

# The HIRRS Circulator

December 2012, Issue 5

Dear Readers,

Wow, number 5! This is our anniversary issue, full of news, art, and everything in between. Things are moving forward with the newsletter group and we look forward to exceeding our previous issues.

Here's a brief preview of what this issue will be about: pictures that pop off the page, New Year's resolutions, articles about what we do, and more stories about us and what we do here at HIRRS.

We hope you will read our newsletter, so please keep reading! In conclusion, we look forward to a joyous season and happy holidays to all!



*Circulator Staff Members: Eric M, Andre B, Patrick K, Desmond O, Horace B, Dave H, Mark S*

*Photo by IC*

--HIRRS Circulator Staff

## Table of Contents

Page 1	Letter from Circulator Staff New Year's Resolutions
Page 2	Stories & Welcomes
Page 3	Reflections
Page 4	Reflections
Page 5	Creativity Section
Page 6	Holiday Festivities
Page 7	Outings
Page 8	Who's Who At HIRRS
Page 9	Who's Who At HIRRS
Page 10	Polling HIRRS

## New Year's Resolutions

- Steve S – To not scare people anymore...at work.  
IC – To finish my math class.  
Liz K – To pay more attention.  
Andre B – To keep doing good.  
Patrick K – Play my music.  
Horace B – Get a job.  
Dave H – Quit smoking.  
Tim – To be able to live another year.  
Marie D – To lose 10 lbs.  
Nicholas M – To go back to school and get a new part-time job.  
Trish D - To be independent and work hard.  
Eric M - To find a job.  
Ben G – To do more exercising.  
Justin S – To win.  
Doug S – Try to live to see the next year.  
Jason L – To walk without a walker.  
Mike M – To get along with people better.  
Desmond O - To control my temper.  
Mark S - To enjoy life more.

# Stories & Welcomes

## The Friendship of Bob and Jason, Part One

By Jason L

Typing by Trish D

There are two main characters in this story. The first and most important person is Bob Thomas. A great speed walker with a lot of problems he is trying to get away from. Then we have Jason. A man that has no problems in this world. Or so it seems.

First, Bob Thomas. He moved to Maryland when he was expelled from a school in Hawaii. Bob got expelled because half the time he would get caught running down the halls. This along with his problems made him pick up speed walking. You might ask yourself what kind of problems does he have. Well, first his original parents did not want him. Then his parents were always traveling as part of their jobs. He was always moving so he did not make many friends. I just lost my glasses and this mean lady Elissa wants me to write more. I don't want your pity but I am sort of blind without them. She says in a high pitched tone you are capable of more. I will try. Back to the story.

Bob was speed walking to school and Jason and his friend saw him. Jason started to throw stuff at him, such as garbage and lunch meat that the kids left in their lockers for months on end. Then Jason (the serious guy) thought it would be funny to throw a banana peel at him. That is where the whole story changes. Now let's hope that Elissa thinks I worked hard enough to have it printed in parts. You said it Elissa.

Bob slipped and fell. It took a couple of hospitals for Bob to be diagnosed with a head injury but later on he was. Then Bob blamed Jason for his head injury.

Then Jason one day was out with some friends and they all decided to steal a car. So then they picked out a white Accord, which Jason did not like, but said screw it. It's something to drive around in. So after some planning it was time.

Now it is time to tell you how Jason landed at HIRRS. Jason ended up at HIRRS shortly before Bob did. Due in part to Jason's hard headed ways, he stole that car. If he explains it, he borrowed the car. He says that because the owner did get the car back.

Jason was a young man with no prior experience driving a car, so he ran into a tree. He then was at several hospitals before he landed at HIRRS where he met up with Bob Thomas.

Now alas I have convinced the very pretty Elissa (I say pretty only because she is reading this and then maybe my charm will get me like three or four newsletters. I don't think it will work out, but I am happy with two. But hopefully I will get more. I don't think it will work, but I can hope).

