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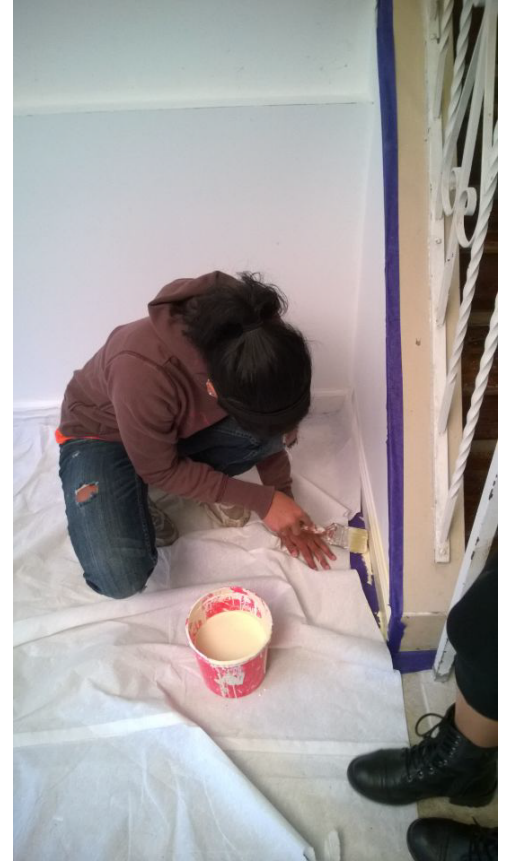
Fighting Hurricane Sandy with Sigma Beta Honor Society

Olivia Basileo

**"It felt amazing to be part of the team helping her restore her home even if it was just for one day."
-Naomi Lopez**

Sigma Beta Honor Society, Stony Brook's own honor society devoted to academic excellence and commu-

nity service, has been extremely active in all sorts of service events this semester. They've spent time with children at Stony Brook's Childcare Center, done a clean up at West Meadow Beach, played board games with the residents at Echo Arms Adult Home, helped international students become more comfortable at Stony Brook through English Pal, participated in the Miracle League of Long Island by acting as "buddies" for special needs children—and that's just a small sampling of the work this student group has done! This



A student helps paint Ms. Beverage's home.

past October, though, some members of Sigma Beta participated in a restoration event none of them will ever forget.

On October 11, six members of Sigma Beta Honor Society volunteered to help a woman named Crista Beverage in Freeport whose home had been damaged by Hurricane Sandy. Beverage's home had been flooded with over a foot of water, and in the process of trying to repair the damages, she had spent much of her retirement money. The six members of Sigma Beta Honor Society and two volunteers from the Southern Baptist Sandy Rebuild Team in Central Islip all came to her rescue. Together, the volunteers painted the walls of a few

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rooms in her house.

Sigma Beta members formed a definite bond with their fellow volunteers and Ms. Beverage. After hearing Ms. Beverage's story and experiencing her gratitude, the volunteers were that much more determined to make a difference for her. Naomi Lopez, one of the volunteers and a Steering Committee Member of the society, says, "It felt amazing to be part of the team helping her restore her home even if it was just for one day. Being able to see the progress that was made from start to finish was also very rewarding in itself." Everyone at the restoration remained upbeat, optimistic, and personable.

By the end of the day, Ms. Beverage had a cleaner, nicer home, and the volunteers had gained a tremendous appreciation for the manual labor it takes to restore homes after a natural disaster. For many of the volunteers, it was the first time they had

ever painted a house. However, the toughness of the work only further motivated these students. Lopez says the true value of this experience was that the volunteers were able to see the impact they had on one woman's life. She hopes this will inspire the Sigma Beta members to seek out other ways to make a difference in people's lives.

Sigma Beta Honor Society's goal is to turn studious Seawolves into community service leaders. The society consists of about 600 students, evenly split between sophomores, juniors, and seniors. These dedicated students perform all sorts of service activities throughout the year! This year, the group voted to support the American Cancer Society. On November 13, they hosted a talent show in collaboration with the Culinary Club and raised \$85 for the American Cancer Society! Says Naomi Lopez, "Everyone had a good time and we're thankful for the groups that agreed to perform for this great cause!" Get involved with this outstanding student group and help them with their efforts!

S

Sigma Delta Tau Supporting Sisters

Olivia Basileo

Many fraternities and sororities perform philanthropy and get involved in commu-

nity service projects, but the sisters of Sigma Delta Tau take things one step further. This past semester, Sigma Delta Tau participated in a Lupus Walk and a Lymphoma Walk to support its alumni sisters who are suffering from those diseases.

