



the NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!



Volume 12, Issue 04

April, 2019

Welcome to the April 2019 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by the FYC. For this issue of *The Noodle*, members of the FYC were asked to respond to the question “*How does my disability affect me?*”

This topic allowed members to share their thoughts on their disability and the ups and downs of everyday life with one. 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 April, 2019 edition of *The Noodle*!



Current Members:

John Baldino
Shevie Barnes
Derek Carraway
Alexander Gonzalez
Leah Gorman
Emma Massey
Dakota Smoot
Josh Tapia
Christina Waldron
Serena Wetmore
Brandon White
Allilee Wood
Niki Germain - FYC
Youth Advisor

Not all disabilities

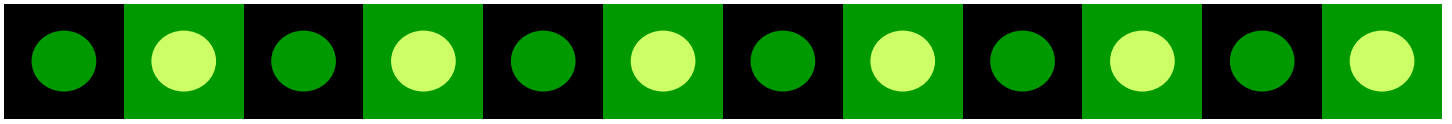
look like this



Some disabilities

look like this

grumpylittles



How My life Is With a Disability

For as long as I can remember, I have been on the Autism Spectrum (ASD). Additionally, I have ADHD and dyscalculia (no I'm not Dracula). Here are a few things that affect me and how I manage my disabilities.

For one thing, I am a homeschooler because I need a slower pace to understand the curriculum more effectively. The ability to control the noise and distractions in my environment enhances my productivity. Doing my school assignments while listening to some type of café playlist as background music assists my ability to focus.

Furthermore, having Autism and ADHD makes me unfocused at times, so concentration on assignments is difficult for me. In order to help me focus I must be holding something in my hand to keep my brain occupied and engaged. Whether it is a small marble or a hair tie, I need something that's just enough to stimulate my brain so I can stay focused and concentrate.

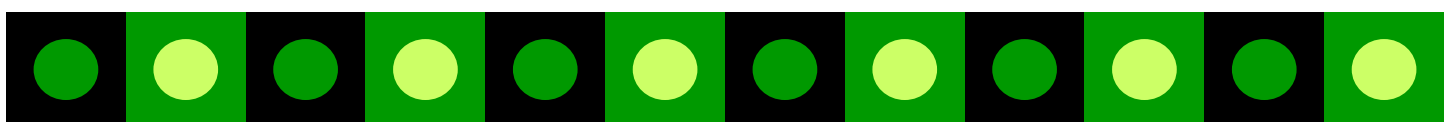
Lastly, M-A-T-H (the worst). Dyscalculia means severe difficulty in making arithmetical calculations. You probably think you have troubles too, but I am a junior just now starting algebra. The concepts of letters equaling numbers, or fractions becoming decimals, are confusing and I've spent years learning and relearning these concepts.

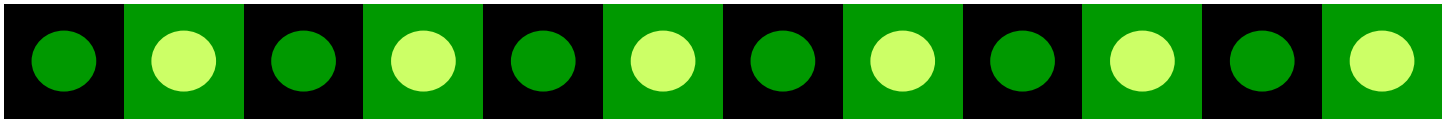
In conclusion, having disabilities isn't that debilitating. Through my Individual Education Plan (IEP) I receive special accommodations for all classroom work and testing. This aids me with longer periods of time for tests, smaller/quieter environments, and even larger print documents when available. These are some of the methods I use to disable my disabilities.

