

March 2020



Prince George's County, MD

NEWS AND NOTES FROM GAMMA PI CHAPTER

GAMMA PI LEADS "OMEGA MARCH" TO ANNAPOLIS

ANNAPOLIS, Md. - You can best believe that when Omega men get together, something good is about to happen. When Omega men get together at the Maryland State Capitol, something important is about to happen. That was the case on Tuesday, March 10, when Brothers from the Super Chapter, from nearby Epsilon Sigma (Bowie State University) and other chapters in Corridor I assembled at the Capitol in Annapolis to bring Uplift to the community through civic participation.

Called "100 Ques in Annapolis," the event was held in Annapolis at the State Legislature, where both the House of Delegates and the State Senate for Maryland meet each Spring to discuss and pass legislation impacting Marylanders. In short, Annapolis

is "The Capitol Hill" of the State of Maryland – the center of power and influence in how the state is run, from the rugged mountains along the state's western border to the in the crystal clear waters of the beaches and the Atlantic Ocean in the east.

This was no tourist adventure. This was about business. In a series of planned events based on a carefully crafted agenda, the men of Omega – more than 100 strong – arrived in Annapolis armed with information about pending bills, ready to ask questions and discuss various legislative proposals, all in the context of what was good for their communities. For the Brothers of Gamma Pi, that meant especially looking out for the residents of Prince George's County. Gamma Pi was charged with organizing this year's event from a Corri-



Gamma Pi Leads 2nd District Ques in Annapolis - *from page 1*



2nd District members with Basileus Bro. Steven Walls (right)

Vice District Representative, Bro. Roni Kent; Corridor I Representative, Bro. Amir Shareef; representatives from Chapters across the Corridor; and the Brothers who made time on that historic day to ensure that our event was a success.”

Brothers identified four (4) legislative bills for which they prioritized support in Annapolis. These bills are being sponsored or supported by Delegates Nick Charles and Eric Mosby, who are members of Omega Psi Phi. In true Omega fashion, each bill is aligned with each one of our Cardinal Principles of the Fraternity. In short, they are:

Manhood - HB1114 - Child Custody and Visitation - Best Interest of the Child - Factors . This bill seeks to eliminate historical preferences/bias towards mothers when analyzing child custody/visitation issues.

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1114>

Scholarship - SB0001 - Built to Learn Act of 2020 . This bill deals with budgeting money that will be used for public school construction.

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0001>

Perseverance - HB1343 - Criminal Procedure Expungement Expansion. This bill seeks to expand expungement opportunities for certain offenses.

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1343>

Uplift - HB0416- Medical Cannabis Business Development Fund. This bill seeks to obtain funding and opportunities for small minority and women businesses in the cannabis industry.

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0416>

To muscle support for the bills, Brothers employed the “fan-out” strategy by breaking up into smaller groups that went out and visited their own local legislator’s offices to discuss the priority bills. Brothers were armed with leave-behind letters of support as part of that effort. The idea was to leave Annapolis with an impression and a message about the most important community-based priorities are from The World’s Greatest Fraternity.

“If we are to have an impact on decisions that are being made that can affect us or the ones we love, we must sacrifice time to inform our legislators regarding how we feel about various issues,” said Bro. Allison, in explaining the significance of the event. “Over the years, the Brothers in Maryland have done exceedingly well at ensuring that legislators know that we are here and that we vote; however, an area where we wanted to improve was in expressing our interest in support of or against actual legislation. Through this kind of expression, we can achieve impact.”

dor level. Corridor I encompasses all of the chapters in Maryland.

The schedule for the day was packed from 9 a.m. until lunch that began at 12 noon, with some optional educational events available afterwards for those Brothers who wanted to stay into early afternoon after the business was complete. This included a visit to the Historic Ashbury United Methodist Church to see Bro. Bishop Edgar Amos Love’s Library and personal artifacts.

“Looking back, I was fortunate and honored to have been supported by our 1st

Project ENRICH Connects Students to Public Speaking Pro

Students who attend Gamma Pi's Project ENRICH program get a jump on other high school students who are looking ahead to college. That's because they're exposed to a lot of "inside information" about admissions, financing, scholarships, majors and careers. The one ongoing focus of the program under director Bro. Willie Hines, has been helping students learn how to speak and communicate clearly and confidently.

As students prepare for the April Essays, they received some valuable lessons about talking in front of an audience during the March 7 monthly session. Local consultant Crystal Smith addressed about 60 students and some parents about the principles of public speaking. In her interactive Power Point presentation, Ms. Smith provided tips on delivery, nervousness, organization and she even offered a mathematical style formula the students could follow in crafting and giving a talk of any kind.

Many Brothers in Gamma Pi who work with Project ENRICH, along with program alumni, stress to the students the importance of verbal communication and public speaking ability in opening the door to career opportunity and advancement. Hearing from an outside source like Ms. Smith



Public speaking pro talks to Project ENRICH

brought it home for the students. They had never heard it put in such a context before, especially the formula.

