

The HIRRS Circulator

January 2016, Issue Seventeen

Table of Contents

- Page 1 Letter from Circulator Staff
- Page 2 What's New at HIRRS?
- Page 3 Outings and Other Activities Recap
- Page 4 Holiday Musings
- Page 5 Notes from Our Travels
- Page 6 Resolutions; HIRRS Advice Column
- Page 7 Artist's Corner
- Page 8 Creative Expression
- Page 9 Creative Expression
- Page 10 Creative Expression
- Page 11 Think About It!
- Page 12 Introducing...



Hey Everyone,

Winter is here! Well, kind of. This December has been super warm – it was 75 degrees on Christmas Eve! Despite the weird weather, we here at the Day Program have been doing our best to be festive during the holidays. In this issue you will hear about what some of us have been doing to celebrate the season and exciting trips that some of us have taken. **A special thanks to Katie for helping to type the newsletter.**

Warmly Yours,

The HIRRS Circulator Staff



Happy Birthday to all of our October, November, and December babies!

- Paul – October 16
- Danny – October 31
- Desmond – November 5
- Tim S – November 7
- Donald – November 9

- Ian – November 12
- Adriana – December 8
- Christina – December 18
- Marcia – December 21

What's New at HIRRS?

We have two new day program staff members to welcome! Their names are Tiffany and Michael. We decided to interview them so we could get to know them better!

Interview with Tiffany

What brought you to HIRRS?

I moved to Maryland for graduate school and wanted a job where I could help others. I really wanted to work with people with TBI; I found out about the position at HIRRS online and applied right away!

Where are you from?

I was born and raised in New Jersey. I lived there until I moved to Maryland for graduate school this past August.

Where did you go to school, and what did you study?

I went to Rutgers University in New Jersey, and I majored in Psychology and Cognitive Science. I currently go to Loyola University in Baltimore, where I am working towards a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology.

What made you interested in this line of work?

My psychology classes initially got me interested in the brain and the impact TBI has on others. I also worked with teens who suffered from anxiety and depression. I became interested in leading groups and helping others through my previous work.

Who is your hero?

My mom. She is such a hard worker and has always been such an amazing support throughout my life.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

Puerto Rico. The weather is beautiful and the food is amazing. I also have a ton of family there.

What are your hobbies?

I like going to the gym and cooking. I also recently got into painting; I think it is really relaxing and a nice way to relieve stress.

What is the furthest trip you've taken?

Mexico.

What is your favorite sport? Do you play any sports?

I don't play any sports. I am not much of a sports fanatic but I do enjoy going to football or basketball games with friends.

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Chicken Parm – my fave!



Tiffany & Michael, Day Program Staff

Interview with Michael

What brought you to HIRRS?

I have a friend who had a traumatic brain injury, so I researched organizations that served people with TBIs; that brought me here.

Where are you from?

I'm from Rochester, New York.

Where did you go to school, and what did you study?

I went to a couple places. One of them was in Jacksonville, FL, where I studied nursing.

What made you interested in this line of work?

I like working with people, and I like to see people reaching their potential.

Who is your hero?

I guess my mother; she's an amazing woman.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

That's a difficult question. I think I'll say San Diego, California.

What are your hobbies?

Screenwriting, directing, comic books, wine tasting, sports (watching and playing), travel... I could go on forever.

What is the furthest trip you've taken?

I went to Scandinavia in 1999.

What is your favorite sport? Do you play any sports?

My favorite sport is baseball. Yes, I do play sports... there's a flag football league in the area that I'm thinking of joining.

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

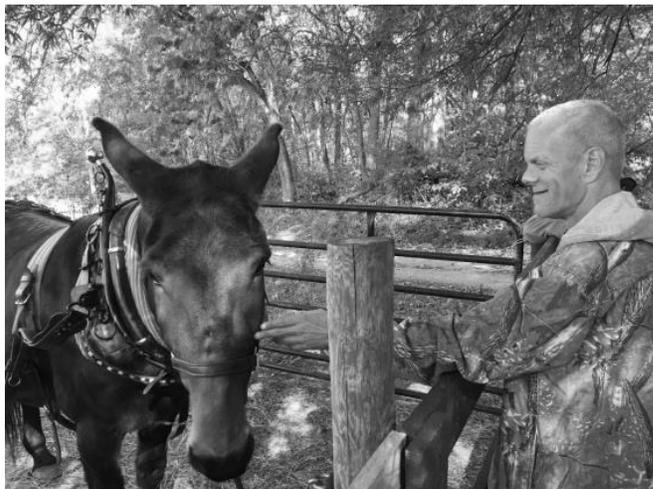
I'd probably say Chinese food.

