

Book club, ribbons to benefit local girls' shelter

By Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Before this semester, many Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority members weren't aware a girl's shelter existed in State College.

But now they're making it their semester-long goal to raise awareness and funds for Stormbreak Home.

The sorority was looking for a philanthropy close to home, and Stormbreak was a good fit because it allows members to "touch the heart of Penn State," sorority vice president Latricia Whitfield said.

Stormbreak Home, which is a part of the Centre County Youth Service Bureau, is a group home

for girls ages 12 to 17, Stormbreak Home program director Theresa Kieffer said. The house's mission is to help its residents reach their highest potential, she said — whether that means returning home, settling into a foster care home or living on their own.

While many students volunteer with the home, Kieffer said she does not know how many students are aware of Stormbreak Home's existence.

And that's what Alpha Kappa Alpha wants to change, Whitfield said.

"They only depend on community funding and they need as much help as they can get," Whitfield (senior-broadcast journalism) said.

The sorority is currently hosting a women's book club, and will donate proceeds from the entrance fee to Stormbreak Home, Alpha Kappa Alpha member Candace Carson said. The cost to join the book club — which is reading Zora Neale Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God" — is \$5, Carson (senior-advertising) said.

About 40 independent students along with the sorority members are involved with the book club this semester.

But because the book group is already underway, Carson suggests those interested in donating to the cause instead purchase \$2 orange ribbons which were created by the sorority.

"They only depend on community funding and they need as much help as they can get."

Latricia Whitfield
senior-broadcast journalism

Alpha Kappa Alpha will be selling the ribbons at all of their events during the fall semester and also at a table in the HUB-Robeson Center during Homecoming week.

Whitfield said she is looking forward to visiting the home at the end of the semester and seeing the payoff of the sorority's fundraising.

"We will be able to see their faces and these young girls will be seeing we are supporting their

cause and them," she said. Hopefully, Whitfield said, the sorority will be able to raise at least \$500 for the home — already, they have raised about \$200.

Funding streams are always tight, Kieffer said, and the donations from the sorority may go to either paying for activities, clothing, school supplies or general house expenses.

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Farmers struggling with dry conditions

Jennifer C. Yates
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PITTSBURGH — When rain fell recently on Rick Ebert's dairy farm, the less than one-quarter inch didn't do much to fill his parched well. He had to have 3,000 gallons of water trucked in last week to ensure his cows stayed hydrated and cool.

"We really need an all-day nice rain," said Ebert, who runs Will-Mar-Re Farms in New Alexandria.

The same could be said in much of the eastern U.S., where abnormally dry conditions have forced some states to issue drought warnings and raised the risk of brush fires. Some farmers say they expect to harvest half of what they normally do, cutting their income while they're paying more for water and feed.

But although the weather is causing them some pain, the drought-like conditions haven't been widespread enough to affect consumers, who are more likely to see the difference in their brown lawns than their grocery bills.

"For the most part, rainfall has been below normal in most areas across the Northeast. It started probably about the middle of June, and it will probably continue into the next couple weeks," said Tom Kines, a meteorologist at Accuweather.

Inland areas of Pennsylvania, the mid-Atlantic, Ohio and parts of

New Jersey up to Maine have been the driest, Kines said.

Last week, Pennsylvania officials put 24 counties under a drought warning and the rest of the state under a drought watch. Most Pennsylvania counties get 37 to 45 inches of rain a year. This year, they've had between 2 and 10 inches less.

"Fall is starting earlier, the corn is being harvested sooner because it's drying out," said Cheryl Bjornson, a Penn State Cooperative Extension educator in Chester County. "Anybody who doesn't have irrigation is going to be affected. If farmers are irrigating then they're ahead of the game."

Maryland agriculture officials expect the state's corn production to be off by 30 percent from last year and soybeans to be down 16 percent. Some spots have had a foot less rain than normal.

Eastern Shore farmer Ed Heikes, who has about 1,400 acres in Talbot County, said a 7 1/2-inch deluge in July gave his corn a fighting chance, but there's been scant rain since. His crop will be 30 to 35 percent below average, he said.

Farther west in Carroll County, corn yields are ranging from a paltry 5 bushels per acre to a modest 100, said farmer Lawrence Meeks of Silver Run.


"It's going to be a really tough year for farmers," said Meeks.

A WALK IN THE RAIN



Sarah Finnegan/Collegian

A student walks with an umbrella on Monday evening. After continuous rain all day Monday, cloudy skies will follow through the week with warm temperatures in the 60s and 70s.


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