our accapella competition, took the first place prize, and to top of all that yours truly was awarded with the best soloist award! So the moral of the story is, never give up no matter what hurdles and barriers may block your path, and most importantly never say “I CAN’T!”

By, Rocky Castro

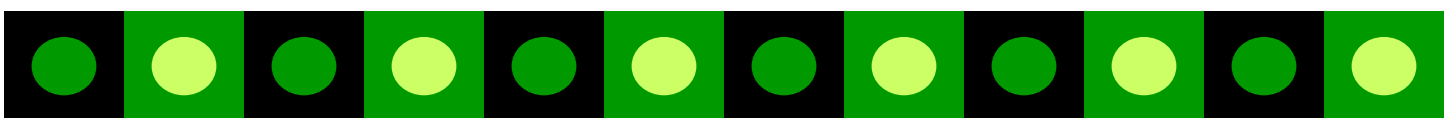




My 7th Grade Field Trip

I haven't faced discrimination very often, but when I look back I always think of this story which was more of a problem than discrimination. When I was in seventh grade, there was a class field trip to Universal in Orlando. Naturally I wanted to go with my friends. The trip sounded so fun! So I put in my application. As it turned out, I was the first student with a wheelchair at my school to want to go on one of these trips. The next thing I learned was that they weren't sure how accessible the bus would be. (It was one of those fancy coaches.) Obviously, I would need a ramp or lift and tie-downs, and naturally, these buses didn't have those. You may wonder why my mom didn't just drive me. One reason was she wanted me to have the experience of riding with everyone else, but also she wasn't comfortable with driving me that far by herself. So we worked it out with my teacher that they'd carry me onto the bus and my mom could sit next to me in my seat and I'd be fine with a seatbelt. But then we learned the bus had no seatbelts. So they searched for another bus and found exactly one in our county that had seatbelts. Problem solved, right? No, because it's never that easy. The week before we left, the bus was involved in an accident and was not able to be used. Thankfully my teacher came up with a brilliant idea. His idea was to take one school bus with a wheelchair lift. In order to get volunteers to ride that bus, instead of the fancy one, they offered students a refund of part of their money. As it turned out more students volunteered than were needed. When I look back on this I reflect on the different challenges that we have faced due to my disability. Sometimes you just have to be creative and not give up!

By, Serena Wetmore





Disability Awareness Month and Bullying Prevention

Bullies don't just find pleasure in making kids miserable day by day inside schools. That isn't the half of it. Bullying happens among the disabled communities as well. People who have disabilities are more likely to be bullied because we're different and people don't understand why people are not the same or similar to them. People need to learn to love and respect others who are not the same as they are, because it is not always good when you are all the same as others. All throughout history, bullying has been in existence, and much of the bullying toward the disabled came from the government in the past centuries. People today tend not to move on but hold a grudge against those who have bullied them, but they don't realize that they are no more different than the people who had been a bully to them. As years pass, if you don't let go of the anger you can become bitter. People who don't have disabilities and people who have them all are the same as I can see. We are all just humans, and none of us are going to be perfect in this world. The bottom line is that everyone has to deal with bullies, or has been bullied, but we have to be the ones who stop the violence of bullying. If you see bullying speak up for other people and together we can be the difference for change.

