

Honors Student  
Association

West Chester  
University



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## *Happenings in Honors*

### **Embracing Diversity: HSA Ally Training**

It's the buzzword you all know and love: Diversity. It seems as though every company and organization has begun to implement initiatives regarding diversity, but what exactly does it mean? Diversity is arguably one of the most important aspects of an organization, as it facilitates understanding of the cultures of our friends and coworkers, and having that deeper understanding of the individual creates meaningful relationships. HSA is full of future professionals, and I think Honors College freshman Diego Jorge said it best, that "[a]ny program (HSA, the Honors College) that aims to train future leaders must take into account the diversity present in society." For this reason, I found it appropriate to bring a short diversity seminar to a recent HSA meeting, called *Ally Training*. The training consists of two sessions, LGBTQA 101, a one-hour presentation summarizing the terms and concepts within the community, and the official Ally Training, another one-hour session which equips the audience with knowledge to help peers who may be struggling with identity or with themselves in general. This information is presented through lecture, discussion, and activities—which makes the two hours seem like nothing.

We were lucky enough to have WCU graduate student Malik Muhammad and our very own Deni Tobin present for us for the night. The turnout was absolutely amazing, with students from every year participating in both parts of the training, bringing in over 70 HSA members. This helped interesting perspectives infiltrate the conversation and brought more depth to the meaning of the training. Anthony Fallacaro, a sophomore in the Honors College reflected on the activities and applicability of the training, "The activities we did and skills we learned...brought us together...[Ally Training] opened my eyes and provided me with an applicable skillset to use in the future, especially so as a future educator." Another Honors College Sophomore, Rebeka Yocum said that the importance of ally training lies "not only in personal growth, but [also] in community-based growth."

Of course, Ally Training refers to only a few aspects of the general word *diversity*, so in the future, I hope to be bringing programs and presentations based on race, gender, ability, etc., and how these aspects of identity interact with each other, known as intersectionality. The breadth of diversity is exactly why I stepped forward as the diversity chair. As a psychology and women's and gender studies major, I am constantly being challenged in my own understanding of society, so why not challenge those who can't have the same in-class experiences I am thankful to have? I am beyond happy to see how our

organization, including students, Dr. Dean and Michelle Wills, the Honors College secretary, has reacted to the program, and I am even more excited to see how our members continue to define diversity and make it much more than a buzzword. ~*Morgan McMurtrie*

## Upcoming Events

Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup> 12pm- 3pm  
Bringing Hope Home 5K

Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> 7pm – 9pm  
Fight 4 Fred Open Mic

Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> 8 pm – 9 pm  
“Would You Rather” student panel

Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> 8 pm  
HSA Meeting Study Abroad Panel Q&A

Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> 12pm – 1pm  
NEDA Walk

Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> 4:45pm – 6pm  
Caroling at Tanglewood

Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 8pm  
GA Meeting



*Juniors Matt Dummeldinger and Casey Mulholland during Ally Training*

## Honors in the Community: BHH WCU

One of our very own members, Megan Hess, is using her gifts of leadership and service to make great strides in the greater WCU Community. A senior nursing major in the Honors College and also a member of HSA, Megan currently serves in her second year of presidency for West Chester University’s chapter of Bringing Hope Home (BHH). BHH is an organization that assists individuals and families affected by cancer by providing financial and emotional support while they go through cancer treatments. They ensure that their families stay in their homes with a secure roof over their heads, utilities on, phones working, and food on the table while they are dealing with cancer.

They accept applications of families with any type of cancer and of any age. BHH has been providing “unexpected amazingness” since its inception in 2008 when WCU alumnus Paul Isenberg started the organization after he lost his wife to Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. Since its inception, BHH has provided unexpected amazingness to over 2,700 local families with over \$3.3 million dollars in assistance. One of these families belongs to a former WCU student, Kevin McGuire, who decided to bring BHH to the WCU community.



