



The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!



Volume 17, Issue 4

March, 2025

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by members of The Florida Youth Council! For this special issue of *The Noodle*, members of the FYC wrote about what they love doing in their own lives. We hope you enjoy learning about our experiences and our thoughts and opinions in this edition of *The Noodle*!

Current Members:

Jakel Baker
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Alexander Gonzalez
Leah Gorman
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James Kuhlman
Sydney Lainer
Vanessa Muniz-Pellicer
Michelle Sandiford
Miles Stewart
Josue Tapia
Lilibeth Carrion Vega
Christina Waldron
Serena Wetmore

From the Advisor's Desk

What do you enjoy doing? If you could just relax on a day what would it be? For me it would be listening to an audio book while choosing a cozy cute photo to color. My own hobbies are reading, writing, doing American Sign Language etc. As we read about what The council enjoys think about what brings you joy!





What I love

by Serena Wetmore

My friends and family have always been supportive of my hobbies and my disability advocacy. I love them for that, and for putting up with me and my challenges. My family never gives up on me and my mission to spread disability advocacy to everyone (pretty much everywhere). Also, I love my friends who support me in participating in events and activities where I do not necessarily want my parents hanging around.

When I say my family supports me in my advocacy, that is another thing I love doing: speaking at events, and participating in any kind of expo where I can tell people about The Family Café, The Florida Youth Council and the Youth Summit. And of course, there is always that random knowledge to share about service dogs, public schools, wheelchair accessibility, and Medicare or Medicaid. I try to always have at least some kind of information that I can hand out to people, even on the street or in a shopping mall. Even though it lengthens the time of our trips or errands, I know that I love doing it, and my family loves helping me.

Another thing I really love is my cats, who are a source of comfort to me. When I got my first two during quarantine, I literally called them my anti-depressant cats because they were a spot of light in the darkness. Then came my newest cat. She is small and adorable and as she was rescued from the middle of a street when she weighed less than a pound. She is a constant reminder to enjoy life!





Three Things I Love!

by Derek Carraway

I'm going to share three things I love and why, but let me start by saying that I love a lot more than three things! I decided to pick three that are a big part of my life. First, I love Jesus and my church. My faith and relationship with the Lord is the most important thing in my life. I enjoy going to church and spending time fellowshiping with fellow believers.



Second, I love Florida State University. Why? Well it started with being an athletics fan. I love their football and basketball teams and root for them to do well. Then, I also became a student and proud alum of the university. Now I'm also a proud employee of the university working in the field I studied as a student. So why do I love FSU? I think that sums it up.

Lastly, I love The Family Café and being a member of the FYC. Being an advocate for others and myself is very important as a person with a disability. I look forward to The Annual Family Café every summer and the Youth Summit and all the opportunities that brings. Well there you have it! Three things I love!

Volunteer, Adapted Sports, and Church

by Leah Gorman

Cupid just struck, and what he told me was to do what I love, and I love volunteering, adapted sports, and church. The first one is volunteering, because I spend my life helping people with disabilities, and I help them to take time and not rush because it is not going to get things sitting right.

The second one is I love adapted sports because I do bowling, billiards, and surfing. They are so good because I talk to people and they ask me what I do and I am an advocate for the Florida Youth Council, and they say "Wow, you do a lot and you are a good person!"

The third and final one is I love doing church. I serve by being an usher and a parking helper, and I was told by God that I needed to serve in his church because I have a great soul. I can tell that when I go to church my soul is always free and it feels amazing when I do my ushering and do my parking helping.



Three Things I love

by Jakel Baker

Ever think about the stuff that makes you happy? For me, it's art, movies, and video games. These aren't just hobbies; they're a huge part of my life and who I am. Art is extremely special to me because it lets me create something out of nothing. I got into it thanks to my brother's stepdad and my teacher, Ms. Olana, who showed me I was good at something when I didn't believe in myself. She helped me find a passion I didn't even know I had. Making art takes time, but that's what makes it so rewarding. It's my way of de-stressing and being happy with myself and my work. Movies are an experience for me. They take me to other worlds and help me forget everything else for a while. Watching movies even got me into reading books like I used to. I love going to the theater and picking whatever I feel like watching. There's always something new, so it never gets boring, unless it's a horrible live action. Video games are like a whole other adventure. I can become anyone and explore worlds I'd never see otherwise. They're fun, and a little challenging, which makes them so exciting. It's not just about playing; it's about experiencing something cool. Art, movies, and video games aren't just things I like. They help make life fun and interesting for me.





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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