by Deborah Kim

ATG event sparks Greek camaraderie on campus

Alpha Theta Gamma's Soriety's Mash Up was one of the biggest collaborative events the United Greek Council has ever seen. The event was designed to help break down barriers and unite people -- Greek and non-Greek -- on campus. Moby Dick House of Kabob provided free food for approximately 200 guests.

The event was designed "for the sake of connection and to bring the inequalities to light in order to make progress and alliance possible," said Sontenish Myers, a member of Alpha Theta Gamma and a facilitator of the event. According to Myers, the Mash Up was organized into two parts, with two themes.

"The first half had a theme of vulnerability while the second half was themed by connection," she said.

During each section there were different activities designed to spark conversation about the respective theme. A Privilege Walk and Corners Activity were just two activities at the event designed to make students aware of their backgrounds and identity.

Many Greek and non-Greek organizations, such as Alpha Chi Omega, Rappah Alpha Theta, Delta Chi, Gamma Phi Sigma, Alpha Phi Alpha, the Office of Multicultural Involvement and Community Advocacy and the Multiracial and Biracial Student Association co-sponsored the event.

All four Greek councils were involved in making this event a success. "It was truly amazing to see different organizations, Greek and otherwise, come together and work towards breaking down barriers," said Felicia Davenport, the president of Alpha Theta Gamma. "I think some people look at the Greek community as so segregated, but this event showed me that there is hope of being the unified Greek community that Maryland Terp Greeks claim to be." 

With the success of the Mash Up, ATG has a goal to make this an annual event.

by Anniika McGinnis

On Wednesday, Oct. 19, Ginny Carroll asked University of Maryland sorority members to sit down if they were aware of any of the statistics she was about to read.

"Did you know that 50 - 100 million females are missing in the world simply because they were girls?" she said.

Almost everybody remained standing. The room was silent.

"More girls have been killed in the past 50 years simply because they were girls than men killed in all of the wars of the 20th Century," Carroll continued. "Women do 2/3 of the world’s work, yet earn only 5 percent of the income. 70 percent of out-of-school youth are girls."

Still, only a few students were sitting. Students glanced around uncomfortably, making sure they were not alone.

UND sorority women were gathered in Ritchie Coliseum to listen to Ginny Carroll, the founder of the Circle of Sisterhood and the Panhellean Association's fall speaker. PHA is a recent member of Circle of Sisterhood, an international sorority-based charity working to give girls around the world access to education. PHA joined the group led by the efforts of Vice President of Administrative Affairs Priyanka Gokhale.

Gokhale attributes her inspiration to Nicholas D Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's Half the Sky, a book chronicling the oppression of women in underdeveloped nations. The book was also Carroll’s initial inspiration. "Circle of Sisterhood was established to leverage the collective wisdom and influence of sorority women to uplift women from poverty and oppression," said Carroll.

Circle of Sisterhood unifies PHA women

Speaker educated sororities on female oppression

Clothesline Project gives voice to violence victims

by Taylor Griffith, Editor

For one day every fall and spring semester, Hornblaze Plaza is transformed into a place of healing.

Shirts hanging from clotheslines are strung across the plaza, each representing a person who was a victim of sexual violence.

From declarations of hatred to proclamations of conquering hurt, students, faculty and staff literally aired their dirty laundry for the University of Maryland community to see on Oct. 11.

Known as the Clothesline Project, the public art exhibition is sponsored by the Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Program and the University Health Center as a medium for healing and a way to raise awareness of the threat of sexual violence on the UMD campus.

According to SARPP coordinator Allison Bennett, "any student group is a perfect storm for sexual violence." If you add in social time, alcohol and sex, the situation is now high risk." These student groups range from athletic teams to Greek life.

Research says there are certain high-risk situations perpetrators look for when targeting victims," Bennett said. "It just so happens that Greek life encompasses many of those characteristics: easy access to alcohol, a closeness within the social structure and an expectation to pair-off.

In the growing collection of approximately 550 shirts, only about 40 shirts -- less than 10 percent -- specifically target Greek life.

The Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life and SARPP have been working together to ensure the Greek community is educated about sexual violence so members can protect themselves and know when to step in to protect others.

DFSL has implemented requirements on the entire Greek community to ensure chapters are educated and safe.

