

# Valentine's Day in April

"On Valentine's Day, we give the people that we love, we give them books."

Each year on April 23, *La Diada de Sant Jordi*, St. George's Day or referred to as Valentine's Day in some cultures, is celebrated by a multitude of people all over the world with the exchange of books with loved ones.

Former UT basketball player Inma Zanoguera, a graduate student in the English as a second language program, said the above quote and explained that she spent the last few years celebrating this holiday on her own, although it has always been her favorite from her culture.

"Every year I would celebrate by giving a book to a friend, or to myself, or what not," Zanoguera said.

This year, however, Zanoguera said she decided to make a change and began working with the Students for Justice in Palestine to help organize a book collection to send help to form an English language library in Gaza, Palestine.

Zanoguera said the idea came to her after reading an article about the situation in Gaza and their need for books.

"I don't know, I guess I just decided to go big and I just said, 'I am going to help these guys, and on the 23rd, I am going to send all the books I am able to collect from now until then,'" Zanoguera said. "So I have been working since then to try to organize this."

Zanoguera said she then reached out to Shahrazad Hamdah, the president of SJIP, and together they began to organize the drive. The books were mailed a day early on April 22 in honor of St. George's Day because the post office was closed on the actual holiday.

“Students for Justice in Palestine is a pro-Palestine advocacy group on campus and in the community,” Hamdah said. “We aim to educate people about the occupation of Palestine and the human rights violations that occur there, so this project interested us because we want to do what we can to contribute to Palestinian society in the West Bank and Gaza.”

The group has been working since the end of March to organize the donations and were able to collect over 250 books, with the original goal being only 100.

Zanoguera said the funding for shipping the books came from SJIP and because they exceeded their collection expectations by so much and because of budgeting limitations, not all of the books were able to be sent.

“I think what ended up happening was we put some flyers on Facebook and stuff, but we mostly reached out to our closest friends,” Zanoguera said, “and just by doing that we collected so many books.”

Though this is the first time the group has put on an event like this, Hamdah said that they hope to repeat the event, either in the summer or in the fall.

To become involved with SJIP you can go to their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/utoledosjp](http://www.facebook.com/utoledosjp).

---

## [The URGE for equality](#)

United for Reproductive and Gender Equality, an organization new to the University of Toledo, is working to become an official student group for the Fall 2017 semester.

URGE has been active on campus for the past year, working with

organizations such as the University of Toledo Feminist Alliance to raise awareness for reproductive health issues, according to Tayler Threatt, a third-year speech and language pathology major and the voter engagement intern with the group.

“Right now, it’s a bigger thing on BG campus, and it’s extremely new to Toledo,” Threatt said. “So we’ve been getting it out to the community, and this semester we have seen a bigger push to get it to people who are on campus.”

Since coming to the University of Toledo, URGE has been involved in putting on a number of events, according to Threatt, including a monthly Sex Trivia Night.

The final trivia night for the year will be held Saturday, April 29 at Bretz Nightclub in downtown Toledo. The theme for the night is BDSM, and prizes are given for first- and second-place teams, as well as for best team name.

“People are uncomfortable talking about sex, people are uncomfortable saying the word sex or what it entails,” Threatt said. “So people can come out, win prizes and kind of understand their comfort level with things.”

This is the fourth time this event has been hosted this year, according to Threatt, and it has seen a growth in attendance since it began last semester.

“At our last one, we had about six teams out, and generally teams are like 3-5 people,” Threatt said. “We had it on campus, and all of our chairs were full.”

Threatt stresses that the event is important because it raises awareness about reproductive and gender equality issues, while simultaneously raising money for URGE to be able to do their work since the organization is nonprofit.

“I think it is really fun. When we have it at Bretz, people

can get up, get drinks,” Threatt said. “So I’m hoping for the last one, this one will be a pretty big turnout.”

The group will continue to be active during the summer, according to Threatt, with a multitude of volunteer opportunities for UT students.

“URGE is like UTFAs big sibling,” wrote Jessie Lynch, the president of the University of Toledo Feminist Alliance and Toledo organizer and data manager for URGE, in an email interview. “As an affiliate, we are able to connect and get support from URGE and FMF organizers, as well as get materials like URGE condoms and other swag.”

