

Sigma Chi raises money to help 'miracle' babies

■ The fraternity expects to have raised more than \$11,000 for Sacred Heart's neonatal intensive care unit

By Diane Huber
Oregon Daily Emerald

Throughout the past week, the Sigma Chi Fraternity held its annual Derby Days fundraiser to benefit the neonatal intensive care unit of Sacred Heart Medical Center. All the donations will go to the Children's Miracle Network, earmarked for the hospital.

The week was marked by several fundraisers, including Tuesday's "Bachelor Auction" and Thursday's lip sync contest. The sororities competed to see who could raise the most money. Sigma Chi also collected donations through T-shirt sales and a penny drive.

Debi White, director of Children's Miracle Network at Sacred Heart, set the tone for the week in her presentation to the sororities Monday night. White brought a "miracle" baby, Lynnsey, born prematurely, and her family with her to emphasize the importance of donating to the Children's Miracle Network.

"I can get up there and say, 'You're helping all of these families,' but by having a miracle child there, it really hits home that they were making a differ-

ence," she said.

Three-year-old Lynnsey held up a Beanie Baby to represent the 2 pounds, 20 ounces she weighed when she was born and told the audience members they were heroes, White said.

White also gave several tours of the neonatal group during the week to small groups of sorority members to show them where their donations were going.

"It's been incredible to watch their faces," she said. "One girl was almost in tears, she was so moved by what she saw."

Sigma Chi treasurer and Derby Days coordinator Daniel Weinsoft expects to earn \$11,000 by the end of the week. Last year, the fraternity brought in more than \$5,000, Derby Days assistant coordinator Luke Hart added.

Hart owes the week's success to sorority members' spirit, because they provided most of the donations, he said. Northwest Natural Gas and many of the students' parents also donated, he said.

Proceeds help purchase equipment, such as the isolettes, which are incubators, for premature babies in the intensive care unit, White said.

She said that out of the 2,500 to 3,000 babies born each year at Sacred Heart, 550 are admitted to the neonatal unit. One out of 10 babies is premature, and the smallest baby



Adam Jones Emerald

Tuesday evening the Sigma Chi fraternity kicked off its week long competition between participating sororities, "Derby Days," with an auction of its members.

ever to be admitted weighed 1 pound, 1 ounce.

She said that babies born between the 23rd and 24th week of the term — which is two and a half weeks shy of the full 40-week term — have a 50 percent chance of surviving. However, babies born just one week later have a 90 percent chance of surviving, she said.

She said about 90 percent of the premature babies admitted to Sacred Heart survive. She owes Sacred Heart's success to the money provided by the Children's Miracle Network.

Two hundred and fifty Sigma Chi fraternities throughout Canada and the United States donate to the Children's Miracle Network for

their philanthropy. The first Derby Days was held in 1922 at the University of California, Berkeley chapter of Sigma Chi.

Hart said the donations are important because they are "saving someone's dream of having a child."

Diane Huber is a student activities reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at dianehuber@dailyemerald.com.

News briefs

MADISON, Wis. (KRT) — With the University of Wisconsin-Madison fast becoming a Noah's ark of stem cell lines, UW researchers working with chickens and quail said Thursday they have created what are essentially the world's first

lines of bird stem cells.

The feat is being hailed as a breakthrough with several potential benefits, including new methods of producing expensive pharmaceuticals using chicken eggs and helping to preserve endangered species of birds such as the whooping crane.

The development also has the potential to remake the poultry industry.

"It is landmark work," said John Kirby, director of the cell molecular biology program at the University of Arkansas.

No one else has yet claimed they have produced avian stem cell lines, a major stumbling block to using birds for many new medical and commercial purposes, Kirby said.

"What they did is give the neces-

sary tool," he said.

UW is best known for its pioneering work in creating lines of human stem cells.

Embryonic stem cells are a type of parent or precursor cell that can form other types of cells that, in turn, go on to make various body tissues and organs.

Because of their potential to pro-

vide replacement tissue and organs, they hold great promise for treatment of diabetes, heart disease, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injuries and other diseases.

—John Fauber

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