

THE

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DOOR

**The Official Newsletter of Sigma Phi
Epsilon's Indiana Zeta Chapter**



BALANCED MEN

March: Spring Break Edition

The 31-day month of March can sometimes seem like a never ending marathon to students in school. However, we are fortunate enough at Valpo to have a two week Spring Break during March, marking the halfway point in the semester. Many brothers traveled home to relax with family, and some took this opportunity to plan short adventures with other brothers. We also had brothers participate in three separate service trips. This newsletter will feature stories from the service trips and from two different group vacations: one to Minnesota and one to the Great Smoky Mountains region.

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FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE SERVICE TRIP: Disaster Response - Panama City, FL

By Ryan Cummings

This spring break, I was given the opportunity to be a student leader on the Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) Service Trip to Panama City, FL. Fellow brother Allen Marvel, Renaissance brothers Ryan Bye and Steve Janowiak, and longtime SigEp volunteer, Carrie Whittier, were also on the trip with me. We worked together with a diverse group of the FSL community to provide service for Rebuild Bay County, a non-profit organization that has been providing relief in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Michael in 2018. Throughout the week, we spent most of our time painting, pressure washing, and repurposing areas of an old school. After working each day, we often found ourselves on the beach, enjoying the nice 70-degree weather. On our day off, we were able to travel up to Tallahassee to tour Florida State's campus. We stopped by the brand new SigEp house, and the brothers there were kind enough to give us a look around. After a full week of service, we were able to turn an old, rundown school into a serviceable community resource center. There was no greater feeling than seeing the look of joy and appreciation on the faces of those who we had impacted with our service. They were so grateful for the amount of work we were able to accomplish in such a short period of time. That alone made it well worth the 26 hours of driving we endured. The nice weather, southern food, and new friendships were all added bonuses. All in all, this trip was an amazing and humbling experience, and something I am definitely looking forward to doing again next year.



Ryan Cummings (back row, far left) and Allen Marvel (back row, far right) on the FSL Spring Service trip.

CHEROKEE NATION COMMUNITY SERVICES: Northeast Oklahoma

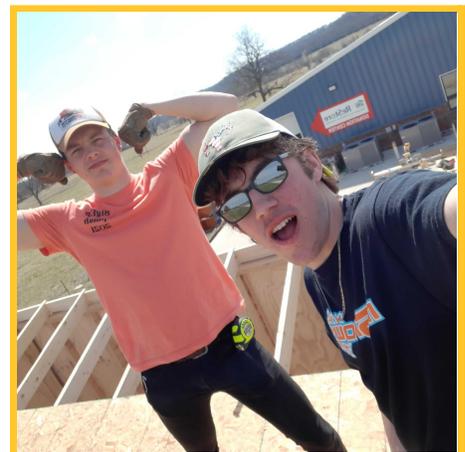
By Ethan Decatur

Over spring break, I was given the opportunity to go on a spring service trip to Tahlequah, Oklahoma. This trip was a cultural immersion trip that involved work with the Cherokee Nation, of which Tahlequah is the capital city. Over the course of my trip, I had a special opportunity to connect with classmates, interact with faculty advisors who came on the trip as well, and enjoy the beautiful scenery that can be found in Oklahoma. Our camp, which was located on a small river, allowed our group to cook, live, and work together to generate a true community living experience.

The work that we completed on our trip involved assisting the local Habitat for Humanity chapter in building a storage shed for their ReStore location. This store allows low-income community members to purchase household supplies, tools, and furniture at prices that allow them to have nice things without causing financial burden. The newly-built storage shed would allow ReStore to keep their overflowing items somewhere clean and dry until there is enough room in the store for them to be sold. Since all profits made from sales go back into Habitat for Humanity, the upkeep and condition of their items is important. Thankfully, I have worked construction in the past, so having a selection of construction skills at my disposal went a long way in helping to build the shed. Since we built a shed from the ground up, teamwork was essential when raising the walls, siding the studs, and laying down OSB on the roof. Since we also had a number of people without any construction experience in our group, there were many teachable moments that brought us closer together and created bonds with those who we were working with.