URGE has already attempted to become an official student organization, Threatt said, though was denied due to a possible issue with the already existing group UTFAs.

According to Threatt, the organization is working at a national level to get approval to apply again in the fall for official student group status.

“I think it’s important to always be aware of the potential for overstepping the boundaries of grassroots organizations that we should be uplifting, as opposed to creating competition,” Lynch said. “Since UTFAs already affiliated with URGE, I personally believe it would have been unnecessary and harmful to have an URGE chapter on campus when the URGE-affiliated UTFAs already there.”

Lynch explained that while it is important that URGE continue to grow, creating an official branch at UT could potentially hurt progress being made by current grassroots organizations.

“It could potentially derail the community UTFAs been working to build,” Lynch said. “Grassroots organizations, feminist or otherwise, should be supported by national organizations, not put in competition with them.”

The two groups do have very similar platforms, according to Lynch, including a focus on reproductive and gender equality for all people.

“URGE and UTFA both believe in social, political and economic equity of all people, regardless of identity,” Lynch said. “Both are pro-choice, sex-positive, intersectional organizations that acknowledge that social movements should be led by the marginalized folks that are most affected by inequitable policy and social norms.”

Threatt stressed that the main difference between URGE and UTFA is the group’s ability to organize, because URGE is national, as well as that URGE is more all-inclusive.

“UTFA definitely it does focus on feminism and what it is, and they have been trying to get the word out... But, however, with URGE, it’s not just one thing; it’s kind of everything.” Threatt said.

URGE will continue to be active on campus, regardless of organizational status within the fall, according to Threatt.

---

## [UT fraternity builds a bridge to adventure](#)

Founded in 1977 and known as Pi Kappa Phi’s exclusive philanthropy today, The Ability Experience is intended to instill lifelong service within the fraternity members to serve people with disabilities.

As part of their Ability weekend, University of Toledo Pi

Kappa Phi members and alumni joined their brothers from Illinois, Ohio and Michigan April 22 to rebuild a boardwalk for Sunshine Communities.

The fraternity brothers visited the facility on Friday to interact with the members of Sunshine Communities and spent the rest of their Saturday building the boardwalk, Keil said. They continued working on the project on Sunday morning until 2 p.m.

Every semester, Pi Kappa Phi visits the special needs home to spend time with Sunshine Communities members and offer any help.

Philanthropy chair and third-year geography major John Stewart said it's important for him to form relationships with people of disabilities, as he has grown up doing service for them.

"We make places more accessible to people with disabilities," Stewart said.

In the past, they have done a variety of fundraising events and have assisted in building ramps for community members.

They have monthly events like movie nights, Halloween dances, 5K runs and dinners. The Pi Kappa Phi brothers enjoy interacting with Sunshine members.

“It’s kind of cool,” said third-year nursing major and vice president Paul Glaza. “It helps us build a relationship.”

Since Sunshine Communities is very close to their philanthropy, The Ability Experience, some Pi Kappa Pi members volunteer and even work there.

In the past, the fraternity has helped them with repainting tables, mulching their ground and setting up stones around the house.

However, the boardwalk is an especially important project, as it lets them have access to the beautiful ground, Glaza said. They are also able to enjoy the river that goes through their backyard.

“The boardwalk allows these members to go out and explore nature,” said third-year mechanical engineering major and Pi Kappa Phi treasurer Jeremy Keil.

Robin Erb, vice president of Sunshine Communities, said that members of the fraternity have helped maintain the boardwalk for years.

“Last year, they spent several weekends at Sunshine dismantling the 1993 boardwalk their predecessors built more than 20 years earlier,” Erb said. “Years of flooding and freezing had rendered the boardwalk unsafe.”

Keil said that, while they spent last semester destructing the boardwalk, this semester the members spent their time reconstructing it.

“They haven’t had a boardwalk for a year and a half now,” Glaza said.

Glaza said it’s been rewarding seeing the people’s reactions to the rebuilding of the boardwalk. He said he likes giving back to these people and allowing them to have the experience again.

“The boardwalk builds wheelchair access to a beautiful, peaceful outdoors,” Erb said. “Those who use mobility devices are often limited to smooth surfaces such as sidewalks and parking lots.”

