

# The HIRRS Circulator

December 2013, Issue Nine

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Hello Readers,

We've made it through the fall, and now it's winter. Before Santa Clause makes his rounds, we are bringing you joy HIRRS-style with our 9<sup>th</sup> issue. In this issue, you can expect a review of the exciting holiday happenings at HIRRS. We will also introduce you to some of our family members and share our recipes for fun weekend adventures.

We appreciate your continued interest in the Circulator. We thank you and hope you have a joyous holiday season!

Stay warm,  
The HIRRS Circulator Staff



## Col. (Ret.) Charles Washington Retires from HIRRS Board

Col. Charles Washington, one of HIRRS' most beloved Board members, announced his retirement from active service to the Board in October 2013. Earlier this year, tragedy struck the Washingtons as Col. Washington's son, William, passed away unexpectedly. This, coupled with a desire to see his wife through a difficult medical diagnosis, influenced Col. Washington's decision to reduce his Board responsibilities.

Col. Washington was an original member of the Board of Directors at HIRRS, beginning service in 1991. Through the years, his leadership, knowledge and genuine concern for the staff of HIRRS and individuals with brain injury have been incomparable. During his tenure, he has witnessed HIRRS' growth from an agency that served four individuals to one that

currently provides support to over 100 individuals a year.

Col. Washington has been granted the status of Director Emeritus by the HIRRS Board for his years of service to the agency.



*Col. Charles Washington, standing before a plaque that hangs in a HIRRS conference room that was dedicated to Col. Washington in October for his years of service to the Board.*

Emeritus status recognizes the significant contributions an individual has made to move an organization to new heights. In addition, a ceremony was held in October to dedicate a HIRRS conference room to Col. Washington. No one was more deserving of these honors than Col. Washington.

Col. Washington passed along the good news that his wife's treatment has been successful and the family is looking forward to spending more time in their home in Florida! He will continue to travel to Maryland for business purposes but we are hoping he has a well-deserved rest in Florida. Thank you Col. Washington!

# What's new at HIRRS



*Rob Guttenberg singing and playing guitar to a HIRRS audience in November*

## **Rob Guttenberg Concert**

*By HIRRS Clients*

Rob Guttenberg came to HIRRS to perform a musical concert for clients and staff. This concert was funded in part by Montgomery County Government and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. He played an acoustic guitar and sang original songs. His style of music is folk music. Rob's songs were about his experience with brain injury. He sang about his life, recovery, and his inspiration. In addition to singing, Rob also discussed his experience with the audience and asked for their input. He interacted with the audience and had us sing along.

We loved the performance. It was energetic and uplifting. We could relate to some of the challenges that Rob experiences. His lyrics were very positive and inspiring. His music is very meaningful. We thought he was a very talented musician, and we'd like to thank him for his time. We would love to have him back!

## **HIRRS Gets Flu Shots**

*By Liz K*

A nurse from Rite Aid came to HIRRS to give flu shots. Some of the clients and staff both got flu shots. It was ok. Robert got a flu shot. He was joking around with me saying he needed to hold my hand when he got his shot. But it was not scary at all. The needle was so small. It did not hurt. It was just a pinch on your arm.

You should get a flu shot if you were not here for one. Flu shots won't let you get sick.

## **Our Trashcan Raccoon Bandit**

*By Dave H*

There is a raccoon that rummages in our trashcan at night because our trashcan emits a smell that attracts some of the nearby rodents. Due to our trashcan being underneath a tree, it will sometimes have a raccoon in it. I check almost daily so that the raccoons will not get squashed and die needlessly.

Here are step by step instructions for a successful raccoon saving operation: 1. Grab a 2 x 4 around the trash can lying around somewhere 2. Stick into trashcan and go about your business so that the coons can come out at night for they are nocturnal.

Because of my investigations previously word got around, and they changed the bins so the coons will no longer be able to get caught in there so when the trash men come by the coons will no longer die needlessly.



