



Project 10 STING RAY presents

# The STING RAY Current



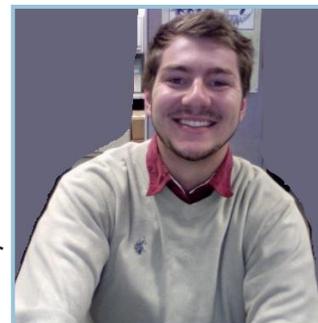
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## New Mentor Coordinator

by Christian Haas



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While volunteering as a mentor during my senior year at USF St. Pete, I could have never imagined the future Project 10 STING RAY would have in store for me. Shortly after my graduation in May 2011, I was offered a position as Mentor Coordinator for Project 10. Needless to say, I immediately accepted the offer and have been grateful for the opportunity ever since.

The role of Mentor Coordinator is to recruit, train, and coordinate degree seeking students who show interest in becoming a mentor for our program. So far, our program has three different types of mentors, with more being developed. Students in Project 10 meet weekly with each of their peer, academic, and community mentors who engage in a variety of activities on and off campus.

Our newest addition to the program is the Community Mentor. Community mentors assist students in completing a series of community lesson plans. These lesson plans are aimed at developing vital communication and independent living skills. Students are expected to do research on a variety of community action items. Examples of these include but are not limited to going to the DMV, searching for the right apartment, finding the right cell phone plan, and opening a bank account. Once the students identify their needs, they choose two locations to visit for each lesson. A community mentor accompanies the student during each onsite visit. Students are expected to talk with the customer service representative regarding their individual needs; they then determine how that relates to the services the establishments offer. After the onsite visit, students write about their experiences in a community living journal.

As mentor coordinator, I also serve as the advisor to one of our school's newest student organizations, Bull Buds. Bull Buds was created to connect students, mentors, and advocates in the USF St. Pete community. The process of leading an organization will assist in the development of invaluable organizational skills. The organization will plan BBQ's, pool parties, kickball games, and invite guest speakers. The students in the STING RAY program will be the primary organizers of these events, with support from other members of the club.

This will allow students to experience the work it takes to develop and implement activities on campus. They will be responsible for everything from managing the event budget, to marketing the event on campus. These experiences are important when striving for the dynamic and comprehensive learning experience Project 10 STING RAY hopes to offer.

With all these changes around us, from the new mentor positions, the student organization, the construction of the new student center, and the renovation of the Campus Activities Center, it is hard not to get excited about what our future has in store!

Please contact me at [crhaas@usfsp.edu](mailto:crhaas@usfsp.edu) to get involved!

## A Word from the new ESE Associate

by Natasha Scott

My name is Natasha Scott and I work at USFSP through the Pinellas County Schools extended transition program, Project 10 STING RAY. The students in STING RAY are 18 – 22 years old and are auditing classes here. I can honestly say that this is the best job that I have ever had and I truly love working with the students here every day! Since becoming part of STING RAY, I have

most of them are familiar with the campus and choose what they want to engage in.

Currently, we have six students; four are enrolled in college courses. The two new students started in mid-October and will begin courses in January. We pair the students up with an appropriate, peer mentor who best suits the student's needs. We provide three total mentors per student, which you can read more about in Christian's article. We work as a team to fulfill each student's individual needs and keep students engaged in program goals. Our main focus is for the students to be successful and gain access to all the resources that are available on campus and in the community!



Natasha assisting Christina in the STING RAY room

gained a lot of insight into the needs of my students. I have developed a loving and caring friendship with all of them on many levels because I strive only to bring out the best in each student and enable them to realize their abilities. There is no limit to teaching a student - it just takes hard work and dedication.

Here at STING RAY, my role revolves around helping students become more independent. I help the students with interviewing skills, job searching, and following through with getting the position. In doing this, each student develops a great work ethic and independence for being out in today's society.

Currently none of our students need full support as to where to go or how to get there;



Laresa, Isabel, & Evan enjoying campus life!



A group picture at the beginning of Fall 2011



# Cheerleading

by Isabel M.

