

# FRAT PARTY

Fraternities and sororities break stereotypes through community service

By HILLARY GANT  
The Battalion

Community service and volunteering are probably not the first things that come to mind when people think about fraternities or sororities. However, several fraternities and sororities at Texas A&M are working to change the negative image of Greek life by volunteering their time and energy to a variety of causes in the Bryan-College Station area. Some of those worthy causes are helping the disabled and spending time with at-risk children.

Hearne resident Dawn Cobb said she did not have the money to have wheelchair ramps built for her home. Cobb said her disability insurance would not pay to have her home modified after her leg was amputated.

Cobb said she did not know what to expect when she called A&M's Student Life office for some volunteer help, but that the project to build the ramps was underway in two days.

Sigma Phi Epsilon member Charles McManemin, a senior construction science major, volunteered to head the project.

"I was told she was having trouble going from her porch to her vehicle," McManemin said.

McManemin talked to Cobb about what

she needed and then measured her house for a concrete ramp outside and a wooden ramp inside. He said he designed a 22-foot sidewalk to get Cobb from the front door to her car.

Then the fraternity had to get almost \$400 worth of building materials donated for the project.

"Furrows gave me the wood and Shepherd's gave me the rebar," McManemin said. "But the hard thing was getting concrete for that ramp. They were going to have to drive the mixing truck all the way out to Hearne, and that's a big deal."

Finally, McManemin was able to convince Transit Mix to help.

"They were great because when I told them about this lady, they just said, 'Tell us when to be there,'" McManemin said.

The volunteer project took about two weeks. Volunteers worked until until 10 p.m. some nights. McManemin said there were usually five Sigma Phi Epsilon members at Cobb's house, building forms for the concrete and preparing the house for remodeling.

The day Cobb returned from the hospital, the concrete was poured. Cobb said the ramps make a difference and she can get around more freely.

"I can be independent," Cobb said. "I can go out to my car and do errands, when before,

I would have to wait for my brother."

The ramp project is not the only community service Sigma Phi Epsilon has completed. President Danny Ledbetter said each member must complete 15 hours of community service each semester. Ledbetter said he thinks the community service requirement has been good for his fraternity.

"I've seen the frat go from a party atmosphere to the guys actually caring about the community," Ledbetter said.

Community leadership is just what Hispanic fraternity Omega Delta Phi was hoping to achieve when it began sponsoring a little league team in Bryan three years ago. Albert Mares, current president and a member since 1997, said the project started out as a simple donation, but quickly progressed into a relationship between the players and fraternity members.

"We gave them money from our dues, then they needed the field re-sodded, then they needed equipment," Mares said. "Finally, we started coaching them."

Mares said that each spring semester,

Omega Delta Phi members practice teams about two hours each week.

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"We keep them off the streets," said. "We tell them it's good to do homework and obey your parents."

Mares said he thinks Omega Delta Phi making a difference in the community ception of college students. He said and businesses regularly call him with projects for the fraternity.

"We are proving that the typical student isn't going out and getting every weekend," Mares said.

The minority fraternities and sororities especially seem to support community service. Alpha Kappa Alpha, an African-American sorority, requires members to participate in a group project and three hours of service each month. President Chasidy Allen said service is the most important part of her group.

Several groups have tutored and mentored "at-risk" programs in the community.

"A lot of us had to sacrifice to be here, we think it's good to give back to the community," Mares said. "A lot of our parents to work two jobs with overtime, and a lot of the minority kids had to get jobs to be able



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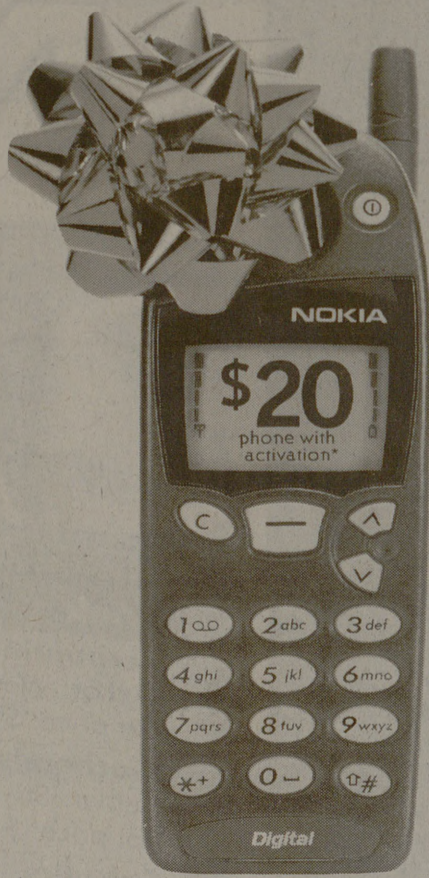
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<p><b>Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church</b> College &amp; Career Class You are invited to a Bible study especially for students. Sunday mornings at 9:45 1228 W. Villa Maria 779-2297</p> <p>For more information contact Marcus Brewer: 696-6558 m-brewer@tam.u.edu http://PersonalWebs.myriad.net/dfwb</p>	<p><b>Episcopal</b></p> <p><b>St. Thomas Episcopal</b> 906 George Bush Dr. • College Station, TX 696-1726 Sunday services at 8:00, 9:00 and especially for late rising Ags. 11:15 a.m. Next door to Canterbury House, the Episcopal Student Center</p>
<p><b>Catholic</b></p> <p><b>St. Mary's Catholic Center</b> 603 Church Avenue in Northgate (979)846-5717 www.aggiecatholic.org</p> <p><b>Pastoral Team</b> Rev. Michael J. Sis, Pastor Rev. David A. Konderla, Associate Pastor Campus Ministers - Deacon Bill Scott, Deacon David Reed, Martha Tonn, Lillian Smith, Maureen Murray, Jill Bludau</p> <p><b>Daily Masses</b> Mon.-Fri.: 5:30 p.m. in the Church Tues. &amp; Thurs. 12:05 p.m. in the All Faiths Chapel Sat.: 10:30 a.m. (Korean)</p> <p><b>Weekend Masses</b> Sat.: 5:30 p.m. (English), 7:00 p.m. (Spanish) Sun.: 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m., 7:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Confessions</b> Wed. 8:30-9:30 p.m., Sat. 4:00-5:15 p.m. or by appointment.</p>	<p><b>Presbyterian</b></p> <p><b>Covenant Presbyterian Church</b> "A welcoming community of faith who reaches out, cares for one another &amp; proclaims the love of Jesus Christ to all" Thomas W. Estes &amp; G. Thomas Huser - Ministers Currently Meeting at Pebble Creek Elementary Sunday Service: 8:30 &amp; 11 a.m. Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. Coming Soon (2001) to Rock Prairie &amp; Wellborn Office: 3404 South College Ave., Bryan, TX 77802 (979) 846-5631, www.covenantpresbyterian.org</p>
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