*Dave's raccoon rescue operation*

## **Day Program Welcomes a New Staff Member!**

*By Jermaine L*

**What is your title at HIRRS?** *Cognitive rehabilitation assistant*

**What kind of work did you do prior to coming to HIRRS?** *Politics*

**What made you want to work at HIRRS?** *I am very interested in psychology and social work*

**What do you like about working at HIRRS so far?** *I like working with all of the clients*

**Where are you from?** *Washington, DC*

**What kind of music do you like?** *I like all kinds of music except opera*

**What's your favorite color?** *Blue*

**What is your favorite movie?** *I like The Departed*

**Do you have any special talents?** *Singing*

**What do you like to do in your spare time?** *I like to hang out with friends*



*Welcome, Sophie!*

# HIRRS Welcomes the Weekend

## My Weekend

By Eric M

This December I went to New York City (NYC) for the weekend. I rode the Bolt Bus with my mom and 2 sisters. It took about 4 ½ hours to get there.

On Friday afternoon, my mom and sister went ice skating and I watched. Later that night we met up with my aunt.

On Saturday we met my brother, sister-in-law, and niece for brunch at The Boathouse. Brunch is like breakfast and lunch together. If you are late for breakfast and early for lunch, you can eat brunch.

On Saturday night we saw the play Romeo and Juliet. I liked the show. It was the highlight of our trip. I'm glad we went.

## Field of Screams

By Jason P

I've been working at the Field of Screams for the past eight years. The Field of Screams this year was very very exciting. We put in several new units this year: Haunted House, Slaughter House, Clown House, Haunted Hayride, Haunted Slide, The Haunted Bridge, Insane Asylum, Zombie Apocalypse, The Crypt, and Haunted Corn Maze. We also sell posters, t-shirts, food, candy, and drinks. We sell tickets by the size of the group. I've worked in the graveyard the majority of the time. This year we named the graveyard "Jason's Playground" and my nickname was Walking Nightmare. I dress up as a zombie and I use a lot of makeup like black lipstick, black eyeshadow, black nail polish, and red, blue and green hair dye. This year we had DC 101, HOT 99.5, and Fox 5 come to the Field of Screams. It was an absolute honor for me because they didn't tell me that I was going to be on TV or the radio stations.



*Field of Screams*

## My Weekend Activities

By Ben G

On the weekends, I go to the gym to train with my fitness trainer Mark. When I am training with Mark, we work on bowling and trampoline. I also go horseback riding with my mom and dad. On the weekends I love riding my horse Papa with my parents because it's fun. Every weekend I go to my religious group, called Tivka. I go on field trips with Tivka to places such as museums and parks.

## Pottery Class

By Trish D

I went about it with eerie thoughts!

I made a beautiful pumpkin in my pottery class. I would mold an oval and I would do the slits on the side, (like a pumpkin,) and Adwoa helped put the finishing touches on it. It was clay.

My instructor's name is Pam. She baked it for me in the oven.

It came out looking like it was in need of some paint! I painted it orange with a green stem. I'm ready for Halloween, are you?



*A pottery masterpiece made by Trish D*

## The Weekend

By Andre B

I get up, brush my teeth and everything, eat my breakfast, and call my bro up to see if I can come over. I'm going to come over anyway, but I call just to check. I get on the metro and go to his place in DC. We mess around. Then I call my girl to see what's up. That's pretty much what I do on the weekends.

# Family Interviews

## Interview with My Mother

By Jason L

Well I guess it must be time for me to do some work. See, my mother can attest to this, I try to put off everything. It might be because I'm so lazy. I would like to think I can do everything even though that has been proven wrong many times before. Well, Ma, last second again. If you have not figured it out yet, I am interviewing my mother. She will tell you she resisted at first but she knows that I will keep asking until I get the answers I want.

