



the NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!



Volume 12, Issue 12

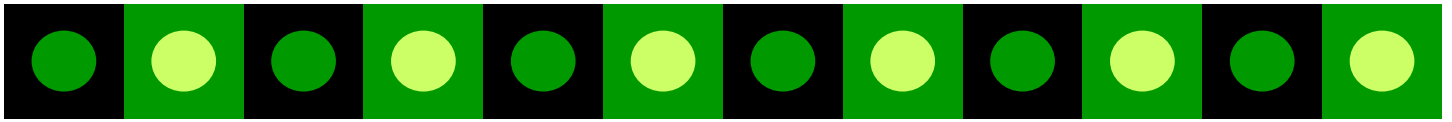
December, 2019

Welcome to the December, 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 “*What is your favorite Christmas gift?*” This topic allowed members to share their thoughts on what makes their Christmas great 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 December, 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
Niki Germain - FYC
Youth Advisor



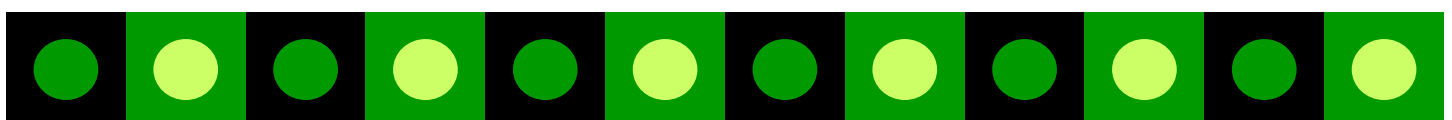


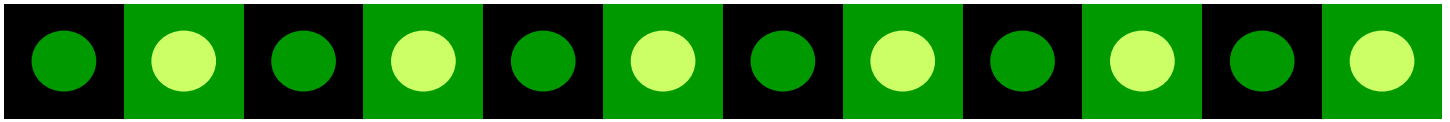
The Gift That Keeps On Giving

I was six years old in '94 and it was my first Christmas away from my native island of Puerto Rico. I had to learn to adjust and deal with my surroundings. It was also the year I lost my vision. Yes, I lost my vision a couple days after Christmas, and it did put a sour taste in me toward the holidays, but six years later the best Christmas gift ever happened to me.

I was twelve years old living back in Puerto Rico with my sisters and Mom. I had to check my eyes once a week at the eye doctor because no one knew what I had, and the doctor didn't really have a treatment plan. Fast forward to December '99, and I met this doctor who said he was going to bring back my vision. Man oh man did I laugh at that! After six years I had lost hope. This doctor asked me to trust him and to be ready to see the sunset by New Year's Eve of that year. My mom and I agreed to the treatment and it began. Christmas came and went and nothing, and I lost hope because the doctor had me and my mom believing for once. I was broken, but then January 14, 2000 happened

It was a warm morning that day and I was getting ready for my doctor's appointment that my granny was taking me to. I noticed on my way there that I could see more than just shadows, but it hurt my eyes real bad so I thought nothing of it. While I was sitting waiting for the doctor, I noticed I could tell the color of the clothes my granny was wearing. I asked her if she was wearing orange and she brushed me off. Literally after about a minute, I could tell my grandma shot up and stood, and she asked me to repeat what I said, and I did. Her reaction and the doctor's reaction scared me to death. They were so excited! At this point all I saw was colors, so I saw blurs of colors around me, yelling and pacing, all excited, and here I was sinking in the chair confused. Yes, slowly but surely, with time my vision returned. I've never been back to 100% but it's better than blind. That's how





I've taken it through years, and it's true.

Getting my vision back was and still is the best gift I've ever received, and I'm grateful every day. Hope you have a gift that you've cherished all these years, and if you don't, you will! Happy holidays!

