

The Pitt Capsule

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY



Pharmacy Weeks is officially upon us!

Josh Niznik, ASP Chapter President

This year there are 11 events planned that celebrate our profession through scholarship, leadership, charity and entertainment. The annual Tucci Lecture was held last Wednesday, January 29th featuring Dr. Neil Capretto, Medical Director at Gateway Health and Rehabilitation Center. Dr. Capretto talked to students about the prevalence of prescription drug abuse in the community of Pittsburgh. He talked about his work with pharmacists in dealing with patients who suffer from the disease of addiction as well as the impact that pharmacists can have. Even as we near the end of Pharmacy Weeks, there are still plenty of events to attend! The festivities will wrap up with the annual Winter Formal on **Saturday, February 8th** at the Westin downtown. Take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate our profession while spending some time with your fellow students as well as faculty and staff!

Riding on the coattails of the incredibly successful “How to Network” session held in January, APhA-ASP will be hosting several exciting events that will help you to develop your professional skills for the future as a part of our “Professional Development Month.” On **Thursday, February 13th**, P2 students will have the opportunity to learn about the professional electives offered through the School of Pharmacy at “Electives Speed Dating.” P3 students will be dishing on their favorite classes to take and how to register for them. Or maybe you’re looking to learn how to manage your finances more responsibly? If so, you should definitely attend APhA-ASP’s Personal Finance Session on **Tuesday February 18th**. Representatives from Lutner Financial Associates will be presenting on topics such as: paying off student loans, investments, personal loans, 401K’s and much more! Bring a calculator and a note pad to take plenty of notes! Finally, if you’re looking for a way to market yourself as a candidate for employment in the near future, you won’t want to miss our session on professional social media on **Tuesday, February 25th**! We’ll help you to

build that personal page or LinkedIn profile that will set you apart from the crowd.

This year’s APhA Annual Meeting is less than two months away! Many students have already registered to take part in this incredible opportunity. This year’s meeting will take place from **March 28th-31st in Orlando, Florida**. The APhA Annual Meeting is the largest gathering of pharmacists and student pharmacists in the country and presents opportunities for students to network, learn, and be recognized on a national level. There is still plenty of time to register if you are interested. Visit the APhA-ASP page on the Porxal for more information!

As we vote for this year’s incoming executive board, I encourage all of you to remain active to help our chapter maintain the excellence that we hold ourselves to each and every day. It is only through our involvement and actions as student pharmacists that we can “Be the Change” for our profession.

Upcoming events:

- Electives Speed Dating – Thurs. 2/13 @12pm Room 402
- Personal Finance – Tuesday 2/18 @5pm Rm 456
- Professional Social Media – Tuesday February 25th @12pm Room 402

Pharmacy Weeks in Action!

Jessica Lewis, Social VP

Pharmacy weeks are upon us! What a great time to celebrate our profession and attend a ton of great events! Everyone can continue getting ready for the amazing events yet to come—including the PLS auction and the Pharm Phormal! Get ready to show off your hot dates and wear your fancy attire to dance your pants off.

A big congrats to all of the P1 students who get their White Coats this month—you’ll finally blend in! Hooray! You’ve survived your first semester and you earned it! Also, a big thank you can go out to everyone who has helped make these pharmacy weeks so memorable, whether it was planning and running the events or just simply showing up to attend! Thanks everyone!

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After a little breather from all of the excitement from the past few weeks, the Social Committee is happy to announce a new event later this spring: **THE PRICE IS RIGHT (PHARMACY EDITION)!** Participants will be chosen from the audience and participate in several games for the chance at prizes! So start paying attention to the cost of those drugs we're all studying.... Details to come!

P2 Presidential Report

Georgina Waldman, Class of 2016 President

The P2 class would like to congratulate the P1s on receiving their white coats – what a big accomplishment! We are happy to have successfully survived P2 fall, and are looking forward to a less stressful semester and warm weather. We are starting our compounding labs and continuing our time at our experiential community sites. The P2 class is also planning a trip to Harrisburg for Legislative Day. There is a fundraiser in the works, so keep an eye out for that in the near future!

P3 Presidential Report

Trey Draude, Class of 2015 President

The P3s have entered their final didactic semester! We are looking forward to finishing strong by planning the end of the year party for the school of pharmacy. As much as we have all been hearing it since we have been P1s... the time flies extremely fast. We plan and look forward to our rotation selections coming up shortly.