**Where were you born?** *I was born in Washington, D.C.*

**Why am I so man-pretty?** *All I can answer to this question is your "modesty" astounds me.*

**Where do you work?** *I work at the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), an independent federal agency. Our mission is to protect the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death associated with the use of the thousands of types of consumer products under CPSC jurisdiction and to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters and household chemicals to name a few.*

**Have you ever played basketball? Can you dunk me, mom?** *I played basketball just for fun when I was a teen. I could have dunked you back in the day but probably not now. Then again, maybe I could.*

**Where do you live now?** *I live in Silver Spring, MD.*

**How do you like to spend your free time?** *I like to spend my free time ("not that I have much of that!") reading, listening to music and playing games on my smart phone.*

**What sports do you like? Do you even like sports?** *I like tennis, track & field, gymnastics, swimming & diving and weightlifting. I will watch basketball or football sometimes.*

**I'm your favorite son, correct?** *Wrong. I don't have a "favorite" son. I love you both.*

**What's your fondest memory with me, Jason Leonard, in it?** *My fondest memory of you was watching you on the football field.*

**Can we play a game of basketball and at what time? And that was not a joke. I'll take you any time, any place. And I will not dunk on you because I'm handicapped.** *I don't know if we can play basketball.*

**What is your life's greatest achievement?** *My greatest achievement is raising you, your brother and sister.*

## My Mother

By Trish D

**How would you treat me if I had been brain-injured from birth?** *Probably very differently. I wouldn't have known anything about you previous to your injury, and I might have tried to "mold" you into what I thought you should be.*

*Fortunately, I knew the real you, and am so happy to see that bright, cheerful, loving and determined young woman is still there!*

**If you had to choose, what animal would you be (barring ducks, Ellen!)** *Well, if I can't be a duck, I would have to choose to be a cat. Cats seem to enjoy their simple lives and never suck up to anyone!*

**Thing positively! What do you think the future holds for Trish?** *How can I think anything but positively when I think of your future?*

*You have done nothing but amaze me and everyone who knows and has met you! I see you achieving almost anything your heart desires. Go for it, girl!*

**Do you wish you had more kids, or was I a Grand Finale!** *Coming from a large family, I would have been happy with four children. But the Grand Finale just seemed to round out my life with you and your two sibs.*

**Mom, did you want to stay in Chicago?** *No, I wanted to get out of there. I was young and wanted adventure. Everyone in Chicago seemed to know each other and marry each other. I wanted a broader world and D.C. looked inviting. Chicago will always be home though, and sometimes I miss it terribly.*

**When did you first experience a Washington summer and how did it compare to Chicago?** *It was the first time I flew to D.C. on a hot and humid August afternoon in 1967. I was not at all prepared for that blast of hot air when I walked out of the airport.*

**Is snow different in Chicago; How?** *The snow I remember from years ago in Chicago was so quiet and clean. And when it snowed it always got deep and stayed on the ground for sometimes weeks at a time. It was never a problem though. I still had to walk to school, no matter how deep the snow!*

**Considering how your three children's name begin with "T" do you like it?** *You seem to forget that your real name actually starts with a "P" for Patricia. But I rather like the lilt of having all three names that we all use for you, Tim & Teresa start with "T."*

**Why do you like the letter "T"?** *Because it always makes me think of my three children*

## Always My Little Sis'

By Patrick K

The following is an interview with my sister Kelly. I'm one of six children, but I'm very close to Kelly because we are only 2 years apart. Maybe that's why I interviewed her.

**What do you like about living in Landover?** *I don't live in Landover, I live in Tracys Landing, but I like living here because it is close to the Chesapeake Bay, and it is very rural so we can do what we like.*

**How many places have you lived?** *I have lived in four states: New York, Maryland, North Carolina, and Hawaii.*

**What do you do for a living?** *I am a Healthcare Administrator and consultant.*

**What do you like about being a mom?** *Sometimes nothing, haha...just kidding. My children give me self-worth and remind me that I am capable of many things. They love me dearly and I love them. I could not imagine my life without them.*

**Did you like growing up in a family with 6 kids? Why or why not?** *I love being one of six children and always have. I have never been alone in my life and I always have a crew that cares about everything I do and loves me unconditionally. Sometimes it was hard when we were young and our parents didn't have a lot of money and we had to do without things, but even then it was not that bad. I had a big brother that I spent most of my days with when I was little, his name is Patrick ☺*