*Kevin McGuire and his brother, Michael*

The BHH WCU Chapter launched in the Spring of 2014 when Kevin linked up with Caitlin Mahon, Development Coordinator and Student Program Director and alumna, and Founder Paul Isenberg. Kevin battled Leukemia twice and received a life saving bone marrow transplant from his younger brother. During his second battle, his family was in need of a bathroom renovation in order for their home to be safe for Kevin's significantly compromised immune system. BHH was able to supply the funds and workers to do just that. Due to this outpouring of hope, Kevin was inspired to spread the unexpected amazingness, and Caitlin and Paul were more than happy to begin their Student Program at WCU where the nonprofit itself originated. After the founding of the WCU Chapter and after Kevin's transfer to a new school, Megan saw an opportunity to "pursue a passion [she has] for helping families with cancer," which she realized after watching a close friend in high school survive Leukemia after a three and a half year battle. In Spring 2014, Megan ran and was elected for BHH WCU president. Through her outstanding leadership, service, and passion, Megan has inspired the broader West Chester University community to provide unexpected amazingness to families in our own backyards.

Last year, WCU's BHH Chapter raised \$1,500 through the first WCU Stomps Cancer 5K, which was able to help one local family. This year, BHH WCU's second annual 5K is projected to raise \$4,500 to help three more families. Megan and the chapter have also participated in Adopt-a-Family, a program linking BHH families with volunteers of Adopt-A-Family.

## Community Service

**Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>**

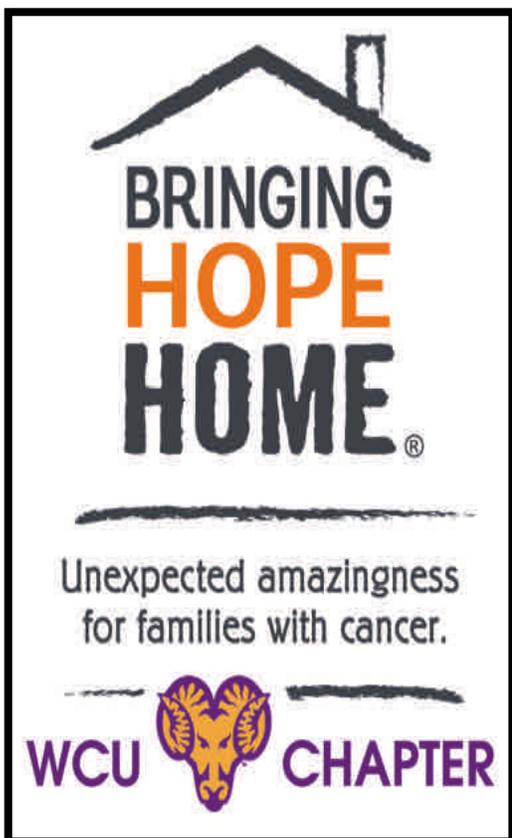
**Hickman Fall Cleanup** If you are interested in signing up for the event, please fill out the following form: <http://goo.gl/forms/J3a0NcIIUF>

### American Red Cross Donor Centers

If anyone is interested in volunteering at the donor center please fill out the following form help pick the days that best suite your schedules:

<http://goo.gl/forms/PskCsDiLbf>

*For more information on how to get involved on campus, contact the WCU Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs at [www.wcupa.edu/volunteer](http://www.wcupa.edu/volunteer) or [JReindl@wcupa.edu](mailto:JReindl@wcupa.edu).*



The volunteers purchase Christmas presents for the family and deliver them personally. Last year they helped three families battling cancer through Adopt-A-Family. Additionally, they participated in many campus events to supports other clubs such as Relay for Life, Aid to South Africa, and the Pantene Beautiful Lengths Hair Donation Drive. The WCU BHH Chapter was then awarded *Bringing Hope Home's School of the Year Award* for all of their accomplishments, and has also inspired other colleges to create clubs including Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh.