Kappa Psi Initiates New Brothers!

Kathryn Wersosky, Corresponding Secretary

January was a great month for Kappa Psi as we finished pledging and initiated 37 new brothers into the Beta Kappa chapter. The initiation night was a great celebration to welcome the newest fall pledge class, and they each had their time to shine with their Big Brother. Since we had just returned from our annual Ski Trip in Deep Creek, Maryland, we were feeling rested and ready to dive into a semester consisting of many activities. Due to the rain, we were unable to hit the slopes of Wisp Resort, but we had a wonderful time relaxing without the snow. Actually, if you were a part of the group of brothers who played five incredibly intense games of Mafia in a row, you might not be as well rested as the others.

As per tradition, the brotherhood hosted the Scavenger Hunt for Pharmacy Weeks. Thank you to everyone who helped plan the event! I think we are all glad the picture of medical student smoking a pipe in the Scaife Hall composite finally got some attention. Coming up, Kappa Psi's Patient Care Committee will be continuing its Generation Rx project in Pitt's dorms to provide education on the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs. Contact Liana Mandel if you are interested in this project at lrm36@pitt.edu.

This is my last article as Corresponding Secretary, so I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the 2013 Executive Board for a fantastic year! Thank you, and good luck to the next E-board!

Rho Chi Updates

Nicole Romstadt, Rho Chi Historian

Rho Chi members worked hard this month to plan the 'Poster, Professor and Progress' event. At this event, faculty members used the monitors in 402 to present their posters to student pharmacists! This event allowed students to learn more about faculty specialties and research projects.

The Rho Chi Health Talks at the Salvation Army continued this month, with the topic of asthma/COPD. Students used interactive demonstrations to teach about the causes, effects, and complications of both asthma and COPD – as well as the differences between the two diseases. The February talk will cover smoking cessation and relaxation techniques.

Rho Chi is looking forward to welcoming new members at the PLS/Rho Chi induction ceremony in March! Acceptance letters will be distributed to the P2 class in early February.

The Rho Chi lab card sale is currently under way. Lab cards are great references for students on rotations, as well as students working on class assignments. Make sure to buy yours before the sale ends! Email Anthony (amb234@pitt.edu) or Erin (err38@pitt.edu) if you have any questions!

Rho Chi is continuing to expand and revamp the tutoring program. If you have any ideas for future program topics (ex. drug info question tutorial, public health projects, health fair idea etc.) please let Hilary (hjn3@pitt.edu) or Josh (jsw36@pitt.edu) know!

Phi Lambda Sigma Updates

Nicole Romstadt, PLS Secretary

PLS members have been hard at work since returning from holiday break!

Beginning in January, PLS members have been helping with PharmD applicant interviews. Members meet with applicants to give a tour of Salk Hall and answer any questions about our pharmacy program, student pharmacy organizations and city living. We are excited to share our experiences and insight with prospective students, and hope to see many of them here in the fall.

Members met for a long evening of PLS applications review and discussion. There were many great candidates, with a wide variety of leadership experiences both within and outside of the School of Pharmacy. Thank you to

everyone who applied. We are excited to welcome new members to the organization! The list of incoming inductees will come out with the Rho Chi acceptance letters in early February.

The auction co-chairs are hard at work planning the annual Grace Lamsam Charity Auction. There are some great new items up for bid this year, as well as the traditional favorites. Mark your calendars for **Thursday, February 6 at 6pm!** The auction will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn, at the corner of Forbes Ave and McKee. Make sure to bring your checkbooks!

Patient Care Committee Update

Katie McGuire, Patient Care Co-Chair

Hello everyone! The patient care committee of APhA-ASP is off to a very exciting start to this semester. We are working on a new project titled PHARxM with the main goal of educating parents about the growing problem of prescription drug abuse. If you are interested in participating please let us know!

Additionally we are continuing the high school presentations, lecture series, and drug disposal project for Generation RX. Look for sign-ups for these great projects on the portal. The committee is also working on creating a new presentation for 'Pills and Popcorn' in the residence halls, which will focus on allergies for the spring. The Operation Diabetes and Operation Heart Committees are also looking to hold health fairs in the spring. If you are interested in participating in any of these projects please let us know!