**Of all the places we lived growing up which was your favorite?** *New Windsor is where I have the most childhood memories, so it is my favorite.*

**What is your fondest childhood memory?** *Ice skating and sleigh riding at Epiphany College with my brothers and sisters.*

## My Son, Michael

By Marie D

**Tell me about your immediate family.** *My wife Stephanie and I have been married for six years. We live in Gaithersburg and have three sons, Levi (3), Ari (2), and Sam (6 months). Needless to say, our house is a busy and hectic place. But, it's a good kind of busy and hectic.*

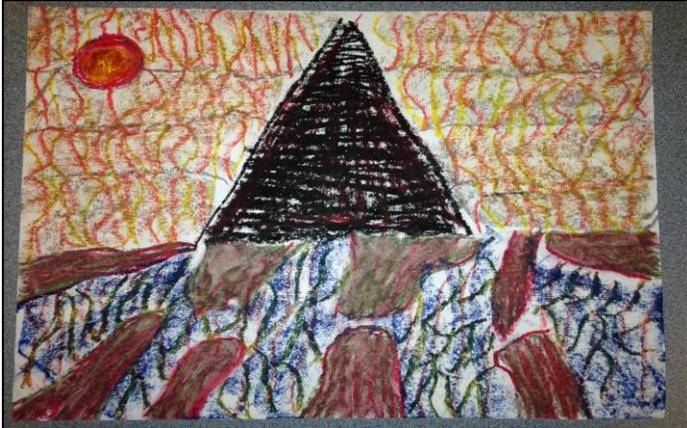
**Interview continued on page 10**

# Creative Expression

**"Under the Sea"** - The participants of Creative Expression Group were shown a painting by a professional artist posted on her blog "Emilee paints". They were encouraged to think about the ways she captured such a wonderful expression of movement. This brought them to see the connection between lines, patterns, colors, shades and the movement of the sea waves. Later clients were asked to draw their own vision of the sea with attention being paid to their choices of varying shades of the same colors and lines to best reflect the sea character (calm, stormy, mysterious...). These are the results of their explorations.



"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life" - Pablo Picasso



By I.C.



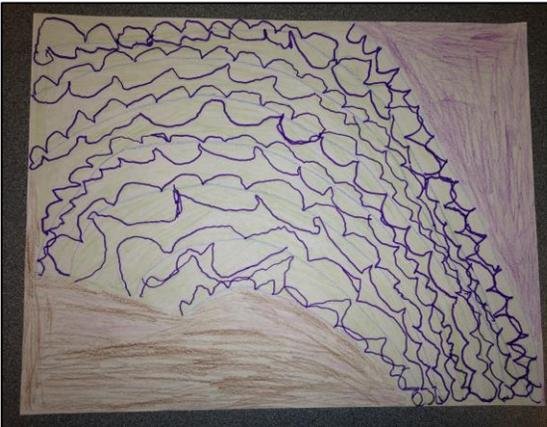
By Trish D



By Desmond O



By Nick M



By Mark S



By Duncan M

# Outings Recap

## **Delivery Man Review**

By Mark S

*Delivery Man* is a movie about a man (played by Vince Vaughn) who from 1991 – 1994 donated to a sperm bank, but there was a mix up and his donations were used to create 533 kids. Some of the kids were suing to find out his identity. He hires a lawyer, who is his best friend, to help him out of it. The sperm bank gave him a folder containing information about his kids. He opened one of the folders and found out that one of his kids was a basketball player who plays for the Knicks. The rest of the movie is about him trying to help all of his other children including a disabled boy, a homeless girl, and a waiter/actor. He helps out his son who is a waiter/actor by taking over his job so he could go to an audition. But what Vince Vaughn's character finds out about himself is he loves kids and wants to get married, when in the beginning of the movie he didn't want to get married or have children. I would recommend this movie as a date night movie.



