



# The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!



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November 2021

**W**elcome to the November 2021 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 topic allowed members to share their thoughts on what is important in their lives or something they did. 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*!

**Believe in yourself!!**

**Current Members:**

*John Baldino*  
*Shevie Barnes*  
*Derek Carraway*  
*Alexander Gonzalez*  
*Leah Gorman*  
*JJ Humphrey*  
*Michelle Sandiford*  
*Josh Tapia*  
*Christina Waldron*  
*Serena Wetmore*  
*Brandon White*  
*Niki Germain - FYC*  
*Youth Advisor*





## My Trip Up North

We were asked to submit a “free write” for this issue of *The Noodle*. I thought I would tell you about my first long trip after travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. I had not been on an airplane for more than two years when we decided to fly to New Jersey to visit family and spend some time in New York City. We were gone for two weeks.

Traveling now is very different from the way it used to be. There are even some variations from state to state, and New York was a lot different from Florida. We had to wear masks in the airport, on the airplane, on the trains, and on the subway. We had to show our vaccination cards and IDs for sports events, theater, and museums. Everywhere we went, people were masked. Some restaurants and businesses were closed or open with shortened hours.

Even with all the differences, we had a lot of fun. In New Jersey, I stayed with my Uncle Tommy and Aunt Joanne. I went to concerts with them, out to dinner and to Stroll’s for Ice Cream for dessert after dinner. I took their dog, Maggie Mae, on a lot of walks, mornings, afternoons, and nights. I listened to the radio show “Breakfast with the Beatles” on Sunday mornings at 8:00 A.M. since I cannot hear it here in Florida.

One of the best times I had was going to the New York Giants game with family

and friends who are Giants' fans. We tailgated, had lunch, and then went in the stadium to watch the game. They gave us Eli Manning bobble heads before we went to our seats. Eli Manning, the former Giants' quarterback, was being honored at halftime. The team retired his jersey. There will never be another number 10 on the Giants team. Unfortunately, the Giants lost that day.

For part of the trip, we spent four days in New York City. We did a lot of walking, saw a play on Broadway called "Chicken and Biscuits," and went to the High Line, Little Island, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. We visited with friends and went out to dinner with them. We walked through Central Park where I saw lots of horses and carriages, the John Lennon Memorial. We walked to the World Trade Center and entered the Oculus, a huge and beautiful work of architecture by Santiago Calatrava.

I enjoyed being in New Jersey and New York City and cannot wait to go back!

*By John Howard Baldino*



## Exciting News!

I have some exciting news to share with you! I have been cast by The Tampa Rep and ThinkTank Theatre as Christopher Boone in the play *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*!

It's rare that neurodiverse actors get cast as neurodiverse characters in professional shows. Usually, neurotypical actors are cast in neurodiverse roles. That's why it is so awesome that they cast me!

The role of Christopher has been on my bucket list for a couple years. The first

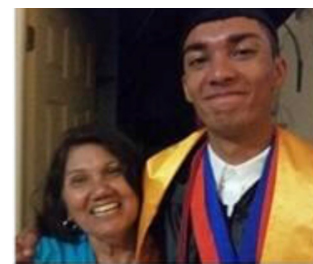
time I heard about Curious Incident, I listened to it on an audio book and loved the heartwarming story and adventure of Christopher.

At the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family Café, I had the opportunity to meet Mickey Rowe, the first autistic actor to play Christopher. We kept in contact after the conference. And when the Tampa Rep approached him in August asking if he could recommend any neurodiverse actors for them, he suggested me!

They emailed me, but it went to my spam folder, and I almost missed it! I got the audition notice thanks to Mickey telling me to check my email. I went to the in-person audition on August 10<sup>th</sup> then got a callback. The callback was on zoom, and it went great! I was offered the role of Christopher at the end of the callback!

I'd love for you to come see the show! Hope to see you there! Tickets are available at <http://www.tamparep.org/curious-incident/>

*By JJ Humhrey*



## A Grandmother's Love

For this free write, I wanted to write about my grandmother and how much of an impact she had on my life. My grandmother was very strict with her grandchildren but only because she wanted us to be upstanding individuals. Of course, I struggled a lot growing up with how I could communicate with her, especially because my grandmother didn't speak any English.

Over time, I did learn to understand Spanish, although I'm not fluent, I could understand what she was saying. Whenever I travel to Philadelphia, I always seek the opportunity to visit her and my grandfather. She always loved coming to Flor-

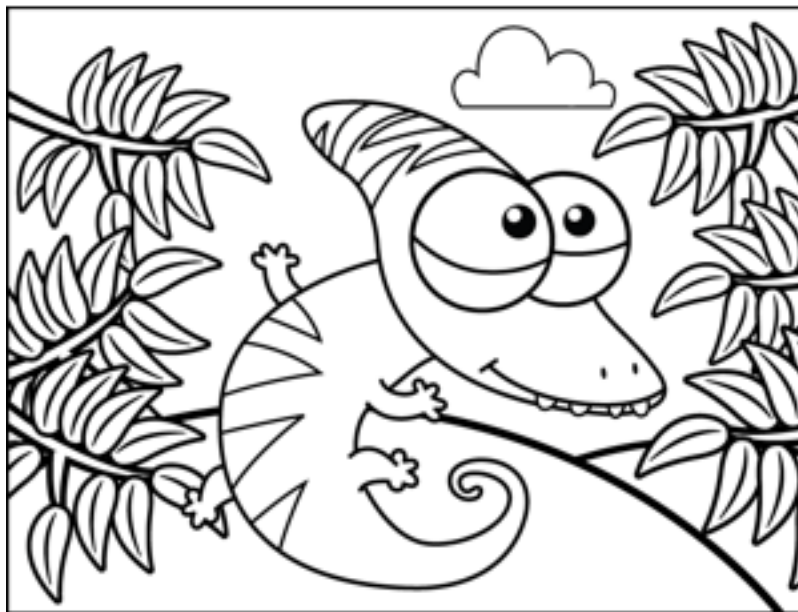
ida because she was always excited to visit me.

Losing my grandmother was a difficult time in my life. No one ever wants to lose a loved one, and the process of grievance must take its course. I wanted to finish college because that was the promise that I made to my grandmother.

When I was a teenager, my goal was to get a bachelor's degree and be the first person in my family to graduate from college. It was rough these past few months, and coping with the loss, that I am still recovering from, makes the process more difficult. Nevertheless, I prevail, and I've done everything I could do to make my grandmother proud.

Life is unprecedented, unhinged, and unpredictable. Of course, dealing with the troubling times in our environment doesn't make things easier. No worries, I am taking one step at a time. I could imagine my grandmother would've reacted when her grandchild was awarded a second diploma. I did it all for her. I'm one step closer to completing my goal. It's difficult entering a new chapter in life without my grandmother being a part of it. In the end, I will continue my grandmother's legacy. She never gave up on me.

*By Alex Gonzalez*





## 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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