I first was hit with the spirit bug when I was in seventh grade. I was at a basketball game and my school had a cheer squad and I watched them during the entire game and instantly fell in love. The next year when we moved to Florida, my dream came true! I became a competitive all-star cheerleader my last year of middle school! I am still a cheerleader to this day! I have 5 years of competitive cheerleading under my belt.

I love everything about cheerleading. The feeling I get when I'm cheering is pure adrenaline!

I cheer for Florida Top Dog All - Stars based in Largo. I have competed mostly in Tampa, Lakeland and Orlando. I have also competed in Atlanta, Georgia and Charlotte, North Carolina. This coming spring I will be competing in Fort Lauderdale.

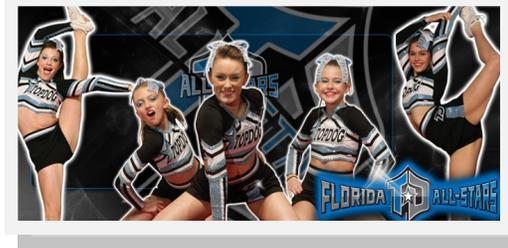
Our uniforms change every 3-4 years and our colors are silver, black and blue. They always add white to the uniforms which I don't like at all!

It's easy to make friends at my gym because everyone knows each other.

I am best at jumps, cheer and dances. This year, our jump sequence is a left pike to triple toe touches.

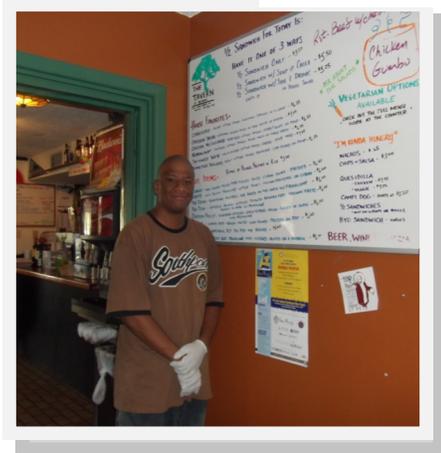
I would like to share my favorite top dog cheer with you:

*The pride of the pack  
forever will be  
T-O-P, D-O-G!*



# Bayboro Tavern Internship

by Jose C.



*Jose standing by the Tavern menu.  
Stop by for lunch & Jose will serve  
you!*

My career goal is to become a chef and when Christian Haas introduced me to the Tavern I took the offer. He and I went to the tavern to see if I would like to work there as an internship.

The tavern is a great place to work because you get to work with people all day every day. It's so nice to work with new people. The people I work with are very nice to be around as well. We all work with each other every day, it's like one big family at the tavern. I help at tavern by bringing people their food, cleaning tables, helping with the orders, and just now learning how to prep the food. This is a step in the right direction to my career goal, which is to be a chef.

# USFSP Fitness Center Internship

by Evan L.

I am working at the USFSP Fitness Center for my on-campus internship. I like working there because the guy I work with there, his name is Todd Clark. He is awesome! I clean the seats on the machines at the gym. I also vacuum the floors and clean the rugs that the people use to work out on. I also like working out at the fitness center when I'm not working.



# Career Development

By: Christina M.

This year I'm taking Career Development. I got to meet lots of new people and the professor on the first day. At class I get to talk about my presentation and myself. It was

my first time to talk about it. After the presentation, I feel better and glad it was over! It was a good class too, not bad at all.

My professor was very nice and understanding. But he gets angry when students are talking when he is talking. I don't blame him at all, he's just doing his job. He is always right about everything, like career choices and finding the right career for you. I want to have a good career. I want to be a English teacher and go to South Korea to teach young children, ages 10 to 13.

When I talk about my

presentation it helps me speak up in front of people I don't know. This makes me feel better because I try to stand up for myself when people give me hard time. They just push me around and tell me what to do but that doesn't get me down.



Jose was also in the career development course & shadowed firemen!