Finally we are going to be looking for new Operation leaders in March, so if you are interested please come to our different projects and get involved in our committee. If you have any questions or concerns please let Meera or I know at asppatientcare@gmail.com.

Phi Delta Chi Brothers Walk to Support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Kevin Ordons

At the end of last semester, the Phi Delta Chi brothers raised \$5,524 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital! The brothers campaigned extensively for a month last semester to secure donations from family, friends, peers, faculty--pretty much everyone the brothers know! The brothers finished the semester off by joining other local St. Jude supporters in a non-competitive 5K walk at PNC Park. It was a fantastic way for PDC to show its support for this great organization in the community.

The brothers of PDC were second overall for team fundraising in the entire Pittsburgh area! The only team that beat them was Team Target whose vast support network was nearly impossible to compete with. They had nearly 100 team members! Fortunately, we were very pleased that all of the money that was raised in our area--over \$50,000--was going towards a great organization and cause.

Phi Delta Chi felt so passionate about this event because St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is our national charity. St. Jude's mission is to advance cures, and means of prevention, for pediatric catastrophic diseases through research and treatment. These objectives go hand in hand with our fraternity, which strives to advance the profession of pharmacy. We believe that supporting an organization committed to disease prevention, treatment, and research is vital to the future of pharmaceutical care!

All of the brothers would like to say a sincere thank you to everyone in the school of pharmacy who supported our cause! Every dollar raised was vital to our success in supporting such an outstanding organization. Please, consider supporting us next year as we walk for St. Jude's again!



Phi Delta Chi brothers pose for pictures after completing a charity walk to benefit St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Local P&T Competition

Alex Morgan, Secretary AMCP

This month, AMCP is having its annual P&T competition. This year, the competition is on the drug Eylea, an injectable ophthalmic agent used to treat macular degeneration. The P&T competition is designed to help students understand the formulary management process and experience the work managed care pharmacists do. Through participating in the P&T competition, students are able to use various concepts they have learned in school and apply it to a real world situation. Teams have to evaluate the pharmacokinetics, safety, and cost of a medication and compare it to similar medications in order to decide if the team will add it to the formulary or not.

Through competing, teams gain skills in critical analysis, research skills, and can practice public speaking and presentation. Participants have to evaluate literature and compare different studies in order to come to a decision about whether or not to add their drug to the formulary. Overall, the competition is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the formulary management process and combine various skills into one competition. Teams also have a chance to participate in the National P&T completion in Orlando if they are one of the top eight finalist teams! Good luck to all the teams competing and hopefully a team from Pitt will be sent to Orlando this year!

Dr. Salk Hall – Thanks For The Support!

Jocelyn Hatfield, LKS Corresponding Secretary

This year 9 of the finest gentlemen from the School of Pharmacy and the School of Dental Medicine competed to become Dr. Salk Hall. The competition was stiff, but this year P3 student John Lyons came out on top! John swooned the judges and the audience when he plunged from the stage with long stem roses for them. Additionally, John showed off his talents by performing a cover of John Mayer’s “Neon”.

John was not the only one with crowd-wowing moments. P1 student Tyler Hoffman wore shirts from all different schools to show the audience his journey through college, while P2 students Brent Milovac and Neil Turco impressively played the piano. Crowd favorite Trey Draude took the audience down memory lane with a parody tune about some of his favorite Salk Hall memories. All of the participants were fantastic this year, and the competition would not have been as successful without you!

This year we were able to raise over \$1,000 for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital – the organization John and the rest of PDC have supported throughout the year. Additionally, we raised over \$300 for the Pittsburgh Project, which is a local organization that helps the Northside community. Finally, a special shout-out is in order to Reina Fink who planned and organized the event this year. Thank you to everyone who came out to support our students and charity!



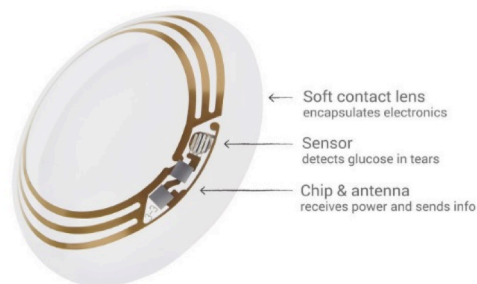
Top: The guys show off their moves during the opening dance. **Bottom:** From left to right: Brent Milovac (P2 – 2nd place), John Lyons (P3 – winner), Trey Draude (P3 – Crowd Favorite), and Cavan O’Reily (P1 – 3rd place)

