

Project 10 STING RAY presents

# The STING RAY

## Current



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### STING RAY Students Directing their IEP Meetings

by L. Danielle Roberts-Dahm

#### Inside this issue:

Internships, Homecoming, & Leadership Retreats... Oh My!	2
Internship at the Bayboro Tavern	2
Living the Dream: My 1st Semester in College	3
My 1st Bulls Football Game!	3
A Fresh[man] Perspective	4
Beginning Drawing & Painting	4
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	5
MLK Award Winner: Rachel Clark	6
Changing Tides with the Director	6

This year, the students in STING RAY have been running their own Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings! With the guidance of the STING RAY curriculum coordinator, Anne Johnson, as well as mentor and family support, students prepare in advance to direct their IEP meetings. Ms. Johnson uses Standing Up For Me, a curriculum that was developed to teach self-determination skills to students with disabilities, to guide this process. The Standing Up For Me curriculum uses the 11 steps detailed in the ChoiceMaker Instructional Series: Self-Directed IEP.

In STING RAY, self-determination is an important focus. Teaching self-determination skills encourages student involvement and ownership in planning their own education and lives, including how to set goals and develop a plan of action to accomplish these goals. One of the first steps is to ensure that students understand what exactly an IEP is and how it impacts their future. Weeks before the IEP meeting, students begin working with Ms. Johnson to discuss their progress on last year's goals as well as brainstorm future goals. The Standing Up For Me curriculum offers lesson plans and worksheets to guide this process of preparing for the IEP and building self-directed IEP skills. Ms. Johnson uses the worksheets from the curriculum to guide the student development of a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation. Having a visual tool projected on a screen during the IEP meeting for all participants to see as the student is running the meeting is effective for all the participants and helps the student stay on topic throughout the meeting.

Both students and parents are amazed at how much more engaged they felt in the IEP process this year than in previous years. Parents also are impressed with the way

their young adults took control of their future and advocated for themselves. Learning to self-direct their own IEP meetings also enables students to use software and skills they would use in the real world, including presentation skills, leadership ability, and self-determination. Successful self-directed IEPs also greatly increase students' self-confidence!

#### References

Martin, J.E., Marshall, L.H., Maxson, L., & Jerman, P. (1996). *Choicemaker instructional series: Self-directed IEP*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.



### 11 Steps of Self-Directed IEP

1. Begin meeting by stating the purpose
2. Introduce everyone
3. Review past goals and performance
4. Ask for others' feedback
5. State your school and transition goals
6. Ask questions if you don't understand
7. Deal with differences in opinion
8. State what support you'll need
9. Summarize your goals
10. Close meeting by thanking everyone
11. Work on IEP goals all year

## Fall 2012: Internships, Homecoming and Leadership Retreats...Oh My! by Isabel M.

Hi I'm Isabel and I'm a sophomore this year at USFSP in the STING RAY program. I am really enjoying my internship this semester. I am an office assistant at the Project 10 office. I love everything I do there and it is my responsibility to do whatever my supervisor asks of me. Some of the duties include: labeling boxes, sending Project 10 materials to other counties, laminating cards, importing evaluations in the computer, preparing documents for mailing and scanning, and faxing. My favorite task is labeling!

I had a blast at the USFSP homecoming dance this year. I wore a dazzling black dress with black metallic beads. I danced the night away. The DJ played all types of music and there were a lot of people there!

USFSP has given me so many opportunities. One of my favorite experiences was the leadership retreat at Epcot. I went with a bunch of USFSP students. We all met at school early in the morning and took a coach bus to Epcot. When we arrived, we had a few hours to go on some of the rides. After having some fun, the leadership workshop started. We were broken into two groups. We learned a lot about leadership by playing games and finding out that you can have a paid internship at Disney. After the workshop was finished, we had some more fun! The Epcot Food and Wine Festival was going on so we were able to try some food from each country! It was awesome! Then it was lunch time, I ate at an amazing Italian restaurant. A few hours later it was time to come back to school! I had so much fun, learned a lot about leadership and met lots of great people!

