



Project 10 STING RAY presents

The STING RAY Current



January 2011



Volume 2, Issue 1

www.project10.info

Spotlight on the Editor

by Danielle Roberts-Dahm

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This issue of the *STING RAY Current* is much different from the first issue. Aside from the students having so much going on to share, we also have a new editor. Even though she is the newest addition to the program, I knew that she would be perfect for the editorial role of the *STING RAY Current* when I learned that she was an avid reader and writer.

Let me introduce you to the new editor of the *STING RAY Current*, Catherine, also known around campus as Cat. She is a recent graduate from Pinellas Park High School and a multi-talented musician, playing both piano and guitar. As mentioned above, she enjoys reading and writing and is currently working on a novel in her spare time. She also enjoys listening to music and playing with children, especially her nephew. Her goals as a student in Project STING RAY are to pass all of her courses and obtain employment. As a student in the program, she hopes to educate people about students with disabilities to reduce misunderstandings as well as to emphasize that they are just like everyone else. As editor of the *STING RAY Current*, she faces a demanding role as she must ensure that her peers are contributing in a timely manner to the newsletter. Catherine has also learned how to use newsletter publishing software to insert and format all of the articles and pictures.

Catherine is not only our newest addition to the STING RAY program, she is also the youngest. But don't let that fool you! She looks forward to spending all four years in Project 10 STING RAY. Catherine is extremely motivated to make the most of her experience in the program and

is looking forward to beginning her coursework in Spring 2011, especially music, education, and journalism courses. As you'll learn in this issue, she keeps busy with numerous volunteer experiences, social mentoring, playing piano and guitar in the student lounge, writing her novel, and mapping out her courses for her college career.



Danielle & Catherine pose for a picture while working on the *Current* together



Students in Project 10 STING RAY on Campus in October 2010



The Newbie

by Catherine R.

It all started with an interview! I tried my best not to be too nervous when everyone asked me questions and to answer their questions the best I could. By the end of the interview my palms were sweating and I felt relieved a little when I left. I have never been to something like that. It gave me an experience. A few weeks passed and my mom, Maria, got a phone call saying that I was accepted in the Project STING RAY and that I would be starting next August in the fall since I was still in high school. I waited so patiently over the rest of my school year and all summer - I was so stoked! It made me feel like I was actually accepted into college.

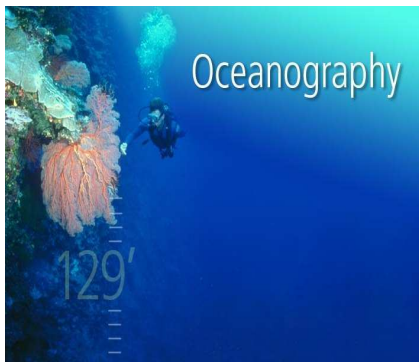


Catherine's favorite senior picture

*It all started
with an
interview!*

When I first started the STING RAY program in August I was not too sure of what I was getting myself into. I had butterflies, of course I was coming into a new school, to college! I knew that once I left Pinellas Park High, life would change from there and it most certainly has. I got to know my classmates, teachers, and everyone in the STING RAY program. They all welcomed me in and were all very nice. After about a month or two, I was settled into my new environment. It is like being a new animal in the zoo, you get transferred into a new environment/home and you adapt to it make it your new home. The first few weeks were full of placement testing; I don't like those so much. I had an IEP meeting with Miss Dobkin, my mom, and another teacher. An IEP is Individualized Education Program for students with disabilities like me and my classmates. I like the program it gives me something that I probably would have never been able to experience. I will be starting classes in January. I will most likely be taking an education course, music course, or a grammar course. I have not chosen yet. So far, that is my Experience at Project STING RAY.

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Oceanography

By Evan L.

Last fall, I took an oceanography class which met on Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 to 4:30pm. The professor's name is Kent Fanning. It's a lecture class and it includes power point presentations. On Blackboard, my professor puts the recorded lectures so the students can review after class. I am learning a lot in the oceanography class, like the coral reefs mammals and different hurricanes.

What I have learned about coral reefs is that they are found in the Florida Keys and in the Caribbean. What is a coral reef? It's a reef that is found at the bottom of the ocean and many sea animals live in them. In this course, I met a new friend Jared and we study together. I was interested in taking this class because I like the ocean and water.





Environmental Science and Lab Class

by Jose C.



Ft. Desoto beach where we went for the lab field trip.

I am taking Environmental Science class and lab with Dr. Krest. In my class we covered the topics: Ecosystems, Water Resources, Land Resources, Natural Resources, Sources of Energy, and Atmospheric Pollution and Climate Change.