On October 19, 2014, 30 members—active sisters and alumni alike—attended the Lupus Walk at Eisenhower Park. The weather was freezing, but everyone held their heads high and did the one-mile, round-the-park walk in support of one of their alumni sisters who has Lupus, Allison Stedman. Gianna Lugo, the sorority's current Philanthropy Chair, says that meeting Stedman and several other alumni who came was an invaluable experience; the connection they shared through their sorority allowed sisters of different ages to work together even though many of them had never met before.

The Lymphoma Walk on October 25, 2014 at Bethpage Ballpark was an even bigger event. Called "Light the Night," the event consisted of a walk outside the stadium in which each group

participating carried a lantern. Along the sidelines, cheerleaders and Girl Scouts held signs with facts about Lymphoma. The walk culminated inside the stadium with talks from Lymphoma survivors, food, and a fireworks show.

30 current members and alumni walked together to learn about Lymphoma and support Melisa Celikoyar, a Sigma Delta Tau alum diagnosed with Lymphoma. Unfortunately, Celikoyar could not attend the walk herself because she was recovering from a recent treatment. Celikoyar's biological sister (also a Sigma Delta Tau alum) came in her place, and the sorority sent the recovering alum a video of everyone supporting her at the walk. As in the Lupus Walk, most current members did not know Celikoyar or the other alumni who came personally. The sisters all came in support of a stranger. It was a night of new friendships,

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Gianna cites the stories from the Lymphoma survivors as the most impactful part of the sorority's experience. Hearing the trials and accomplishments of people diagnosed with the disease—like their own Melisa Celikoyar—was inspirational. Meeting their alumni sisters was also a major aspect of the events; Stedman and Celikoyar's gratitude



Sigma Delta Tau sisters at a bake sale.

and enthusiasm made the group's participation worthwhile. Stedman took the time to thank each and every sister who attended the Lupus Walk for her, and Celikoyar sent a heartfelt thank-you letter to the active chapter after receiving the footage of the walk. Both current members and alumni will remember these walks and how easily they connected with their fellow sisters for years to come.

Sigma Delta Tau has 43 active sisters and countless alumni. Aside from attending awareness events, the sisters perform philanthropy. They support two national charities: Prevent Child Abuse America (PCAA) and Jewish Women International (JWI). PCAA creates a different fundraiser each year, and this year's is the Krispy Kreme

fundraiser. Sigma Delta Tau members sell as many donuts as they can, which are provided free by the company. Most of the sorority's fundraising money goes to PCAA. JWI, on the other hand, sends the chapter bottles of nail polish, which the sisters then sell on behalf of the organization. All proceeds from the nail polish go back to JWI. The sisters have also done a number of smaller community service events, such as bake sales and veterans home visits.



Sigma Delta Tau sisters at the Lupus Walk.

Keep an eye out for the amazing work Sigma Delta Tau sisters are doing to support each other and their charities!

M

Midnight Run with Oxfam

Olivia Basileo
and Julianne Broderick

It's an eye-opening feeling to learn about people less fortunate than ourselves, but it's another thing entirely to meet them. On November 20, the Oxfam America Chapter here at SBU along with the Muslim Students Association took a van into Manhattan and hand-delivered food to over 70 homeless people on the streets. Part of an Oxfam America event called Midnight Run, this journey through Manhattan brought Stony Brook students into direct contact with New York City's homeless.

This semester's Midnight Run was carried out by Oxfam SBU and the MSA, but it was the product of a collaboration between parties all over campus. The Haitian Student Association collected and donated bottled water; the Investment Club donated bananas; Jasmine food court donated bread, peanut butter, and jelly; the residential halls donated clothes; the Marine Sciences Department provided the

van; and the Wang Center gave the students a place to prepare the food and regroup for the entire day of the event. The members of MSA put together the sandwiches, and Oxfam organized the run, also contributing 5 trays of pasta to the haul.

20 students went to Manhattan and drove around the city from midnight till 3:30am. They made three stops: Penn Station, 5th Avenue, and the Rockefeller Tree. At each of these areas, the students gave food and clothes to the homeless who had gathered to meet them. Says Kwabena Busia, Treasurer of the Oxfam Club, "It was extremely fulfilling, with their smiles and reception. The anticipation with which they waited in the freezing night was very touching. They were thankful and ecstatic when we handed them food and clothes." After making their three stops, the Oxfam and MSA students still had food leftover, so they kept driving around Manhattan, stopping to give food to the homeless people they passed by.