Overall, the trip was a great success, with us finishing the shed by the end of the 8 days we spent in Oklahoma. A great number of my favorite college memories were made on the trip as well, as I would sign up to go on another one in a heartbeat. To conclude, could I have spent my spring break in Florida, or skiing back home in Massachusetts? Yes. However, the experience I was provided was one that taught me things about others and about myself that I would not trade for any other experience.

(Ethan Decatur and Emmet Peterson are pictured working on the roof of a new shed.)



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST: Biloxi, MS

By Doc Janowiak

Service is an inseparable element of what many of us in Indiana Zeta consider to be a balanced programme of living. For myself, and for my recently-renaissance-inducted father, service has been an important part of life for years. My first service trip, which I had anxiously awaited, was during the spring break of 2020, just a week before COVID lockdowns were imposed across the US. My ill-fated second service trip was never to be, as the lockdowns saw the cancellation of spring break trips in 2021. Naturally, I was eager for the resumption of the trips as this semester closed in.

I packed on the Thursday before break, and was ready to go at 6:00 AM on Saturday morning. From the beginning of planning, the group I accompanied was short one advisor. The beloved chemistry professor, Dr. Bob, was the only faculty or staff member joining. What's more, we were down one student on the morning we left. The immediate effect was to give us more room to spread out in our respective two minivans, since there were only 5-per vehicle.

The drive to Biloxi, Mississippi was spent in a conversation with not a second of pause, around topics so myriad as to leave no corner of the human condition untouched. Each minivan formed a tight-knit community in their drive South, and by the time we made it to Biloxi, we were all well-acquainted.

We spent our days split between Mississippi and the deep bayou of Louisiana, where we cleaned the long-neglected house of a widower and rebuilt the ruins of a dilapidated church that had been destroyed by Hurricane Ida. Throughout the week, we were all impressed by the scale of what we could accomplish as a well-coordinated group. At night, we stayed in bunk houses on the premises of the Biloxi Christian Church, and between service and sleep, we made frequent trips to the beach, stopped at Waffle House, spent the night of Gavin's birthday in New Orleans, and played card games with one of the other groups staying with us at the church (their group being from Western Michigan University).

We left Biloxi with a new understanding of American deep poverty, a thankfulness to be able to rest after a week of labor, determination anew to promote service, and a resolve to return next spring break to another of Valpo's service trips.



GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN TRIP

By Jack Meyer

Over this past spring break, myself and eight other brothers embarked on a longstanding chapter tradition by loading up two cars and spending a week in the Smoky Mountains near the Tennessee/North Carolina border. While this trip usually serves as an opportunity to appreciate nature, hike through the mountains, and exercise our brotherly love, our small caravan ran into numerous unforeseen obstacles along the way.

The typical nine and a half hour long car ride took its toll, but a hearty dinner provided everyone with a much needed morale boost. The next morning, the group made its way on our first excursion to a highly acclaimed disc golf course. With the forecast holding at a sunny 65 degrees, the day could not have been better. Well, that was until Joel got a phone call informing us that we were going to be evicted from our cabin due to a booking error by yours truly. This yielded a frantic drive back up the mountain to efficiently pack up what little we had unpacked from the night before. Although the situation looked bleak, a classic maneuver of SigEp negotiating and flattery gave way to the booking agency transferring us to an adjacent cabin with double the square footage!

The rest of the trip went by without a hitch excluding Aaron losing control of his body behind the wheel, my acquisition of an out of state speeding ticket, Joey and Jacob's near death experience, the flooding of a second floor bathroom, and the countless number of bruises and scabs accumulated. There were plenty of beautiful hikes, technical disc golf courses, and celebratory measures, as well as an anxiety-inducing car trip down the dragon, one of the most dangerous roads in America. While six of the nine attendees were seniors, we hope to see another cohort of brothers make their way to the mountains next year!



