

EMU Board of Regents Meeting, 11-17-2005, Communications Session

Good afternoon, my name is Michael Haynes, and I am the student coordinator for the Eagles Nest Project. The Eagles Nest Project is a campus-wide initiative to sponsor the building of a Habitat for Humanity home in the Ypsilanti community, through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley. Habitat for Humanity builds affordable housing for low-income families, which benefits not only the family who moves into the home, but also the entire surrounding community. The Eagles Nest Project is coordinated through the VISION office, which is the community service office in the Department of McKenny Union, Campus Life, and Diversity Programs, part of Student Affairs, and is under the advisor, Peggy Harless, Assistant Director for Leadership and Community Service of Campus Life.

This project is a two-part effort. First, \$65,000 must be raised in order to cover the cost of construction materials, and secondly, hundreds of volunteers must be recruited to physically build the home.

In order to accomplish this, people from all facets of the campus, such as students, faculty, staff, and administrators, and the community, both residential and commercial, must come together with the common goal of improving the lives of their fellow community members and the neighborhood itself. The results of the project will not only be an affordable home for a family in need, but also the unifying of both EMU and the Ypsilanti community.

At the September Student Affairs Committee Meeting, Regent Sidlik requested a full update on the project, and as the project coordinator, I am delighted to be here today to give you all that report, as well as share with you the tactics to accomplish the first part of the project-raising \$65,000.

As of yesterday, we have raised a total of \$7,650 through numerous fundraising activities. The most recent event took place during the last week of October, when we held a pumpkin decorating contest. Students, staff and administrators alike competed, and in less than a few days, nearly \$500 was raised for the project.

There is a fundraising event taking place even as we speak. Right now, at the Pray-Harrold mall, students are building miniature houses out of cardboard, pop cans, plastic, and any other materials they could find as part of the Build-4-Bucks event. Sponsored by the Honors College and Honors Students Association, the Build-4-Bucks event is one of our largest campus fundraisers this semester.

Participants, in teams of four, have spent the past few weeks gathering pledges and donations to come out and build the small houses throughout the day. The team that has the most pledges as well as the most creative and durable house will win a free credit hour of tuition for each team member, and local businesses such as Tower Inn and the McKenny Union bookstore have donated gift certificates to runners-up. Our goal is to raise at least \$5,000 through this event, and we should know the results by the end of the day. The participants began building at 7am this morning, and will continue until 5pm, when the house judging will occur. I invite you all, if you have a moment today, to pass through the Pray-Harrold mall and take a look at all of the excitement and energy associated with this event for the benefit of the project.

We have split our fundraising goal into two milestones; raising the first \$30,000 by the end of January, and the remaining \$35,000 by the end of May. To reach the first milestone, we are working on several initiatives. First, we recently finished a grant proposal to the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor for \$6,500, which we will know the results of in early January. Several other grant proposals are expected to be completed in the next month as well. Secondly, a project merchandise campaign is in the works, which will consist of the sale of t-shirts, polos, bracelets, and many other items, both on campus and at partnering local businesses.

Several student organizations have committed to the project, such as Greek Life and its Greek Week, a week long event in the spring that raises money for a chosen philanthropy, and Student Government has also donated \$1,000 to the project. An event with the Women's Rowing team is also being developed to take place the middle of January.

We have been working closely with Milton Jackson, Director of Development for Student Affairs at the EMU Foundation, who has been a vital partner in opening off-campus doors. There have also been several meetings with faculty and staff members from departments from all over the university, such as construction management, communications, student media, university health services, and the REC/IM. We are investigating possible campaigns to create friendly competitive spirit between academic and structural departments through fundraising. Many people from all areas of campus have already shown their support of the project,

and we continue to strive towards more community involvement as well. I encourage you, as Regents of Eastern Michigan University, to give your full support to this project.

With the amount of support shown so far, and the potential development in the upcoming months, I am confident that we will finish the project on time, and be able to build the home next fall.

I will do my best to attend future Board meetings in order to give you updated progress reports, and I have given you a packet which contains an overview of the project, facts about the institution of Habitat for Humanity, our volunteer flyer which has my contact information as well as the project website, a breakdown of the construction material costs, and a transcript of everything I have said today for your reference. Again I invite you to visit the Build-4-Bucks event taking place today at the Pray-Harrold mall, and I thank you for your time and your support.