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1 Both students and Ann Arbor residents passing through the Diag stopped to donate to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. Photo by Kirsten Kortebein.

2 The giant homemade teeter totter in the middle of the Diag in the fall quickly got the attention of passing students and increased donations to Mott. Photo by Kirsten Kortebein.

3 In light of October being National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the men of Sigma Alpha Mu and the women of Sigma Delta Tau sold "Go Blue Wear Pink" t-shirts on the Diag. Photo by Rivan Stinson.

GREEK LIFE GIVING BACK

WRITTEN BY KAITLIN SCHULER. DESIGNED BY CIERA CLAYBORNE.

Sometimes in the rushing process, one of the most important aspects of Greek life is forgotten: philanthropy. While most philanthropic requirements are established by national chapters, some sororities choose philanthropy as their focus and go above and beyond the set requirements. LSA junior Leila Pastore describes the exceptional philanthropy of her sorority, Phi Rho Alpha. "I think that an organization's founding principles regarding philanthropy can speak volumes about their values. The fact that our constitution mandates specific philanthropic work means something about what our founding sisters wanted Phi Rho Alpha to be about." In fact, this sorority is a local and independent sorority at the University, meaning it only has one chapter and is not part of the Pan Hellenic Council. Because of this, it allowed freedom when writing the Phi Rho Alpha constitution to set its own philanthropy goals. LSA junior Hannah Poindexter said, "each semester, sisters must complete at least five philanthropy hours from at least two events. We also host one large event each semester — a bar night in the fall and a Ben & Jerry's date auction in the spring — which are both required." Outside events can fulfill the requirement as well, as long as Pastore approves it and at least three fellow sisters attend. Similar requirements exist for Pan Hellenic sororities, though they do not always consist of as many hours.

Philanthropy is meant to be a fun way for sisters to bond while helping the community, and with all the unique events, it achieves that goal. Examples of events in Phi Rho Alpha's history included the Out of the Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk, Sigma Chi's Derby Days, Burns Park clean-up, blanket making for homeless shelters and the NAMI Walk for mental illness awareness. Poindexter said she would love to see a campus-wide carnival to raise money as a philanthropic event. "Each Greek house would create a booth or station with an activity featuring their philanthropic organization and along with doing something fun, everyone could learn about the great causes each house supports." Phi Rho Alpha currently donates to the Michigan Autism Partnership, and other charities supported by Greek life at the University include the Alpha Phi Foundation for the research and treatment of women's heart disease and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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