Erb also said that the 1,140-foot boardwalk stretches through Sunshine’s backyard and allows users access to Swan Creek. The boardwalk will feature gazebos, benches and platforms to give users open spaces to relax.

To make this project a reality, Sunshine had an engineering team that volunteered to lay down the foundation. Then, the members of the fraternity worked to build the boardwalk and railing, Keil said.

He added that, throughout the process, the ADA came for



standard regulation to oversee all the work.

“They’re so happy to have us here. I got hugs from at least three of them today,” Keil said.

The project will be finished within the next few weeks. In addition, the fraternity donated about \$5,000 to Sunshine.

Some of the national programs Pi Kappa Phi members have participated in include Journey of Hope and Gear Up Florida, Stewart said. These programs involve riding a bike through communities to raise funds and awareness for people with disabilities.

To continue its efforts, the fraternity will be hosting Boundaries Week to raise money for The Ability Experience. One hundred percent of proceeds from its philanthropy dinner on April 27 will go toward supporting people with disabilities.

---

## **Fairytales with a twist**

Into the woods we go with a modern retelling of two famous fairy tales by the University of Toledo Opera Ensemble. The group will bring the story of Grimm’s fairytales into the 21st century.

In the two one-act operas April 21-23, UT students will present “The Brothers Grimm” by Dean Burry and “Little Red

Riding Hood" by Seymour Barab in the UT Center for Performing Arts Recital Hall. The performance is directed by Denise Ritter-Bernardini, an associate professor of voice in the Department of Music.

"Our students have worked very hard as they always do," Ritter-Bernardini said in an email interview. "The opera students have a very high work ethic. The music is pretty difficult in the Dean Burry, but they have really pulled through."

The ensemble's performance of "The Brothers Grimm" is the Ohio premiere of the opera. The opera tells an engaging tale of how the siblings took oral German folk stories and immortalized their characters in writing. Rumpelstiltskin, Rapunzel and Little Red Cap all come to life anew by pens of brothers Wilhelm and Jacob.

William Floss, a fourth-year vocal performance major, has two roles in the performance. He plays Rumpelstiltskin in "The Brothers Grimm" and the Woodsman in "Little Red Riding Hood."

"For Rumpelstiltskin, I really get to have some fun," Floss said in an email interview. "He is very creepy and cynical, so I really just get to drop everything and hop into this character and creep around the stage."

The UT Opera Ensemble will then present one of the most famous of the Grimm's stories, "Little Red Riding Hood." The recital hall will be transformed into the forest before Red makes her famous trek to Grandma's house.

"I really think this is a great starter opera," Floss said. "It's wonderful and fun music that engages the audience, it's in English, the stories are funny and each of the two operas are only 45 minutes long."

A surprise element is brought to the performances through spoken poetry, rap and modern dance moves.

“‘Little Red Riding Hood’ already had some spoken dialogue that was in rhythm, and we just added a rap style to it to make it more modern in its feel,” Ritter-Bernardini said. “We also have added some hip-hop dance styles to some of the choreography because there’s a particular character within the Little Red story that is clearly a hip-hop fan.”

Floss said Ritter-Bernardini’s direction has been nothing short of great for the past four years he’s known her.

“What I love most about her directing is that she is always pushing me outside of my comfort zone,” Floss said. “She has absolutely made me the actor I am today.”

“The Brothers Grimm” and “Little Red Riding Hood” will be performed Friday and Saturday, April 21 and 22 at 7:30 p.m., as well as Sunday, April 23 at 3 p.m. Performances will be held in the UT Center for Performing Arts Recital Hall. Parking is free in the lot directly across from the building. Tickets are \$10-\$15 and are available through the Center for Performing Arts Box Office online at [www.utoledo.tix.com](http://www.utoledo.tix.com) or by calling 419.530.ARTS (2787).

---

## Students showcase diversity at Pharmacy’s got Talent

A night of impromptu performances and spontaneous dances were some of the highlights of this year’s Pharmacy’s Got Talent.

The University of Toledo’s Student National Pharmaceutical Association hosted the event April 14 from 6 – 9 p.m. in the Student Union Auditorium.

“What made this event so unique is that we welcomed anyone to

perform even last-minute,” said Ami Mehta, a third-year graduate pharmacy student.

Mehta, the vice president of SNPhA, has been a part of the association since her first year and helped organize this year’s event.

