



news

Theta Phi Alpha hosts fourth annual Sapphire Ball



SUBMITTED BY BREE GANNON

Theta Phi Alpha sisters Morgan Badenhop, Ashley Perry, Mikayla Reer and Bree Gannon at the Sapphire Ball.

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Since 2015, the Theta Phi Alpha sorority has a tradition each year for a night that is not only filled with fun with, but raises money for charities as well.

That tradition is the annual Sapphire Ball.

This year was the fourth time that the Sapphire Ball took place at Ashland University, with the event being held on Feb. 10 at 6 p.m.

The ball in AU's Redwood Hall included a dinner and silent auction afterwards with tickets priced at \$20 per person for both and \$10 per person for just the auction.

Nearly all the proceeds went to charity.

Sami Eron, the President of Theta Phi Alpha, said that many people were invited to attend the yearly ball in hopes of raising as much money as possible for charity.

"We tried to get the word around and get as many as possible to attend the ball," Eron said. "We invited people from around campus, our families and alumni from our chapter to all come and help raise money for our philanthropy."

The sorority not only had to spread the word about the ball but get donations for the silent auction as well.

"Everyone in our sorority took the time to reach out to the local communities to get donations," Eron said. "We all did a lot of work for the Ashland community, our home communities and our families to get the word around and raise money for the event."

There were many ways that the sorority reached out to the community said Eron.

"We sometimes had a table set up in the student center to help get the word out to AU's students," Eron said. "We also sent letters to local businesses talking about the event and what they could do to help."

Many of those local businesses that helped to put on the event

were from downtown Ashland.

"We especially reached out to our downtown businesses here in Ashland," Eron said. "A lot of them donated and were very supportive of what we were trying to do."

Abby Hayes, the sorority's new philanthropy chair, immediately saw the results of their efforts to spread the word with attendance at the ball this year.

"We sold close to 300 tickets for the silent auction this year with a lot more people also purchasing dinner tickets than usual," Hayes said. "That took up a lot more space than planned for so next year we're probably going to have to move to another building since Redwood is shrinking."

With such big numbers attending the ball, Hayes said she was hopeful that this year's event would be a big hit.

"There was a lot of people coming this year, so I had hoped it would be a hit," Hayes said. "I was a little nervous since this was the first ball that I had put on."

Six to eight months of planning went into the ball said Eron.

"Our philanthropy chair did most of the work, but we all started planning for the ball around six to eight months ago," said Eron. "It was definitely a long process."

Hayes had to dive head first into planning the ball after the chair before she got a position with the campus St. Jude Children's Research Hospital executive board, leaving the details of the ball in limbo.

"I had picked up the planning for it about two months ago after the position had been handed down to me," Hayes said. "I just came into the position, so I had to do a lot very quickly since there were still many things to do."

Even though there were still many details to be worked out, a good majority of the planning for the Sapphire Ball had already been done said Hayes.

"The girl before me had sched-



SUBMITTED BY CAIT DAVIS

Theta Phi Alpha sister Cait Davis and Gina Grace at the Sapphire Ball.

uled it and gotten the date, location and times," Hayes said. "She had a lot of things like that done and prepared some of the donations. I had to take over from that point on and plan everything else."

The past two months had been a whirlwind of activity for Hayes, since taking over the job.

"I had to make sure girls were getting donations and make tickets," Hayes said. "I needed to make sure girls were selling those tickets while also planning food options with catering services. After that, I had to organize the tables with what was going to be in the bids and raffles. This all took place two months before the ball."

Even though the planning for the Sapphire Ball was a challenge for Hayes, she said that she always kept telling herself how close she was to the finish line.

One of the philanthropies that the sorority raised money for included the Glenmary Home Missioners.

"Some of our money is donated to the Glenmary Home Missioners," Eron said. "They are a group in the Appalachian area that helps to support the homeless and their local communities."

Besides the Missioners, Theta

Phi Alpha also donated the money raised from the ball to Camp Friendship, a place where underprivileged children can go to camp.

"We also donated our money to this camp called Camp Friendship, where kids cannot afford to go to camp," Eron said. "At Camp Friendship they are provided with everything they need including bedding, toiletries, clothing and activities. Those kids are all referred to by social workers."

