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RELAY RAISES \$42K



Vanguard photo/Adam Baudoux

Fundraiser nets record numbers for charity

By Sara Kitchen
THE VALLEY VANGUARD

Relay for Life participants shattered a \$35,000 fundraising goal by producing over \$42,000 for the American Cancer Society. According to Student Association President Jeremiah Stanghini, it is likely that Relay '08 has raised more money than any previous

student-run fundraiser at SVSU.

Although fundraising efforts were shy of meeting the \$50,000 goal set by the Student Association's Relay for Life committee, Angela Seeley, the committee's co-chair, was very pleased with the results.

"Of course we were bummed out because we didn't meet our committee's goal," the occupational therapy senior said, "but the goal that the Relay for Life organization sets is figured statistically and based on last year's results and how much they want us to grow, and we blew that goal out of the water."

Last year, participants raised

about \$27,000. Seeley estimates that by the end of the week prior to the Relay, about \$25,000 had been raised. This amount included all of the money raised by participants by that point, as well as funds raised from gas pumping, intersection collections, bake sales, and t-shirt sales among other small events.

"At that point, we weren't sure if we would meet either of our goals, so I was really happy by the end of the night when we figured out our total," Seeley said. "I think it went really, really well. The big key was that we started early and got a lot of people registered. We had only raised about \$7,000 prior to the Relay last year."

Co-chair Becky Griffin agreed that the final fundraising total was reflective of the committee's efforts to begin planning raising money early. "We also had some amazing people on the committee, and some amazing team captains," Griffin said.

"It was a really successful event," Seeley said. "A lot of people came out and showed support, and the carnival theme was a big hit."

Seeley sends a special thanks to Dining Services, who donated over \$5,000 in food for participants at the Relay.

Registration for the event went paperless this year, as 51 teams of 414

individuals kept track of their fundraising online at the American Cancer Society-sponsored SVSU Relay for Life Web site. Online participants logged \$15,890.85 of raised funds prior to Relay night.

The Student Nurses Association (SNA) was among the top ranked teams as they logged \$2,829 on their online team account.

SNA team co-captain Torrey Freese explained her groups fundraising process. "We had a large group, so I asked everyone involved to raise a minimum of \$100," the nursing senior said.

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VOLUNTEERING

Students spend break teaching lessons of their own to overseas children

By Sara Kitchen
THE VALLEY VANGUARD

The Dominican Republic is proving to be a hot spot for SVSU students seeking to perform community service abroad.

Most recently, a group of 21 SVSU students teamed up with students from Central Michigan University to spend their spring break working in the city of Monte Cristi through the Orphanage Outreach organization. Students from both colleges were members of the His House Christian Fellowship.

Co-leaders for the SVSU group were Nursing Senior Jamie Zumbro and IT Services employee Brent Fitzgerald, who is a recent graduate of Ferris State University. The pair enlisted the help of CMU Associate Campus Minister of the His House Fellowship Eric Woods to plan their trip and collaborate with the CMU students.

"Our trip was not related to previous trips," Fitzgerald said, referring to

the 2007 Alternative Spring Break that sent SVSU students to work in the Dominican Republic through the same organization. "We were discussing what sorts of mission trips were available, and there was only a habitat trip in the works at the time," Fitzgerald said.

"We try to organize at least two mission trips every year for the week of spring break," added His House member Susan Burgard. "Every year our His House does a Habitat for Humanity mission trip."

The group spent their week teaching English and leading a youth group for children whose native language is Spanish. They worked among over 200 other volunteers, most of which were college students. Forty-five children resided at the orphanage ranging from 18 months to 18 years of age.

"We would have to prepare lessons for all of our classes, and each day we would get a different subject to teach," Zumbro said. "For example, one day, my group had to teach body parts to all of our classes, and other groups taught clothing, sports, face parts, food, etc."

"The residents of Monte Cristi don't have much money, and the schools lack a decent English program," Fitzgerald said. "For a lot of children in this particular area, the ability to speak English is a ticket to a better life."

For the orphanage's youth group program, His House organized an instructed lesson for the children which involved singing and performing the story of Adam and Eve.

The group also got a chance to engage with the children outside of the



Vanguard photos/Adam Baudoux

Biology senior Susan Burgard teaches English to children in the Dominican Republic using flash cards.

classroom setting. "Between classes, we would play with the children at recess," Fitzgerald said. "Whether it was playing frisbee, jumping rope, playing soccer, or just making wild attempts to break the communication barrier, we wanted to invest in the children. The

love that we wanted to share with the kids is the same love that Christ has for us, and our goal was to help them to see that love."

Burgard described some other aspects of the experience. "We got to see the real Dominican Republic from the

beautiful beaches and mountains to the poorer neighborhoods where goats and dogs run freely. It was an amazing eye-opening experience and helped us to understand just how much we were doing for the people there."

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