



# the NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHHH!!!



Volume 13, Issue 02

February 2020

**W**elcome to the February 2020 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by the FYC. For this issue of *The Noodle*, members of the FYC were asked to do a free write. This allowed members to share their thoughts on things that are important 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 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



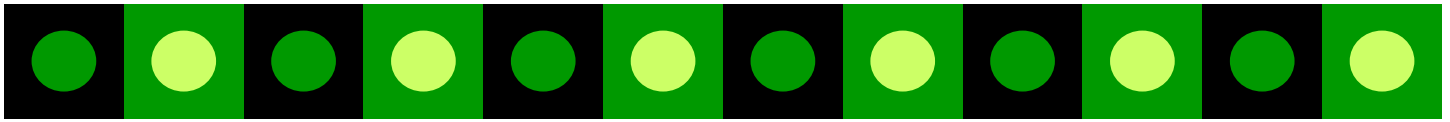


## **Americans with Disabilities Act Turns 30**

The Americans with Disabilities Act turns 30 this year, and with the anniversary, comes a situation that has taken a toll among Americans with disabilities and plagued them throughout the years. Florida is asking a full federal appeals court to decide whether the U.S. Department of Justice can proceed with a lawsuit opposing the state alleging an infringement upon the Americans with Disabilities Act – a case stemming from concerns about “medically fragile” children being placed in nursing homes. Attorneys for a group of children filed a federal lawsuit claiming, in part, that the state was dishonoring the Americans with Disabilities Act by failing to accommodate assistance that would allow children with severe medical difficulties to stay in their homes. The Department of Justice tried to negotiate an arrangement with the state but ended up filing a lawsuit in July 2013.

Cases that have been reported on indicate that many patients are being physically abused by the employees whose job is to take care of the vulnerable in residential facilities. Unfortunately, many children with disabilities are having their civil rights taken away and are unable to obtain the accommodations that are covered under the ADA.

Those with disabilities number more than 14 million nationally, a voting bloc roughly the same size as Latino or black voters. People with disabilities contribute discrete perceptions, viewpoints, and knowledge that is born of flexibility, preparation, and typically an effective work ethic. Because people with disabilities must continuously adjust to their surroundings, they also bring creativity,



agility, endurance, openness, provision, and aptitude for solving problems.

More of us need to see those who live with disabilities through lenses of strength. We can speak out against discrimination and segregation and hold those who infringe on the law accountable, but we can also do more. Employers can help by hiring workers with disabilities while stabilizing comprehensive and accessible methods associated with recruitment, utilization, interviews, and onboarding, as well as administration review and progression.

If this is what our leaders perceived as problem-solving, then we are giving a future for our citizens a more sinister trail than what it is forsaken.

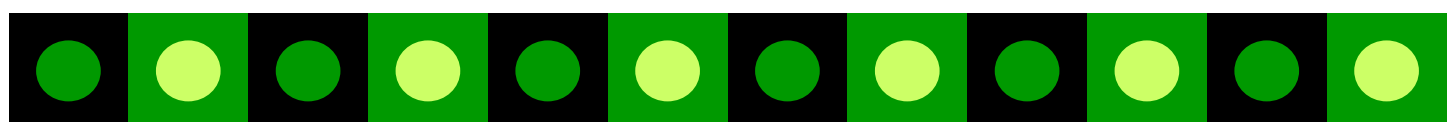
*By Alexander Gonzalez,*

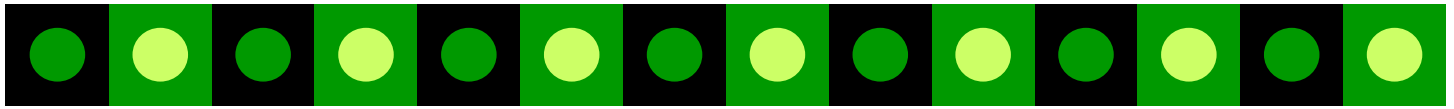


## Aphasia

My name is Leah Gorman and I am 24 years old, and I had a stroke on August 1, 2019. It started with aphasia. My stroke caused me to sleep for 10 days in a coma. When I woke up I was weak on my right side, and I have a problem speaking because I have aphasia. I was unable to speak. I have trouble understanding my speech.