Mehta said Pharmacy’s Got Talent is a diverse event intended to assemble different cultures to showcase the students’ talents.

“We asked students to perform for us to celebrate the month of diversity: April,” Mehta said.

This year’s performances included classical Indian dancing, Dabke and pharmacy students singing.

While the president of African People’s Association, Nnenna Kalu, taught members how to dance to African music, Filipino American Association members performed their traditional folk dance known as Tinikling.

In addition to free admission, free food was also served from a variety of different cultures.

“Last year we only had about 100 people,” said Keya Shah, a third-year graduate pharmacy student. “This year we had more than 200 people come in.”

SNPhA has been planning the event since the beginning of the spring semester. Mehta said, since they were only expecting 200 people, she was surprised when they were overbooked and even ended up running out of food.

Mehta said that SNPhA embraces diversity. The organization tries to implement diversity within the pharmacy students. SNpHA itself is very multicultural, as it includes members from various places, including India, Albania, Nigeria, Africa, Middle East and Greece, Mehta said.

Caren Steinmiller, an associate lecturer in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and one of SNPhA's faculty advisers, said the event was well orchestrated and included a wide range of performances that represented all the different backgrounds.

"It was probably the biggest crowd that they have had yet at this event," Steinmiller said.

She added that the students reached out to peer students from other pharmacy colleges and asked some of their SNPhA members to attend.

She believes Pharmacy's Got Talent is a great way to celebrate the diversity in the college and have everyone show off what makes them unique and special.

"It's so nice to see everybody come together and celebrate everybody for being who they are," Steinmiller said.

She said she liked seeing her students support one another. Steinmiller added that this is SNPhA's last event before the year ends and is one the executive board arranges.

Steinmiller shared she was very happy and loves to see everybody so proud of their heritage and background.

---

## Smile for Smiles

Millions of children in developing countries suffer from cleft palates and lips. Most cannot eat or speak properly and are ostracized in their own communities. The cost of surgery is just \$250, but most cannot afford this, so these clefts go untreated.

However, one fraternity is planning to raise money for reconstructive surgeries to change the lives of those living with clefts.

The University of Toledo's Zeta Phi Eta will be hosting their first annual Smile for Smiles April 23 from 1 – 3 p.m. in front of University Hall's bell tower.

Members of the fraternity will be taking professional headshots for \$5 and are offering Photoshop and retouching for an additional \$5.

All money raised will be donated to Smile Train, an international children's charity that provides free cleft repair surgery and care to children in more than 85 developing countries.

According to their website, Smile Train has performed more than one million surgeries since 1999 and, every five minutes, a child receives a cleft repair surgery.

Elliott Free, a fourth-year communication major and vice president of Zeta Phi Eta, said that Smile for Smiles was organized through the fraternity's national council.

"Our national council wanted to create an event where all chapters, across the country, raised philanthropic funds on the same day," Free said.

Abigail Sullivan, a fourth-year communication major and fundraising chair of Zeta Phi Eta, will be taking headshots during the event.

She said that this is a great opportunity to give your profile a cleaner, more professional look.

"LinkedIn is focused on heavily both during and after college," Sullivan said. "Headshots, especially high quality, professional headshots, aren't cheap."

Free said that, as a professional communication fraternity, Zeta Phi Eta feels it is their duty to use their talents for a greater good.

“A huge part of our mission involves serving the local and greater communities,” Free said. “Zeta Phi Eta will continue to spread hope, joy and love to all for years to come.”

---

## Jammin' in the name of awareness

Get ready for live music and entertainment this weekend as the University of Toledo's International Justice Mission chapter hosts its first-ever Traffic Jam UT to raise awareness for human trafficking.

IJM is a global organization that seeks to protect human rights and fight violence around the world.

Demma Strausbaugh, a third-year biology major and president of IJM, founded the UT chapter almost two years ago and is also responsible for organizing Traffic Jam.

“Traffic Jam UT is a large collaborative effort with the university and the community to work toward a human trafficking-free Toledo,” Strausbaugh said.

Traffic Jam will be held Friday, April 21 from 3 – 8 p.m. at Carter Field on UT's campus.

More than 500 people are expected to attend, and Strausbaugh said she is anxious to see how it goes.

