

# THE HERALD

MEREDITH

September 16, 2015

## Stay With Us: Suicide Prevention Week

Emily Chilton, A&E and Copy Editor

Starting Monday, September 14, Meredith will kick off their first annual Suicide Prevention and Awareness week. Sophomore Molly Smerko is the chief student organizer for the event. "This past January I lost a friend to suicide," said Smerko. "I was grieving for a long time and really didn't have a good way to process my grief. A friend encouraged Molly to go forward with her idea of an awareness week, and in May she emailed the Counseling Center director Beth Myer. Plans went forward from there, mostly taking place during the summer. Mental health awareness has become a growing issue both nationally and locally, especially in the wake of such deaths as well-known actor and comedian Robin Williams and the many Appalachian students last school year. "We want to

spread awareness of suicide and depression, and educate people so that they can talk about these issues," said volunteer coordinator Sarah Smerko. "We want people who come to these events to come out more informed about suicide and more equipped to prevent."

The week will start off on Monday Sep. 14 with depression screenings by the counseling center staff from 10am to 1pm in the first floor of the Cate Center. These screenings will also be held again at the end of the week, on Friday Sep. 18. Later on Monday evening, from 4-5:20pm, a QPR training session will be held in Harris 214. QPR stands for "Question, Persuade, Refer" and is known as the "CPR of mental health." This tool will allow those trained to help those in distress or

with suicidal tendencies. (RSVPs are required for this event).

Tuesday Sep. 15 will feature a screening of the movie "To Write Love On Her Arms" at 7pm in Kresge Auditorium, with a panel discussion following from 9-10pm. There's free pizza for the first 100 attendees. This event is open to the public, and if you attend both it qualifies as an Academic/Cultural event! A counseling center staff member will be on site due to the sensitive and mature content of the movie.

Wednesday Sep. 16, a Story Telling Night will be held in Kresge from 7-8:30. This will be a time for students and others to share their personal experiences with depression and suicide. Light refreshments will be served. This event is also open to the public, counts as an Academic/Cultural event, and

once again a counseling center staff member will be on site.

Thursday night will round off the week with a Suicide Remembrance Night in front of Johnson Hall from 7-8pm, which will include a candle-light vigil. This event is for students to take part in remembering those lost to suicide.

We hope to have lots of students come out for all of these events to help support the awareness and prevention of suicide. Please feel free to post about any events using the hashtags #staywithus or #mesuicideawareness. If you choose to post, remember to do so in a kind and sensitive way. For more information, like the Facebook Page "Meredith College Suicide Prevention and Awareness Week".

## Study Abroad Kicks Off

Sarah Kiser, Staff Writer

On Tuesday Sept. 8 the Office of International Programs held a study abroad fair to inform students about all the opportunities Meredith College and its affiliate programs have to offer.

"Study abroad is a wonderful opportunity to enrich your education, become more independent and confident, and sensitive to other cultures. It's really wonderful to see students after they get back. They're standing up a little taller and they're talking about all the places they've travelled. You can tell that they have the travel bug for life," said Director of International Programs, Brooke Shurer. Many students caught the travel bug and have studied abroad multiple times, according to Shurer.

Sansepolcro, Italy is Meredith's signature program. Sansepolcro is a "charming, authentic" town full of life and culture that Meredith has had a relationship with for over 30 years. Students have the opportunity to be immersed in the culture and learn to be confident international travelers. "We're not just tourists there; we're really part of the community," said Shurer. Shurer has been there three times.

There are credits available in each of the programs that satisfy various requirements for many majors, minors, general education, and electives. There is no definitive "best" time to travel. "The best question [when deciding when to travel] might be time wise, and how it fits into a student's four year plan," said Dr. Pitts, an advisor

of the Anger program.

There are also opportunities with Meredith Affiliate programs. They are "providers that meet our standards of academic quality, student support, safety and cultural engagement," said Shurer. With these programs, students can travel all over the world. There is a complete list of affiliate programs on the Office of International Programs website. Students traveling with these affiliates engage in one-on-one advising with the OIP beforehand and are still connected with Meredith throughout their entire trip.

The first step for those interested in study abroad would be to attend a general advising session where they will receive more steps, including personal advising and funding workshops. Students can sign up for both of those and find more information at Meredith.edu/studyabroad. The application process begins with an online application and supplemental materials. After a student decides where she wants to go, she meets with financial aid to figure out how affordable it can be. She should also submit a scholarship application with the Office of International Programs. Students wanting to travel during the upcoming spring semester should apply by the end of this semester. "Meredith College feels so strongly about the value of study abroad that 100% of financial aid and institutional aid travel with students to help make study abroad more affordable," said Shurer.

## Proud As A Peacock

Julia Allsbrook, Staff Writer



Photo Credits Miss America Organization

On August 29th many Meredith students, faculty, and community supporters spent their Saturday afternoon saying farewell to Kate Peacock as she made her departure for Atlantic City, New Jersey to compete in the 2016 Miss America Pageant.

The rising Meredith junior was crowned Miss North Carolina on Saturday, June 20th in Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh, where she won a \$12,500 scholarship and a year of appearances across the state. Peacock was previously crowned Miss Dunn before competing for the Miss N.C. title.

Peacock's platform promotes pediatric eye disease awareness, as

she has been a patient at the Duke Eye Center for the majority of her life. Kate has used her stories to inspire patients around the state in all Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, including Duke Hospital. She will be publicizing her campaign through bracelets that say, "SEE the dream" in hopes to find cures for pediatric eye diseases.

During her farewell in Jones Auditorium at Meredith, Kate gave her supporters a glimpse of her talented toes. She also displayed her entire wardrobe for Miss America and discussed her hopes for the pageant. Meredith College was in full support its fellow angel as she took the stage Sept. 13th at Boardwalk Hall.

On Saturday, Sept. 13th, the Class of 2017, Office of Retention, and Students Success, and the 1891 Club hosted the Miss America viewing party in Jones Auditorium. Many Meredith students arrived and watched the beginning of the pageant adorning their Miss America crowns and flooding social media with "#ProudAsApeacock."

Although, Miss Georgia received the 2016 Miss America crown in the end, the entire Meredith community is still "proud as a Peacock" and cannot wait for Kate's return to campus.

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