During its monthly three-hour sessions, Gamma Pi spends the bulk of its time divided into smaller groups by grade level. The presentation on public speaking by Crystal Smith was the closing session for March 7, which followed small group sessions during which students talked about and role-played job interviews. If the students follow the advice they got on this Saturday, they will all be ready for the essays come April.

www.projectenrich.org

"Would You Like to See My Resume?"



Gamma P Brothers also spent the March session helping the young students prepare for interviews. The Brothers set up mock sessions in several breakout groups in the classrooms, according to grade. The youths went before live panels and received feedback afterwards.

Project ENRICH advisers conducted interviews for various positions, from music producer to law school applicant. They were tough on the questions and demanded that students do their homework beforehand. The exercise inspired confidence and helped students learn to pitch themselves.

MARDI GRAS 2020 IS RESET

The Brothers of Gamma Pi Chapter were stunned like everyone else at the rapid turn of events in mid-March when the fast-moving CoVID-19 coronavirus brought life around the globe to a near complete standstill. As a result, we have had to reschedule our Mardi Gras 2020 Fundraising Gala to Friday, July 31st. The show will go on, it's just delayed. The original date was Friday, March 20th.

The decision to postpone was not made arbitrarily. The chapter was bound by crowd-size restrictions that Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan put into effect on March 12. At that time, public gatherings were limited to 250 persons. Mardi Gras could not have been held even if the chapter wanted to move forward, under these guidelines.

Mardi Gras chairman Bro. Rodney Beverly states that the program for Mardi Gras will remain the same. It will still feature live music by F.A. M.E. (Foundation for the Advancement of Music and Education) jazz ensemble and The World Famous DJSHABLAST, will be spinning on the "Wheels of Steel." The event will still take place from 8 p.m.-1 a.m. with dinner from 8:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m., and an open bar from 8 p.m.-10 p.m.

"We are excited that we were able to secure a date that Martin's Crosswinds still had available. Everyone with events, from weddings to dinner dances were affected by the closures and had to re-book for another date."

Mardi Gras 2020 was pretty much sold out, and last-minute tickets were moving fast. With the event now being rescheduled, an opportunity exists to purchase a few of the remaining tickets. For additional information about tickets, go to www.gammapi.org. You can also reach out to a member of the chapter for information about any available tickets for the new date. Some individual chapter members may have one or two spots open at their tables.

The Super Chapter encourages you to spend time ensuring your family's safety and following government guidelines during these challenging times. We look forward to seeing you Friday, July 31st and ready to "Party with a Purpose."



Why is the event being postponed?

The State of Maryland declared a state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency on March 5, 2020 to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the state. Several cases have been confirmed in the State of Maryland and in Prince George's County.

Coronavirus ("COVID-19") is a severe respiratory disease, that can result in illness or death, is spread generally by person-to-person contact. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), higher risk people are older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the CDC and the Maryland Department of Health recommend canceling large gatherings and social distancing in smaller groups. As a result, on March 12, 2020, Governor Hogan issued an executive order that "social, community, spiritual, religious, recreational, leisure, and sporting gatherings and events ("large gatherings and events") of more than 250 people are hereby prohibited at all locations and venues, including but not limited to parades, festivals, conventions, and fundraisers."

Will my tickets be refunded?

Unfortunately, we are unable to refund tickets. The event is not being canceled but postponed to Friday, July 31, 2020 to give our patrons a first-class experience without the concerns and worry about contracting coronavirus in a mass gathering. There are fixed costs that have been incurred and cannot be recouped and it is our paramount goal to raise vital funds to support the efforts of Friendship Charities to make a positive impact on the lives of our young people, families and senior citizens in Prince George's County. We can still achieve this important social action goal. It is simply being delayed.

Right now, we are living in unprecedented and uncertain times and we appreciate your understanding and continued support.

How will Friendship Charities and Gamma Pi ensure a safe, clean, sanitized venue for patrons when this is rescheduled?

Friendship Charities and Gamma Pi Chapter will work very closely with the venue to ensure proper preparation and management of the facilities in regards to concerns about the risks associated with coronavirus.

Have you had any contact with or advice from any local or state public health agency about whether to hold Mardi Gras?

We have not had specific communications with public health officials. We have been reviewing and operating according to published guidance made available by public health officials, as well as from news reports. However, the executive order by Gov. Hogan on March 12 established a new level of response in that it prohibits gatherings of more than 250 people. Under this new executive order, Mardi Gras could not be held.

Is it possible that Mardi Gras will be cancelled altogether this year?