By Emma Massey

Throughout my Lifetime

When someone has a disability, at first it may feel discouraging. You may think that you're vulnerable, and it can be confusing. When my parents found out about my diagnosis, my father felt very upset, but also confused at the same time. Same can be said for my mother. They didn't know what would happen to their son or what the future might bring for him. It goes without saying that a parent cannot blame themselves for what happened. My parents needed answers to figure out what it means for someone who has Autism.





It turns out that young boy was me. Throughout my lifetime, I will carry the burden of having Autism as if it is a disadvantage in my life. When I was little, I didn't know what Autism was or how I got it. But with all the setbacks and the frustration, and confusion, I learned that Autism is more of a gift. What Autism means to me, is that I can be who I want to be. Autism doesn't define my character, my actions, or my mindset. It's the beauty of how I see the world and people that I surround myself with. I may see the world much differently than most people, but it's how I observe and utilize my abilities to do the right things. To lend a helping hand, to share my knowledge with people I come across. I define who I am, not a document that is printed for me. My father once told me that you are not just anyone, you have a purpose in this world, that's why you're here for a reason. And even if it takes the rest of your life, you owe it to yourself to find out what that reason is. One day, you're going to decide for yourself what kind of person you're growing up to be, because whatever that person is, good character or bad, he is going to change the world.

By Alexander Gonzalez

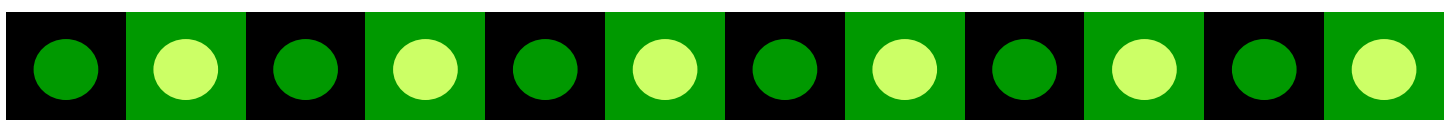
Don't Let It Get You Down

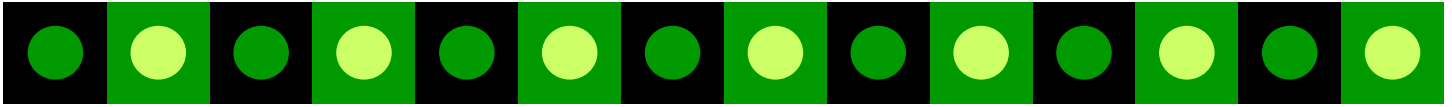
I am unique and different. I have autism, low muscle tone, and ADHD, but I concentrate on my abilities not my disabilities.

The American Psychiatric Association gives the diagnostic criteria for autism in the fifth edition of the statistical manual, DMS-5 for short. The DMS-5 says that people with autism have difficulty with social communication and interaction and restricted interests and repetitive behaviors.

I have some issues with communication. I had speech language pathology in my growing up years. I went to the speech pathologist every week. When I was little people did not understand me, but I am a pretty good communicator now. One social communication mistake I made was when I thought a girl liked me as a boyfriend, but she was only being nice to me. I want to be a better communicator with women so I can have a girlfriend.

My repetitive and restrictive behaviors can be annoying and helpful at the same time. For instance, I repeat myself a lot, and that bothers some peo-





ple. On the other hand, I keep my room very neat and always make sure my clothes, dishes, horse, and car are sparkling clean. That attention to detail is a good thing.

Low muscle tone or hypotonia can limit my physical activity. I played sports like basketball but I could not run very fast. Even though I look strong, I am a little weak. I needed a therapy bike when I was little because I could not push the pedals on a regular bike. I am stronger now and I can ride a bike, ski, shoot hoops, play pool, hike, and swim.