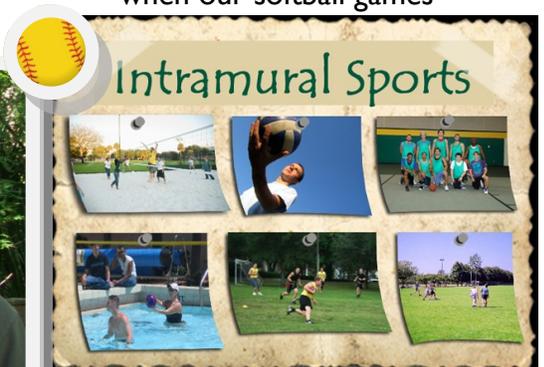
Christian & Christina at USFSP Get On Board Day. Christian was Christina's academic mentor for her career development course, too!

## Softball

by Evan L.

My experience playing softball is fun. I did play in the softball game when I had a game. I played shortstop and made a popup diving catch. My teammates said I did a good job and hustled a lot and did an awesome catch! I went to some practices for softball and did a good job at practices. I also played all different kinds of positions in softball like outfield, DH, shortstop, and catcher. The coach's name was Tyler. He was a nice coach and told us how to play softball. He was around the field for started and warm up on the field as a team together. Our team was called the Wheelers. We had a good season but lost every softball game 0-8. I hit base hits and scored a run for the team and played really good.

when our softball games



by Laresa B.



## Special Olympics



One Friday in the summer, my Special Olympics bowling team and I went to Orlando to compete. We had dinner at the Wide World of Sports after having a health checkup. I ate chicken, rice, and green beans and it was so good. After that, there was something going on so we stayed in Disney until 9:00pm. It was a fun day!

On Saturday, we had to compete in bowling at 8:00am. After that we went back to the Sports Center and got checked up again. That night we had a dance. We left early and went back to the hotel. On Sunday we ate breakfast at the hotel and we went home. I took lots of pictures and we played games and just chilled. I won 5th place!

Another good thing about going to Special Olympics bowling is that I met my boyfriend. We were talking at the pool and then had lunch together. We were talking about life, like what's going on between me and him. We ended up holding hands and talking about what we were going to do together.

## Internship at the Waterfront

By Trent T.



This semester I started volunteering at the Waterfront. The Waterfront is the aquatic sailing center at USFSP. Students can come to enjoy the pool, swim, sun bathe, or play volleyball in the pool. Students can also

My responsibilities include cleaning the pool deck, chairs and tables, clean the locker rooms, sweep the floors, scrubbing the floor mats, and shower curtains. In addition, I wash and stack the life vests.

I work two days a week at the Waterfront. My supervisors name is Teresa. She is really nice and friendly. Zach shows me how to do my job and helps keep the Waterfront running smoothly. I have enjoyed working at the Waterfront. The people are great. It's nice to work outdoors I also get to wear my bathing suit. Volunteering at the Waterfront has helped me learn important skills and how to follow directions. These experiences will help me in my future career.



Trent taking a break while working at the Waterfront

check out a sailboat or kayak to take out on the water to enjoy the Bay.

Newsletter Title

# Cultural Anthropology

by Evan L.



The class I am taking this semester is Cultural Anthropology. It is a challenge but it's interesting. I'm learning a lot. There is a lot of homework. Good thing I have someone to study with, named Kristina. She helps me with my homework in class and we do our homework before class.



## My Summer Trip

by Christina M.

My sister, dad and I went on a very long vacation this summer. My first experience was going on the airplane was okay. They gave us some snacks and drinks on the airplane. I got to see down on the cities, they were little. It was a very long ride, too, but it was worth it when we got off the plane and my aunt was waiting to us!

My aunt is a crazy driver but she is nice and let us stay at her house. We had a party and the next day my sister, me, and my aunt we went shopping while my dad spent

more time with his bother. The next morning, me and my sister had to get up early to go fishing on a boat. We had camp fire and cooked hotdogs with the stick like we were camping. I don't like horseflies or the cold water though.

I am glad it was over at the end when we got back at my aunt's house. Then went back to my brother's house to have pizza that you can heat up by yourself. It was very good! After that we went back to my aunt's house to go to

sleep because it was night time. My sister was on her phone all night talking about family history.



# Becoming a part of the State Advisory Committee (SAC)

by Catherine R.

