

Using Dance to Promote Voter Registration

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There are many different ways Greek-letter organizations use to raise money for their philanthropy. The Upsilon Beta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. at Christopher Newport University (CNU) hosted a dancing competition, Stroll to the Polls, on Saturday, Oct. 23 in order to raise money to promote voter registration awareness.

Greek-letter organizations give students many opportunities within their school and their local community to raise awareness for their particular cause. Each organization has a specific cause to raise awareness and money for which is their philanthropy. While Greek life on the surface looks like a social club for students to find a group of friends, it is also important to remember the reason they exist.

The Upsilon Beta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. is an all-black fraternity founded on Dec. 4, 1906. It was formed at Cornell University by seven male students who believed they needed a strong brotherhood for African descendants in their community. It started off as a study and support group but eventually grew to become what it is today. CNU's involvement website The Compass says, "While continuing to stress academic excellence among its members, Alpha also recognized the need to help correct the educational, economic, political, and social injustices faced by African-Americans."

The event took place at the Ferguson Performing Arts Center at CNU. Admission was \$10 for people who bought tickets online ahead of time and \$15 if bought at the door. The audience

was filled with members of all the different sorority and other Greek groups participating in the event who came to cheer on their fellow sisters and brothers. Many students had signs with pictures of their sisters faces on it to hold during their performances. It was clear that this was a big event for the Greek organizations and many people came out in support.

The dances the groups performed included specific dance moves called "strolling." Strolling is a form of dance that Greek Organizations in the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) showcase at special events. For this event specifically, groups were given permission by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity to use these specific dance moves, but made it clear in their introduction speech that use of these dance moves outside of these events is not appropriate.

Eight Groups performed, including the Latino Student Association, Gamma Phi Beta Sorority, K-pop choreography & performance group, Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority, Delta Gamma Sorority, Phi Mu Sorority, Alpha Delta Pi Sorority, and Alpha Phi Sorority. Along with the groups, two guest speakers came to speak in between some performances.

The first speaker was Cameron Bertrand, a CNU graduate and an Alpha Sigma Alpha Alumni. The second speaker was the mayor of Newport News, McKinley Price. Both speakers talked about the importance of getting involved in our community and having a voice when it comes to ways we can improve it. They spoke about how crucial it is for everyone to vote and make their voices heard because it can have such a big impact on everything around them.

The group that ended up winning the entire competition was the Alpha Phi Sorority. Their performance was well choreographed, and they had the largest and loudest section of sisters and students cheering for them. Although all of the groups that performed did a good job, it was a well-deserved win for the Alpha Phi Sorority.

This event was a great way to promote voter registration while also keeping everybody engaged with the performances. It helped educate people while also giving them a show full of talented dancers. This has been an extremely popular event for the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and hopefully will continue to be in the future.



Photo from CNU instagram