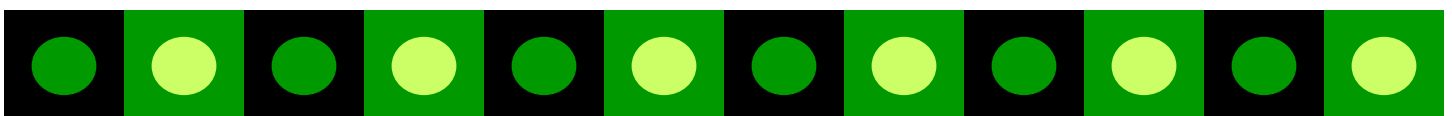
ADHD is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and because I have it, I have trouble focusing on tasks or I fidget. Sometimes I stare out the window when I should be writing. I also forget things when I don't pay attention. I try to overcome it and tell myself, "Stay focused!" I am successful when I play the piano, drive my car, ride my horse, and clean the house.

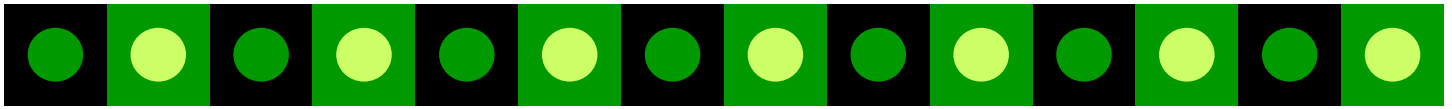
I do not let my disabilities get me down. I am a happy guy. I am always smiling and want to make the world a better place.

By John Howard Baldino

My Life with Two Disabilities

I live with two disabilities: one that is obvious and one that is not. The obvious one is cerebral palsy, which causes multiple daily problems: things like needing help to get up in the morning. I also need help feeding myself, and have mobility issues and trouble with pretty much everything that involves using my motor skills. The hardest part of my physical challenges is realizing that I'm not going to be able to do everything I want without help and trying to explain that to other people. My disability is somewhat individually based. No two people with cerebral palsy are the same. So, what may be easy for other people with CP may not be the easiest for me. I also have a hyper-acute nervous system, which can cause my senses to be overwhelmed by sound, light, and other stimuli. This means loud or sudden noises startle me. My brain becomes overwhelmed and it feels like an explosion going off in my head. For example, this makes things like driving my power chair kind of challenging. Its controller is kind of like a tablet and something like a loud noise occurs, I





might jump, and suddenly stop or lose my focus. I feel a little embarrassed when these things happen. Also, I'm easily distracted and get nervous when I know people are watching me. I have depression-anxiety which causes me to over-think and react disproportionately to situations. I tend to be overly sensitive and insecure about myself. This is something I'm trying to combat so my confidence, as well as my driving skill, will rise.

By Serena Wetmore

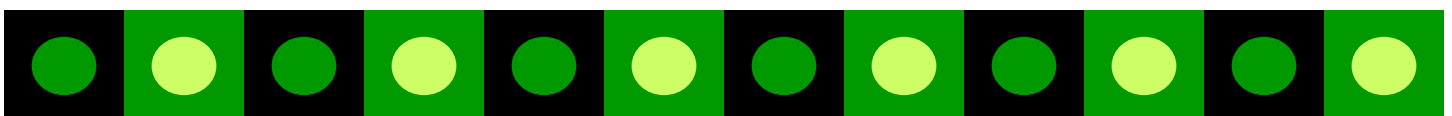
How My Disability Affects Me

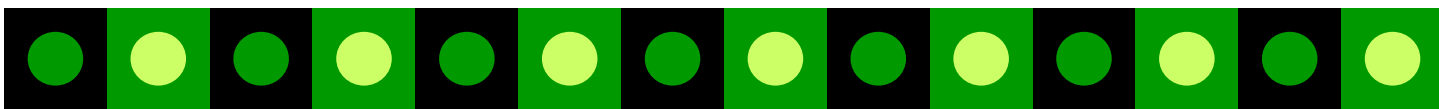
How my disability affects me . . . Oh, where do I begin? As a person with multiple disabilities (caused from a stroke), I could talk about so many things, but I have decided to pick out a couple that most affect me today presently. The stroke caused me to have several conditions, including mild cerebral palsy, ADD, and no peripheral vision on the right side.