Liz K at the HIRRS Holiday Party

## **The Trip to Wheaton Mall**

By Sean S

We went on an outing last week to Westfield Wheaton Mall. Marcia and I drove with Alexa to the mall and met up with the other clients. We went to stores like Target and FYE. Then we went to the food court and I ate at McDonalds. The outing was cool. I'd like to go again, but next time I would like to go to GameStop.



## **Ford's Theater**

Mark S, Daniel M, Kerem K, Patrick K, Andre B, Ben G, Tim C

Recent Outings	
October 3	Homestead Farms
October 11	BBQ at Brooke Meadow
October 18	Used Bookstore
October 23	Dave & Busters
October 29	Movies – <i>Gravity</i>
November 1	Movies – <i>Bad Grandpa</i>
November 5	Rockville Civic Center
November 14	Ford's Theater
November 22	Montgomery Mall
December 4	Movies – <i>Delivery Man</i>
December 6	HIRRS Holiday Party
December 12	Bowl America
December 18 & 19	Wheaton Mall

## **Gravity Review**

By Daniel M

The movie *Gravity* was a terrible movie. Ok, so the movie starts out in outer space with George Clooney and Sandra Bullock doing nothing but floating around. Debris hits the area where they are working in space and they become stranded. At the end, Sandra Bullock makes it to Earth in Asia. I would not recommend this movie.

# HIRRS celebrates the holidays

## HIRRS Halloween Party

By Liz K

We had a Halloween party at day program on October 31<sup>st</sup>. It was a lot of fun. Team Building Group planned it. All of day program's clients and staff came to it. Everybody had fun.

We decorated cupcakes that Claire and Alexa made. We decorated them with frosting, marshmallows, crushed Oreos, gummy worms, pretzels, candy corns, and sprinkles. I did not see the sprinkles, then I would have used them. There was also chips, candy, and soda. I liked the food a lot. After we decorated the cupcakes some people watched a scary movie. Some people dressed in costumes, but not everyone did. It was great. Happy Halloween!



Guess who? Duncan M, as a zombie



Top: Payman J  
Right: HIRRS Christmas Carolers

## Hanukkah

By Ben G

My favorite holiday is Hanukkah. Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah. Hanukkah is the festival of lights. This year it started on November 27 and ended on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The starting date of Hanukkah was special this year because it was a day before Thanksgiving. Hanukkah is celebrated for eight nights. During Hanukkah, the candles are lit on the menorah. The first candle is lit on the first day of Hanukkah, and the rest of the candles are lit every day for seven days. The kinds of things I eat during Hanukkah are latkes, four donuts, cheese and gelt. A Hanukkah tradition that I have is getting presents every night, which is why Hanukkah is my favorite time of the year.

## HIRRS Holiday Celebration

By Jason P, Dave H, Tim C, Denise R, Trish D, Marie D, Daniel M, Andre B, Ben G, Duncan M

Our annual Holiday party was a success! We continued the tradition and held the party at the Elk's Lodge across the way. The date of the party was unique this year because it coincided with Dave H's birthday! The dining hall was decorated with all of the holiday trimmings. Before we ate a delicious feast, some of the HIRRS clients performed Christmas carols and Patrick played the guitar. It was wonderful entertainment and it put us in the holiday spirit. There was also a DJ who played some holiday tunes. Some of the clients showed off their moves and boogied down on the dance floor. We all had a ball! We look forward to celebrating again next year. We wish you all a Happy Holiday season!



## What I'm Thankful For...

**Patrick K:** Being alive, leaving

**Eric M:** being at HIRRS and at my house

**Jason P:** my family, my friends, HIRRS, god, surviving my car accident, and Chipotle

**Trish D:** being alive, HIRRS

**Andre B:** my life, Jesus

**Denise R:** a warm place to live, good food, being alive

**Dave H:** my life—God worked through those doctors to give me a second chance at life

**Desmond:** everything I have and all the people in my life, work, all that I have and all that I learned. I am most thankful for life and all the people in my life, mostly my family.