The 3rd Hartwick Symposium was in Jacksonville this year on Halloween! The theme was "Experience the THRILL of Postsecondary Education", complete with a Monster Bash and "Scarican Idol" dance contest with celebrity judges Randy Jack-O-Lantern, Paula A-Ghoul, Simon Howllll, and hosted by Ryan Slimefest. There were a lot of good presenters and the students and mentors got to spend a full day at the University of North Florida which was awesome!



## Internship at the Bayboro Tavern

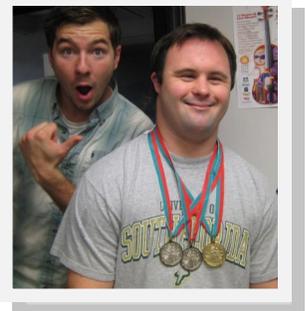
by Trent T.



This fall I began an internship at the Bayboro Tavern, which is right on the edge of campus. The Tavern is a popular hangout for students and faculty. They specialize in delicious hot and cold deli sandwiches and craft beers from the area.

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday I work the lunch rush from 10:30-1:30. My duties at The Tavern include delivering food to our customers, sweeping, emptying the trash, along with cleaning the dishes and tables. I really enjoy working at The Tavern - everyone there is friendly and kind. They make me feel like I am an important part of

their team. I was surprised and honored when they recognized me on the white board at the entrance of the restaurant for the medals I earned at Special Olympics. One of the best parts about having an internship at The Tavern is after each shift I am allowed to eat for free!





# “Living the Dream”: My First Semester in College

by Sebi J.

I'm new to St. Petersburg. I grew up in Sarasota and graduated from Sarasota High School in 2012. Last year my mother and I drove up to St. Pete to attend the Hartwick Symposium where I found out about the



STING RAY program. I liked them and thought that they were so lucky to go to college! My mom and I decided to apply to the STING

RAY program. Even though it was scary to move away from home, I was excited to make the move. Now I am living at an apartment complex that is only 2 blocks from the University. It's nice living so close to everything, I have been able take the trolley to Ray's games, museums, the Saturday Morning Farmers market, and movies at Bay Walk. I've even taken a few Segway tours. I am looking forward to the Grand Prix that will be coming to town.

This semester I took a Career Development class. The professor asked us to do a lot of hard work and I ended up making a cool presentation about myself, my interests, and the jobs I might like in the future. Afterwards, Christian, the STING RAY Mentor Coordinator, took me to a jobsite at Fort De Soto Park to talk to a park ranger. While there we saw coyote tracks! My favorite part of being on campus is working as an intern at The Waterfront. My duties are keeping the life jacket rack in order, washing the canoes, cleaning the shed that houses the sailing team gear and washing the deck. I like hanging out with the people who work there. They tell the funniest jokes! Sometimes I feel homesick, but with everything I am doing and all the people I'm meeting, I feel like this is my second home.



## My First Bulls Game!

by Michael F.

I spent my entire high school career as a manager for the St. Petersburg High School Green Devils football team, so you can imagine how psyched I was to get tickets to my first Bulls game! We played Rutgers University and the game was televised on ESPN. My STING RAY buddy, Sebi, and I took the USFSP charter bus to Raymond James Stadium in Tampa. We had club access tickets which gave us special seats in the second row. We were surrounded by Bull's fans. Every time the Bulls had a 3<sup>rd</sup> down, a bell would ring and I would get into high gear and lead my section in cheering. It was a hard fought game, but Rutgers came out on top.



At the end of the game I had to give Rutgers credit for playing some of the best plays against our defense has ever seen. I also give the Bulls credit for making some big plays as well. Even though we lost, the Bulls will always be winners in my book. I look forward to going to more Bulls football and other sports games this year. That's one of the best parts of being in college!



