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# A Greek Christmas: WKU fraternities, sororities give back to community kids

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Nov 30, 2022



Western Kentucky University junior Lauren Cowulich (right) helps wrap Parker-Bennett-Curry Elementary School students she and other members of the Greek community. Photos by Grace Ramey/gramey@bgdailynews.com

On Christmas morning, 34 Parker-Bennett-Curry Elementary School students will find presents under their tree personally picked out and wrapped by Western Kentucky University's Greek community.

The presents will include items from two sections of the kids' wish lists – the “needs,” like clothes and shoes, as well as the “wants,” like Barbie dolls and rollerblades, said Andrew Rash, WKU associate director of student activities.

The lists were compiled by the Family Resource Center officer at the school, who will also deliver the gifts to the “adopted” students.

Sarah Minix, Parker-Bennett-Curry Family Resource Center coordinator, said she has a list of about 175 students that are in need at the school.

“We have wonderful children and families, but we are a lower socioeconomic population,” Minix said.

The “adoption” of 34 students is a “heartfelt” and “appreciated” act of service by the WKU Greek community, she said.

Tuesday was the second year of the annual Christmas Angel Event, in which WKU's Greek organizations came together at Downing Student Union to wrap the presents they'd bought for the kids they “adopted” as part of the Christmas philanthropy event.

After the wrapping event, WKU will deliver the presents to the Family Resource Center, where the kids' families will be able to pick them up for the holiday season.

Approximately 100 WKU students participated in the event, from each of WKU's 34 chapters, including those from the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the Interfraternity Council and the Panhellenic Council.

This scale of inter-Greek collaboration is fairly rare, outside of Greek Week and homecoming, Rash said.

Sophomore Dakota Boudoucies, a Pike fraternity member, said that his chapter got a basketball goal that hangs from a door, clothes and books for the 4-year-old boy they "adopted."

He said that the inter-Greek collaboration was an important aspect of the event.

"It's a good atmosphere," Boudoucies said. "Everybody's helping each other out. Nobody's restricting on supplies or anything. The holidays isn't really a time to hold grudges. It's a time to just give back."

Junior Chloe Hill said that each chapter spent \$130 per kid. Her chapter, Alpha Gamma Delta, got markers, a sketchbook and clothes for their adoptee, a girl who loves art.

"I love the Panhellenic and IFC communities and I know that this is a great way to get involved more," Hill said.

Junior Taliah Guthrie and her Gamma Rho Sigma sisters got Sonic clothes, Minecraft toys and handheld video games for their adoptees.

“Some people don’t have the funds to have a really good Christmas, so we’re just here using the funds that we do have to help people enjoy their Christmas, especially at such a young age,” Guthrie said.

“We have pretty young kids. At that time, Christmas is such a big thing for young children. So being able to give back to people who don’t have what we do – it will mean a lot to them, and it means a lot to us.”

Guthrie attended the event last year too, but said that more people were participating this time around.

Philanthropy like this is at the core of what Greek life is about, Rash said.

“It’s something highly impactful that’s a very doable thing,” he said. “It’s not this crazy impossible thing.”

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