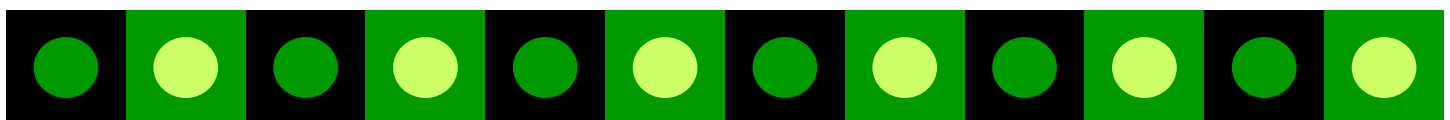
By Josue Tapia

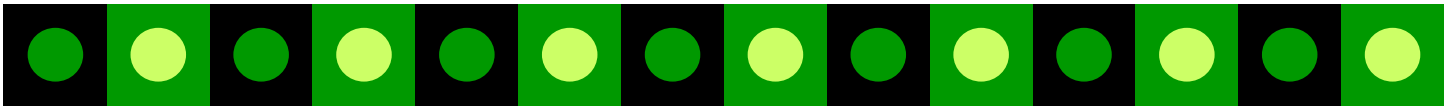


Best Christmas Gift Ever!

Over the years, I've received many gifts for Christmas, but a couple of them have stood out. One year my parents got me an air hockey table. I've always liked playing it, and I'm actually quite good at it. There's an arcade-type place in town that had one and I used to enjoy playing it every time I'd go there. I've always joked that if it was a competitive sport, I'd have an excellent chance of being crowned champ LOL. Although I don't seem to find the time to play it as much these days, I've still got it in the back room for when I do, and I still enjoy it when I get the chance. A little later on, I even bought a cover to go on it to help protect it and keep it clean. It was a memorable gift and that's why I consider it to be one of the greatest Christmas gifts I've ever received!

By Derek Carraway





My Four Favorite Gifts I Got for Christmas

The first gift I loved as a kid was Silly Bandz. Silly Bandz were everything when I was a kid due to the fact they came in mesmerizing colors and shapes. Every single elementary school kid had to have at least a few on their wrists or they were considered a nobody. However, like most trends, these rubber bands soon were forgotten about and are now a memory of the past.

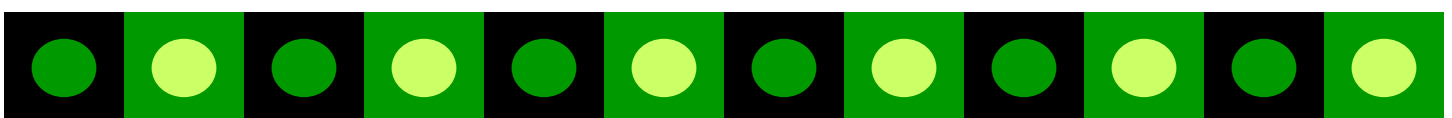
The next gift I received which fascinated me was Zhu Zhu Pets. Now you are probably thinking, did you really get a live animal as a present? To answer your question, no. Zhu Zhu Pets are mechanical toy mice and the reason I loved these toys as a kid was because they had their own little home, they made loud noises, and I could shoot the mice down the hall.

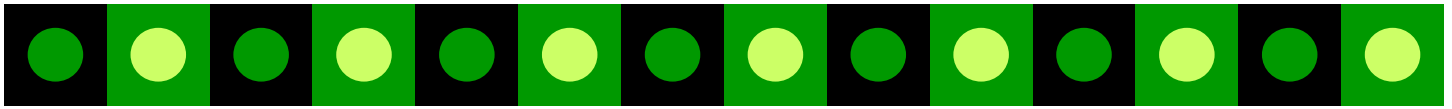
The third gift that is nostalgic to me, but not as much as Silly Bandz, is Loom Bands! Loom Bands were a big hit when I was in middle school and everyone was obsessed over them. Loom Bands' concept was to get the peg, put the rubber bands on the peg, and create anything you wanted out of little tiny rubber bands that would eventually turn into a bracelet, necklace, ring, anklet, or anything else you wanted to create. The bad part was some kids would bring their pegs to school and make little crafts during class and that distracted basically everyone.

