

Pride group struts its stuff at Duke

BY JAMES EDWARD DILLARD
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — Duke University's East Campus turned into a sea of rainbows for several hours Saturday afternoon as N.C. Pride — a statewide gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender organization — hosted a celebration of its 20th anniversary.

The celebration, which included a parade and a festival, gave the members of LGBTQ community an opportunity to publicly show their pride in their lifestyles and themselves.

People crowded to watch colorful floats and LGBTQ groups parade down Main Street, singing songs and tossing out free items.

In addition to the parade, a street festival on the university lawn featured booths for churches, political groups and vendors who support the cause.

Bo Dean, a keynote speaker and leader in the LGBTQ community, brought a message of hope to the

audience in its struggle for acceptance.

"My life experience has taught me that there has never been a dark moment that good has not come out of," he said.

Despite the tense political climate in the country about gay and lesbian rights, Dean said he remains hopeful. "Ultimately, what wins out is equality," he said. "As intrusive and divisive as (the Bush) administration has been, especially with LGBTQ, we will see equality prevail."

Carolyn Davis from Garner expressed a similar hope for acceptance as she took a break from the festivities to eat lunch.

"I'm proud. I'm out. I just wish more people were not so narrow-minded," Davis said.

Political groups also were present and active in the festival. Many participants wore Kerry-Edwards buttons and carried signs for other Democratic candidates.

Along with campaign and regis-

tration information, party representative Jason Lindsay said the booth sought to show the differences between President Bush and Sen. John Kerry on LGBTQ issues.

"The Bush administration speaks nothing but hate and discrimination to GLBT," Lindsay said.

But he said Democrats, with a few exceptions, have been progressive in their treatment of gay and lesbian people.

The Log Cabin Republicans came to represent the GOP and its views on business, but not a presidential candidate.

"We have decided to withhold endorsement of President Bush for the 2004 campaign because of his position that he is endorsing a national constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage," said Doug Register, a representative for the Triangle chapter.

He said this is the first time the Log Cabin Republicans have withheld support from a Republican

candidate.

Members of Calvary United Methodist Church in Durham came to inform LGBTQ people of the religious aspects of their sexuality.

"We're providing a witness for others that Calvary United Methodist Church is a welcoming and safe place for gay and lesbian persons," said Sam Isley, a gay church member.

Isley said there are many struggles he and the church must overcome to gain acceptance within the Methodist community.

"In the Methodist church, our book of rules states that self-avowed and practicing gay and lesbian persons cannot be ordained, and same-sex marriages cannot occur in our churches and cannot be performed by Methodist ministers," he said. "We're trying to change that, and we will change that."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Town holds 1st arthritis benefit

Walk raises \$20,000, ups awareness

BY SAM SHEPARD
STAFF WRITER

More than 250 people united for the common cause of raising money for and awareness of arthritis research Saturday morning.

From 9 a.m. to noon, members of the Orange County community participated in the 2004 Chapel Hill Arthritis Walk at Meadowmont Village — the first event of its kind in Chapel Hill.

They were able to raise at least \$20,000 to be used by the Arthritis Foundation for research.

Arthritis, a chronic disease that affects more than 70 million Americans, is the leading cause of disability in the country. There are more than 100 forms of arthritis that affect people of every age.

Participants in Saturday's event had the option of walking a 5K or a one-mile scenic route around Meadowmont. Meadowmont even permitted walkers to bring their dogs along for the stroll.

Though they could take part on their own, participants were encouraged to form teams, groups of five members or more.

Pat Kropp, the team leader of "Pat's Pacers" who has had rheumatoid arthritis for 34 years, raised more than \$700 for the cause.

Every three or four months, she visits her doctor to get her "joy juice," medication that greatly improves the quality of her life, Kropp said. She hopes money raised from events such as the walk will help find a cure for arthritis.

Lois Modell, a group vice president for the foundation, said there are about 200 other walks planned this year. This year, the organization already has received nearly \$4.5 million from walks alone, as compared to \$2.8 million last year.

There is a "myth that physical activity may harm people (with arthritis), but actually walking is the best thing they can do," said

Dr. Leigh Callahan, a professor of orthopedics at the UNC School of Medicine and chairwoman of the North Carolina chapter of the foundation.

In January, Callahan first thought about having a walk in Chapel Hill. Two months later, the Thurston Arthritis Research Center at UNC volunteered six members of its staff to head the event. By Saturday, almost 60 volunteers had signed up to help the cause.

The volunteers needed to secure corporate sponsorships, pinpoint a location and find more volunteers, said Matthew Morrison, a Thurston volunteer in charge of marketing and public relations.

University students also raised money and participated in the cause. Amy Chamkasem, a senior nursing student and committee chairwoman of the UNC Association of Nursing Students, led a group of about 30 students that raised \$421. They walked under their motto "Feeling the world one patient at a time."

After the walk ended, participants stayed for a raffle, a moon walk and light refreshments.

Morrison and other event volunteers said they hope they can raise even more money next year. "Walks tend to double in size from one year to the next," he said.

For information on volunteering for next year's walk, e-mail arthritiswalk@unc.edu or visit www.arthritis.org.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

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P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515
Michelle Jarboe, Editor, 962-4086
Advertising & Business, 962-1163
News, Features, Sports, 962-0245

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Insurance organizations stress preventive care

BY AMY EAGLEBURGER
STAFF WRITER

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina released data from member surveys and claims analyses Wednesday that paint a picture of how many people are using preventive care.

In the 2003 State of Preventive Health report, BCBSNC defines preventive care as "visits to physicians for routine medical examinations and health screenings."

The report found that in 2003, 11.1 percent of male and 12.1 percent of female members were using preventive care, roughly the same number who sought care in 2002.

While the number of those seeking care has remained stable from 2002 to 2003, the company is working toward increased awareness of

the importance of preventive care.

"People tend not to go to a doctor unless they feel bad," said Mark Stinneford, a company spokesman. "They need to go to an annual check-up. There, you can talk about any concerns you may have with your doctor."

Screenings for specific types of cancer, regular checks of blood pressure and weight, proper vaccinations and an annual visit are recommended for all. According to the report, many of those most at risk for health problems do not see that they are vulnerable.

"There is a gap in perception between people's risk for health problems and what they perceive as health problems," Stinneford said.

Amid heightened awareness of America's expanding waistline, the

report noted that 21 percent of its members are obese and an additional 34 percent are overweight. In 2003, 495 bariatric surgeries were performed as a treatment for obesity — nearly twice as many as in 2002.

"Obesity is interesting because for most people, it is something that can be prevented and treated for free," said Michelle Douglas, company spokeswoman. "It is a matter of getting off the sofa, exercising and eating good meals."

The report states that 49 percent of members feel they know little about weight loss and, in order to combat this unawareness, national initiatives have been created.

WalkingWorks is one such program that distributes pedometers and step logs for members to track their activity. These special pro-

grams not only seek to promote physical activity, but also address other specific health risks.


A reported 19 percent of members use tobacco products. The BCBSNC program Tobacco Free seeks to provide resources and support to the 65 percent of users who wish to break the habit.

Bob Greczyn, president and chief executive officer of BCBSNC, said that promoting preventive health care is still a work in progress.

"We are still working to fully understand why a relatively small proportion of certain segments of our membership seeks preventive health services and screenings in any given year."

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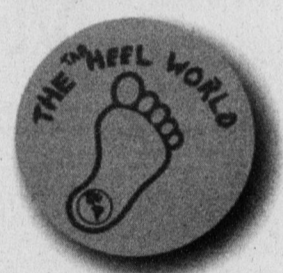
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