Aphasia is a loss of words, but not intelligence. People with aphasia have trouble speaking, understanding, reading, and writing. People with aphasia are still just as smart and have all their intelligence. I had only a few words at first but I got more and more. It made me sad and mad at first because I could not express





what I wanted to say. I could not tell anyone my thoughts. It made me angry. My mom had to help me communicate with family, friends, therapist, and nurse. I could not get what I wanted on my own.

Here's some advice on communicating with people with aphasia like me:

- When talking with someone who has aphasia, talk slower and repeat when they have trouble understanding.
- Give them time to say what I need to say. They have to think about the words. Writing key words and using pictures help them to understand what you are saying, and writing helps.

Going to an aphasia center has helped me in many ways:

- Working on my speech and reading and writing during the day.
- Making new friends.

Everyone has aphasia at aphasia rehab center. I know I'm not alone.

*By Leah Gorman,*

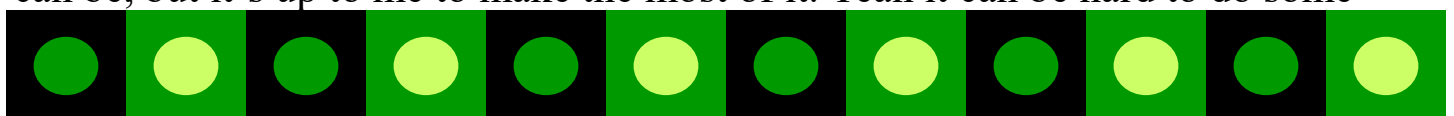


## Different People

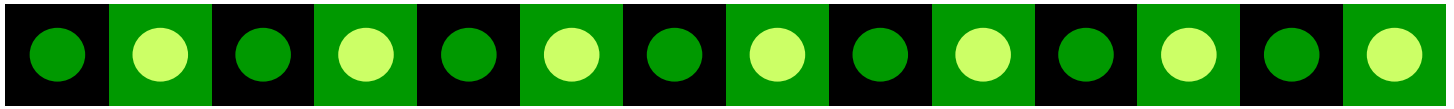
People have always seen me differently. I don't know why, but having a disability changes the way the world sees you. Personally, I've dealt with everyone, ranging from the bully to the person that treats you like a baby.

It can be hard being accepted sometimes, because they don't see me, they see my disability. My disability doesn't make me who I am, but they seem to think otherwise, and I don't get a chance to show them who I really am.

Many out there think having a disability is a burden in life. In some aspects it can be, but it's up to me to make the most of it. Yeah it can be hard to do some







things, but that shouldn't stop me from achieving the goals I set for myself in life. I know they won't stop me, but there's always that thought, "Can I really do this?" Throughout my life, I've always had really bad vision and many think that means I can't fend for myself and someone needs to baby me. But that's not true.

While many others use it against me and try to belittle me and make me feel insignificant, I've learned to live like this and I will continue live like this because those people won't just disappear, they will always be there. I understand I can't do some things due to my vision but that won't stop me from doing the best I can. I'm enlisted in the Navy, and that was hard to do, but I managed to check a goal off my list.

Having a disability doesn't limit you; you limit you. You are the only thing in life that can hold you back, so why do it? You do it because you're scared. For your whole life everyone says one thing and you're scared to go against what they say because they've destroyed the beautiful voice you have. I can speak from experience, because I was in that very same position, but I made the choice to go against what they said no matter how wrong they said I was. I fought through all the negativity and proved them wrong.