## A Fresh[man] Perspective

I am a freshman at USFSP in STING RAY. I still remember how I felt on the first day I was shy and nervous waking up and getting ready. It was a day full of excitement and with a rush of many different emotions. Then a few weeks later I got the hang of it and I made a lot of new friends and got to know a lot of new people. I had to pick a class and it was Career Development. After that I had to sign a syllabus to know when the assignments



by David T.

can meet and recruit people, which is called Get on Board Day. It was very hot out that day. I hung out with the G.S.A (Gay, Straight, Alliance) organization. That day I signed up for seven other organizations. Christian, our Mentor Coordinator, got me an internship at the Multicultural Affairs office. I am in a lot of organizations and it can get overwhelming but I hold my head up high. Some organizations' meetings go over time, like instead of meeting from 6pm to 7pm, we won't get out until after 8pm. The gym is an awesome way to get some stress relief and get your mind off of things. The Waterfront is good for getting in the water when you are done with gym. Davis Hall is for shooting pool, watching TV, hanging out with students, and buying snacks and drinks. My favorite drinks are energy drinks because they keep me awake and ready for the day. The Tavern on campus has the greatest food to eat! I usually get the Cuban sandwich and French fries, but sometimes I like to change it up a bit by

were due. USFSP holds a day once a semester where all student organizations

getting something else. The Campus Grind is for morning food, coffee and fruit smoothies which are good. USFSP just opened up the University Student Center for breakfast, lunch and dinner but the food there is only good on some days. Red Mango is good for smoothies but I prefer Tropical Smoothie. I like it here at USFSP in the STINGRAY program and I look forward to my next three years here.

## Beginning Drawing and Painting

by Kailey C.



My name is Kailey and I joined STING RAY in August of this year. I like it here at the USFSP Campus. In my first semester here I took beginning drawing and this semester I am taking beginning painting. My teacher in my painting class is really nice and I think I will paint masterpieces! My favorite project in my Beginning Drawing class was drawing my self-portrait. We started out with a picture of ourselves, and then we drew a grid over the picture so we could enlarge it on a bigger piece of art paper. I dipped my painting brush into the ink and tapped the paint all over the paper, at the last minute I decided to paint red lips on my portrait. My classmates like my painting and told me that my portrait looked just like me. I really like drawing - it's something I've enjoyed all my life.



# Universal Design for Learning

by Catherine R.

In collaboration with & Mickie Hayes, Director,

Florida Consortium on Postsecondary Education & Intellectual Disabilities



With today's new technology, educators are developing new strategies for increasing individual student success. Teachers are beginning to allow students to read lectures online and record lectures; they use charts, graphs and other visuals in lectures to help students understand, they also use group discussion and real world examples. These are all examples of UDL strategies. Universal design for learning is not just for learning it is everywhere we go and you may not even realize it.

Universal design was originally conceived by an architect, Ron Mace, in the 1980s in an effort to design buildings that were accessible to all people, specifically individuals with disabilities. Mace proposed that simple enhancements to traditional architectural design, such as ramps, elevators, and automatic doors eliminate obstacles many individuals face entering and functioning within a given building or structure. Everyone benefits from universal design.

Everyone learns differently –no two brains work in the same way. Colleges and universities today base curricula off of the average learner, but in reality there is no "Average Learner". Everyone has their own unique way of learning. The brain works in three different ways when we learn, Recognition learning, Strategic learning, and Affective learning. Recognition learning is the "What" of learning. Recognition is the way we identify words and formulas. Strategic learning is the "How" of learning. It is what we use to plan out steps to completing a project or assignment. And Affective learning is the "Why" of learning. This is how we pursue our goals, develop preferences, build our confidence, persist in the face of difficulty, establish priorities, and care about learning.

I had the opportunity to be part of a video with Mickie Hayes, Director of the Florida Consortium on Postsecondary Education & Intellectual Disabilities, and Christian Haas,