**Daniel:** what I have right now in life

**Marie:** my husband, my wonderful children, and our exceptional grandchildren

**Ben:** my mom and dad

# Who's Who at HIRRS

## Desmond's Interview with Jimmy

By Desmond O

**Why do you come to HIRRS?** *To get a job*  
**Tell me about a trip you have taken.** *Last year I went on a family trip to Florida. We went to the Daytona Nascar track.*  
**Do you have any pets?** *I have two dogs, Shania and Toby.*  
**What do you like to do for fun?** *I like any kind of dirt sports like four-wheeling and dirt-biking.*  
**What sports do you find most interesting?** *Nascar, motocross, and drag racing*  
**How do you see yourself as succeeding in life?** *Keep working on cars*  
**What is your dream job?** *Working for a Nascar pit crew*  
**What would you say keeps you alive?** *My dad keeps me going because he looks out for me.*  
**What would you say is your biggest flaw?** *I have a bad temper*

I have learned a lot about Jimmy that I did not know. We have not spent a lot of time together, but if we were I know we would have a good time. We have some of the same likes. He seems to be very friendly and fun. He still feels like a new person and I am willing to help him because I do see him as a friend.

## Interview with Nick

By Bryan B

This is my interview with Nick. I interviewed him on Monday December 30 in the morning before lunch. We like the same movies

**Where are you from?** *Silver Spring, MD*  
**What did you get for Christmas?** *Technically, my family doesn't celebrate Christmas because we are Jehovah Witnesses, but I did get some new shoes around the time of Christmas.*  
**What's your favorite holiday?** *New Years, because it means a new year is starting and I get to make resolutions.*  
**What do you like about being at HIRRS?** *I like that HIRRS helps me put my life back together.*  
**What's your favorite kind of music?** *R&B and hip hop*  
**What's your favorite sport?** *Basketball*  
**What are your hobbies?** *I like to watch sports, play chess, and go on walks*  
**Who is your hero?** *My brother*  
**Do you have a favorite movie?** *All the "Friday" movies with Ice Cube*  
**Where's the coolest place you've ever been?** *I've been to Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, also called Holland.*

## Sean S Interview

By Marcia Y

I had an interview with Sean and I learned a lot of new things about him.

### Where are you from?

*I was born in Washington, DC. I live in Upper Marlboro, MD.*

### What kind of music do you like?

*I like to listen to country music and British music.*

### What is your favorite TV show?

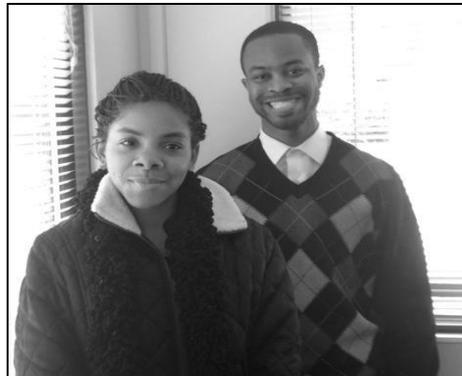
*Spongebob Squarepants and Looney Tunes. I also like the Charlotte Church talk show on YouTube.*

### Where have you traveled? What is your favorite vacation?

*Nashville, TN because my favorite country singer, Winona Judd, lives there.*

### Where would you like to work?

*I would like to work as a mechanic because I like cars.*



Marcia and Sean



Bryan B and Nick M

# Meet our staff

## Maggie Interview

By Duncan M

Hello, I am back to tell you a little about Maggie. There is a lot that we don't know about her and there is a lot to know about her. She's the one that does it all to get us here, first she had to do some work to find out about us. Then she had to do some investigating. I am so lucky that she was here to get me in this place, and I'm sure that you all feel the same. I had a great time learning about what Maggie does here at HIRRS. Thank you every body for letting me do this interview.