The event will include food trucks from Rosie's and Deets BBQ,

carnival games, raffles, live music and guest speakers.

One of the speakers to be featured at the event is Celia Williamson, who founded both the Lucas County Human Trafficking Coalition and the Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute at UT.

Bands from the Toledo area, such as Little Pink, The Ice Cream Militia, Cryface and Shell, will be performing at the event.

Tanner Wertz, a member of The Ice Cream Militia, will be playing at the event. The band has been performing since 2015 and is completely made up of UT students. Wertz says he hopes that the event is successful in raising awareness for human trafficking in Toledo.

“It occurs so much in this area whether people know it or not,” Wertz said.

In 2016, the Ohio Department of Health named Toledo as the fourth-highest city in the country for rates of human trafficking, and according to the Polaris project, a non-profit organization working to fight against trafficking and slavery, overall trafficking rates in Ohio are on the rise.

“Human trafficking is very high in this region, and we need to do what we can to help those who have been victimized and prevent others from becoming victims,” Wertz said.

Strausbaugh expressed how putting together the event has been a lot of work for herself and the IJM executive board, but it has been worth the effort.

“I hope people will learn about the realities of human trafficking and start advocating for our mission and victims,” Strausbaugh said.

Admission wristbands for the event can be purchased at Ask Rocky’s prior to the day of the event. The cost is \$6 for students and \$10 for non-students. Admission comes with 5



tickets that can be used for food or games, and extra tickets can be purchased at additional cost.

There is also a VIP admission wristband available for \$25, which allows unlimited access to games and activities.

All proceeds from the event go to support IJM at UT and the Lucas County Human Trafficking Coalition.

“Awareness is the strongest defense against trafficking,” Strausbaugh said. “We want parents, students, and kids to know what the signs are and what they should do if they suspect trafficking is going on around them.”

---

## Quenching the thirst

Nearly one in 10 people live without clean water every day. That’s 663 million people worldwide. In Africa alone, women spend 40 billion hours a year walking for water.

This year, University of Toledo students and community members had the opportunity to experience a day in the life of one of these women. The Catholic Student Association hosted the sixth annual Walk for Water April 9 in UT’s Centennial Mall.

Participants carried gallons of clean water along the 5K course to raise money for Clean Water for the World.

Zach Gibbemeyer, a third-year exercise science major and event director, said that the money goes toward water purification units.

“They have both a solar and non-solar one,” Gibbemeyer said. “The solar ones are more efficient since you don’t need to have electricity, but they are both very well needed.”

Gibbemeyer said that 130 participants preregistered this year, topping last year's total by 20. Even more signed up the day of.

Race and program director Kristy Kagy, a fourth-year exercise science major, has played a major role in the event since her freshman year.

"I think it's just a good way to go out and show people what you really care about in the world," Kagy said. "There is a global water crisis, and we have to acknowledge that."

Kagy said that Toledo Public School students also attended the event for educational purposes.

Kagy is thankful for faculty and sponsors who played a role in putting the event on and encourages students to consider becoming a part of the team in the future.

"The way that I look at it is, clean water is a human right that not a lot of us have access to," Gibbemeyer said. "This is something that is helping to provide people with that chance to have clean water, that human right."

---

## **Taking back the night**

Cries of "Women unite! Take back the night!" rang out through the evening air as women took to the streets Saturday in a stand against domestic violence and sexual assault. This year marked the 23rd annual "Toledo Area Take Back the Night."

Community members and University of Toledo students participated in the event held at Woodward High School April 8. Holding signs, women marched a mile around the surrounding community.

Take Back the Night is a worldwide movement involving more than 600 campuses and communities in 30 countries with the goal of raising awareness and ending all forms of violence against women.

There was a separate men's event held from 8–10 p.m. The night began with a resource fair, and people from organizations in the community presented tables with information.

During the fair, participants viewed T-shirts from the Clothesline Project, which allows women in the community who are survivors of violence to take the chance to express their feelings by writing on and decorating a shirt.

Lily Ostrander, a third-year pharmacy major, volunteered previous years to hang the shirts and said it was overwhelming to see how many stories of violence and survival these shirts represented.

"The Clothesline Project simultaneously breaks my heart and gives me hope," Ostrander said. "It's about unapologetically revealing your truth in a world that tells you again and again to stop talking about it."