COLUMNS

November issue

The University of Maryland, College Park

Fall 2011

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Sororities in ‘unique position’ to help women around the world

The University Shop, located in College Park Shopping Center, sells Greek and Maryland Terps apparel in business since 1993. Since its opening, four competitors have opened and closed their doors in the College Park area.

Carroll praised the pre-existing initiatives on this campus and encouraged the sorority women to continue their efforts, elaborating on the impact of just a few dollars raised.

"You can feed a girl in the developing world school lunch every day for a year for $5.50," said Carroll. "In developing countries, it's $5 to send a girl to school for a year, and she has nothing to wear. She needs a uniform, books, tuition, everything. To us, that's dinner out."

To many UMD sorority women, Carroll's presentation was an eye-opening and inspiring experience. PHA collected names of students who wanted to become involved with the Circle of Sisterhood, and the line of women stretched out the door.

"I think it's amazing," said senior supply chain management major Bonnie Butler. "When she said those facts, I really had no idea. I plan on checking out the website tonight and maybe sending information to my mom, my aunts and my sister about it. It was extremely touching." After reading "Half the Sky," I went on the book's website and donated $1, and got really into it," said juvenile accountancy and communication double major Kelsey Grover. "I didn't know anybody cared about things that I did, so just to know that I'm not the only one who ... read the book and ... cared about it is just awesome."

At the beginning of the presentation, PHA presented Carroll with a $4,500 check, the largest donation her organization has ever received from a university. Individual chapters raised money for Circle of Sisterhood through fundraiser campaigns. "Half the Sky," the university's First Year Book for the 2010-2011 school year, raised awareness of female oppression on campus. After hearing of her interest in the book, PHA advisor Liz Brown suggested Gokhale look at Circle of Sisterhood. "When I got the position [of VP of Administrative Affairs], I was like, 'Done. This is something I have to bring here; it's too important to not do,'" said Gokhale.

Among other initiatives, Gokhale wants to organize volunteering at local women's shelters, including those for victims of human trafficking. "I think it's really important for a woman to do things globally, but I think we need to realign ourselves. I think it's really important for the community to get more personally affiliated with these issues," said Gokhale. "But if you're actually volunteering in the shelter, you're intimately touching people's lives."

Gokhale also hopes the Circle of Sisterhood initiatives at UMD will help to unite the different Greek organizations, as well as other student groups, under a common movement. "I know there's an intrinsic competitive- ness between the sororities, but I have watched this past year ... sorority communities around the country pull together and -- in the spirit of women's sisterhood -- fundraise and create awareness around the global issues relating to girls and women," said Carroll. "It's amazing to see it. It's phenomenal."

By becoming involved with the Circle of Sisterhood, Gokhale wants to enlighten sorority members to the true impact of problems that are often unknown or dismissed.

"We tend to write off [these problems] as 'Oh, it doesn't impact me,' but as a person it does impact each and every one of us," she said. "I hope that having our chapters be involved with the Circle of Sisterhood will help people realize that we can make a difference for the better."

The Clothesline Project is a public art exhibition that helps victims of sexual violence heal, and also raises awareness of a larger problem within the community, according to SARP Coordinator Allison Bennett. "The project is a catalyst through which people come to realize a problem of violence within their organization," she said.

Bennett said the Greek community takes this issue to heart. "Chapters participate in the project, and they are proud to be a part of it. Each shirt is one person. Each shirt is a part of UMD."

Project ‘breaks silence’ of sexual violence

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To rush, or not to rush? Advice for PNMs

by Kayleigh Schultz

Fraternities and sororities hold events to get to know potential new members, spread information about their organizations, and prepare to take new pledge classes each semester. This process is known as recruitment, or rushing. Every member of a fraternity and sorority has gone through recruitment and understands how scary, fun and exciting recruitment can be. During recruitment people learn what they are looking for in a fraternity or sorority, what they value in a house, what they hope to get out of Greek life, and the skills and opportunities Greek life can offer them.

Telling different people and learning information about fraternities and sororities can be overwhelming, but current members say it’s worth it in the long run. “Recruitment was really stressful, but I’m so happy I went through it because I love the sorority I’m in,” said Kelly Renehan, a sophomore criminology major and member of Alpha Omicron Pi.

However, fall and spring recruitment are very different. Formal recruitment for sororities in the spring forces potential new members to learn about every house in one weekend. While this process can be tedious, it’s designed to be helpful.