Outings and Other Activities Recap



Eric cut up the dance floor at the annual holiday party!

Recent Outings and Events	
October 7	Homestead Farms Pumpkin Picking
October 15	Friends of the Library Bookstore
October 22	Great Falls – Nature Walk
October 28	Movies - Goosebumps
November 4	REINS Therapy Horse Barn
November 13	Newseum
November 17	Lunch at Buffalo Wild Wings
December 2	Glass Harp Concert at Elks Lodge
December 4	Holiday Party at Elks Lodge
December 9	Lunch at Noodles & Company
December 16 & 18	Wheaton Mall – Holiday Shopping
December 23	Movies – Star Wars: The Force Awakens



Tim C making a new friend at Great Falls.



Sam, Marc, and Jermaine were reporters for the day at the Newseum.

Holiday Musings

The end of the year means holiday season! Here, people share their thoughts about Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Hanukkah.



What is everyone's favorite thing to eat on Thanksgiving? Everybody agreed – they love turkey! In addition, **Eric** likes stuffing and mashed potatoes; **Andre** enjoys eating pie; **Steve** looks forward to his mom's jello and pecan pie; and **Danny** can't wait to eat carrot soup!

We asked: What is the best present you've ever gotten for Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa?

Andre: I got a Trans Am.

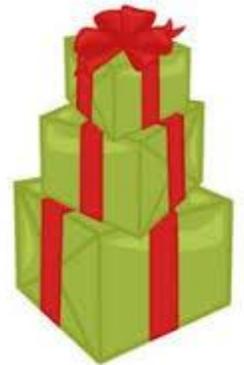
Danny: The best present I got for Christmas was a TV. It was a good gift because it gave me something to watch.

Nick: Money, so I could buy what I want!

Trish: My favorite present was a piano. It made the décor!

Eric: I got a Samsung Galaxy. It's like an iPad; I like to use it for reading.

But everyone also agreed that it's better to give than receive. According to **Steve**, "It's priceless to see other people's reactions on their faces and it warms your heart."



HIRRS Holiday Party by **Danny**

The first week of December on Friday, the HIRRS staff and clients went to Elks Lodge and had a party for Christmas. At the party we listened to music and ate awesome food. The food we had was roast beef turkey, potatoes, bread, and broccoli with cheese sauce. They also had dancing going on. Jason P brought his guitar and played Christmas music. At the end of the party we had cupcakes and then went back to HIRRS. It was a pretty fun day!

Notes from Our Travels

Over the last few months, many of the Day Program clients went on exciting trips both near and far. Here is what they and saw!

I went to New York on the Bolt Bus with my mom and my sister. My aunt flew up from Charlotte, North Carolina to New York. We stayed in Staybridge Suites in Times Square. I saw the big Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center. My mom, my sister, my aunt, and I went to eat brunch at a boat house restaurant in Central Park. It was a fun trip. I want to go again next year with my mom, my sisters, and my aunt!

-Eric

This New Year's Eve I stayed up and watched some concerts. I did not stay up to see the ball drop. I went to bed early. The next day I got up on New Year's Day, and my mother came to visit me. We went to Gaithersburg to the book store and I got myself a calendar. After that we went to get some lunch at California Pizza Kitchen. It was good!

-Danny

I went to California for Thanksgiving. I went to Los Angeles. I saw my friends Fred, Yuling, Stanley, Daniel, Mike, Eugene, Frederick Chang, and Sam! We had Thanksgiving dinner together. I went to the beach and played volleyball. I had a fun time. Next time I want to go to Washington and San Francisco. Then I went to Utah (Salt Lake City) for Christmas and New Year's. I went with Grandma, Dad, Grandpa, Uncle, Auntie Hoa, Auntie Phuong, and cousins Victoria, Kevin, Hoa and Jenny. We ate a lot of food, especially pho. It was cold, and it snowed. I had to wear pants! For Christmas I got a card from Grandpa - it had \$100 in it!

-Quinn

New Year's Resolutions

The New Year is all about change and fresh starts. What things would you like to change in 2016?