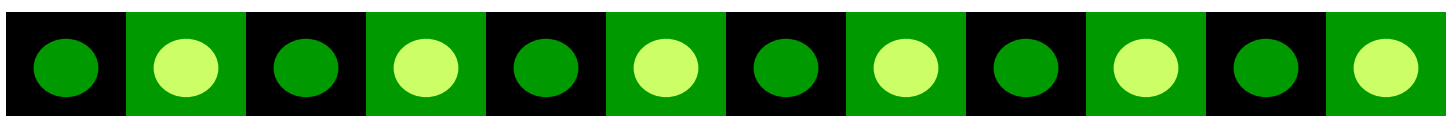
I'm not saying my life is perfect, but I'm saying I have a voice now. Some still treat me differently, but people see me for who I am.

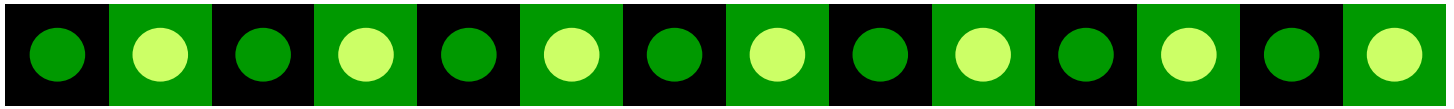
*By Brandon White,*



## Happy New Year Indeed!

For this month's free-write, I decided to do a continuation of last month's topic. That's because I have something else that I'm majorly looking forward to in this





New Year that I couldn't speak about quite yet at the time that I wrote last month's article. I got the gift of an engagement for Christmas! Whose engagement you may ask? Well, brace yourself *Noodle* reader fans, it was mine! Yep, I popped the question to my girlfriend. And . . . she said yes! So, that other thing I'm looking forward to is helping to plan my wedding! We've already decided it'll take place this summer. That means I'm going to be extra busy the next few months on top of my usual stuff, but it'll be more than worth it! I could elaborate a little more but I'll leave it at that for now though. We're soooo excited! Happy 2020 indeed!

*By Derek Carraway,*

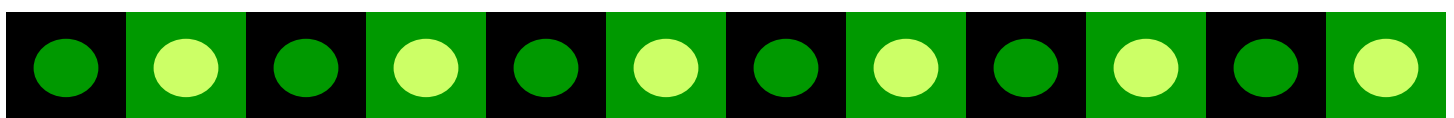
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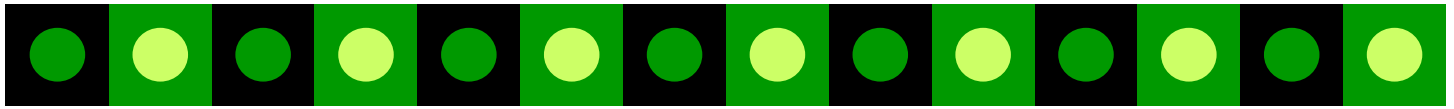


## **Why I'm Advocating for Disabilities**

This month's article topic is a free write relating to disabilities, so I decided to write about why I joined the Florida Youth Council, and why advocating for disabilities is important.

When I was just eight years old, my parents were told by a doctor that I would never graduate high school due to my disabilities. I began elementary school with specific learning difficulties in the subject of math (also known as dyscalculia). Due to the fact I took longer to process information, I could not keep up with the other kids in class. Therefore, when the other kids would attend PE, I would be having face-to-face help with homework with the help of a tutor. To help myself survive I received an Individual Education Plan. When I started dual enrollment classes at college, I reached out to my professors in each of my classes, while also reaching out to the disabilities office to let them know my accommodations.



