



The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!



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Welcome to the January 2023 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by members of The Florida Youth Council. For this issue of *The Noodle*, members of the FYC wrote about what they are looking forward to in the new year. This allowed members to share, express and explore their personal insights, experiences and memories. We hope you enjoy learning about our experiences and our thoughts and opinions in this edition of *The Noodle*!

Current Members:

Catalina Andonie
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What I Look Forward to in 2023

What I look forward to this year is going to different events all over the state. I love to be with so many people that have different disabilities, this is because they understand what it is like to have a disability. Because they know what it is like, they can connect with each other on a deeper level.

At the events I attend it is common to meet someone with a different version of the same disability. It is so wonderful when people that have different disabilities come together in one place. We get to hang out and get to know each other and meet new friends that we would have never met otherwise.

In the past we have attended different events such as The Family Café conference and the Youth Summit that happen all within a couple months of each other. They make for a very special and fun time not just for the people that are attending but also for the people that are working at the events.

We come together from all over the state and even all over the world. There are many people that don't know about the different kinds of helpful resources that are available to them because they aren't familiar enough with the resources that will help make life easier for them.

If they are a parent to a child with a disability, they have a disability themselves or they are married to someone with a disability there are resources available to them that they can find by attending The Family Café and The Florida Youth Council's Youth Summit. I can't wait for this years 25th Anniversary Family Café. I hope to see you there!



By Morgan Griffin



What I Look Forward to This Year

I have five different things that I am looking forward to in 2023. I look forward to my sister's wedding on February 5th, 2023. Not only do we get to celebrate with a wedding, but I will get the privilege of being a bridesmaid for my wonderful sister!

I also look forward to working on being in a relationship in 2023, I often think that I get looked at favorably but then they don't get the courage to talk to me, so they walk away, and we end up saying nothing, that is something I plan to work on moving forward. I



I like to take a positive outlook on my personal health, I look forward to not having cancer or a stroke because of my current health.

Moving forward, I plan to keep my family closer through deeper and more meaningful communication. Finally, I look forward to seeing familiar faces and getting to meet new people at The 25th Anniversary Family Café Conference and the Florida Youth Council's Youth Summit. I love being a part of these special events and getting to help because I love to advocate!

By Leah Gorman



Something Old, Something New

In the year 2023, I am looking forward to a couple things. One of the first which comes to mind is going back to an in-person Night to Shine prom. Last I heard it was going to be “live” and I am so excited. It’s been part of my life for a very long time and is one of my favorite things to do. For those of you who do not know about it, Night to Shine is a dance designed for people with special needs to attend around Valentine’s Day. I love music even though I don’t typically like loud noises. They serve food which is appropriate for young people. Everyone gets treated like a prom king or queen. Sometimes they do hair and makeup or shoeshines, whatever it takes to make you feel beautiful/ handsome on this special night. You get to walk (or roll!) down the red carpet while spectators cheer you on and take pictures. It can be very loud at first, so if you don’t like this “red-carpet treatment” you can usually go around and skip it. If you get the chance to do this in your city, you absolutely should give it a try.

Another thing I am looking forward to is a college class called Human Growth and Development. Not only is it being taught by one of my favorite professors, but it is also a class I think will be very interesting as I will learn about how we humans



go from childhood to adulthood. I’m very interested in psychology, and I think this will be a useful class for me. I am not yet sure what other classes I will be taking this year, but I am mostly down to what they call electives, which means I get to pick a course that I enjoy. I can’t think of anything more enjoyable than that!

By Serena Wetmore



My Hopes for 2023

Two Thousand and Twenty-Two was filled with triumphs, happiness, dismay, and sorrow. It has been an up-and-down year for a lot of us. I finally finished college and became the first person in my family to obtain a bachelor's degree. Around the same time, I lost my best friend of 15 years and dealt with a relationship ending with heartbreak. It's expected that we process the struggles of work, school, and even our home lives.



Dealing with the issues that are happening in our personal and, sometimes, we try to look for the most straightforward solutions to orthodox predicaments. This world takes more strength than it gives us, and we often ask ourselves, where do we go from here? How do we move on? Sometimes the battles we choose not to fight are just as important as the ones we do.

Who knows what 2023 will bring us? We know that the Florida Youth Council will be bigger and better. Despite our accomplishments this year, more work still needs to be done. We say farewell to those who left and welcome new members with open arms. We push an ideal that we strive towards, overcoming the tribulations that stubble before us. What makes our group unique is that we have the same goals to help us make our community better. So, what is my hope for 2023? Honestly, I don't know the answer to that. I don't know if I am ready for what comes next. But in reality, no one is ready. The only thing I'm sure of is that I must take a leap of faith. At the end of the day, all we need is to take one step forward. If I continue my duty as a member of this organization, we can reach new heights and achieve many things beyond our wildest dreams. The last thing we need is to turn back now. As we move forward into the new year, I want to cite a quote from Robert Louis Stevenson: "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant."

By Alex Gonzalez



Looking Forward to 2023

There are so many things I could choose from, thinking about what I'm looking forward to this year, and then it hit me. I am looking forward to seeing my baby girl continue to grow and develop!

She's almost a year old and she's already so smart. I'm so looking forward to throwing her first birthday party in 2023. I've been to a very small handful of 1-year old parties in my life, mostly for my little cousins, and I know traditionally it's more for the parents. However, I am interested in seeing how my baby girl does because she's a very happy baby!

We've already decided we're just going to hold a small gathering for some of our immediate family members that she has already been around, hopefully she'll respond well. Only time will tell though. This is some of what I look forward to in 2023 so I just want to close by saying Happy New Year!!!

By Derek Carraway



2023: A Year to Make Things Better

Next year in 2023, I look forward to making the world a better place. We face a climate crisis and there is too much anger in the world. So, I will concentrate on saving the environment and being kind.

The environment needs our attention. I will save electricity by turning off lights when I leave the house or if I am going to bed. I will also recycle at my house and wherever I am. I will save water by turning off the faucets when I am not using them, and I will try to take shorter showers even though I love long ones. I will recycle and pick up trash where I see it, especially on the beach. It is important to keep our beaches and cities clean.

I will be kind to other people and the animals that I know, horses, dogs, goats, and birds. I will drive my friends' home from work if they need rides. I will take good care of the horses and goats where I work so that they are happy and healthy. I will feed the birds at my house and make sure their bird bath is filled. If I am kind to people and animals, they will be kind to me. Spreading kindness makes life better and if we all were kind, anger would cease.

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. The program is open to application year round.

We hope to hear from you soon!



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