I want to get more exercise! So my resolution is to work out more. –**Danny**

I'd like to get a part-time job and go to college. –**Nick**

To be less persevering and just go with the flow! –**Trish**

I want to see the Washington Nationals win the World Series in 2016! – **Eric**

I don't make resolutions – I never keep them! –**Steve**

The HIRRS Advice Column

It's important for a person to be able to ask close friends and family for advice. Participants of Newsletter Group thought of a problem in their lives they need help solving and got suggestions from others on how to work through it. (Anonymously, of course!)

Q. I applied for a job at Giant Food in Bethesda. How can I get a bus from the Bethesda metro station to Giant Food?

A. Get your work schedule and call the bus service to ask about the bus times.

Q. The issues that are common to head-injured people are all affecting me. I don't want to wait! Help!

A. My advice is to talk to your mom for help, and to also talk to other people with head injuries. If you need help, you don't have to wait!

Q. I need advice on how I can perform better at my job without getting so tired. What should I do about building my energy back up?

A. Try to get more sleep!

Q. Sometimes having a brain injury makes me depressed. How can I find happiness?

A. Don't give up! Brain injury rehabilitation takes time and effort. But it's gratifying!

Artist's Corner

Art Enables is an organization in Washington, DC where individuals with disabilities can create art. Artists are encouraged to tell stories through their artwork, and can feel a sense of pride and accomplishment by sharing it with others. HIRRS' very own **Paul** attends Art Enables twice a week. Below you can see one of his paintings, which he calls "The Lighthouse." He hopes you enjoy it!



Creative Expression

Participants of Creative Expression Group were up for a major challenge. And what is more daring than letting the world see you as you are? Typically, we want to present ourselves to others in the best possible way highlighting our finest features. With ourselves, though, we are usually more honest. That's why I hope that you will appreciate the self-portraits here for their openness and courage. An additional challenge was to use construction paper and pages from magazines instead of paint, pastels or pencils. It definitely involved lots of creativity and planning but our artists did an admirable job. Don't you agree?

-Svetlana



Mark



Marie



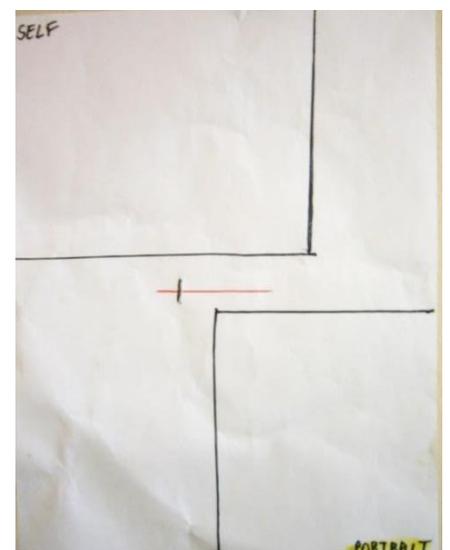
Nick



Jermaine



Christina



Ian

Members of Svetlana's Creative Expression Group are philosophers and poets! They are good observers and psychologists, too. And, of course, they are gifted with a great sense of humor. That's why their stories are interesting, thoughtful and fun. For this particular assignment, the group attendees listened to "California Dreaming", a famous 60's song performed by The Mamas & the Papas folk rock quartet. This beautiful song is about complicated relationships, long winter and longing for warmth. Inspired, group participants wrote their own stories, poems and essays. Enjoy!

"Winter Tales"

We're all at *St. Mary's Soup Kitchen* at 12:30 sharp, M-T. Other places, other times. Miss Mandy runs it. And since Miss Mandy runs it, since Miss Mandy's real Christian, and since all places that start with *St.*'s are definitely real Christian, we have to take off our hats and say a long prayer to Jesus before we eat.

I am a beggar. You've heard it: "Beggars can't be choosers." But I am also Jewish. And I do know how to pray like a Jew – I haven't always been a beggar. I've learned enough to know it's no fun to hang this close to Christians when they're doing their thing. And even though we'd say it's not the same, they'd probably say "ditto." I first started coming here years ago. The first day I remember telling Miss Mandy my name was Sam. She said, "Samuel? You're Jewish?" And I hesitantly said yes. She hugged me and told me I was welcome here. But still I had to pray to Jesus.

Today is Christmas and it's 12:30 sharp. Miss Mandy announces over her megaphone that an AA group will be serving our food today. We all smiled. These were the only volunteer servers we ever said "Thank-you" to. So much better than college students fulfilling their hours for sociology credits.