## My Trip to Spokane, Washington

By Davo H

Over about a three week period of time I went to my mother's house in Spokane, Washington. She was or is living there with her boyfriend, Dave. It's a lil' weird he has the same name as me, but it's all good, he's a good guy. I got to meet his daughters because they live relatively close. My job was to tend to the chickens and I did, as well as feed the deer and shovel the snow outta the driveway and whatever I made during the day. I lost to them playing poker at night cause my mom's a card shark. I told her that. I said, "You're a shark with a pretty smile. As soon as she'd bite ya, she'd make up for it with a pretty smile."



Davo H  
Photo by IC



Claire H  
Photo by IC

## Welcome to HIRRS, Claire!

By Horace B

We would like to welcome Claire to Day Program and HIRRS and we hope that your experience here will continue to stimulate and motivate you to accomplish all of your goals and aspirations.

## Thank you, Sarah!

We'd also like to thank Sarah for all her dedication to HIRRS and Day Program and wish her luck in her transition to the Vocational department at HIRRS!

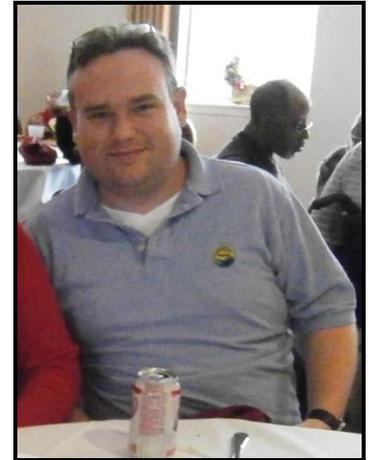
# Reflections

## How I Celebrate the Holidays

By Jason P

Typing by Trish D

Well I go to a lot of malls to shop for gifts, etc. We, my family and I, decorate our house to no end. I see a lot of my relatives and friends as well. My father, P.J., takes my brother Bryan and I to a light festival. I think it is located in Bethesda if I'm not mistaken. On usually the eighth of December, my father takes my brother Bryan and I to a very special place. It's different every year. One year my mother and my father took my brother Bryan and I on a vacation I'll never forget: Tahiti. Although that's another story. We just have a huge family reunion. So with that said, the holidays are huge for my family. Thank you so much for reading my story on the holidays. I hope you enjoy the holidays as much as I do. :)



Jason P

## Trip to NYC

By Eric M

I went to New York. First thing I went to the hotel in New York in Holiday Inn near the Bolt bus stop. On Saturday night I went to see the nutcracker at New York it was good show in New York, but I didn't like the raining and cold night on Saturday.

On Sunday night I went to see the big Christmas tree light at New York it was very cold at Rockefeller Center that where I saw the Big Christmas tree Light it was nice to see at New York and on Monday morning I came back home to Maryland it was a long bus ride home to Maryland.

I liked seeing Act 1 and 2. It is a ballet show. I will show the book of the Nutcracker on their 2 Act in the show. It was a 2 hour ballet show.



Eric M

## Music Group

By Desmond O

Music group is run by Robert and Tom. They do a lot to challenge us. Every music group is different. One music group will focus on what we hear while the other will focus on what we see and hear. I have had a lot of fun going to these groups but like all things I have learned a lot about myself and that I have different tastes in music. I still listen to what I like but I think the purpose of music group is to get out of our comfort zone and listen to something new. Since the music group is occupied by 2 people it shows us the music they like, as well as letting us be a part of it. That to me is great. I have enjoyed all the music groups I have been to and can't wait to see what we will do next.

I like Music Group because it teaches me to be patient. We have games that we play on teams and it is called guess who the artist is and it works on memory. Your teammate might know what you don't. It also gives everyone a chance to see what you really know about that style of music. Some might know more than others and you could be helpful to the team you are on if you know that type of music.