Following the resource fair, a rally took place in the high school's auditorium featuring music and speakers.

Bianca Caniglia, a fourth-year student double majoring in environmental science and women and gender studies, performed an original poem entitled "10 Things."

For the past three years, Caniglia attended Take Back the Night and has performed her poem each time. Caniglia said she felt honored to be a part of this event.

"Speaking out in the face of violence is really important to me," Caniglia said. "Getting the chance to do that through my poetry was very exciting."

A total of 114 women of all ages chose to march after the

rally. Women who were unable to walk rode a bus following the march through the streets.

The march was a powerful experience for Courtney Campbell, a third-year nursing major. This was her first year attending Take Back the Night.

“Marching alongside other women and supporters made me feel a part of something important,” Campbell said.

Following the march, many of the women reconvened for the Survivor Speakout. During this time, women shared personal stories of how they were affected by domestic violence or sexual assault.

The speakout was important to many in attendance, including Alexandra Korsog, a fourth-year nursing major.

“The speakout made me feel like I was not alone and that I had love and support surrounding me,” Korsog said. “It was like I had armor and, for the first time, it felt great to talk about it.”

Throughout the night, women like Micki Pittman, a fourth-year social work major, volunteered as a safe person.

“As this is an event that many survivors attend, and the stories shared or topics discussed may make a person emotionally distraught or uncomfortable, a safe person functions to provide immediate care to someone who is in crisis or is triggered,” Pittman said.

These volunteers undergo a comprehensive advocate training offered through the Young Women’s Christian Association.

“Sexual and physical violence against women is a serious crime, and it happens everywhere,” Pittman said. “There is no reason to be ashamed or embarrassed; it is not your fault and you are not alone.”

The event covers difficult topics, which can be intimidating for some, but Ostrander believes this is why it is so important. The event had a profound impact on her and many others.

“Each year I take away more insight into my own experiences with sexual assault, as well as a deeper understanding of the experiences of those around me,” Ostrander said. “I hope others take away not only a list of resources for where they or a loved one can find help, but also a bit of healing in knowing that they are surrounded by a community who will listen and care about their experiences.”

---

## **‘ Photographers Without Borders ’ enacts change**

Could we possibly be contributing to the extinction of species without even knowing? Adjunct Communication Theory Professor Christy Frank took her first international trip to Sumatra, Indonesia, to find out.

There, as part of Photographers without Borders, she learned about the impact the palm oil industry was having on both human and wildlife.

“I really didn’t know how devastating things were from here until I went there,” Frank said. “It’s amazing to me how, in our everyday life, in the United States, a ton of the products we are purchasing are contributing to that problem.”

Between 1990 and 2005, the palm oil industry hit its big boom, causing plantations to replace rainforests in Sumatra. Frank said the sad thing is that people depend on palm oil

plantations for their economy.

"It's a double-edged sword. People really need ways to survive, to make money and support their family," Frank said.

It's not done in sustainable way, as the process involves illegal encroaching of national rainforests. Frank said access roads segmented the forests, hindering animals traveling between their habitats.

Although Frank knew of these issues before traveling to Indonesia, she was still surprised. She added that over half of the forests have been lost due to palm oil plantations.

"We would go a three-hour trip in Sumatra and 90 percent of the time we were driving in this van, it was all palm oil plantations," Frank said. "It's amazing how much they've taken over the land."

The reason why palm oil trees are so detrimental to the environment is because they deplete the soil of all its resources. The trees consume up to 20-30 gallons of water a day and have caused water shortage in surrounding villages, Frank said.

This problem continues to exist because palm oil is cheap and there is a great abundance of it, Frank added. They get cheap labor for it, and when they establish the plantations, they burn acres and acres of rainforest.

"Not only are you killing animals with fire, but you are also releasing tons of carbon in the atmosphere," Frank said.

Sumatra is the only place in the world where the Sumatran orangutans live. It's also the only place where the orangutans, the rhino, the elephant and the tiger all coexist. Those four species are critically endangered, and other wildlife has been affected.

People have died and lost their homes because of palm oil

trees. These trees have contributed to flash flooding, as their soil cannot handle floods.

Frank said her favorite part was working with the Orangutan Information Centre. She said the founder of the nonprofit grew up in Indonesia and has rescued wildlife through his work.