In this class there are a lot of written assignments that have to be uploaded into my online portfolio. In my portfolio I had to include a summary of 2 news clippings, a position

paper, a letter to a public official, and an environmental activity. Each article needs to contain a rationale and self-reflection. This is a lot of work, but if I want to learn, I need to push myself to complete it all. Sometimes I had to give up time at the fitness center, game room or swimming pool, but I didn't mind because I want to feel like a college student.

Beginning Drawing Class

by Christina M.

Beginning Drawing classes are for people who want to be in the art program at USF St. Petersburg. The professor Erika Schneider is very nice and honest about everything. I have one of my drawings in the classroom; it is a nude drawing. I was a little nervous at first but I got over it and tried my best to draw the lady. It was ok, now I know I can do it. I was glad it was over. It was part of the assignment. The moving picture helped us learn about creatures and how their body was positioned. In the beginning art class we have field trips. One of the field trips was to the Art Museum at USF Tampa. I had a good time at the museum I am glad I went on the trip. I got a ride with one of the students in the art class to the museum. It was fun! The art museum hung portraits with nails onto the walls.

Some of the things are about how to learn line blinding, coloring pictures using gray pencils or a black pen. Without looking at the paper it doesn't have to be perfect or nice, you just have to try your best on it. We have learned a lot about line blinding, coloring, still life portraits, gridding, portrait and landscaping, model gesture, posing, shift and Chinese landscaping, and shifting and perspective.



Christina in her beginning drawing course, working on one of her many works of art.

Home Shopping Network

by Catherine R.

On October 20th all of the students in the STING RAY program got a tour of the Home Shopping Network. HSN was launched by Lowell 'Bud' Paxson and Roy Speer in 1982 as the Home Shopping Club, a local cable channel seen on Vision Cable and Group W Cable in Pinellas County, Florida. It expanded into the first national shopping network three years later on July 1, 1985. HSN, its initials forming its alternate name, pioneered the concept of the viewer shopping for items in the comfort of their own home. HSN has its roots from a radio station managed by Paxson. In 1977, due to an advertiser's liquidity problem, the company was paid in can openers. Left with having to raise the funds, on-air personality Bob Circosta went on the radio and sold the can openers for \$9.95 each. The can openers sold out, and an industry was born. Circosta later became the new network's first ever home shopping host.

We all knew that Ms. Dobkin and Michael Shaffer had a surprise in store for us, but all our guesses were wrong. The surprise was a limo to transport us to HSN. We were all so shocked! It was my second time in a limo, but some of the students' first. When we got to HSN, Sarah Miller and Genna Krantzberg were waiting for us to take us on a tour. Darryl Blaker joined us later in the tour. The whole tour was amazing! We learned that the best seller at HSN is electronics such as laptops, desktops, etc... On the whole tour, we got to see stuff that some of the employees haven't even seen, such as the warehouse where everything is stored for the next show. We even got to see a live show and all the show rooms!



Group picture of HSN staff and students of the STINGRAY program



What a surprise! Inside the limo, on our way to HSN.

Jose, one of my fellow students in Project STING RAY, talked about what he liked most about our visit to HSN. He says...*"It was my first time in a limo, it was awesome! It was a wonderful experience for all of us we all had a fun time. I also liked the technical department. I liked how the cameras moved around and how many lights they had for just one display. It was crazy for just how much work they needed to do for just one product."*

Thank you to HSN for letting us come and see them. We also want to give a special thanks to Judy Owen because she helped to arrange the tour and our transportation there.

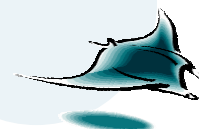


Volunteer experience: YWCA/USF FAMILY VILLAGE

by Amanda H.

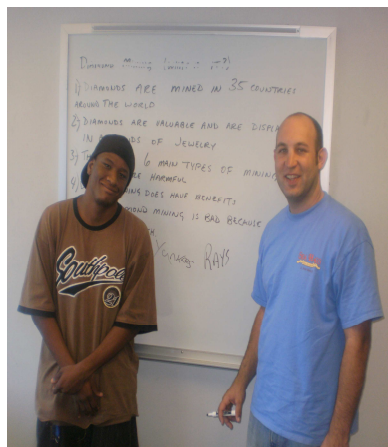
I volunteer on Tuesdays at the YWCA/USF Family Village. I volunteer working with four and five year old kids. My duties are working one-on-one with the kids making puzzles, playing games, and watching them at play time outside to make sure they are safe. I enjoy volunteering there because the teachers are so nice and the kids are so smart!





Social & Academic Mentors

by Jose C.