**What is your job title at HIRRS?** *Director of Admissions and Quality Assurance*

**What's a typical day on the job like for you?** *I do a lot of troubleshooting in my job so I am on the phone a lot and writing and answering emails. I also research information for program development ideas and materials. I speak with funding sources such as DDA, DORS and the TBI Waiver to help prospective clients get funding.*

**What's the most satisfying part of your job?** *Being able to help an individual or their family get the help they need, whether its receiving services here at HIRRS or other programs, obtaining benefits such as SSI or finding doctors, therapists that can meet their needs.*

**What's the hardest part of your job?** *Having to tell people that they can't get services here because they don't have funding.*

**What did you study in school?** *I have a BA in Psychology with a minor in special education*

**How do you decide if a person is a right candidate to be a client at HIRRS?** *The directors and I look at an individual's records, i.e. neuro-psychological, medical, etc., we meet with them and their family and see what their needs are and whether we can meet their needs with the expertise we have. We also look at the individual's personality to see if they will be able to get along in our environment.*

**How long have you been at HIRRS?** *16 years*

**If you could do anything else, what would you do?** *I would have my own energy work practice doing Reiki with people and animals.*

**What's been the biggest change at HIRRS since you started?** *The company has really grown in size and the types of services we provide have evolved so we are more comprehensive and able to provide a variety of programs to meet individuals' needs.*

**What are your hopes for HIRRS in the future?** *That we continue to evolve and grow. Adding new services and improving existing ones. To have new ways to fund people with brain injuries so they can get services would allow us to re-focus on what we do best, which is cognitive re-training and community re-entry.*



Duncan and Maggie

## My Interview with Trinelle

By Justin H

Trinelle had a lot of interesting responses about her job. She started working at HIRRS for the first time in December of 2005. Since that time the hardest part of her job according to Trinelle is not being able to control whether or not someone gets a job. Her favorite part of her job at HIRRS is watching people change as people when they get jobs. She is inspired by the survivors at HIRRS every day. She feels as though it is an honor to help people reach their goals in life.

Trinelle was born in Maryland, while her parents were here on vacation, but she is originally from New York. Her family is from the beautiful country of Trinidad and Tobago. Trinelle's hobbies/interests are crocheting, going to the playground with her kids, and watching movies. Her favorite food is French fries!! ☺ Trinelle also loves Soccer. Trinelle's favorite movies are *Imitation of Life* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.



Tom rocking out with his band, Sons of the Radio

## My Interview with Tom about his Band

By Nick M

It is Tuesday November 5, 2013. It is 11:00 and I just got finished interviewing Tom who works at the HIRRS as a speech pathologist. I did the interview about him and his band.

**How long have you've been playing with your band?** *Current band—January 2012. Steady in a band since April 2010.*

**What is your band's name?** *Sons of the radio*

**What is your past in singing or instrumental in the band?** *Bass guitar and back-up vocals*

**How often do you have weekend shows?** *Three shows a month and sometimes five.*

**How much do you practice with your band or on your own per week?** *With his band, once a week*

**Where exactly (city, state, club) does your band perform?** *Mostly Maryland*

**What type of music does your band play?** *Alternative Rock*

**Do you and your band have any groupies?** *steady 10-15 people*

I hope you have enjoyed learning about Tom and his band. I like to learn about people and their own individual talents. I hope to learn more in the future. Have a good day.

# Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

## **Interview continued from page 4 (By Marie D)**

**What do you do for a living? How long have you been doing this?** I'm currently a 6th grade English teacher and Team Leader at Ridgeview Middle School. I have been at Ridgeview for ten years...if you count the two I spent there as a student. Since becoming a teacher in 2004, I have taught 2nd grade, 6th and 7th grade Reading and English, 8th grade TV Studio, and 8th grade drama. I also coach the girls' soccer team.

**What do you like most about your job?** The fact that I don't have to sit in front of a desk all day. I feel like what I do definitely impacts other people on a daily basis. In my ten years of teaching, I can say I never liked my job as much as I do this year. I just feel like I'm finally in a position where I can be successful.

**How do you spend your free time?** Right now, my free time is extremely scarce. Before having kids three and a half years ago, I used to play lots of soccer, golf, go snowboarding, travel to visit friends, etc. However, having three kids who are three years old and younger kind of limits your ability to do those things. Once my kids are older, I'll be able to enjoy those things with them. For the moment, I spend my free time signing the alphabet, playing choo-choo trains, and changing diapers.