"They've turned things around, and he has given hope to the area," Frank said.

Panut Hadisiswowyo started the organization and now has rescued hundreds of orangutans, all while helping reclaim illegal palm oil plantations.

"Everyone kept telling him that he couldn't reforest a former palm oil plantation, but he proved them wrong," Frank said.

To further prevent habitat loss, Frank is also working with the Sumatran Wildlife Sanctuary movement to protect and conserve more than 40 hectares of rainforest land.

"The land was amazing; it was wild like it was supposed to be, an actual natural habitat," Frank said.

Frank said her trip to Indonesia was life-changing. She said it was special to see orangutans swinging so gracefully through the canopy of trees.

"I'm really hoping that I can be a voice for the voiceless by helping animals that have a very real chance of going extinct," Frank said.

She believes that the only way to raise awareness on this issue is through sharing personal stories.

One of the stories she heard made everyone in the room cry. On a poacher's last day on his job, he shot the mother orangutan to separate it from its baby. The mother kissed her baby, gripping it tightly in her arms until she took her last breath.

“I think when people realize how similar these creatures are to us, stories like that can really touch people because they realize what an impact our behaviors can cause on wildlife,” Frank said.

She said every photographer that went had a different personal motivation. Frank lost her grandmother a year ago. She said her grandmother’s passing made her think about the legacy she wanted to leave behind, so she found a cause that would allow her to give back.

Frank said some of the photographers will be submitting photos to help raise awareness.

“If we don’t take action now, it won’t exist for future generations,” Frank said.

Frank, who has now caught the travel bug, hopes to get involved in more humanitarian projects. She plans on applying for other photographers’ programs to travel internationally and bring attention to other issues.

“I think sometimes we get very disconnected as citizens over here; we don’t realize how connected we all are on a global scale,” Frank said

According to Frank, the Sumatran rainforests could be completely wiped out by 2030. She said people can help by making informed decisions on what they are purchasing. Consumers can cut back on how much they rely on palm oil products.

She suggested that people also support NGOs like the Orangutan Information Centre that have rescued animals and are providing a living space for people affected by the plantations. They have established coffee and orange farm plantations.

“It’s all sustainable, and they’re all helping local people get involved still make a living, but in a more sustainable



eco-friendly way,” Frank said.

She believes connecting with people and working toward a common cause for a greater good is vital for humanity.

Her work is available on [www.vanismedia.com](http://www.vanismedia.com) and her fundraiser to support Sumatran Wildlife Sanctuary can be accessed on <https://grouprev.com/sumatranwildlifesanctuary-christy-frank>

---

## Accepting the beauty of the perfectly imperfect

After being told she had only six weeks left to live, Madison Humphrey didn't think that she would make it tomorrow. But today, she is the spokesperson for the National Eating Disorders Association and has won titles with National American Miss and Miss Ohio Teen.

Humphrey, a second-year media communication and women and gender studies major, said her life changed when she received mail from the National American Miss program.

When she got the letter, Humphrey shared that she was in a very dark place in her life. Due to her struggles with an eating disorder and depression, she was a little skeptical about the pageantry world.

“At first I was like, pageantry is not my thing, and then I looked into it a little more and how it suddenly transformed people's lives,” Humphrey said.

Learning about how the program helps girls to build their self-esteem and confidence encouraged her to go to the free open call.

"I just kind of fell in love with the way it made me feel," Humphrey said. "I stepped on the stage one time and have been addicted ever since."

She said it was a relief to step on stage for the first time. She felt like she didn't have that burden anymore and could raise her voice.

"The thing that really helped me build my confidence was realizing that I could share my story of my recovery and inspire other people," Humphrey said. "That's really empowering to me and, from there, I've just my built confidence and felt comfortable with myself."

She shared that, at first, people were very doubtful of her. She wanted to prove that she could do it.

"I was determined to go out there and give everything I had," Humphrey said.

Although she didn't win anything the first year, the next year she won Miss Ohio Teen Spokesmodel. She said that pageantry has changed her life into something completely different. She didn't have confidence before, but pageantry has opened her up and changed her life.

Humphrey said pageantry didn't click for her at first; rather, she fell in love with it over time.

"I guess just being in such a dark area of my life, it just gets so exhausting being so down on yourself and not believing in yourself," Humphrey said.