According to the executive order issued March 12, 2020, planned large gatherings and events must be canceled or postponed until after termination of the state of emergency and the proclamation of the catastrophic health emergency has been rescinded. At this time, given the information we have and the circumstances, we are planning to simply postpone and reschedule Mardi Gras 2020 for Friday, July 31, 2020. The Mardi Gras is an important fundraiser for our community-based programs and we have no plans to completely cancel the event.

MORE INFORMATION AT WWW.GAMMAPI.ORG

Gamma Pi Chapter Celebrates 47 Years on March 5



Buffalo Wild Wings

March 5, 2020

CHAPTER SOCIAL



Early 1970s

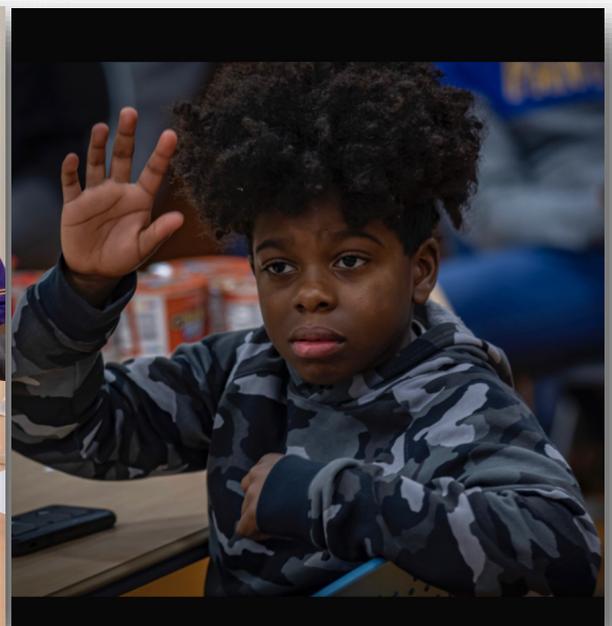
QUE KIDZ: Bringing Black History Month to Life

With its monthly sessions, Gamma Pi's Que Kidz program opens doors on the world for the young preteens who live in the under-served Prince George's County community of Kentland. For Black History Month, the Brothers threw wide open the doors to the history of African Americans with an entertaining and educational program held at the Kentland Community Center on Saturday, February 22.

The group was small, but the lessons were big. Members of the chapter used the morning to share the biographies of historical Black Americans, lead the youth in history-based trivia games, screen short powerful YouTube mini-documentaries about the Black Experience in the United States and share their own personal stories of racial struggles in America. The youth were wide-eyed and seemed fascinated by the stories and about the contributions of the African Americans who paved the way before them. Not all of the names of historical figures were household names.

During the program, the youth were encouraged to relate their own personal stories and ask questions. They wanted to know what I was like during the Civil Rights struggle? How did segregation affect their families growing up? How did Barack Obama become the nation's first Black president? Why did African Americans drink out of different water fountains or ride in the back of buses? Some of the questions were sensitive personally, such as students asking why were they seemingly treated differently than other kids in class? Or, what if someone makes a racially sensitive remark in their presence?

As the noon hour approached, the students were served lunch. That gave them a chance to discuss what they had learned and to continue asking questions. The Brothers of Gamma Pi had a goal with the program, and they accomplished it. They wanted the youth to leave the Kentland Center feeling a sense of pride and self-worth from their heritage. They did. All in all, it was a productive morning of education and fun. For these youths, Black History Month leaped from the pages of the history book and into their hearts and minds. It became real..



Gamma Pi Brothers Help Pay Tribute to Legendary Omega Man and Coach Herman Boone

Several Gamma Pi Brothers were among the throng that paid tribute to legendary high school football coach Brother Herman Boone, recently, when he entered Omega Chapter.

Bro. Boone, the subject of the hit classic movie "Remember the Titans," in which he was played by Denzel Washington, became famous as a championship football coach during the tumultuous time of integration. He made his mark at the now-renowned T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Va., where his services were held.

The Gamma Pi contingent included Brothers who entered the Fraternity at Tau Psi Chapter, where Bro. Boone was initiated into Omega Psi Phi.



Gamma Pi members gather for Bro. Boone's services

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE APPROACHES: APPLY NOW



Looking for help with college expenses? Do you live in Prince George's County? Gamma Pi's annual scholarship application deadline is approaching rapidly.

The deadline for first-time new scholarships for the upcoming 2020-2021 academic year is March 31. For student who are prior recipients and are looking for continuing support, you have until June 30 to apply. Application information is available at www.gammapi.org.

Click on the Scholarship link from the home page to access information about eligibility criteria and the online application. Your application must be received by the deadline to be considered. Don't miss this opportunity from the Super Chapter!

DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CHECK OUR WEBSITE AND OUR GAMMA PI MOBILE APP FOR UNEXPECTED SCHEDULE CHANGES.

Photos courtesy *Brothers Eric Fields, Howard Hamilton, Anthony Kelly and Marcus Whitfield*