**How did you meet your wife?** We went to rival high schools. Steph went to Wooton and I went to Quince Orchard. It's strange that we never actually met until after college considering the fact that we lived minutes away from each other our whole lives. Our moms worked in the same elementary school together for many year, vcfs. When I was in high school, I actually interned at their school and even spent time working in my future Mother-in-law's classroom. Finally one day in 2004, it dawned on them that setting us up would be a good idea. We've been together ever since.

**What do you enjoy most about being a dad?** I love everything about it except for the lack of sleep. Having all three of our kids 19 months apart has been exhausting at times, but it's so wonderful to see them interact. My favorite part of the day is right when we get home from work and the 2-year-old, Ari, runs up to his big brother, gives him a huge hug and says, "Hi Levi!"

**Tell me about your interests.** I have a slightly unhealthy obsession with J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" series. Since 2001, my sophomore year of college, I have been fascinated with the Potter universe. I've held a volunteer position with the world's leading Harry Potter website (Mugglenet.com) and even attended a Harry Potter academic conference where I heard college professors from all over the world talk about the influence of the boy wizard. I'm also a huge sports fan and support all the local teams. I love taking my kids to the Nationals game and look forward to sharing lots of great moments with them as they grow up. Once, my son Levi even made an appearance on ESPN's Sportscenter singing "Hail to the Redskins."

**What are your long term goals?** I just want to be able to provide a happy life for my three boys. If they can grow up and become successful, respected, caring members of their community, I will be happy.

## **Poem**

*By Mark S*

The fall has turned to winter  
The leaves are on the ground  
And soon the families will get together and thank the lord  
above for all the gifts he has given us  
And soon the stockings will be hung by the loving care of a  
mother so dear  
With the children excited with the fact that Christmas is  
coming and no Grinch will steal these feelings of joy  
Oh Christmas morning, as the children open their presents,  
and the parents watching and loving every moment  
Let your light so shine  
So where ever you go people will always be able to see the  
light you wish to be in the world

## **Happy Birthday!**

*Happy Birthday to clients & staff celebrating October, November, and December birthdays*

Patrick K – Oct 2  
Claire H – Oct 3  
Paul M – Oct 16  
Alexa B – Oct 27  
Mike M – Oct 30

Daniel M – Oct 31  
Desmond O – Nov 5  
Ian C – Nov 12  
Dave H – Dec 6  
Marcia Y – Dec 21

## **New Year's Resolutions**

**Ben G:** I want to exercise more, get a job, and communicate more without my iPad.

**Denise R:** I hope the New Year brings me a happy home, good food, good music, and good health.

**Jason P:** My resolution is to write more songs about each season of the year.

**Tim C:** I want to grow my hair to my waist.

**Dave H:** To quit smoking cigarettes

**Danny M:** To eat healthy and get more exercise

**Andre:** To have a good year

**Marie D:** To always write down activities that I am really looking forward to

**Trish D:** I want to continue improving my life

## **A Christmas Story**

*By Andre B, Desmond O, Jason P, Ben G, Eric M, & Dave H*

It was Christmas morning, and I was shocked at what I saw underneath the Christmas tree. Sitting next to all of the presents was a shiny new Jaguar. I was surprised to see it, and on the windshield was a note. When I looked closer, I realized it was a lottery ticket! I was rich and proud of myself. I hopped in the car and took it for a spin. I drove over to the five/ten and cashed the lottery ticket. I had mucho dinero!

Driving down the road, I looked into my glove compartment and was surprised to see more lottery tickets!! I thought carefully about what to do with my millions. I would build my own amusement park called Fun Land. There would be roller coasters, Ferris wheels, popcorn and cotton candy. Monkeys dressed in tuxedos would run Fun Land. It will be awesome! Most of the proceeds from Fun Land would go to ending world hunger.

This was the best Christmas ever!!!!

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