I like Music Group because I find it interesting and that is not only because we get a chance to listen to music, but also it tests our knowledge. For example, we have done "Who Am I" where the staff puts clues in different places in the room. And I think it helps us get more related when working on teams. So I think it gives skills that will help us for the rest of our lives because I think we remember what we learned.

# Reflections



*Liz K & Payman J*

---

## Montgomery College Singing Classes

*By Liz K*

Have you ever been to Montgomery College for classes? If not, let me tell you about it. I'm in a singing class right now. It is a lot of fun. I am having a great time in it. We sing songs. We will have a final class with a concert. I have taken an art class, reading class, and computer class. They sounded like fun to do. I like singing in a group. I would not change anything about it. Yes, certainly it would be fun to see you there. The teachers are great and fun to be with. Nothing is bad about the program.

---

## Autobiography

*By Mark S*

*Typing by Trish D*

I was born in 1971 with a disability called Spinal Bifida. I was rushed to Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah to close up the bottom of my spine, but also to put a shunt in my head so the blood wouldn't rush to my head. At the age of four, me and my grandpa were in a hit and run accident. He only had a broken leg. I however was in a coma for ten days. Since then, I've had 50+ surgeries with things put in and out of my body. However, thanks to my dad who was in Congress for eight years, I was able to meet President Carter, Reagan, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, among others. I've also had the opportunity to go to the Final Four, which is a college basketball tournament, for 10+ years in a row. So all in all, it has been a whirlwind of life and death and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Now I'm at HIRRS, working hard to make myself better, and I've moved to High Point in Gaithersburg. As far as my experiences overall, they've been positive, however scary at first being new and all. But now I look forward to getting up every morning knowing that I'm coming to HIRRS with their smiles on their faces.



*Mark S & Eric M*

*Photo by IC*



---

## Tuning My Guitar

*By Patrick K*

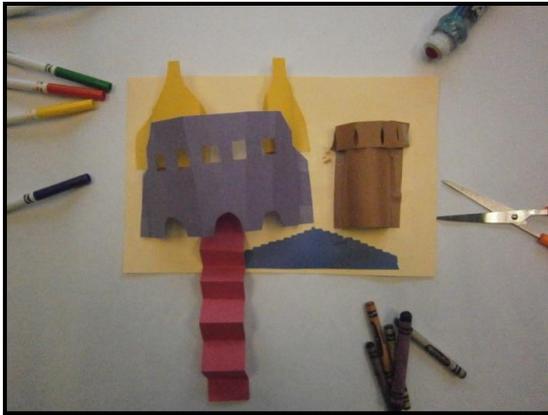
Hello reader. My name is Patrick Kearney. Yes I play guitar, 6 and 12 string. Recently I picked up a 12 string guitar and am in the process of putting strings on it. In order to do this you have to have a tuning fork. Of course it had to be a Fender. The name of the strings are EADGBE. You have to practice, of course, like anything else. You have to ask personally for some help. I now have a tuning fork. I can play a few songs by The Eagles. That is my favorite group.

# Creativity Section

## Pop Up Castle Project

By Svetlana G

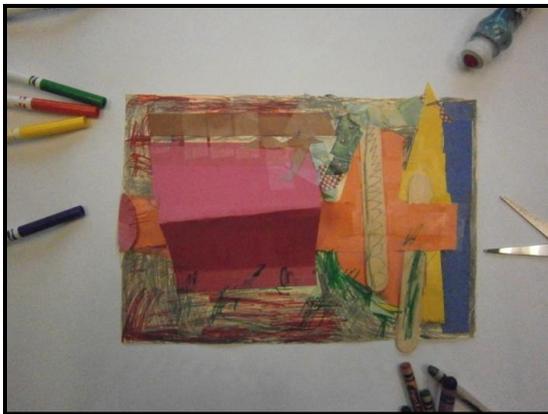
The Creative Expression Group participants were asked to “Build” their own 3-dimensional castle. Prior to that, the typical parts of a traditional medieval castle were discussed. A significant amount of time was devoted to planning. The clients had an opportunity to see a completed project as an example of different techniques the construction paper can be used for, such as folding, bending, cutting out, to create a 3-dimensional picture. The clients were encouraged to draw a sketch and decide what materials they want to use before they start their projects. The result was an array of beautiful fairytale castles as individuals as the group participants! *Photos by IC*