Lastly, Smencils! Now before you say anything, these were my childhood favorite school pencils of all time. Smencils are pencils that smell amazing. As a kid, just having one during class and taking it out to smell it was fantastic. See, why it drew kids in was because Smencils smelled like blueberry, strawberry, grape, cinnamon, sugar, and much more. I had the cinnamon scented one. Just like Silly Bandz and Loom Bands, everybody had to have one, and if you did not like what you had, you would trade with someone else.

In conclusion, the reason I like Christmas time is because when we receive gifts as kids we love them, but in reality it's the gift of your heart to someone else during Christmas.

By Emma Massey





My Dream Gift

When I was in Elementary School, I received the most amazing and memorable gift ever. We were coming home from Christmas Eve service. I think I might have been six. We were just about to go in the front door when my dad almost stepped on a small box. Inside the box was a beautiful crystal necklace that looked a little like an iris, the colored part of the eye. It was round with a clear circle in the middle and facets were cut out around the center radiating out to the edge. With it was a note addressed to me that said I was one of the nicest children in the entire world and I deserved a special gift. It elaborated that this necklace was a dream stone, which would hold all your good dreams so that they would go directly to your heart. The note was curiously signed “S.C.” You can probably imagine what that felt like for a little kid!

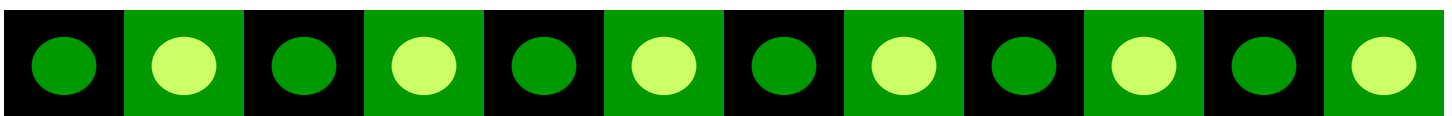
As a six-year-old child this was an incredible gift. I often felt underestimated by people, or even invisible, so this made me feel special and even a little important. Today it is a symbol of all the wonderful things that people do for me, and reminds me that people really do care about me. I never did find out who left the dream stone, though I asked everyone that I could imagine might have done it. Perhaps things are better left as a mystery that you treasure in your heart.

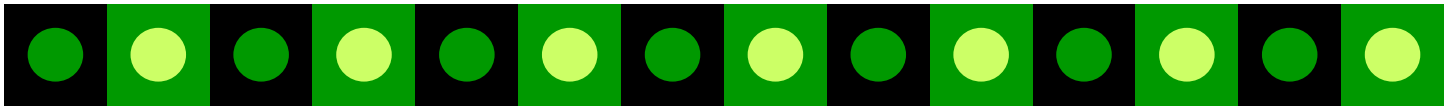
By Serena Wetmore

The Best Gift

The best gift I’ve ever received. Hmmmm, I would have to say my family. It’s kind of cheesy but my family is by far the best gift I have ever received, even through the ups and downs. I honestly would not be where I am today without them. They helped shape me into me! I’m thankful for that. They have pushed me to do the best I can in whatever situation I’m in. I always do my best to not disappoint them, but that doesn’t always go according to plan, so I just do my best. The FYC is part of my family. I may not say “I love you” to them, but I consider them part of my family. Each and every one of them have made an impact on my life, and I’m grateful for that. I can look back in five or ten years and look back at the memories I’ve made with them. The family I have is by far the best gift I have ever received. The stuff you buy will someday be gone but no matter what family is always there.

