

Annual run doubles up on charities

Erin Clark
Features Editor

Freshman Jenni Mattingly had enough to worry about without facing difficulties with her Truman tuition.

Mattingly underwent brain surgery for a cancerous tumor a year and a half ago. Because of the financial implications, Mattingly and her parents are struggling to meet tuition payments.

Luckily, someone has stepped in to help. Service sorority Alpha Sigma Gamma will sponsor a Run-Walk for charity at 9 a.m. Saturday. Half the proceeds will go toward Mattingly's tuition.

"My roommate is in ASG, and she's been talking about [the Run-Walk fundraiser] and has known all about my situation," Mattingly said. "I had a big issue at the beginning of the semester about not being able to come back because of tuition."

Mattingly said she wants her life as a college student to be as normal as possible. Although the tumor is gone now, she said she still suffers from many of the same

symptoms she had before the operation, and chances are high that the tumor could come back.

This knowledge affects her every day, but she still has an important goal.

"Going to college was always one of the big goals in my life," Mattingly said. "Even though I was sick, I wanted to go, but it's been hard financially with my family."

The Run-Walk fundraiser means one less thing for Mattingly to worry about.

"I'm thrilled and very, very grateful for what ASG is doing," she said, adding that she hopes to join the service sorority in the future.

Run-Walk chairwoman senior Jenny Knight said the Run-Walk is in its eighth year, and this year's theme is "Lace it, Race it, Pace it."

"We choose a new charity every year," Knight said. "This year we decided to split

the money. This first cause is [Mattingly's tuition]. The second cause is ... about making Truman's campus more handicapped accessible."

"I'm thrilled and very, very grateful for what [Alpha Sigma Gamma] is doing."

Jenni Mattingly
Sophomore

That half of the money will be presented to campus disability services, where staff will allocate it where it is most needed.

"The girls noticed that there are some things that could use improving on campus," Knight said. "One of our girls has a friend in a wheelchair, so she talked to the girl and realized there are more problems than we notice."

Senior Elizabeth Poelker brought ASG members' attention to those problems.

"My former roommate and friend was in an accident last May that left her paralyzed from the waist down," Poelker said. "She returned this semester to Truman, and I've just kind of watched her struggle."

Poelker said her friend is dealing with her situation well, but everyday difficulties still present themselves.

"[The problem is apparent when] listening to her talk and listening to all the ways that we could improve," she said.

Housing is a particular problem, Poelker said.

"There is basically only one place she could live on campus," she said. "She had to have a roll-in shower, and not a lot of the dorm rooms have that, and not a lot of places off campus either."

Furthermore, Poelker said her friend is staying at Truman during the summer to make up for a semester she missed because of the accident. During the summer, hot water to her apartment will be shut off, meaning she will have to go to the Student Recreation Center for a hot shower.

The Run-Walk hopefully will provide funding to solve such problems, and it is off to a good start because it is the culmination of several fundraisers.

Knight said pedometers are on sale at the Student Health Center for \$5, and ASG

members also have participated in a magazine fundraiser and an e-mail chain fundraiser to supplement the cause.

"Every penny, dollar and prayer helps," Knight said in the e-mail.

Last year was the first year ASG used the e-mail campaign, and it alone raised almost \$1,000, according to this year's e-mail.

"We made about \$3,000 [total] last year and are hoping to surpass that this year," Knight said. "In order to have enough money to donate to both causes, we would like to make more."

Knight said participants have a choice to enter the 5- or 10-kilometer contests.

Registration is \$10 in advance and \$12 the day of event. Participants can register in advance today between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center or between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Student Union Building.

Spots are unlimited, but the first 50 participants will receive a free T-shirt, and everyone is eligible for door prizes.

Donations may be sent to ASG's mailbox in the Center for Student Involvement.

Swordplay clashes on Quad

Christina Wirkus
for the Index

Fighting with giant foam swords is harder than it looks.

The group known as the Historical Swordsmanship Club, or Swords, regularly practices on the Quad four nights each week.

"Our goal is to teach people the basic use of the sword and how to protect other people and themselves with it," president sophomore Colin Ellis said.

Ellis said he has been interested in swordplay for as long as he can remember. He started the club when he came to Truman as a freshman.

"I've been studying swordplay for about seven years now and practicing on my own, and when I got here I found that there were other people interested in it," Ellis said. "So we got together to look some stuff over, to practice a little bit, and then it eventually just kind of evolved into this club."

Although it might look like all fun and games, the members of the group take it seriously and are very concerned with each other's safety, Ellis said.

"The most important thing I want them to pull out of this group is that other people are very important, and you take care of them, whether they are your teammates, friends, en-

emies or strangers," Ellis said.

This might look like an individual sport, but Ellis said the team aspect of Swords during practices is important.

"Once you get the kind of attitude where everyone considers the person to their right and left before themselves, then you've got a cohesive group," Ellis said.

In Swords, every hit against an opponent counts as one point, from being hit hard in the chest to being scraped on the fingers, Ellis said.

"We kind of use the honor system," Ellis said. "You count your own hits. When you get hit, you shout it out so everyone knows that you got hit."

A few things are expected of the club members. Fighting members make their own swords when they join, using three-fourths inch PVC pipe covered in foam and duct tape. The group Web site gives specific instructions on how to make these swords.

In addition to the swords, there is a one-time fee of \$5 to pay for training equipment, and Ellis said he also requests to meet with those interested in joining the group. Ellis said it is important that potential group members understand what the club entails.

"We want to make sure we don't have anyone who's going to be

overly violent or not under control or not willing to listen and take criticism," Ellis said.

Along with promoting good sportsmanship in an area that otherwise might seem like it would be promoting violence, Ellis said he encourages selflessness by not allowing people to have different ranks.

"I want my group to be a cohesive team and group of people who fight together to better each other," Ellis said. "I don't want a ranking system because that'll create pretty steep divisions, and then you'll have a psychological block."

Members can expect to learn many different areas of skill and expertise from Swords meetings.

Sophomore Cale Young said he always has been curious about swordplay, but there never was anywhere he could practice. Young said he tried the fencing club, where he met Ellis, and soon after he became involved with Swords.

Young said he plans to graduate from the ROTC program and enlist in the Army. He said he hopes that what he learns in Swords will help him down the road.

"I'm trying to take this and transfer it if I ever need it, which is unlikely, but it's not a bad thing to have around," Young said.

Sophomore Sam Blanchard



File Photo/Index
Members of the Historical Swordsmanship Club practice on the Quad last semester.

heard about Swords the day after its first meeting and has been a member ever since. Blanchard enjoys the fighting aspect of the club, but as a history major, he is more interested in the historical aspect of it.

"It was something I always wanted to do, but it was something I had more scholarly interest in as well," Blanchard said.

Blanchard said some other groups on campus also meet to fight, but Swords is much more controlled.

"We're more for the technique

and historical accuracy of it than just going around swinging," Blanchard said.

Blanchard said the reality aspect initially drew him to the group.

"There are things from sword combat that you can take and apply to hand-to-hand combat and any other kind of self-defense," Blanchard said. "There are principles that carry over."

For Blanchard, Swords has been a reinforcement of the values he already had, and it has given him a better understanding of how to

achieve them.

"If anybody has any interest at all in weapons combat around the world, come out at least once and watch," Blanchard said. "Even if you don't want to participate, it can be a decent spectator sport."

Swords meets from 6 to 8 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in the Violette Hall lounge. The practices always are open to others, and people are encouraged to join. More information is available on the group's Web site at www.geocities.com/trumansword.

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