

Di-Phi debates King's impact

Examines civil rights legacy at UNC

BY ALICE MILLER
STAFF WRITER

The Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies, UNC's oldest debate organization, joined campus-wide celebrations Monday to remember the reason classes are canceled every third Monday of January.

About 25 people gathered to debate whether UNC has failed to uphold the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

"Today is more than a day of no classes," said Andrew Pham, president of Di-Phi. "It's time to debate about our nation's history."

In honor of the holiday, the historically white organization invited predominately black organizations the Black Student Movement and the UNC chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to attend this debate.

But neither BSM nor the NAACP were represented at the debate.

Derek Sykes, president of BSM, said many members of the group were participating in service projects in honor of the MLK Week of Service and could not attend the event.

Sykes said the debate was not something BSM was sponsoring, but group members do plan to hold future events with Di-Phi.

Ryan Jenkins, the programs committee chairman and critic of Di-Phi, said that after communicating with both groups he was disappointed that neither was in

attendance.

Although neither group attended Monday night, Jenkins also said plans are in the works for future events with BSM.

"This gives us a chance to meet with other groups and reach out to shove off a reputation of being an old white boys' club — which we aren't," said Stephen Smith, a fifth-year member of Di-Phi.

The debate between Di-Phi members focused on successes and failures of King's legacy at UNC.

Topics ranged from what King truly stood for and conflicting definitions of diversity to modern-day instances of affirmative action and self-segregation. Many group members also questioned what else the University could do legally and morally to enforce King's legacy on campus.

The debate that UNC has failed to uphold King's legacy did not pass in the eyes of the present senators of Di-Phi.

The evening ended with three senators voting that UNC was not upholding King's legacy, with seven senators against and three senators abstaining on the issue.

Di-Phi has a long history of debating controversial topics.

As early as 1790, the members of Di-Phi took up the issue of slavery. They voted affirmatively on the issue of abolishing slavery. That same year, the group debated equal rights for women, an issue they voted to support.

More recent issues of debate for

"Today is more than a day of no classes. It's time to debate about our nation's history."

ANDREW PHAM, DI-PHI PRESIDENT

Di-Phi have included women's role in the military, bombings of civilian targets and whether or not the U.S. should invest more money in space exploration.

"We believe in debating," Jenkins said. "Di-Phi has always questioned things and has gone out on limbs."

Di-Phi often invites campus groups to their debates when the topics deal with issues that pertain to them. In the past, Di-Phi has hosted members from the College Republicans, Young Democrats and Campus Y.

"We have always wanted to find ways to diversify," Smith said.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Volunteers build outdoor classroom

BY CATARINA SARAIVA
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

HILLSBOROUGH — Amid picnic tables, benches and bird feeders, a crowd of volunteers worked through their day off on Monday to build a new learning environment at Partnership Academy Alternative School.

The school's outdoor classroom was chosen as the Orange County Signature Project for the Triangle United Way's third annual Triangle Martin Luther King Day of Service.

More than 100 volunteers helped build a short trail and an open-air amphitheater featuring a stage and large benches to seat 50.

"Any time you're doing something like this ... in honor of Martin Luther King, it's fine, it's good," said Mike Stewart, the husband of a PAAS social worker.

The school has been housed in a three-room building for almost a year, said Principal Paige Kimball.

While it is not at capacity, the staff finds it hard to carry out PAAS's fundamental team-building activities within the classrooms. It

also will allow the entire school to gather for assemblies.

"When we moved here, I noticed there was an open area out there," Kimball said. "It would be nice to have a classroom."

The staff plans to use the space in part for a personal development elective that will focus on character and career planning.

PAAS provides alternative learning methods for children who haven't been successful in traditional schools because of social, emotional and behavioral difficulties.

The plan was initially created by school staff and a volunteer architect. They proposed the design to the Martin Luther King Day of Service Committee, which accepted it and helped look for donors and volunteers, Kimball said.

"Planning this for months and months and months and then seeing this finally take shape like this is unbelievable," said Lynn Pittman, community relations and special events manager for the Triangle United Way.

Supplies were donated by The Home Depot and volunteers included N.C. Blue Cross Blue Shield employees, University sorority and fraternity members, Carolina Friends School parents and children, Volunteers for Youth and others.

"I think that people worked extremely hard," said Tim Marshall, a GlaxoSmithKline employee whose wife is a counselor at PAAS.

"A lot of energy was put out and innovation ... by young and old."

Volunteers braved near-freezing temperatures Monday, but they worked all day to finish the project.

"Believe it or not, I still sweat today," Stewart said.

Volunteers showed up to help put together the outdoor classroom that will provide PAAS students and staff with a unique learning space. The amphitheater will be open to other Orange County schools and for community use.

"I think it was an opportunity to put something back into the community," Marshall said.

"And people took it."

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