By Brandon White





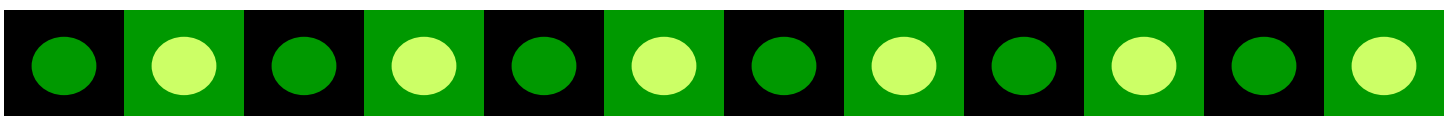
Two Gifts in One

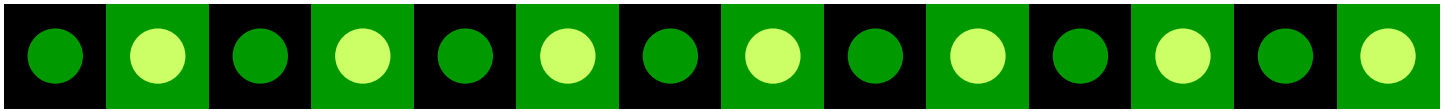
The best gift that I have ever received is mentorship. Mentorship is the guidance provided by an experienced person. I have a mentor named Joe. I work with him at Hands and Hearts for Horses, a therapeutic riding stable in Thomasville, Georgia.

Joe has taught me how to work on a horse farm. He has guided me through cutting down trees, mending fences, setting up riding trails, and taking care of horses and goats. I also assist him with riding lessons. I help get the horses ready for disabled riders and get them mounted on their horses. I am a side walker during lessons. The two of us work the horse stalls. Joe dumps the water buckets and I refill them. I feel energized when I am with Joe.

My mentorship with Joe will help me achieve my goal of becoming a barn manager. It is a very important step in establishing a career. Joe has taught me more than I could ever learn by myself or from a book. He has given me the confidence to work with horses.

The mentorship has turned into friendship. Friendship is also a precious gift. It is a relationship of mutual affection between people. Everybody needs friends to hang out with, learn, and have fun with. As friends, Joe and I patrol the trail with the John Deere Gator and play a life-sized game called Connect Four after the riding lessons are finished. We usually go out to lunch on Fridays. We go to O'Neal's Country Buffet and Billiard Academy. We eat there and talk about what we have already done and what we need to do when we get back to the horse barn after lunch.





Mentorship is a great thing, but it is even better when it includes friendship. I will value my working relationship and my friendship with Joe for the rest of my life. Thank you, Joe!

By John Howard Baldino



The Greatest Gift

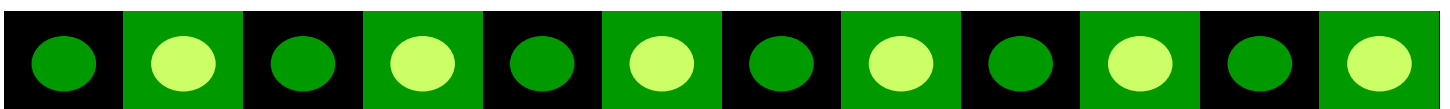
For most people, Christmas or even their birthdays are the days that they experience gifts. They treasure the gifts, but usually by the end of the year they have “moved” on. We have all heard stories about sacrifices people have made to get their loved one a gift.

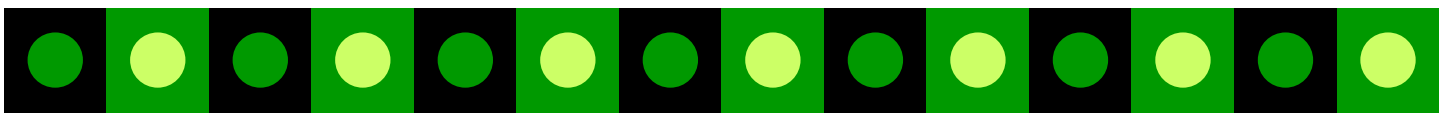
It’s interesting for me because the greatest gift I have ever received didn’t come on my birthday, or Christmas, and now it has become a holiday. The greatest gift I have ever received is the person whom I call my right hand man. We met on September 22nd in the year of 2010, a day that was really not special to the ordinary eye, but a time that has become one of the most important days of my life. Cliché right? The truth is at an early age my parents taught my brothers and me that gifts don’t always have to be unwrapped. They taught us to value that someone thought enough to even buy us a gift.

For me the greatest gift I have ever received was and is love. For me it’s a gift that I will never have enough to repay. That day very many years ago did more than change my life. It gave me perspective. Suddenly with this gift I had to give something and accept something more.

In case you are wondering if that means I never got that bike I wanted, or computer I prayed for, I did. While I am grateful, the greatest gift I have ever gotten is one that everyone deserves, and it’s love.

By Shevie Barnes





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!



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