I was smiling, even chuckling too, when the *always* smiling Miss Mandy told me the most touching thing I've felt in what otherwise feels like too long a life. "When you get to the green beans there is a Hanukkah lady." When I met this woman we spoke and spoke. I stood there looking past her at times at the dreidel picture that was hung on the cement wall of the Methodist church basement.

Miss Mandy tapped me on my shoulder. "I don't forget any of my patrons." And she winked at me. My winter was made.

-lan

Alas! – it's winter! (my favorite season.)
I have many reasons.
Bring on the snow, sleet and frozen rain.
It causes me the least bit of pain.
It's a sight to behold.
Whimsical stories to be told.
Snowmen, marshmallows and beautiful sights.
Look out for the occasional snowball fights.
Hot chocolate with marshmallows,
With closest dear fellows!

-Trish

The winter is cold. When the wind blows, it is like a tiger eating your flesh.
Winter is a long drawn out process that lasts for days, months even, seems, years.
The best part of winter is when it's over, the winter of my discontent.

-Mark

“Winter Tales” continued...



Where I live, there is a lot of white from the snow in winter, and it's everywhere. I think it's a beautiful part of winter. As a young boy growing up in a nice neighborhood, winter was more interesting than it is now. We built snowmen and had snowball fights. We laughed and played till spring would arrive. And we enjoyed the white fluffy stuff on the ground.

I am very careful now because my balance went off when I had brain injury when I was seventeen.

-Nick

In a small town named King Mountain where everybody knows everybody, there is a tradition when the fighters meet after the big snowfall to make the best snowballs possible. Then they fight till the last man, woman or child standing, and the winner claims the title till next year. It always brings the neighborhood together and is done as play and games only, of course. Rare occasion when the fight brings the whole town together.

-Jermaine

The winter is very cold. And it is more difficult when you're old. I am looking out the window and am concerned about the amount of snow that has arrived. I am wondering if I'll be able to walk to all of our convenient places. I love walking but am nervous to do that in this amount of snow. I am thinking about something to look forward to. A trip to Florida would be perfect this time of year. I love the sun, palm trees, and am excited about the amount of walking I'll be able to do.

-Marie

One morning I woke up and there were about 15 inches of this white beautiful fluffy snow that was absolutely still and perfect because there were no footprints and no tire tracks yet. I love looking at fresh untouched snow, it almost has a glittery effect on the trees and on the tops of the houses. Now, during this snow I was confined to my house due to my health situation and didn't want to risk falling and possibly breaking anything, even in this beautiful snow. I loved watching all the neighborhood kids playing in the snow, making the best snowman and having snowball fights.

Even though I was stuck inside, I didn't let it get me down because every time I looked outside and saw the luminous glow of the snow, it cheered me right up.

-Christina

Think About It!

If I won the lottery...

I would like to give some away to reputable organizations, but also keep a small portion to use personally – like for enjoyment and personal activities, like traveling!

-Marc

I would give it to the homeless. I would hope they put it towards buying a house.

-Desmond

I would make sure I could live comfortably for the rest of my life, then make sure my mother, father, and sister could, then donate the rest of my money to charities like homelessness, Leukemia & Lymphoid Society, and course scholarships for the under-privileged.

-Ian

If I were president...

All jobs would be equal opportunity for men and women.

-Trish

I would make the first law about peace.

-Ben

Of which country? If it's the United States, I'd let the government "work its magic."

-Jason P

I'd fix poverty in America.

-Nick

If I was stuck on a desert island, the 3 things I'd bring are...

A water bottle, food, and medicine/first aid.

-Eric

A book, food, and shoes.

-Ben

Food, water, and a toy.

-Marc

A phone, a mirror, and a pet.

-Trish

Food, water, and a tent.

-Tim C

Introducing...

The Circulator has usually been dedicated to the Day Program located at the HIRRS main office. But did you know that HIRRS has another Day Program? It's called Brooke Meadow, and their curriculum includes lots of exciting community outings and activities. Brooke Meadow will be featured more in upcoming newsletter issues; for now, here's a brief introduction to its clients!



Trish, Bernice, and Adwoa at the Botanic Gardens.



Bernice and Wallace enjoying the outdoors.



Visiting our good friend Paul.



Happy birthday Felix!



Felix celebrating Christmas with Sam.