Marie D



IC



Desmond O



Trish D



Nicholas M



Horace B

# Holiday Festivities

## Halloween Door Contest

*By Nicholas M*

Halloween was a little while ago and the staff at HIRRS had a contest of what staff member could have the best looking door to their office. It was nice because it was competitive, in that Dana and DeMarcus won. The clients voted to decide the winner. We had trick or treating with a lot of candy being distributed. I got a few sugar free treats because I'm a type 2 diabetic and sugar can do more harm than good. It was overall nice and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.



*From left to right: 3rd place door by Tom K, 2nd place door by Svetlana G, Sarah G & Elissa I (with thanks to Ian C), and 1st place door by Dana M*

## Scenes from the Holiday Party



*Patrick K & Remy P*



*The Dance Floor: Dave H, Claudia B, Trinelle, Desmond O, Jason P & Liz K*



*Frank & Trish D*



*Nicholas M, Carrie P, Brandon W & Jason L*



*Felix, John, Danny & Mark*

# Outings

## Bowl America

By Patrick K

I enjoyed bowling so I could be a part of the clan from HIRRS. Desmond is a friend of mine from that place. Other people went too. The problem which I have is my own tremor. I have to learn to put up with it. I almost got a turkey, which is three strikes. I used to bowl in the past at a place in Crofton Bowling Alley. I keep trying to do the best I can. The game is a lot of exercise.



At the Holiday Party -- enjoying lunch



Patrick K, Barbara P & Remy P

## Recent Outings

Recent Outings	
September 21, 2012	BBQ at Brooke Meadow
September 26, 2012	Movie: End of Watch
October 5, 2012	Homestead Farm
October 12, 2012	National Capital Trolley Museum
October 16, 2012	Movie: Taken 2
October 25, 2012	Strathmore
November 1, 2012	Used Bookstore
November 7, 2012	Bowl America
November 8, 2012	Bauer Dr. Community Center
November 13, 2012	Movie: Skyfall
November 20, 2012	Joe's Record Paradise
November 29, 2012	Movie: Breaking Dawn Part 2
December 4, 2012	Wheaton Mall Holiday Shopping
December 7, 2012	HIRRS Holiday Party
December 12, 2012	Wheaton Mall Holiday Shopping
December 21, 2012	Movie: Wreck-it Ralph

## HIRRS Holiday Party

By Horace B

The Holiday Party was held on December 7, 2012 at the Elks Lodge. We all ate, listened to music and had a delightful time sharing merriments. We ate fried chicken, beef stroganoff, broccoli with cheese, mashed potatoes and rolls, cupcakes and cookies. My favorite food served was fried chicken. My least favorite food served was broccoli. My favorite part of the holiday party was the camaraderie shared by all. It showed that we all could come together regardless of our differences. My least favorite part was leaving. I would have like to stay a little longer. The HIRRS Holiday Party was very exciting and rewarding. It gave each and every one of us a time to spend this joyous occasion with each other during this very joyous time of the year and season.

## Skyfall Review

By Eric M

People at HIRRS went to see *Skyfall* on Tuesday November 13th. I like the part when James Bond saves M from Silva but she didn't survive the gun shot. I didn't like the part when James Bond gets shot off of a train from the beginning of the movie. Yes, I would like other people to see this movie. It is a very good movie to see. I have seen other James Bond movies before, like *Casino Royale* and *Tomorrow Never Dies* and I have been playing the video games of James Bond, like *Blood Bond* and *Tomorrow Never Dies*. My favorite James Bond video game is *Tomorrow Never Dies*. The games are hard, but I think this movie is the best movie I have ever seen. I liked it. Go see this movie. It is a good movie. I will give it 100%. I can't wait to see the next James Bond movie in 2016. Coming Soon.