Pictured: Jacob Felix, Jack Meyer, Joel Stangebye, David-Paul Schulze, Aaron Spaletto
Zac Ahlers, Jimmy Ernst, Joey Gentile, and Josh Holsapple

BROTHERS IN MINNESOTA

By Jack Colwell

My name is Jack Colwell and I am a freshman who recently joined Sigma Phi Epsilon. Through this process I have grown close to many of my fellow brothers. Over spring break I was lucky enough to be invited to join brother Dawson Penshorn, along with Kyle Langreck, and Oliver Vinovskis in exploring the greater Minneapolis area. With Dawson as our local tour guide (being from the nearby town of Wayzata), my brothers and I set off on an epic adventure. We visited the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden which was filled with bizarre artwork and the iconic spoon with a cherry statue. After that, we journeyed on to the Basilica of St. Mary and looked in awe at its ornate interior. This was followed by a walk-by tour of Target Field, home to the Minnesota Twins baseball team. Afterwards, we went to eat delicious handcrafted pizzas for lunch at Pizza Lucés. With full stomachs, we continued to explore the Twin Cities. We visited the ice cube inspired architecture of U.S Bank Stadium (Minnesota Vikings), looked through blue glass on the top floor of the Guthrie Theater, and then headed over to the University of Minnesota. Upon arrival, we passed their fraternity row and noticed a certain fraternity was missing. This led us to look up the address of the local SigEp chapter and found that it was located on a different part of campus. We were then lucky enough to be let inside and accordingly met some of the wonderful brothers of the chapter. After this we realized that it was time to return to Dawson's house for some much needed rest. Throughout the trip we were treated to some amazing home cooked meals by Mr. and Mrs. Penshorn. I can't thank them enough for their kind hospitality! In the subsequent time in Minnesota, my brothers and I visited downtown Wayzata and the Capitol Building in St. Paul. Although short, this trip provided some much needed rest from classes. It was great to be able to spend a few days with brothers Dawson, Oliver, and Kyle, and it's an experience I will never forget!



Left: From left to right, Dawson Penshorn, Jack Colwell, Kyle Langreck, and Oliver Vinovskis.
Right: A photo-op with the Twins' mascot, T.C. Bear, at Target Field in downtown Minneapolis.

CHAPTER EVENTS: MARCH

- 5-20 Spring Break**
- 5-12 Spring Break Service Trips**
- 21 Brotherhood Event:**
House Hide n' Seek
- 25 Family Olympics:**
Cornhole Competition
- 26 Service Event:**
Highway Cleanup
- 27 Family Olympics:**
Doubles Disc Golf
- 29 Unity Event w/Sigma Chi:**
Rocket League Watch Party

MORE SPRING TRIP PICTURES



Left. A hike in the Great Smoky Mountains
Right. Dawson, Oliver, and Kyle hit the slopes with Renaissance Brother, Mr. Penshorn.



Above. Doc enjoyed getting to know his travel-mates during the car ride to Mississippi.



Left. Ethan and Emmet saw a rodeo with their service group!
Right. Allen and Ryan met some SigEps from Florida State.

HIGHLIGHTS



Top left. Brother Jack Larson organized a house hide n' seek brotherhood event.

Top right. Brother Evan Stock and his family traveled to the Southwest over Spring Break and visited Zion National Park.

Bottom. The chapter reorganized the SLC and bought a brand new sectional!

DANCE MARATHON

Dance Marathon is Valparaiso University's largest philanthropy event each year, raising money for the children in Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. Our chapter is always highly involved in organizing the event with many brothers serving on the executive board and other leadership positions. Catch April's newsletter for coverage on this exciting event and to find out how much we raised!

Letter from the Editor

Matthew Yee, External Relations Chair

Hearing about brothers' spring break adventures and seeing all the awesome pictures submitted made this edition especially fun to produce. I noticed a few interesting similarities between all three of the service trip articles. In particular, each touched on how working together in service created a strong bond between the members of the group in just one week. New friendships were able to form so quickly because each individual on these service trips shared a common goal and purpose: helping those in need and gaining new, diverse experiences and perspectives. I hope you enjoyed reading this Spring Break Edition. Look forward to April's newsletter which will recap the last full month of the school year! Time is flying!

SigEp

IN ZETA SLC

You can unsubscribe to some or all communications by the Sigma Phi Epsilon Indiana Zeta chapter. However, SigEp needs to communicate with you periodically about our chapter or events that may happen in your area, so we encourage you to allow general Fraternity communication through email. SigEp makes every effort to minimize the number of emails you receive. To update your contact and/or communication, preferences email us at sigep.externalrelations@valpo.edu.

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