It was mid-May when I was asked if I would like to be part of The State Advisory Council (SAC). I wasn't really aware of what this was or even why I was being asked. I found that I was asked to be a student's voice, to basically speak up for all students in exceptional student education (E.S.E) in the state of Florida. Danielle Roberts-Dahm from Project10 took me to



Cat with former bureau chief, Bambi Lockman

this meeting as my travel companion.

This meeting was held in Tallahassee at the Duval Hotel. The hotel was so nice! From the moment you drive into the entrance to the time you leave you feel as if you are

famous. Free valet parking, when you walk into the entrance of the hotel, you'll see all the different patterns on the furniture - some zebra, some leopard, and other very interesting patterns, patterns that you would not normally see on a piece of furniture. The light fixtures also catch your eye. The one in the lobby looked as if they were jellyfish floating in the air. The smell of coffee from the Starbucks to your left. To the right was the restaurant Shula's 347 Grill in honor of Hall of Fame Coach, Don Shula. The winningest coach in NFL history, with 347 career victories!

Danie and I checked into our room on the 4th floor with a nice view of downtown

Tallahassee. The door was heavy, you would know if someone walked out the door or not. The two queen size beds and flat screen TV caught my eye. There was even a touch screen computer in our room, but it did not work so well. The bathroom that had no privacy at all! The doors were glass and on a slider. The showerhead was amazing though! It was as if it was raining on you while you took your shower. I was so used to putting my head back to rinse my hair it was different not having to do so. The toilet was interesting, the flush handle, well, we couldn't find it at first because the button was on the side. It took me like ten minutes to finally figure it out! The sink was neat too; it was glass and looked like a bowl.

The first meeting was a few hours after I got there and was a new member orientation where there were introductions and then three different people talked about what would be covered at this meeting. We went over how the SAC works, the roles and responsibilities of SAC members, our purpose for being there, and a lot more. The topics discussed at this meeting were the different education programs including Project10 STING RAY, Florida's successes, and how all these different programs throughout the state differ. The bureau chief, Bambi Lockman, gave an update of what was going on with the FDOE (Florida Department of Education) and I even got a ten-minute time period to talk about my experience with being in STING RAY

and how they have helped me with my goals in life. I explained The STING RAY Current, and that I was writing my

own fiction novel. I had four or five people come up to me after my speech asking for my autograph for when I publish my book they will already have my signature.

The three days that I spent in Tallahassee was a wonderful experience. I got to explore the city, we went to two different malls and I ate at a hibachi (Japanese steakhouse) for the first time. The food was great! And my overall experience was a good one. There were some downsides though. My suitcase decided that it wanted to break so I had to go and buy a new one and I left my flash drive in the hotel room that had my finished book on it. The next SAC meeting that I will be attending is next year in July and I cannot wait!



# 2nd Annual Hartwick Symposium on Postsecondary Education & Intellectual Disabilities



***The future is NOW!***

December 14-16, 2011  
at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel

## Changing Tides with the Director

By Jordan T. Knab, Ed.S.



When the students in the STING RAY program named my corner of their magazine "Changing Tides," neither they nor I realized how much would change as a result of this pilot project at USFSP. As a result of our work with STING RAY and the award of a federal grant in the fall of 2010, we are beginning to see the fruit of our labors across the state of Florida.

In August of 2011, two more postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities opened, one at Florida International University in Miami and one at Florida State College Jacksonville. Currently, our Consortium partnership is providing technical assistance to two other large Florida state universities, two private universities, and four community/state colleges, all of whom are in the program development stage. In mid-December, our students, family members, mentors and program coordinators will be joined by their peers and colleagues from 17 other universities and colleges across Florida at the 2nd Annual Hartwick Symposium, hosted here by USFSP. These are certainly exciting times for our youth with intellectual challenges and their families throughout Florida! As we enter the upcoming holiday season, I reflect on giving thanks for the dedication of our staff and the hard work of our students in the STING RAY program. I am proud to work alongside them all!

**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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University of South  
Florida St. Petersburg

140 7th Avenue South  
SVB 112  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Phone: 727-873-4654  
E-mail: Project10@stpete.usf.edu



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