STING RAY Mentor Coordinator and former USFSP student. This video expresses the different ways university students learn best and techniques instructors use to help them learn best. The way that I learn best is through class participation, the professor gives a lesson and the students reflect on it in class with their ideas with minimal participation from the professor. When I took my Narration and Description class, the professor had the students read a few passages from the text book, and then post our ideas on blackboard so that the whole class could read it and leave their comments. When we had to write a paper, she would make us write our rough draft then present it on a smart board or projector so that everyone in the class could read and edit it. You were not allowed to read your own paper aloud, so when another student read your paper you could hear your mistakes, the mistakes you would have not known by just reading it aloud by yourself. When the professor graded the papers, she would write her comments on the paper and explain what was missing or incorrect. I like reading aloud it helps me grasp what I am reading and understand it better. I learn by hands on and auditory. I also learn visually when the professor writes notes on the board I write them down, and then he or she goes over them in class. I also learn best with an academic mentor. Actually sitting down with them and going over the lesson, made sure that I understood what the lesson was about and helped me make my papers and presentations pristine. I can learn while listening to music, but I cannot learn in a noisy area with everyone talking, I prefer to learn with others... like I said everyone learns differently, no two brains learn the same way.

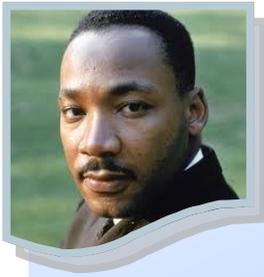
The world today is becoming accustomed to new technologies and new ways of looking at information. I think everyone should invest in these new strategies because they help all students grasp what is being taught. Not everyone can learn through a long lecture of just "blah, blah, blah" talking all the time. They need a variety of instruction specific to their learning styles; a down to earth way of learning. I believe this is why some students are held

back or drop out. They become frustrated with school because although they want to learn something, it can be very difficult and time consuming if professors and teachers don't change the way they teach. If a variety of curricula plans are used, then maybe we'll have higher graduation rates and more students wanting to stay in school. Universal Design for learning is the new way of learning! I think it will benefit the way students grasp what is being taught. I know I like Universal Design for learning, maybe you should try it too.

If you would like to find out more information on UDL, there is information available online at: [www.FLTSPID.info](http://www.FLTSPID.info)

Gorman, M. (2012). Postsecondary Education and Universal Design for Learning online module. Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education (TPSID) grant awarded to the Florida Consortium on Postsecondary Education and Intellectual Disabilities from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education from 2010 - 2015. (#CFDA 84.407A, P407A100034). Available online at: <http://www.flconsortiumudl.net>





## Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Award



The Martin Luther King Jr. Student Award is awarded to students, who have been nominated by students, staff, or faculty, who have shown to promote the spirit of MLK Jr. through community service, advocating for social justice, and/or civil rights.

We are proud to announce one of our very own mentor, Rachel Clark, was nominated for and won the Martin Luther King Jr. Diversity Award. Rachel started out as an Academic Mentor for one of the students in STING RAY and was eventually hired as a Community Mentor. Since the beginning of the school year, Rachel has dedicated countless hours to making sure students in STING RAY are comfortable and confident when participating in community activities.



## Changing Tides with the Director

By Jordan T. Knab, Ed.S.

It is with very mixed emotions that I write my final column for the STING RAY Current. I am very excited about my opportunity and challenge ahead in developing a new postsecondary campus with the Dan Marino Foundation. I will however, deeply miss the daily interaction with the students in the STING RAY program. I can honestly say that developing and working with this program has been one of the greatest highlights of my entire professional career in education. I am very proud of my staff, the students, and the USFSP faculty and mentors who have made this such a successful program and model for other programs across the nation. Recently, Danie and Christian presented on STING RAY in Virginia to a national audience of school district personnel and postsecondary educators. At the end of their presentation, I overheard several conference participants leaving the presentation saying "wow, that was the best session I attended here," and "those Florida folks really know their stuff." I am pleased to report that one of our students in STING RAY, Cat, sits on Florida's State Advisory Committee on Exceptional Student Education. STING RAY's university student club, the Bull Buds, won best new student group in 2012!



The University should be really proud of their support and involvement with this program and the impact it is having on the lives of all of our students on the campus. I know that I am!

**Project 10 STING RAY is the direct result of recommendations proposed by the Education Subcommittee of the Governor's Commission on Disabilities in the 2008 report to Governor Charlie Crist. The intent of the project is to develop a pilot site that will serve as a program model for post secondary institutions to host students with significant cognitive disabilities who have graduated with a special diploma and wish to continue their education on a postsecondary campus.**

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