Jose and Jeff working on an assignment in the library

Jeff Schellhause is my academic mentor who helped me with my environmental science class work. We meet in the library twice a week. Whoever gets there first check's out a room and laptop and calls the other person to tell what room we are in, then we get

started on my class work. I have a lot of assignments that I have to do for my class. We look for information for my article summaries and position paper. I use the internet to find my

information. When I finish I type it and e-mail it to Jeff. He reads it and approves it or asks me to make changes. When it is complete I send it off to my professor. He is a real good guy and friend. We talk about sports too. I am very glad I have an academic mentor. The class work is very hard to understand and he helps explain it to me.

Jon and Stephanie they are very nice to me and everyone they come

across. This year I had a good time with my mentors. All the mentors would meet with each other and do something like kickball, BBQ and go swimming in the pool, or play pool. Jon and I went kayaking which was real fun to do. Everyone got to know each other.



Jon, Jose, And Stephanie hanging out on campus



Trent with his Mentor Adam eating lunch together at the Tavern.

My Mentors

By Trent T.

I wanted mentors to have lunch with, to socialize and to help me with class work. A mentor can do different things with me than my STING RAY classmates. Adam is my social mentor.

I like Adam because he is nice and he is fun to be with. I meet with him on Wednesdays at lunchtime. We went sailing one day and he taught me how to go in the right direction. We have had lunch together at Chick Fil A. I enjoyed eating with my friend. I would like to show him the condo where I am living near campus.

Jeff is my academic mentor. He is a USF student who used to be a high school teacher. Now he is taking a lot of science classes to try to go to medical school. He tutors me for my Environmental Science class. I meet with Jeff once a week after class. We meet in the library. He helps me write papers for my portfolio. The papers are hard to write so I need his help. He makes sure I don't goof off so I get my work done on time. I like having Jeff as my academic mentor because without him I wouldn't get it done.

Special Olympics Swimming

by Trent T.

Last year I qualified to go to Special Olympics State Games for swimming and won gold, silver, and bronze medals. I swim freestyle stroke and breaststroke. I like to swim because it is good exercise. To practice for Special Olympics, I swam two laps each day at the USFSP pool.

I go to the USF St. Petersburg pool using my USF student I.D. card. You can also rent a key for a locker to put my stuff in while I use the pool. In the locker room, I change clothes, put my shoes and bag in the locker. I take my cell phone, towel, and key to the pool with me. The USF pool is open 11am- 6pm, Monday through Friday. It is closed for Thanksgiving and re-opens in February. The pool is heated with solar panels. If the temperature is below 80 degrees, then heater is turned on. I'm glad the pool is heated because it's no fun to practice in a cold pool!



Trent winning the gold medal!



Evan with his championship t-shirt on

Intramural Sports-Soccer

by Evan L.

One of my interests is soccer because I played high school soccer for 4 years. I hoped I could continue playing soccer in college. I found out that they have intramural sports on campus. There was a meeting and everyone got to be picked by a team. I play soccer at the USFSP rec field across from Barnes and Nobel. Our games are every Thursday evening and we play for 1 hour. There are 12 players on my co-ed soccer team and the team name

is Vuvuzelas. The different positions I have played are goalie, defense, forward, and midfield. We are really good because we enjoy playing together. Our record is 4-1 and our team is in the playoffs.

To join the regular USF soccer team you have to be really good but to be on the intramural soccer team you just need to know the basics of soccer. Intramural sports aren't as competitive. We just want to have fun and meet new people. I have enjoyed getting exercise and playing the game of soccer.

Waffle House

By Amanda H.

I started working at Waffle House on September 29th. I was hired to be a part-time Hostess on weekends. My duties are sweeping floors, cleaning windows, bussing tables, and greeting people at the door. It's a fun but hard job because you got to be always on your game and smile a lot even if it's not your best day.



Amanda's Waffle House nametag.



Working at Publix

by Christina M.

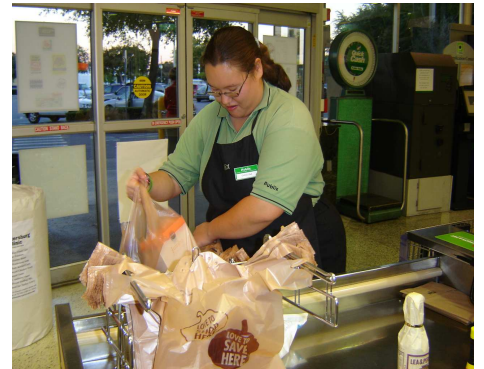
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I started working at Publix on September 22, 2009 right on my birthday. My job title is the bagger. My duties are bagging groceries, collecting carts, mopping and sweeping the floors. I work about 20 hours a week. Publix is a great place to work. People are really friendly, not "mean like a lion". Working at Publix's I have learned how not to get mad or upset with people when they change their mind about how I should bag their groceries. From my paycheck I have to pay for my gas, cell phone bill, lunch at the school and snacks for my break at work. I get paid every Thursday and go to the bank to deposit my check on my next day off. I save some of my

money so I can buy a house or just buy a book. It's up to me. The new weekly schedule is posted on Wednesday and I write it on the back of my pay check. That is important to have your schedule because they won't tell you on the phone. That is Publix policy.