# Who's Who At HIRRS

## Nicholas M

*By Andre B*

I interviewed Nick about being at HIRRS. I interviewed Nick, he played basketball in school and he played baseball in junior high school. Nick was the first person that I ever interviewed.

A: How did you get your brain injury?

N: I was a student at Paint Branch High School in 1996-1997. I was a student athlete who was an intelligent student who played high school sports. Basketball and football junior varsity at Spring Brook. The last team I played on was Paint Branch varsity basketball. My brain got damaged when I was a couple of months from graduation, I was in a coma for two and a half months and in the hospital for nine months. Some memory got erased and I have been in therapy for years now.

A: How did you find out about HIRRS?

N: My mother knew of this program for head injured people.

A: What are you thinking about doing now?

N: Continue to be in therapy and get a job working somewhere that allows me to work full-time and live independently.

A: Are you going to get married?

N: If I meet the right female.

A: What do you like to do with your time?



*Andre B & Nicholas M  
Photo by IC*

## Elissa I

*By Desmond O*

I interviewed Elissa to find out how she started and if this job was right for her and why it was.

Q: When did you start working at HIRRS?

A: In August of 2011.

Q: How long have you been here?

A: Been here a year and a few months.

Q: Was this your first job choice? If not, what was?

A: Well, when I first graduated from college, I was interested in a couple of different things. One of the big options was social work, so this was my chance to explore that field and I'm glad I did.

Q: What advice would you have for future staff?

A: Be flexible and have fun with it!

Q: Do you see yourself doing anything else?

A: I can envision myself doing lots of different things, but I really like working with people, so I think as long as I'm doing that, I'll be happy.

Q: Does it ever get frustrating?

A: It can be frustrating, but not that often.

Q: What keeps you going?

A: The people and my high spirits :)

Q: Where do you see yourself in a year?

A: That is a really tough question for me and one that I still can't really answer. I'd like to be back in school at some point and living in a city or on a farm because that would be fun.

Q: Does this job give you purpose?

A: Oh yeah, absolutely. It's very meaningful work.

Q: What did you want to be growing up?

A: When I was really little, I wanted to teach. Then I wanted to be a psychologist. Then a radio producer, then a writer, then a farmer, then back to teacher and back to psychologist and it's all kind of cycled around from there.

Q: How far would you like to go with this company?

A: Well, I love working here. I love the people. But I'm just starting out, so I have to see where the next step takes me.

Q: How did you like being interviewed?

A: I enjoyed being interviewed immensely. Desmond is an excellent interviewer.

I liked having the honor to find out things I did not know about people I spend the most time with. I think it went great. And I'd like to interview her again.

# Who's Who At HIRRS

## **Sarah G**

*By Davo H*

This here's an interview I had with someone that works here that I had the privilege to get to know more about as a person. So here goes...

D: Sarah, what was the cause of you starting in this brain injury/ rehabilitation field?

S: Well, I was a Sociology major and I decided I wanted to go into a social work or case management type job and I entered an agency which focused on vocational rehab, which was something I really liked learning about and decided to go to grad school for it.

D: How'd you find out about working here?

S: As a requirement for my master's degree, I needed to do an internship and I wanted to focus on working with clients with brain injuries and this seemed like a good agency to work for. I had heard good things about it and decided to apply as an intern.

D: What's it like commuting to and fro from D.C.?

S: It's not easy. I drive a total of about three hours a day back and forth to get here, so it's basically an hour and fifteen minutes here and anywhere around two hours back.

D: Is it moving slow? Traffic?

S: It depends, yeah.

D: How long have you been interested working with people with head injuries?

S: When I started grad school, after taking some classes, I started wanting to focus on a specific population and I was really interested in learning about head injuries so I wanted that as a focus.

