

A PIECE OF THE PI

Pi of Texas Alumni Association • Texas A&M at Commerce • October 2007

Fundraising Credits Made Easy

John R. Lynch

As everyone knows by now, or should know by now, there are many requirements to keeping your scholarship. Besides making the required meetings, keeping your grade point average up, and participating in a committee, you also need to earn culture day, honors topic, fellowship and fundraising credits. If you ask anyone who has been around for a while, it seems like the fundraising credits are the hardest to earn. Fortunately for us, they are easier than most can imagine by attending the tailgate parties and football games on campus. So far, we have had two games, and came away with the spirit award for one. I have been fortunate enough to watch the games from the sidelines, and have come up with some good tips in assuring we don't miss out on any more.

First of all, we need attendance. We are the largest organization on campus, and when we have the same number of members as a smaller fraternity or sorority, we are already fighting an uphill battle. Second, it is just as important, if not more, to be loud and proud in the third quarter as it is at the beginning of the game. The judges make their decisions towards the end of the game. It is easy to be motivated and spend all your energy at the begin-

ning, but what they are looking for is the group who can sound good when the points are down, and the game is not so exciting. At the last game, the one where we won the award, the association members paced themselves, and were loud and proud the whole game through. Finally, we need to pay attention to the game. There is no sense yelling "defense, defense, defense" when our quarterback is holding the ball. It is ok to sit back and enjoy the game, then cheer when something good happens. It is also just as important to feed off the groups around us. The key is spirit, and if we are joining another chant, or chanting back and forth, that shows spirit. It's not all about yelling at the top of our lungs until our voices are shot for an entire week.

For those of you who have never been to a tailgate and football game, you are missing a lot of fun. We have always had the best tailgate parties along with the biggest turnouts. It's an excellent way to meet members on campus for whom you may have never known were in our association. It is also a great way to show school spirit, earn your fundraising credits, and have a heck of a lot of fun doing it. Hope to see you all at the games.

Cheers to the environment!

Esther Kelley

Some of our members have really taken the mantra of Phi Theta Kappa's international service project (Operation Green) to the recycling center. Daniel Hartman, Chairperson of the Service Committee, has developed an independent study project to recycle aluminum, other metals, and paper waste. This project is aimed at increasing recycling in the Commerce area. To help motivate the community, Daniel has established a scholarship fund for environmental studies majors here in Commerce. This fund must reach \$5,000 within thirty months to become permanent. A \$25 initial deposit has been made and an additional \$25

was deposited this week from recycled materials. Daniel has set a goal of raising at least \$2,500 this year, and this is where all of you environmentally aware Phi Theta Kappa members can get involved. The future of this project depends on our ability to save enough aluminum and other materials to fund this scholarship. So put that aluminum can you are holding in a bag, and remember that he will also take most any discarded metal item, as well as newspaper and all white papers. Call Daniel when the bag gets full. To contact Daniel: e-mail tamucanman@yahoo.com or go to www.commercerecycle.com to learn more.

In The West

Sara Ragsdale

Next month, the Texas A&M University-Commerce playhouse will be having a production of *In The West*, a Texas show by 20 Texas authors.

In The West was created in 1985 by a group of twenty actor/writers/directors in a workshop conceived by Jim Fritzier, conducted by Janelle Buchanan and Sidney Brammer and produced by Big State Productions in Austin, Texas. The workshop for *In The West* came as a reaction to Richard Avedon's ground-breaking photo exhibit *In The American West* which premiered in Fort Worth, Texas in 1985. Their intent was not to recreate the people shown in Avedon's photographs but to create western characters from their own unique and individual viewpoints as westerners.

In The West features Atseko Factor, Chad Pope,

Open Mic Night

Lacy Price

Open mic night was presented to the students and staff of Texas A&M University-Commerce by Breakout Entertainment. The show was open for anyone willing to participate in the event, and anyone who wanted to watch. Amateur entertainers including poets and songwriters were the main entertainment of the night. They came on stage and gave us their pieces. The first act I saw was a woman poet; she had beautiful visuals in her words and captured the crowd. A young man, who is more of a lyrical poet, did his job of inspiring the crowd with a poem about the black people who have paved the way for black rights. This same young man performed another lyrical poem about the relationships between young men and women today. He talked about how guys and girls are both players in a sense and how people are just getting hurt in relationships. Then he brought some lightness to the issue by finishing up his poem by telling the women in the crowd about how he could be a great man for them. The girls really enjoyed this and their hollers proved it. Another lyrical poet came to the stage. He was very entertaining. He

