Honors Council at HuskyTHON

Elizabeth Lauri, HM Committee Chair

Over the past decade and a half, UConn’s HuskyTHON has raised millions in support of Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, and the Children’s Miracle Network. HuskyTHON is an annual 18-hour dance marathon with the purpose of raising funds and awareness for CCMC. Participants work year-round to raise money and find sponsors leading up to the big event. Students from every corner of campus join in, working together towards the ultimate goal of improving the lives of the children that are helped by the CCMC.

When HuskyTHON first began, back in 2000, the participants were able to raise around $14,000. That number has grown exponentially in the years since, and this year the grand total came to $560,104.56 with Honors Council contributing an impressive $1,801 to that total.

This year maintained the tradition of energy and excitement, with certain hours dedicated to specific themes and styles, like Hawaiian hour, or Pajama hour. However, the most fulfilling element, everyone agreed, was being able to welcome and meet the children the event was ultimately for, along with the hourly spotlights on families who had been helped by CCMC. Honors Council was well-represented this year, with a 19 member team dancing through the night. Zach Higgins deserves an Honorable Mention for his work as a Dancer Rep for the team as does Lauren Biernacki, our Fundraising Committee Chair, who has been working tirelessly on this project all year. Due to the massive support shown throughout campus many smaller teams were combined, and this year Honors Council Members teamed up with members of the UConn Marching Band, and UConn Swing and Blues in support of Josh, the miracle child they were matched with.

HuskyTHON is one of the biggest annual fundraisers for CCMC and we are overjoyed that we have such a great opportunity for all of us to pitch in and make a real difference in the lives of thousands of children.
Drum roll please. The three toed sloth is the mascot of the UConn Ugly Animal Preservation Society! On March 8th the Environmental Committee of Honors Council held a competition to see which neglected endangered animal most deserves our attention. Jacob Mikullitz started off the event with a brief introduction to the Ugly Animal Preservation Society. Founded by Simon Watt in Britain, the society aims at bringing to light the struggles of endangered animals other than the ones typically seen – pandas, seals, snow leopards, etc. The universal animal of the society is the blobfish. The Environmental Committee put the following neglected animals up as proposals for a mascot: the three-toed sloth, the hagfish, and the California condor.

The three-toed sloth was the first animal up and was presented on behalf of by Adriana Antigiovanni, Environmental Committee chair. While we might think that sloths are cute at first glance, they are far from it. Their fur is a micro-ecosystem for fungi and other organisms. The fungus which grows in their fur can be used for camouflage and even has medical benefits. With a low population growth rate due to only having one offspring at a time and deforestation destroying their habitats, they are currently an endangered species.

The hagfish, presented by Ben Breslau, is one of the ugliest ocean bottom-dwellers. This fish is able to bloat out by secreting a large amount of mucus from its body. The mucus produced can be used both offensively and defensively as it suffocates anything in its path. Hagfish are endangered due to the large amount of fishing in the ocean. Without the hagfish, decomposition processes suffer, and thus the ecosystem does as well.

The final ugly animal was the California condor and was presented by Matthew Bilmes. The condor was once spread out to both coasts of America, but these days the few you can find remain in California due to hunting, pesticides, and those pesky power lines. The condor is making a slight recovery, but it is not enough; in 1982 there were just 25 left and today there are 160. An interesting fact is that these birds mate for life.

With the presentations done, the votes were tabulated. Taking away 60% of the vote was the three-toed sloth. The hagfish came in second with 30% of the vote, and the California condor sank to last place with only 10% of the vote. If you would like to learn more about neglected endangered animals which need our attention, visit http://uglyanimalsoc.com/. Thanks to everyone who participated for creating a terrific event!

College Hack Sweepstakes!

Congratulations to Phoebe Hughes for winning the college hack sweepstakes with this entry:

“Set your homepage to Google Calendar (and keep it updated) to keep yourself organized and to help with time management.”

Honorable mentions to:
Adrianna Antigiovanni “Bringing a reusable bag with me in my backpack at all times so I never have to use a plastic bag.”

Danielle Deschene “Ask for Dunkin’ and Subway gift cards for the holidays.”

Nick Chapman “Ride a unicycle.”

Thank you to all that participated. Be sure to check out future contests and surveys from the Newsletter Committee by attending HC meetings Wednesdays at 7pm in Laurel Hall.