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Frat helps brother's family

Efforts help fund cancer treatments

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS - Fraternities normally celebrate brotherhood. Northern Kentucky University's Pi Kappa Alpha chapter - known as the Pikes - is also celebrating motherhood.

Debbie Billiter, mother of Pikes past president Adam Billiter and a coordinator in NKU's marketing and communications department, was diagnosed this year with an aggressive form of breast cancer. When the fraternity brothers heard about the expenses the family was incurring, they mobilized.

The fraternity organized a powder-puff football game and raised funds through registrations, shirt sales and concessions. More than 125 people participated. The brothers also organized a dance called Mom Prom. Fraternity members brought their mothers as their dates.

The events have raised more than \$1,000 for Adam's mom. However, this was not enough to cover the mounting bills that she faces.

"Mom is having a hard time paying her deductible for all of the treatments she is receiving," said Adam, a secondary education major. Adam's father died of a heart attack in 1999.

"As a widow and single mother, she is having a hard time making the added expenses," Adam said. "I work full time to put myself through school and have a hard time helping with money."

Derek Schaefer said he chose to become a member of Pi Kappa Alpha because "they not only knew what it took to be successful in the classroom but also in the community," and helping his fraternity brother's mother is an example of that.

Being in a fraternity "is about being there for each other during the good times and the bad," said Schaefer. "I truly believe that because of this very sad situation we were able to turn it into a learning experience. I trust that by us doing these different events we have come to understand the true meaning of brotherhood."

Justin Bockhorst decided to join the Pikes because they reminded him of his high school buddies.

"It was not till the pledging process and becoming an active member that I would see what this fraternity is all about," said Bockhorst. "Our chapter is truly scholars, leaders, athletes and gentlemen. It is the best decision I have ever made since I have been in college that will affect the rest of my life."

Adam, a senior, will complete his student teaching in January, then graduate.

"It is really hard to put into words what this means to me," said Adam. "I have given a lot of myself to the fraternity and for them to give back to me and my family speaks volumes for the character of these young men. Many of them have never even met my mother, but care so much for me and my family that they would donate their own money and work toward helping her."

NKU's Pi Kappa Alpha chapter has 73 members.

Additional donations for Adam's mother can be made at any U.S. Bank branch to the Debbie Billiter Medical Fund.

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