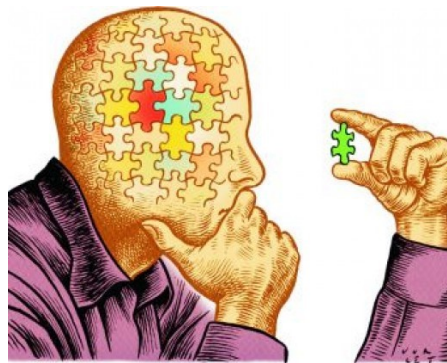


I decided to join the FYC due to the fact I believe advocating for people with disabilities is a wonderful opportunity. Nonetheless, when I first joined FYC, I was a silent seventeen-year-old who did not know how to advocate for myself. Eventually, I came out of my shell and recognized how one person can make a difference to thousands of people, embracing the challenge to walk out of my comfort zone and cause an impact.

In conclusion, what I aspire to see in the next few years through the FYC is helping people overcome their fears for themselves and their disabilities. Change starts slowly, however over time it creates a significant outcome for generations to come.

*By Emma Massey,*

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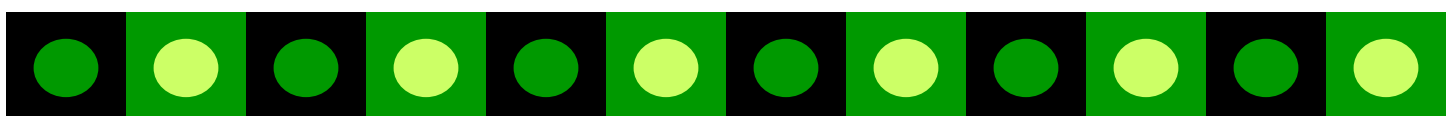


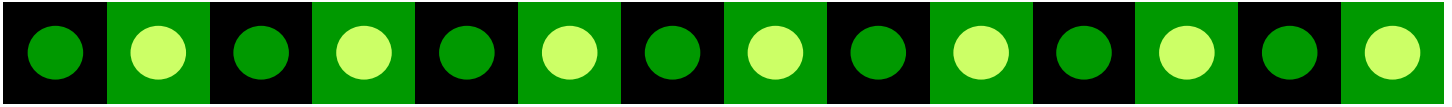
## **Developing Awareness**

Lately, I have found myself busy in my own projects to advocate for the disabled. I will share one of them with you.

I'm helping an up-and-coming game developer from Finland add disabilities to his life-simulating game. We have been talking about various features that he can add which will make interesting, as well as fun, game play. For example, if the character is dyslexic, all the words that their parents or narrators would say would come out scrambled. Another idea is to simulate unpredictable movements in the character's body, to simulate a neurological disorder (like cerebral palsy) and have a mini-game where you must get yourself ready in the morning.

One thing I have stressed to this developer is to not make the disabilities obstacles, but rather make the player think outside the box to solve puzzles and chal-





lenges. Of course, I can't speak for all disabilities, which is why I encouraged the developer to reach out to other people with disabilities so he can learn how to address them appropriately in the game.

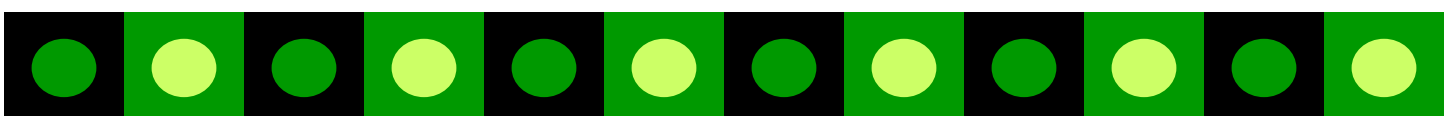
You may ask, why am I doing this time-consuming exercise? Well, I wanted to make the able-bodied community aware of what we, the disabled community, deal with on a daily basis. I thought demonstrating it through a popular game that some YouTubers have been playing in its earlier version would make people take notice. All those watchers and players would be more aware of our daily struggles and be more accepting of our conditions. I hope they will realize that we can live perfectly normal lives, but just need a little assistance along the way. Maybe when the game's update comes out, I will let you all know. I love what I am doing right now and hope that exploring this gaming option will help others.