My Publix will be torn down after Christmas. They will build a new Publix more like the store on 66 Street and Tyrone. The new store will have a Pharmacy. I will go to another Publix to work until they are done building the new Publix. I chose the smallest store, the one near USF close to my classroom.



Christina at work bagging groceries

Volunteering Experiences

By Catherine R.

Meals on wheels association of America is the oldest and largest national organization composed of and representing local, community based senior nutrition programs in the United States. All told, there are some 5,000 local senior programs. These programs provide well over one million meals to seniors who need them each day. What I do every Monday with Barry McDowell and sometimes Joyce Morin is take these meals to the seniors that can't get food for themselves. We leave campus to go get the meals at the Enoch Davis Center it takes about an hour to send all the meals to the seniors. There are about 7 to 8 customers on a list with their addresses. The seniors get a meal that includes a hot meal, fruit and a drink

with their cold meal. If there is no one at the house we give it to another person on the list. Barry McDowell has been working with Meals on Wheels for 25 years! I like working with this organization because it feels nice to see the seniors' faces when I hand them their food. It lets me know that I am doing something good and nice for the elderly. They are very thankful that they have us to bring them their food. It is sad sometimes to see the seniors that can't get around like a normal person would.

A Ronald McDonald house charity provides temporary housing to families of seriously ill children undergoing treatment. There are 300 Ronald McDonald houses in 30 countries and regions. Ronald McDonald house acts as a home away from home so families can



Barry McDowell and I picking up food at the Enoch Davis Center.

stay together, helping children heal faster and cope better. Ronald McDonald houses provide over 7,200 bedrooms to families around the world each night saving them \$257 million in hotel costs. Ronald McDonald family rooms are a place to rest and regroup right at the hospital, close to their sick child. These rooms comfort over 3,000 families each day. They offer a place for family members to rest, wash clothes, take a shower or nap just steps away from their child's bedside.



Amanda, Catherine, & Christina at RMH
peeling apples

While the family stays at the Ronald McDonald house they are assigned chores to their room number. They are supposed to do these chores every day. When I volunteer there I do some of the family's chores for them if they seem they are having a hard week. Christina, Amanda, and I look at a chart in the kitchen. We look to see who hasn't done their chores for that day or if they seem like they are having a hard week and don't have time to do their chores. The chores are very simple just like as if you would clean your own house, mopping, sweeping, vacuuming, ect... The families do not have to pay to stay at the Ronald McDonald house. Some give up to a \$25 dollar donation, some don't give any at all. It helps families with their finances. I think this a good place for families to stay when they have a child in the hospital because it makes them feel safe like their own home - it's a safe haven and there only a walk away from their child. I

enjoy volunteering at the Ronald McDonald house because I know what some of the families are going through. My brother, sister, and I have been in and out of hospitals for most of our lives, so I know how to relate with families who have a child in the hospital and can give families hope that their child will get better.

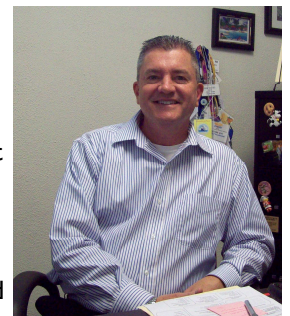
Changing Tides with the Director By Jordan T. Knab, Ed.S.

It is once again my pleasure to submit an article for the *STING RAY Current* newsletter. During the past year, the STING RAY program served as the impetus and foundation for a model demonstration grant out of the Office of Postsecondary Education within the U.S. Department of Education. My staff and I worked tireless hours over the summer to create a grant proposal with the purpose of forging ahead in bringing the STING RAY model to college campuses across the state of Florida. In early October, we were notified that our grant application was successful! By mid-December, we gathered students enrolled in postsecondary transition programs, their parents, mentors, faculty, and program coordinators together from 13 postsecondary campus programs across the state to share best practices and identify barriers that need addressed. This is only the beginning of a 5 year project intended to increase the opportunity for students with intellectual disabilities to participate in postsecondary education on college campuses throughout Florida.

In the words of Helen Keller, "It is a terrible thing to see and have no vision." I thank the administration and faculty of USF St. Petersburg for sharing and supporting our vision and I remain proud of all of the accomplishments of my staff and the students of the STING RAY program.

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.

Project 10 STING RAY is supported through collaborative funding by the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, Pinellas County Schools, Project 10: Transition Education Network, and the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (contract # 291-2620A-0C008).



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**A special thanks to Judy Owen of Pinellas County for her inspiration,
advocacy and support of STING RAY**