Gadget of the Month: Google Smart Contact Lens

Andrew Nguyen, Class of 2015

Many of us are familiar with the health monitoring tracking bands made by Fitbit and Jawbone (UP). These devices sync with your smartphone to track your activity, diet, and sleeping patterns. These must be what people want because they seem to sell as well as any gadget out on the market. But how about something that is a little more disease state oriented, like say, for diabetes? Enter the Google Smart Contact Lenses prototype. The focus of much research is developing devices and ways that help people with chronic diseases live a more “normal” and uninterrupted lifestyle. These Smart Contact Lenses do exactly that by using human tears to test glucose levels. Gone would be the days of pricking your finger three times a

day and paying for 90 test strips every month. Instead, this device could help a patient with diabetes manage their disease with glucose readings every second. The developers also mentioned integrating LED lights to warn patients when they are close to experiencing a hypoglycemic or hyperglycemic event. Unfortunately, not everyone wears contacts, but chances are that people would be more willing to wear contacts daily rather than sticking their fingers multiple times daily.



Applications, Interviews, Graduation: The Perfect Storm

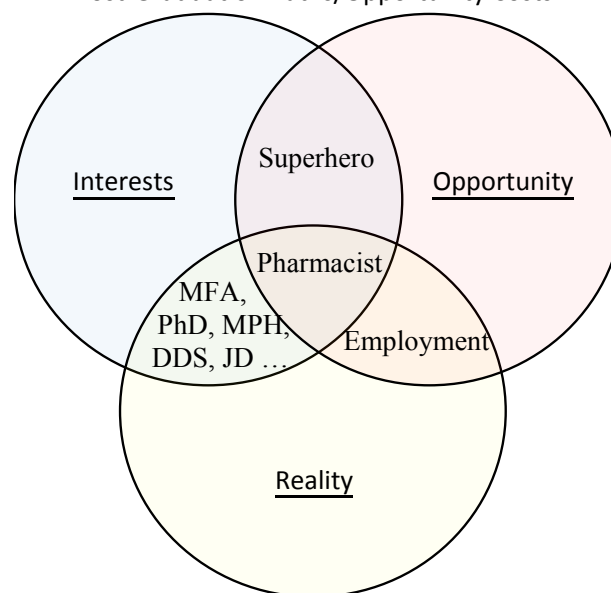
Ravi Patel, Class of 2014

Sweaty palms, weak knees, heavy arms, and nausea that makes me question my mother's pasta for lunch. I look around to see if anyone notices I've sweat through four layers and realize that everyone else looks like they know what they're doing. Rather than a test or prep before a standardized patient, the setting of this anxiety is an interview for a post-graduation program. While this interview is a new experience, the rollercoaster of emotions is not a foreign concept. In fact, it's almost familiar. The transition from student life to life after graduation is a familiar "application process", only in a new context.

The application process after graduation recalls experiences of applying to college after high school and applying to pharmacy school during/after college. During these applications, there are frequent grumblings about the frustrations of condensing years of dynamic education and experience to a static application form and two supporting documents. Qualifications have to be proven for a position only tangentially experienced or understood. Best laid plans and endless research eventually go awry and lead to second-guessing the 15th draft(s) of supporting documents the night before the deadline. Interviews become a delicate balance of explanations of why I am a qualified, invested candidate and not excessively confessing that this is just one of many varied programs to which I am applying. Eventually comes the joy of acceptance, suppressed "successor remorse", and a reserved excitement for what the future holds—likely a reiteration of this process. This happened in high school, it happened in college, and it happens again in the final year of school.

Metaphor alert: High school was a chance to canoe around on a calm lake, taking in the sights and confirming mastery of the water. College throw the canoe into a creek with a tricky current and endless waterways to explore. Pharmacy school is an onrush into rapids offering challenges and thrills that go by too quickly to be fully appreciated. The world after graduation finds the rapids emptying into an ocean with an endless array of challenges and thrills, the dangers and rewards of which are dwarfed by their own sheer numbers. In the final year of pharmacy school, in the midst of the application process, it's shocking to see both the success of path traveled and vastness of the opportunities ahead. Survival in each body of water is a seemingly impossible task at the time, but ubiquitous nonetheless.