D: Do you enjoy working here?

S: Yes, I do. I liked it so much I applied for a position here; hence, why I am here still.

D: What's your qualifications?

S: I have a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling with a focus in Traumatic Brain Injuries.

D: What's your goals in life?

S: To be a rehabilitation counselor for agencies that work with traumatic brain injuries.

D: Do you want to be a vocational thingie?

S: Yes, that's my main focus.

D: Did you volunteer anywhere w/ people w/ TBI's before getting this job?

S: No, I worked with individuals with disabilities, but it wasn't focused on traumatic brain injuries.

D: Do you like coffee?

S: Yes. I worked at Starbucks for nearly a year. So yes, free coffee.

D: What do you like to do for fun?

S: I like to hang out with friends, see movies, play sports, do puzzles.

D: What kind of sports?

S: Well, I played lacrosse most of my life and I do some local sports leagues, like touch football and kickball.

D: What's kickball? Like a baseball field or something?

S: Pretty much, yeah.

D: Why did you want to work here instead of somewhere else?

S: I really enjoyed how much the staff seemed to generally care about the people they're working with and the people they're helping.

D: Do you want me to stop asking you questions?

S: If you have more questions, I will be happy to answer.

D: What's your favorite type of food?

S: Lobster. Any seafood basically.

D: Shrimp?

S: Shrimp is good.

D: Yeah. Bubba likes shrimp.

---

## **Gabe J**

*By Liz K*

Do you know Gabe? If not let me tell you about her.

L: How do you like working in the residential department?

G: It is very challenging.

L: Are you ever leaving HIRRS?

G: Only if I get fired.

L: What do you like most about HIRRS?

G: Able to be flexible and creative.

L: Is this your dream job?

G: No, not my dream job.

L: How long have you been at HIRRS?

G: Since 2003.

L: What is the best part of working in residential?

G: Being able to provide houses for people to live in.

L: What do you do in your free time?

G: I like to read, garden, and enjoy making challenging art.

L: How many times have you been to New Orleans?

G: Seven times.

L: How many times have you been to the houses?

G: Every two weeks.

L: What do you do in New Orleans?

G: Go to visit friends and have fun.

This was a fun interview.

# Polling HIRRS

## Why do people celebrate Christmas?

<i>Choices</i>	<i>Results</i>
Because they enjoy being in a joyful and exuberant mood	0
Because most people need something to identify with spiritually	1
Because it is meaningful	0
To spend time with other people	4
<b>Presents</b>	<b>5</b>

## What is your favorite sports team?

<i>Choices</i>	<i>Results</i>
<b>Redskins</b>	<b>5</b>
Celtics	1
Orioles	1
Nationals	0
Capitals	1

## What is your favorite group?

<i>Choices</i>	<i>Results</i>
The Temptations	1
The Supremes	1
En Vogue	2
Boys II Men	0
<b>The Beatles</b>	<b>7</b>

## Will the Washington Redskins and Dallas Cowboys go to the Playoffs?

<i>Choices</i>	<i>Results</i>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>5</b>
Maybe	0
No	3
I Don't Know	3

## What is your favorite hair color?

<i>Choices</i>	<i>Results</i>
Blonde	1
<b>Black</b>	<b>4</b>
Brown	2
Red	0
Dirty Blond	1

## What is your favorite holiday?

<i>Choices</i>	<i>Results</i>
Halloween	1
Thanksgiving	4
New Year's Eve	0
<b>Your birthday</b>	<b>5</b>
Other	0

## What is your favorite food?

<i>Choices</i>	<i>Results</i>
Pizza	1
Hot Dog	2
French Fries	1
Ice Cream	3
<b>Other</b>	<b>4</b>

Head Injury Rehabilitation & Referral Services  
 11 Taft Court, Suite 100  
 Rockville, MD 20850  
 Phone: (301) 309-2228 | Fax: (301) 309-2278