The president of SBU's Oxfam Club, Oliver Nyithambe, recalls how freezing the night was. When he realized that people lived on the streets and had to withstand that cold night after night, he felt both grateful and heartbroken. One of the most memorable people he met

"What seems very little to you can make a lot of difference. Unknowingly, we have dumped people's lunches in our garbage cans and stacked their jackets in obscure corners of our homes." -Kwabena Busia

on the run was a man in a subway stop with no shoes. "My hands were freezing, and this guy didn't even have shoes," Oliver said. It was not immediately clear why, but the man refused their help and remained closed off. Seeing the horrible conditions homeless people live in made a lasting impression on the students.

The Midnight Run is a special, educational experience for everyone involved, but it was extremely meaningful for Oliver. Coming from Kenya, Oliver had volunteered with the Red Cross in his home country.

"It's an eye opening feeling to learn about people less fortunate than ourselves, but it's another thing entirely to meet them."

He knew he was more fortunate than others, with a place to sleep, food to eat, and shoes on his feet. After seeing the poverty in his country, he always wanted to give back. However, he never expected a great city like New York to have such poverty as well. Participating in the Midnight Run taught him that home-

lessness exists everywhere in the world, in every major city, and that students are able to make a difference. For Oliver, this event was the culmination of his whole semester. After struggling through six classes and balancing his roles as a student ambassador and the president of

the Oxfam Club, he says the Midnight Run put everything back into perspective for him and made it all “worth it.”

Kwabena also gained a new perspective after the run. He remembers arriving at their second stop just as a woman and her daughter were about to give up waiting and leave. They would have left sooner had another man not encouraged them to wait a little longer. The happiness and relief the women showed when the Oxfam and MSA members arrived taught Kwabena just how much of an impact he could have on another’s wellbeing. “What seems very little to you can make a lot of difference. Unknowingly, we have dumped people’s lunches in our garbage cans and stacked their jackets in obscure corners of our homes.” The students who participated in the Midnight Run learned together just what we all take for granted and forged friendships through this newfound understanding. As Kwabena says, they “came to realize the community in service.”

The Oxfam Club also held a Hunger Banquet at LDS College. Several LDS 101 classes participated, and each student was assigned to sit in one of three areas: on the floor, on a chair, or at a table with an extravagant feast spread out. The three areas represented the poor, the middle class, and the rich. While the rich were allowed to eat from the wide spread of food, the middle class were given just some rice and water, and the poor were given nothing. Throughout the meal, some students were shifted to other classes to reflect



Students at the Midnight Run.

economic changes; for example, someone in the middle class could lose their job and become poor. By the end of the banquet, which lasted about an hour and a half, the students truly fell into their roles. Oliver, who orchestrated the event, prompted students to think: how did the “rich” feel, eating while their classmates were sitting on the floor? How did the poor feel seeing the rich eat while they got nothing? The Hunger Banquet challenged students to think about poverty in a new way. For members of the Oxfam Club, it was only a prelude to the real suffering they would encounter on the Midnight Run.

The Oxfam Club hopes to host another Midnight Run and make an even bigger difference for New York City’s homeless. The Midnight Run is an Oxfam America event that is held by schools, mosques, and churches all year round. There are many ways to get involved in Midnight Run, either by donating supplies or going to the city. The most important thing to remember is that each individual is part of a

much larger cause, and there is community in service. The Oxfam Club meets on Wednesdays at 7:00pm in SAC 305.

Share Your Stories

We want to share your stories with the Stony Brook University community! SB Serves is a Career Center publication dedicated to highlighting the community service activities that the students, faculty, and staff of Stony Brook University take part in! To find out more about how to be featured in an upcoming issue please email Megan Smedley, Internship Consultant at Megan.Smedley@stonybrook.edu. Please include your name, phone number, and email address along with a brief description of your involvement experience. Upon submission a SB Serves writer can contact you for additional details.

Features can range from one page articles to smaller snapshots. Pictures help bring to life the experience for readers and are great additions to issues! If you have any upcoming events you would like to share with the community we can include these as well. Maybe you have not been involved yourself but know someone that is and you would like to nominate them for an upcoming feature, let us know! We are always looking for new individuals and groups to feature please share with us your thoughts and experiences!