Post-Graduation Paths/Opportunity Costs:



If this application process after graduation is so similar to previous experiences, why does the jump to the "ocean" seem more daunting? After graduation, there are fewer explicit paths and opportunities. (Ever try to read a map of the ocean? It's all just blue.) Outside of didactic settings, there are not hundreds of peers from who to seek advice, empathy, or commiseration. (Easier to spot a shark if traveling in a school.) Failure and success is more personal. (Credit for capsizing or a prize catch goes to the same person.) A less than ideal position can make all previous effort feel futile. (Revenge on an albino tuna wouldn't placate Ahab.)

Reassurance in the midst of these (and many more) worries can come from a simple conclusion. If the anxiety and effort in the application process simply take on new context after graduation, so can perseverance. This dilemma of facing a future of challenges is only encountered after a record of success. So far, each application process has been some sort of success. After every successful application process, the difficulty really comes in maintaining the convincing charade of competency until it's superseded by confidence. After past application processes and numerous years of schooling, the combination of honest effort, "fake it 'til you make it," and a healthy dose of luck has a pretty successful record. There is comfort in comparing the (lower) acceptance rate of entering pharmacy school to the (much higher) rate of placements of graduates in fellowships, residencies, jobs, and other post-graduation programs. So even though I have no idea what I will be doing after graduation, I know I'll be doing something.

Somewhere out there, there is a fishing boat in need of clinical medication services, poorly developed metaphors, and a monthly opinion pieces with weak conclusions...

Please, Don't Burn Bridges

Aaron Devanathan, Class of 2016

In pharmacy school, you end up meeting many people. This happens with conferences, projects, and school itself. For some, it is a daunting task to introduce yourself to someone you have never met. For others, the task comes easy. But when you ultimately meet the new person, you have to remember him or her, or else the introduction was useless. Let me explain further.

Humor me and do a little experiment. Look at your respective class and see how many people you knew prior to pharmacy school. Perhaps the number is around 25% and you met the other 75% in school. Now take a look at the other classes. How many of those people did you know prior to pharmacy school? You see my point. And that's only in pharmacy school alone!

The idea of meeting new people is extremely exciting, at least for me. People come from different backgrounds and various upbringings that you are guaranteed to meet someone who is unlike you. This is especially true for a university that attracts people from all over the world.

So let's say you go to a conference and meet some new people from other pharmacy schools, other states, and perhaps other countries. Now what? The goal is to forge relationships that will be long-lasting. That is achieved through recognition. No one will know who you are unless they can put a name to a face and then reinforce that afterwards. This is what is done after interviews. The interviewer already knows your name and may be able to put a face to that name, but sending a thank-you letter following an interview will lead to recognition. You have to follow-up.

In my opinion, that is the toughest part of meeting new people. You can be a nice, respectful person and have a decent conversation about pharmacy, sports, or entertainment, but that means little if the person doesn't remember you or vice versa. Recognition has to be there.

Granted, going to multiple conferences helps and I would encourage doing so, but sometimes that is not feasible. So we have to rely on two things: business cards and social media. Business cards are fantastic to follow-up with someone, since they have contact information like e-mail addresses and phone numbers right there at your fingertips!

Perhaps you are more comfortable with social media. Facebook and LinkedIn are the two that come to mind. But friending someone on Facebook is not enough. You have to

take another step and actually talk with him or her. If not, then that is not much better than meeting once. It would be like if someone currently famous went to high school with you, but you two weren't friends. Sure, you could claim he or she went to high school with you, but that's it. You don't know them well enough to really claim anything beyond that. So follow-up and be diligent. You might find it uncomfortable at first, but after having a conversation, the feeling will subside and you just made a new friend!

There is a pitfall here that can easily be side-stepped. You might be more inclined to befriend someone who you expect to be able to do something for you in the future. Although it is admirable to take the future into consideration, that isn't the case with meeting new people. Befriend people who you are comfortable with, not "junior aristocrats". I think we all know that.

So when you receive an e-mail or a friend request from someone you met at a conference, don't shrug it off. The person clearly wants to connect with you beyond a conference and that is not something to take lightly. Remember that you are dealing with a person.

Once you do connect with the person, don't forget to keep in touch periodically. Don't let the person fall off the radar so much that you forget about him or her. In essence, *don't burn bridges*. I have been told over and over again that pharmacy is a small world. I didn't believe it until I went to conferences and connected. It really is a small world and it's great to be a part of it.