The stroke and CP affects my entire right side. You may not have thought about this, but we live in a right handed society/world, and this is evident by simple things you buy in the store and use every day that a non-disabled person would not even notice. One of many examples is your basic digital camera. I have yet to find one with the snap button on the left side.

The mild cerebral palsy causes my muscles on the right side to be really tight. Due to this, I have been getting Botox injections regularly to help keep the muscles loose. Having to get the injections due to my disability affects me today by causing me to have to go into work late on the mornings I get the injections and use my leave time when otherwise I could be saving it up. That also goes for other doctor's appointments I have on a regular basis that cause me to burn leave that I wouldn't have to otherwise. One of the other appointments is because I have attention deficit, which requires I see a doctor every 3 months in order to get necessary medication to help with that.

The last example that I will share of how my disability affects me is my visual disability. I have no peripheral vision on the right side, and due to that my eye doctor will not clear me to drive. Therefore, I am forced to rely on public transportation, which believe me is not the greatest. This disability affects me every day because you have to have a way to get around in the world we live in today: to go to school, work, the grocery store, church, or anywhere else you wish to travel. Due to not being able to drive, this affects me every day, es-





pecially now that I have a full time job. I've had this job for about 14 months now and I enjoy it but I will honestly say the most stressful part of the job is getting there in the mornings and getting home when it is time to clock out at the end of the day.

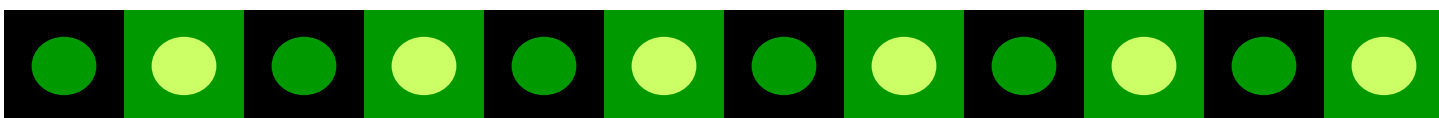
There are many other ways that my disability affects me but this is just a small glimpse into some of it.

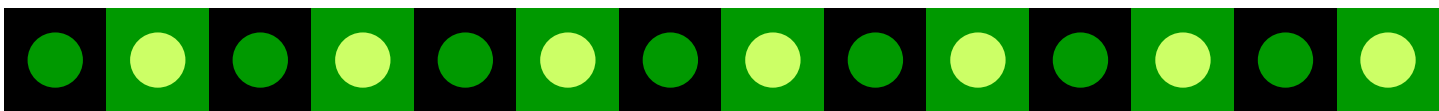
By Derek Carraway

My Disability

My name is Allilee Wood and my disability is ADD. ADD is attention deficit disorder. This affects me in a couple different ways, but it never stops me from striving to do my best. The major ways my disability affects me is that I get distracted very easily, I forget a lot of things, and I have trouble focusing on one thing at a time. For example, when I'm taking tests at school it's very distracting with a lot of noise in the room. I tend to focus on the sound and not my school work. If someone opens the door, I look. If someone asks a question I look up and zone out. When it comes to forgetting things, that's when ADD really takes a toll. I have to set many alarms on my phone to remember to do school work to keep up in my classes, to do chores, to fulfill my obligations at home, or to take my medicine to keep my health stable. Whether it's making commitments and sticking with them or remembering plans with friends, I've found that reminders are definitely the way to go for me. Then lastly, ADD also makes it so that I can only usually focus on one thing to do at a time. So if my mom asks me to do chores, like wash the dishes, I do it, but if she tells me to do something after I wash the dishes I'll forget and have to be reminded to go and finish what I've started. Although I have a disability, I've learned a routine, made improvements, and stayed focused on bettering myself and not letting it stop me from living a regular life. I have good grades, many friends, and I work five days a week. Just because I have ADD does not mean I am not able. EVERYONE is able.

By Allilee Wood,





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