Looking forward to future unexpected amazingness, this year's 5K is being held on November 1<sup>st</sup> at 12 pm, starting at Ehinger Gym on campus. New additions to this year's 5K include a Bone Marrow Registry Drive in honor of Kevin McGuire, post race Halloween Zumba, a family speaker, team awards, and more. After the 5K, Megan wants to focus on Adopt-A-Family. If you would like to become more involved with BHH, meetings are held in Merion 122 on Mondays at 8:30 pm. If you cannot make the meetings, sign up for the weekly emails through OrgSync, like the Facebook page **BHH WCU Chapter** and follow **bhhwcuchapter** on Instagram and Twitter.

Through Megan’s determined leadership, service and passion, BHH WCU has made leaps and bounds helping families with cancer. What started as a small group of friends working towards a common goal has transformed into a community-wide effort to support families in need. Not only is she an active and valuable member of the HSA community through leadership and service, but she has also used her strengths to make a difference in the broader community. Thank you to Megan and the rest of the BHH WCU Chapter for spreading your unexpected amazingness!

~*Devon Stroup, contributions from Megan Hess*



*BHH WCU Chapter Executive Board  
2015-2016*

## HSA from a Non-Honors Perspective

As a community college transfer student, moving to West Chester and beginning my junior year in a completely new place was both scary and exciting. I remember being overwhelmed with the excitement of new classes, new people, and new experiences that I wanted to get involved in. A few weeks into the school year, WCU had its student involvement fair which was packed with thousands of students getting information for and joining a countless number of groups – of course there were plenty of stands set up for sororities, fraternities and sports teams, but I also found a lot of information about groups that I never even knew existed! Groups like the Slow Foods Movement, Photography Club, and Honors Student Association were a just a few that caught my eye. As I walked by the HSA table I remembered my roommates (who were all accepted into the Honors College Program) telling me that I should think about joining HSA with them. Of course I thought “can I even join HSA if I’m not a part of the Honors College?” Fortunately the answer is yes! HSA is open to any West Chester University student who wants to join. And so, even though I am not a part of the Honors College and I do not take Honors seminar classes, I decided to join HSA.

Being a member of HSA has made my first semester so far at WCU so much more interesting. HSA has exposed me to so many wonderful people, organizations, and volunteer opportunities. While the majority of HSA members are in HSA because they are in the Honors Program, other students, such as myself, wanted to join for the other opportunities HSA would expose us to. All of the members of HSA I have come in contact with or worked with are so genuine, friendly, and good-hearted, and sharing a passion for helping others and working to better the community has helped me make lots of new friends.



*HSA members Devon Stroup, Sami Stalford, Anna Brandt, and Jackie Giovinazzo*

The fact that everyone is so open and accepting of all members, regardless of whether or not they are part of the Honors College, makes HSA a very inviting environment. They also make the meetings laid back, fun and informational. Had I not decided join HSA, I would never have learned about the amazing organizations and events that the members donate their time to. Events such as the Hickman Fall Cleanup, American Red Cross donations, and Adopt-A-Block are just a few of the community services that HSA members participate in that I was unaware of before joining HSA. Simply because I am not part of the Honors College does not mean these are events that I would not want the opportunity to participate in, and I know the same is true for other WCU students.

Simply put, whether you are a part of WCU's Honor's College or not, HSA provides its members with great volunteer opportunities, information about community happenings, and amazing people with whom to work and connect. HSA is for anyone who wants to join and you definitely get out of it what you put in. I feel very fortunate to be friends with so many kind, hard-working individuals that I've met through HSA, as well as the people we meet through our volunteer services. HSA has also provided me with a sense of purpose and belonging in the college and community, and I highly encourage others to join HSA in the hopes that they find it as fulfilling as I do. ~ *Anna Brandt, Junior, Early Grades Education Major*

## Halloween Fun at HSA!

*Check out pictures taken by HSA Historian, Sarah Henry, at the HSA Halloween GA Meeting!*



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HSA Happenings is a student-produced monthly newsletter created and distributed by the Honors Student Association. Its purpose is to supplement the West Chester University community's knowledge of the Honors Student Association's activities and endeavors.

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