Kelly MacDougall, a sophomore of AOlPi, said “it was helpful to go through during the spring because I got to see all the houses and know I was making the right choice. It helped me to make an informed decision.”

Going through recruitment also helps students better understand what they want to gain from joining Greek life.

“I was really interested in getting involved in philanthropy and realized that joining Greek life could open up a lot of opportunities for me,” Renehan said.

MacDougall had a similar experience: “I wanted to have a big group of girlfriends and get to know people. Going through recruitment helped me to get involved and meet people I never would have met before.”

Whether you’re set on pledging or rushing to determine if Greek life is for you, recruitment is a potentially life-changing experience.

Sigma Kappa wins grant for hospital toys, books

by Sarah Gibbons

The Maryland chapter of Sigma Kappa received a grant to collect toys, books and games for the Children’s National Medical Center.

Once a year, the national Sigma Kappa gives the 1874 Giving Circle Grant to a chapter that is working with an organization outside of the philanthropies the sorority supports nationally.

Children’s National cares for more than 360,000 patients a year, according to the center’s website. They provide more than $4.6 million in uncompensated medical care to pediatric patients. The center provides care for emergencies, trauma, cancer, cardiac and critical care as well as neonatology, orthopaedic surgery, neurology, and neurosurgery.

In addition to the medical care Children’s National provides, the center does its best to promote a nurturing and fun environment for its patients. There are multiple play rooms on each floor of the hospital which are restricted to doctors and parents, a safe haven for the children to ease the fear of the hospital and make them feel more at home.

Maryland’s SigKap executive board toured Children’s National to better understand the charity behind Terp Thon — the campus-wide dance marathon that benefits the hospital — and were inspired by the atmosphere of the hospital and the lengths at which they go to make the patients comfortable.

Sigma Kappa plans to turn their efforts into a community-wide effort to better the lives of the patients at Children’s National.

“We hope to educate people on the mission of the hospital and how these toys and books will help the patients there,” Rachel Engster, philan-

Presidential Profile: Phi Sigma Kappa

by Michelle Hauth

A group of people exist who believe that Greek life isn’t for them, and when senior finance and supply chain management double major Jay Goebel came to the University of Maryland, he was one of them.

However unlike it seemed at the time, Goebel is now the president of Phi Sigma Kappa and has been for the past two and a half years.

When I asked Goebel to explain why he decided to take on this task, his story was not that of an ordinary chapter president.

Goebel saw the role of being president as an opportunity to help create an outstanding organization.

“Giving these children the atmosphere of the community-wide effort.”

The toy drive will take place in November.

Registration for Terp Thon 2012 began on Sept. 30.

“AOPi proves balancing athletics, sorority is doable

by Morgan Lash

Even without extra-curricular activities, many students may become easily overwhelmed by the stress of schoolwork at a prestigious university. Despite this, many students still have the urge to get involved in various activities around campus.

Two of the most time-consuming organizations on campus are arguably university athletics and the Greek system. Each requires time and dedication from their members. For most, managing Greek life, and university athletics with school is challenging, but worth the effort.

Senior Demetra Doors has been a member of University of Maryland’s cheerleading team since her freshman year. She is also an active member of Maryland’s chapter of Alpha Omicron Pi.

Doors said it can often be hard to manage both activities, especially with her schoolwork.

“Although the division of time between her sorority and her teamates could potentially cause problems, Doors said there is rarely an issue.”

“There isn’t really any tension ‘between my two commi-mentments’ because my sorority sisters are very understand-able and cheerleading must come first, so if I ever miss an event because of cheer it is understandable and excused.”

A strong support group from both the athletic team and her sisters is necessary in order for Doors, or any Greek-athlete, to succeed.

While Jamie Little, coach of the cheerleading team, is happy Doors can remain active in her sorority, cheerleading remains “a mandatory obligation and must always be the first priority.”

With support from her sorority, teammates and coach, Doors finds juggling all of her time-inten-sive opportunities to be much easier.

“I feel that always being active in sports has helped me build good time management skills. I always put my commitment to cheerleading first, but I also make sure to give sufficient time to my sorority’s activities.”

While maintaining an acceptable grade point average, participating in sports and being involved in a sorority or fraternity is difficult to handle, with the help of her sisters, coach and teammates, Demetra Doors proves that it is feasible.

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