Even though those are the two main charities that they work with, Theta Phi Alpha also continues to try and help their own local communities in any way possible.

"Camp Friendship and the Glenmary Home Missioners are our main connections," Hayes said. "But we also try to help out with the homeless shelters in the area and any other charities we can think of."

Eron said this year's Sapphire Ball was the most successful one the sorority has done.

"This year we were able to raise over \$9,000 which is the most we have raised since we started the event," Eron said. "I'm so proud of the work Abby and the rest of the chapter have done to make it successful."

Coburn Gallery hosts new exhibit

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The Coburn Art Gallery opened Feb. 15 at 4:30 p.m. with a new exhibit, "Dear Dr. Seuss," and will run through Feb. 24.

The new exhibit will be open the same week of Seussical to complement the Dr. Seuss theme of the musical.

Cynthia Petry, director of the Coburn Gallery and professional instructor of art, explains how the art of the show came to be.

"We wanted to do a brief show while it was running and we put out a call for student artists," Petry said, "so young artists of all ages, professional artists, we have AU students and they work, also faculty, so it's sort of a fun look at what inspired them about Dr. Seuss... The whimsical nature of his work, it's very fantasy, everything's sort of fluffy, and the different creatures, so I'm anxious to see the work altogether."

Dr. Seuss's books will be coming to life in the theater lobby with the help of Smithville schools.

"We have a high school and middle school coming in from Smithville and they're going to be transforming the front of the gallery into a Dr. Seuss book," Petry said. "So they're going to paint the walls, they made furniture, so they whole thing is going to be a weird furry environment, so the activities will be the environment itself."

Art Saturday is a free event where families can make their own fishbowl and a "Dr. Seuss creature of their own invention," Petry said.

On Feb. 16, 17, 18, 23 and 24, it will go from 6:45 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. for the matinee.

An AU club will be part of this exhibition.

"Art club is also having a pop-up shop, so they'll be selling some of their own works and then they'll be doing a small canvas sale for the Beacon House, which is a local after school program, they're raising money for that as well and that will be open the 15th, 16th and 18th," Petry said. "It'll be open prior to the production, during intermission and then after the show."

So why is it called "Dear Dr. Seuss?"

"Any kid, whether you like science, or nature, or music or whatever your thing is, there's usually someone that inspires you and I thought of it that way and this was sort of our visual letter to him," Petry said. "A way of saying these cool things, I think for students it's the style. Sort of this really loose feeling to the drawing when you see them and they're very organic, sort of look like an aural but then they're just not at all."

This exhibition is free and open to the public, AU students, faculty and staff.

"People should come out," Petry said. "It'll be fun, I'm really excited to see the environment."

Ashland Rec Center launches new app

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The Ashland Rec Center now has a new way of keeping students and community members up-to-date on what is going on in the facility.

The Rec Center has a new app that allows subscribers to plan out when they would attend the center, depending on what they are looking to do, by showing a count of an area that is updated every half hour and sign up for Group X classes.

Assistant director of programs, Krista Chauvin, said that the idea for the app came from aquatics director Justin Fletcher in a meeting before the spring semester.

"He came in and presented the idea and it all sounded great," said Chauvin. "We're encouraged so far by the feedback we've been getting from students and faculty alike."

Chauvin likes how the app makes signing up for GroupX classes and inviting friends to join easier.

"All you do is pull up the app and register for the class," said Chauvin. "Then it can ask you if want to invite a friend, and you just add the person you want to invite and it will send them a confirmation email."

According to Fletcher, the idea came for the app came from a website developed by an old graduate student he knew from his days at Rowan University in New Jersey.

"He actually came up with the app as a business venture," said

Fletcher. "He has over a dozen schools now that subscribe to the app."

The app, known as fitDEGREE, was developed to help recreation centers keep track of how many people were using the facility and to find a more effective way to keep members connected in a way that had never been done before.

The AU version of the app is known as 'AU Rec Center' and is in a trial period to test its effectiveness and if management ultimately

wants to keep it going forward in the future.

Chauvin hopes that they decide to keep it in the future.

"It's made things that much easier to keep track of thus far," said Chauvin. "I hope we can continue to use it into the foreseeable future."

The app is right now at 445 subscribers and is expected to continue to grow as it gains more traction among students and other members.



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