So my take home message is this: please, don't burn bridges. Whether it's a girl you met from Rutgers for the second year in a row or a girl you met from Wilkes for the first time, it is imperative to keep in touch. And who knows? You may end up seeing these people again someday.

The last thing I want to hammer home is when someone reaches out to you through any medium (e-mail, Facebook, etc.). The person clearly took a leap of faith and wanted to contact you following an established initial meeting and that takes courage and the courteous action is to acknowledge and respond. The worst thing you could do is nothing, and that just isn't right. Besides, you wouldn't want that to happen to you.

Pharmacy school provides us with grand opportunities and it is up to us to take advantage of them. Meeting new people is great both in the short- and long-term. So in the next few years, meet more people from all over the country and follow-up with them. You will be glad that you did.

February - We Meet Again

Aaron Devanathan, Class of 2016

Since 2005, I have not been a fan of February. Weather. School. Love. Academically speaking, it is the toughest month of the year. It actually trumps finals weeks! And it seems that February itself dips into the surrounding months of January and March. Maybe February is jealous of the fact that those months each have 31 while it only has 28. It only seems fitting that Valentine's Day falls right in the middle of the month (more on that later).

In the days leading up to February, I shudder to think what February has in store for me. And when the month ends, I rejoice, knowing that I have 11 months of freedom before feeling all this again. What if it is a leap year? Game over. Look, I just don't like February.

It is difficult for me to believe that classes don't intentionally load up exams, projects, and papers in February. They just do. Think back to previous years and perhaps you will see what I mean. The middle of the semester is always the toughest; it is a "coincidence" that the month is February. It is a tough academic month and finals week seems like a joke compared to the constant barrage characterized by February.

Cynics will tell you that Valentine's Day is a "holiday" established by the greeting card industry. Those people are generally single. Proponents will tell you that the day is a way to show those they care about how much they mean to them. Those people are generally *not* single. Then there are those who understand the "holiday" aspect but still believe the caring portion of the day. Those people are generally *not* single. What's wrong with February 13 or 15? You don't need that particular day to shower someone with love. There are 364 other days to do so. It cannot be a coincidence that February 14 rests in the exact middle of the month. It just can't. That is par for the course for February, however. February 14...

Now that I have set the stage for February, you might be thinking that I am looking at this too black-and-white. There are too many intangibles that can affect a particular February, right? There are good things that happen in February. I will not debate that because I believe so, too. But it is important to recognize the perils of February before the month goes into full swing.

So now what? The trap is to merely accept February for what it is and not change anything about it. You just can't do that. The idea is to be an agent of change. Think about it. If you can change one February, then you won't feel this way

again. There is one caveat: you have to be proactive during February to maintain the change. Otherwise, the good February will seem like a fluke and you will lose hope. And you can't lose hope.

So what am I suggesting? Since you know the pitfalls of February, you have to prepare for the assault. Study hard for the exams. Work hard on the papers and projects. Make the month meaningful in ways that may not necessarily directly combat the pitfalls. For instance, have an annual tradition that contains positive experiences (ex. a Super Bowl party, a February 29 party every year, or a dinner with the same person/people.) If you accept the tough parts of February and attempt to combat it, you may even enjoy the month!

The toughest day to combat is the glorious Valentine's Day. February 14... If you are single, how could you possibly feasibly get through this day? Here's the trick: you have to get your mind off the day. Schoolwork is a great way to do so. But the more preferable way is to spend time with *other single friends* on that day. Then it's more of a day of spending time with good people rather than a Valentine's Day substitute. Trust me, it works.

This takes practice and it won't be accomplished this February. Multiple years of a positive February will change your thinking. You just have to believe me. But once you try, you will be successful. Any negative experience can be righted with a positive one. That's all it takes. And if you can't naturally have it, you have to make it yourself and it will be sweeter.

So this February, you have to try and be proactive and shrug off the negative experiences. Take a risk on February 11, despite the difficulties. Try to relax on February 17, even if it feels impossible. Go to Noodles and Company on February 21 and try to enjoy a meal while holding back the tears.

February, we meet again. This time, try to rewrite the story. You have to make this February a positive one so that you can look back and smile. Otherwise, the shortcomings of February will remain permanent in your mind. Believe it or not, you must be the change. Change February and you will be a greater person afterwards.