Her biggest struggle was just accepting the problem since, for the longest time, she didn't want to recover. She realized that her eating disorder didn't have to define her.

Now, she is the spokesperson for the National Eating Disorders Association, through which she has traveled to different events. This year she will be visiting Indiana. She has also

spoken for the River Centre Clinic and attends its event every year to speak on its behalf.

In her second year of National American Miss, Humphrey has won first runner-up talent, first runner-up academic achievement, third runner-up top model, fourth runner-up actress, most recommendations, Miss Spirit of America and placed sixth overall in Miss Ohio Teen out of 100 girls.

Humphrey has also competed in the Ohio pageant for three years and won second runner-up overall in 2016. She has won Miss Ohio Teen photogenic, academic achievement, Miss Spirit, Miss Spirit of America, most recommendations, portfolio, first runner-up spokesmodel, first runner-up, Most Promising Model, second runner-up casual wear model and third runner-up actress.

At the StarJewel Showcase in 2016, she won the Regional Teen title and won the national overall title in May.

Humphrey said it's more than just winning the pageants.

"If you're just going to wear the banner and the crown, that doesn't matter," Humphrey said. "With me, it's all about going out there and using the pageantry as a platform to talk about eating disorders and raising awareness about these issues."

---

## Singin' in Savage

More than \$18,000 was raised this year during the University of Toledo's second-longest standing tradition.

Songfest, hosted by Blue Key National Honor Fraternity and Mortar Board National Honor Society, was held April 1 at 5 p.m. in Savage Arena.

The night of competition and cause included dance and vocal performances from multiple UT organizations, fraternities and sororities.

The amount of funds raised was the largest in Songfest history and will be donated to Hut Outreach, a ministry that helps build schools and provide free education to children in Haiti.

Samuel Duling, a fourth-year majoring in political science and economics and the president of Mortar Board, said his favorite part of Songfest was the presentation of the check to Hut Outreach.

“My personal relationship with the founders of Hut Outreach, in concert with the unparalleled efforts of our Rocket community to raise a record-breaking amount of money so they can build a high school in Haiti, warms my heart more than I can say,” Duling said. “I am beyond confident that the Hut Outreach team will use every single dollar to help the Haitian people and represent UT in the best light possible.”

Stephanie Elkins, a fourth-year majoring in professional sales and vice president of Blue Key, said that surpassing their fundraising goal was one of her favorite parts of the night as well.

“I also loved seeing everything come together into a beautiful night of raising almost double our original goal of \$10,000 for Hut Outreach,” Elkins said.

Elkins, one of the Songfest emcees, was in charge of the event and said she had been planning the event with co-emcee Brandon Rosolowski since October 2016 to help in coordinating all contracts, group performances, director meetings and securing funding.

“It was my first and last time planning it,” Elkins said. “It was incredible to see the other side of things and how many pieces of the puzzle there are to make the event happen each

year.”

Performances were split into three divisions – co-ed, men and women – and were judged based on vocals, creativity, choreography and several other categories.

Pi Kappa Phi was the winner of this year’s men’s division and the ladies of Kappa Delta took home the trophy in the women’s division.

The Catholic Student Association also won first place in the co-ed division.

Joseph Leech, a fifth-year civil engineering major and one of CSA’s Songfest directors, said that seeing all their hard work pay off was an amazing thing.

“My favorite part of songfest has been the friendships that have been made and grown throughout our time preparing for the performance,” Leech said. “Sometimes practices were stressful and resulted in some late nights, but I believe I walked away with a closer group of friends and some of my favorite college memories.”

Mary Bishop, a first-year pre-nursing major, said winning Songfest’s co-ed division was “freaking amazing.”

“I literally cried,” Bishop said. “It was my first time doing Songfest, but I did musicals, so it was nice to be on stage again.”

Kylie Koesters, a fourth-year pharmacy major and vice president of Mortar Board, said that while Songfest is a time to see each performer put their heart into something they love, it is, more importantly, a time to recognize what they as a campus are able to do to give back.

“In just a few short months we changed the lives of those in Haiti forever,” Koesters said. “They’re getting a high school. Looking back, we’re all there for a common reason—to take the

opportunity as students to give back just a little of what this great university has to offer.”