*By Serena Wetmore,*

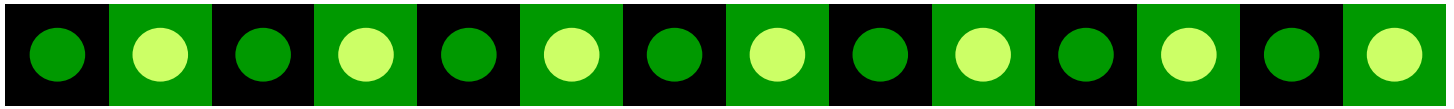


## **Why It's Important to Be Physically Fit**

Hi, my name is John Howard, and in this free write I am going to talk about why it's important to be physically fit and how to get and stay healthy and fit. To get







physically fit, you have to exercise, eat healthy foods, and drink lots of water. My plan in the New Year is to start eating healthy foods, to drink lots of water, and exercise daily in order to develop and maintain healthy habits.

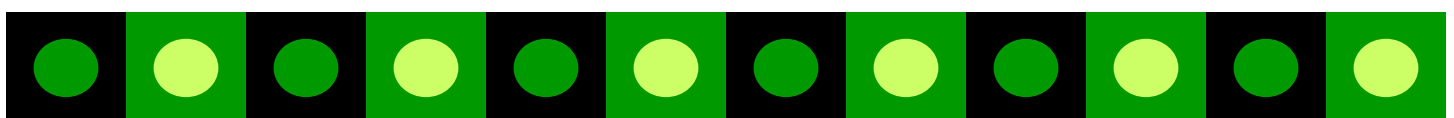
Here are some tips on how to get started. Begin your exercise regimen slowly and build up gradually. Give yourself plenty of time to warm up and cool down with easy walking or gentle stretching. The goal is to exercise for at least an hour a day, and over time speed up to a pace you can sustain for five to ten minutes without getting overly tired. Your muscles will ache at first, but it means your body is changing for the better.

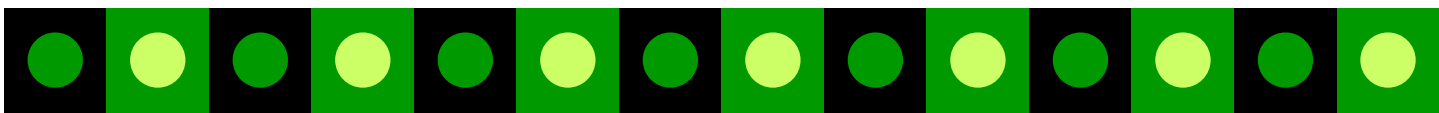
Next, you need to start eating healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, drink lots of water, and avoid soda. Apples, for example, cause the stomach to feel full for up to four hours. Green vegetables such as beans and broccoli keep your digestive system clean and running. Eating lean meats like turkey and chicken as well as seafood are all full of protein and healthy nutrients which keep your muscles fit. Water will help you stay hydrated and avoid muscle cramping. Soda, on the other hand, contains too much sugar and will not help get you in shape.

Be sure to start keeping track of calories and your food intake per day, and get plenty of sleep. It is crucial that you always get enough sleep in order to recharge your body's batteries. Six to eight hours of sleep will generally keep your body going all day. Making sure you do these two things will be helpful in developing your physical exercise plan.

Lastly and most importantly, you must set goals and keep a positive mind set. I have begun by walking two laps with my dad in the neighborhood every evening. We have started slowly and as we get stronger we will monitor and increase our distance. Our goal is to get healthy and fit and to begin feeling better about ourselves and our bodies.

*By John Howard Baldino,*





## 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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