Cody Allen Rushing, Kyle Halberstadt, Quincy Johnson II, Matt Plummer, Kristi Smith, and Sara Ragsdale. *In The West* is directed by Dr. Carrie Lee Klypchak. *In the West* has a pre-show performance beginning at 7:30p.m. by Lou Ann Petty's band in the Black Box. They will offer Texas Americana and Western music for the audience. There will also be a complimentary photo exhibit provided by the Third Floor Photo Society. Audience members are encouraged to arrive by 7:30 p.m. to take advantage of this opportunity. For those bringing children: There is adult language in this play! The content is not particularly controversial, but parents need to be aware that there is adult language. *In The West* runs October 4 – 7 and 11 - 14 2007 with evening shows at 8 pm, and Sunday matinee 3 pm. All shows will take place in the Studio Theatre. Tickets are \$3 for students (must show I.D), \$8 for seniors, and \$10 for adults.

did another "love" poem. While this poem did not cross the line, it was very graphic and a bit sexual. He had a very tasteful way of putting things. The entire crowd got into his words. He had the whole house in the palm of his hands. Besides the poets, there were the songwriters. A young woman came to the stage and performed numerous original songs with her guitar. The songs were mostly love and serious type songs. I noticed the crowd really getting into the feel of her guitar and the sound of her voice as she was belting out her original lyrics. A young man songwriter came to the stage and also played a few love songs. His music had a different feel than the girls, but it was still just as easy on the ears. His lyrics were very deep, sweet, and they seemed sincere. Love in some form or fashion seemed to be the trend of the night. It was great being able to see a bit of what lies behind the students that we see every day on campus. I would have never imagined some of the beauty that I saw and heard coming from these people. Open mic night was a wonderful experience.

Peace Corps and Job Opportunities

Vargha Manshadi

You can have a great experience by volunteering for the Peace Corps and turn that to an opportunity for an excellent job. The Peace Corps started its mission in 1960, when Senator John F. Kennedy asked students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. Then, from that motivation grew an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship. Since that time, more than 187,000 Peace Corps volunteers have been invited by 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. The Peace Corps is now more essential than ever, working in areas such as

information technology and business development, and committing more than 1,000 new volunteers as a part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Peace Corps volunteers continue to help countless individuals who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities. The Peace Corps goals are to help people meet their needs, and to help support a better understanding of the people who served. As Phi Theta Kappa members, we have this opportunity for acquiring life skills as well as adventures with certain programs through the Peace Corps. To get more information, visit their website at www.peacecorps.org.

The Housing Crisis Center Dallas

Alexandra Krietzsch

The Housing Crisis Center (HCC) began its services in 1978 as the Dallas Tenants' Association. Since then the HCC has grown to its current scale of housing programs and services specifically designed to prevent homelessness and to stabilize the elderly, the disabled, and families with children in decent, affordable, permanent housing, and to empower these groups to be able to solve future housing problems. Their vision is to make the community a better home for everyone. There are over 20,000 individuals which contact the Housing Crisis Center for assistance each year. The HCC has a staff of 20 people supported by over 200 volunteers which are available to provide services. Most agency clients are the "working poor", and over two-thirds are female. Almost half of the clients are children and youth, and close to 10% are over age 50. The number of children and elderly continues to increase. Some of the programs are, the Home Power Social Services Counseling, which is designed to prevent homelessness, resolve crises, support positive life decisions, encourage self-sufficiency, and provide ongoing skill building opportunities. The Vienna Short Term Transitional Housing gives homeless families with children housing for up to four months at no charge



at the Vienna Apartments. While in residence, families receive counseling, skills training and referrals to meet their specific needs. The primary goals for all families are to stabilize their lives and be able to obtain and maintain affordable permanent housing. The Home Again Long Term Transitional Housing is for individuals and families who are homeless; they can stay for up to 18 months if continuous progress is being made toward their goals. During that time they receive rent and utilities to live in apartments in the community. In addition, they are given the case management services needed to acquire skills to become employed and self-sufficient. Overall, the Housing Crisis Center is doing an outstanding job in providing a home for many people in need. You can help fulfill their mission by donating. Your donations support the housing services, educational and legal programs and help empower individuals to solve any future housing problems they might encounter.