

Alpha Omicron Pi at App State holds holiday service event during National Philanthropy Month

By: Sophia Hughes



Members of Alpha Omicron Pi play Go Fish with children attending High Country Caregiver's holiday event.

Photo is courtesy of Julia Thorne of Alpha Omicron Pi.

BOONE, N.C.— Members of the Sigma Gamma Chapter of Alpha Omicron Pi held their High Country Caregivers event at Grace Lutheran church on Nov. 17, bringing holiday crafts, games, and food for children and their secondary caregivers. The event coincided with National Philanthropy Month, which is observed during November.

High Country Caregivers (HCCG) is a local organization, founded in 2006, which aims to aid children who rely on a secondary caregiver, other than their biological parents. According to

HCCG's website, their mission is to *provide advocacy, support, and education for kinship caregivers and their families.*

As of 2025, [10% of children](#) in North Carolina rely on secondary care. Kinship caregiving/secondary caregiving is [especially common](#) in rural areas like the High Country, where families are more likely to face challenges involving financial hardship as well as limited social support networks and resources.

All nine sororities on App State's campus devote efforts to several philanthropic organizations, and Alpha Omicron Pi supports HCCG as its local philanthropy, with [Sisters for Soldiers](#) as its national philanthropy, and [The Arthritis Foundation](#) (focusing on childhood Arthritis) as its international philanthropy.

The Sigma Gamma chapter partnered with HCCG in late 2017, and has since facilitated both volunteer and fundraising events for the organization throughout the year.

“Philanthropy to me means being able to use the abilities and gifts I was blessed with to help someone else rather than myself alongside people I care about,” said Kylie O’Connor, a senior student who is looking back on four years of working with Alpha Omicron Pi’s three philanthropies.

Along with sorority members, members of Grace Lutheran church helped facilitate the holiday event; volunteering to assist the children in their arrival, activities, and serving food provided by Alpha Omicron Pi. HCCG staff checked adults in at the door to ensure a safe event.

“I sat in a circle with some kids and my sisters to play Go Fish during the event. We thought we would switch activities after one round, but the kids loved the special fish themed cards we brought, and didn’t want to put the game down,” said Ella Dunnavant, an Alpha Omicron Pi member who attended the church event.

The fellowship hall was lined with different games, allowing children to move between activities at their own pace. Soft holiday music played beneath warm conversations between caregivers who stayed to socialize with other adults during the event. During these events, Alpha Omicron Pi aims to provide not only a fun environment for the children, but also a relief of responsibility for their caregivers.

In an Alpha Omicron Pi recruitment speech this fall, Amelia Hicks, the sorority’s former director of philanthropy, stated that HCCG events are; “Close to the hearts of Alpha Omicron Pi members, as they are close to our home.” Each event takes place in Boone, and these events include a myriad of activities such as trunk-or-treating, snow tubing, holiday card making, Easter egg hunt, and others.

The Sigma Gamma Chapter held a second event for HCCG during National Philanthropy Month, which invited other members of Fraternity Sorority Life (FSL) as well as alumni members to the

Student Union to write letters of appreciation to the HCCG staff and letters of support for children under long term care in nearby hospitals.

Kelley Robinson, the current director of philanthropy, spoke about her feelings of loyalty towards the organization's philanthropies. She stated, "The holiday season is not always effortlessly magical for everyone. We all deserve happiness during this time, and if I can give my time to help even just one person, contribute to one of our efforts, I feel pride in our chapter."

On National Philanthropy Day, which was observed on Nov. 15, Alpha Omicron Pi posted photos commemorating its 3 philanthropies to Instagram, and wrote via caption that they felt honored to be in support of each organization.

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