By, Dakota Smoot



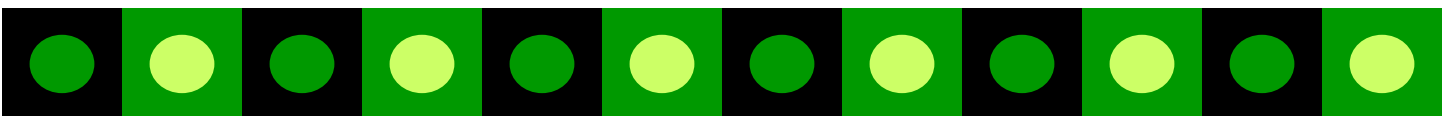
Disability Awareness Month



Disability History & Awareness in the Year 2016

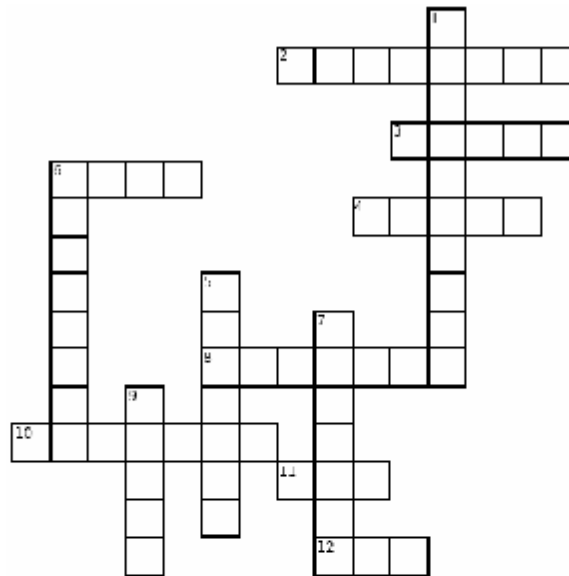
Let's go back on the timeline to June 13, 2008. On this day, The Disability History and Awareness bill was signed by former Gov. Charlie Crist. It suggests that all public schools, grades K-12, teach disability history and awareness in the classroom. Now moving forward to this year, I had the privilege of speaking at the Department of Education about the Disability History and Awareness bill that the Florida youth Council came up with. It was nice that I played a part in kicking off Disability History and Awareness Weeks (which is the first two weeks of October). So far this October has been the best one yet . . . at least for me.

By, Megan Germain





Disability Awareness Crossword Puzzle



Word Bank

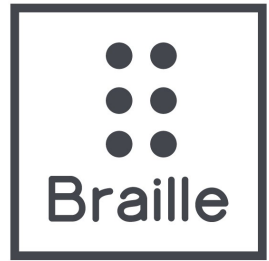
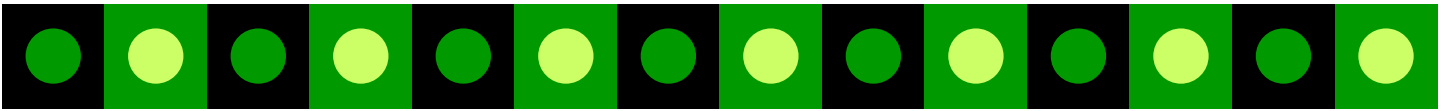
Deaf
Capable
Feelings
Disability
Blind
Ability
Glasses
Hands
See
Ask
Catch

Across

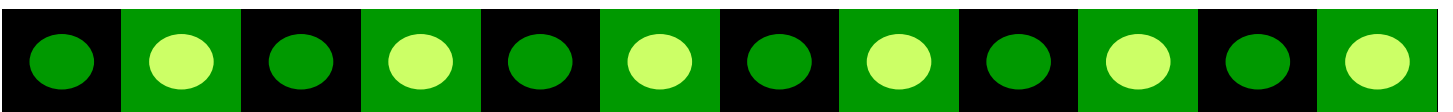
2. A person with a disability can have their _____ hurt by other people who don't understand their disability.
3. You cannot _____ a disability.
4. A person with a visual impairment or disability is not necessarily _____.
6. People who cannot hear are _____.
8. People who have disabilities have the _____ to do many different things, but may use a different way.
10. A person with disabilities is _____ of doing many things.
11. Before you help a person with a disability, you should _____.
12. People who cannot _____ are blind.

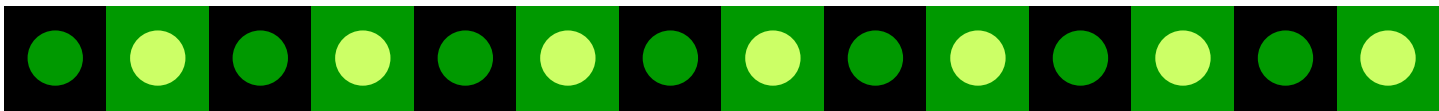
Down

1. People who have a _____ have lots of ability.
5. People who are blind use a series of raised dots called _____ to read.
6. _____ is one kind of learning disability.
7. Many people have _____ to help them when their vision does not work correctly.
9. People with a hearing or speech disability may use their _____ to communicate.



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



820 East Park Avenue, Suite F-100

Tallahassee, FL 32301

