

# The University of Connecticut Chapter of **ALPHA LAMBDA DELTA**



We encourage superior academic achievement among students in their first year, promoting intelligent living and a continued high standard of learning. We also assist students in recognizing and developing meaningful goals for their role in society.



# Pumpkinfest

By: Fariya Nax

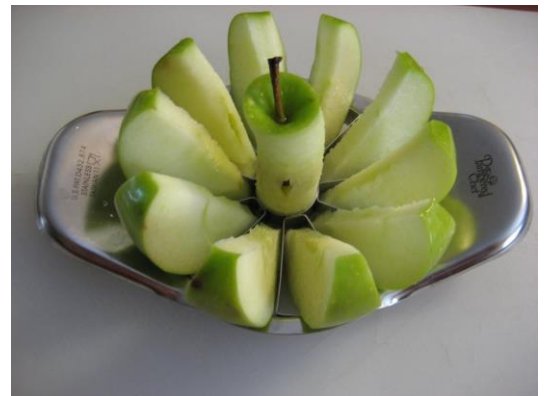
“Even though we faced a lot of trials while planning this event, I think it came together amazingly,” Lorian Dozier. We couldn’t agree more with that sentiment.



The Fall 2014 Pumpkinfest was the first profitable Pumpkinfest in UConn ALD history. Choosing an organization to raise money for this year was an easy task. The proceeds were given to Active Minds. Active Minds is a non-profit organization that strives to alleviate the stigma behind mental health. The organization reached out to ALD early in the Spring 2014. ALD member and president of Active Minds, Susan Kusmierski played a key role in

setting up this arrangement. All of ALD e-board agreed on the worthy work of this much needed organization and that is how the charity was chosen.

Though the apple dipping bar was a great success, decorating the pumpkins stole the show. ALD sold out of pumpkins within the first two hours of the event! Central to planning the event were Lorian Dozier and John Potter, ALD’s very own event co-coordinators. They began planning this fundraiser since the beginning of the semester up until the day of the event.



All of this charity work would not have been possible without the help of ALD members who volunteered at this event as well as cooperation from Dining Services. Ethan Haggerty from Dining Services deserves a huge shout out from ALD for getting us baked goods, hot chocolate, and apple cider to sell for free. Not only that, Ethan was immensely helpful in setting up and acquiring a temporary food permit.

Of course, the work is not done for our altruistic members. Already looking forward, John Potter had to say “I would like to thank every one of the volunteers and participants for putting on an exceptional Pumpkinfest, and I expect that Flowerfest next semester will be even better.”

Everyone working the event had a blast and we spread some awareness about an excellent cause. This was a huge success. UConn ALD could not be more proud of the energy and effort that its members committed to this event. Thank you everyone for your contribution.

# Active Minds: Changing the Conversation about Mental Health at UConn

By Caitlin Briody

Active Minds is a nationwide group dedicated to removing the stigma that surrounds mental health, particularly in the college setting. Its founder, Allison Malmon, started Active Minds as a college student after her brother committed suicide. Her goal was to make people comfortable talking about mental health issues, as the subject is often considered taboo despite the fact that 1 in 4 Americans suffer from a mental health disorder. Our UConn chapter puts the 'Active' in Active Minds, meeting weekly to discuss mental health and plan events, and raising awareness through numerous activities throughout the year. Most notable is the Field of Memories, which is set up during Suicide Prevention Week each September. 1,100 yellow flags are set up outside the Student Union, representing the 1,100 college students who die by suicide each year. Other events are reoccurring, including the playful Compliments and Cookies event, during which a group member wearing a cookie costume passes out cookies and compliments to random students on campus. This event is a fun way to encourage positive mental health at UConn, and is always appreciated by students! Members of Active Minds also do tabling for National Day Without Stigma, host a Stress Less Day, participate in FreshCheck Day, and plan events for Self-Injury Awareness Day and National Eating Disorders Awareness Week, which happens in February. As part of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week the group will host a speakers panel which will discuss what eating disorders look like and how they can be treated. In April another guest speaker from the Active Minds Speakers Panel, Maggie Bertram, will come to campus to talk about her struggle with anxiety and eating disorders.



What makes Active Minds unique at UConn is not only the events they put on but also the kindness and dedication of the students involved. Kaitlin Murphy, an eighth-semester English and Education major, says that her favorite part about Active Minds is “being surrounded by an awesome group of people on campus. The group is very welcoming and close-knit. We take the time to get to know one another and I’ve made some great friends from the group.” Susan Kusmierski, a sixth-semester Psychology major, says that members also support the student body by working “with counseling and mental health services on campus to connect the student voice with that of the counselors.” She believes it’s important to educate students about mental health so that they can support each other, advising that “...the best way to help a friend in need is to be there for them 100% judgment free and to directly ask them if they are having thoughts about harming themselves. The first line of defense are friends and it is important to let your friend know that you are there for them.” In addition to supporting their friends, members of Active Minds at UConn are willing to take the next step by supporting the campus community. “Mental health is something everyone has and something everyone struggles with from time to time,” Murphy says, “Members of the group are passionate and dedicated to making a difference at UConn. We are people who care about other people.”

If you’re interested in getting involved with this great cause, send an email to [activemindsuconn@gmail.com](mailto:activemindsuconn@gmail.com) and ask to join the email list! Being on the list will keep you informed about meetings and upcoming events, or you can also find Active Minds on Facebook and Twitter. Spring 2015 meetings will be held on Wednesdays at 6:30PM in Student Union 303.

## Scholarship Workshop

By: Kevin Keary

Last semester ALD members came together to learn about the exciting scholarships that they are eligible for. Although the deadline has now since passed, I know that by holding this workshop, many members were able to learn about the fantastic scholarships that our individual branch of ALD, as well as the national branch, provide. Below are some of the available scholarships, and good luck to all that applied! The winners should be announced in the coming month!

### UConn ALD Scholarships

*Dr. Seuss Award*- \$250 dollars awarded to a full time student to be applied to the purchase of academic books.

*Paper 'n Paws Award*- \$500 awarded to a member who excels academically and is involved in the community.

*Katie Michel Roaming Husky Award*- \$1000 awarded to a member participating in a study abroad program in 2015.

*Continuing Education Award*- \$500 awarded to a graduating member pursuing a graduate degree.

### National ALD Scholarships

*Jo Anne J. Trow Scholarship*- An award given to 36 outstanding sophomores ranging between \$1000 and \$6000 to be used in their junior year.

*James G. Stemler Study Abroad Scholarship*- A \$1000 award given to 20 students studying abroad in the 2015-2016 academic year.

*Alpha Lambda Delta Graduate Fellowships*- An award ranging from \$3000-\$7000 for students and alumni pursuing a graduate degree.



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## Research Workshop

By: Aiden Ford

For many undergraduates on campus, participation in research, either as a part of an established lab, or through independent work, is a key part of their plan of study. However getting started can be a challenge, so ALD member Emily Liao organized the Research Workshop to help other society members get ahead. Featuring speaker Caroline McGuire, the director of the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR), the event highlighted the variety of research opportunities on campus, which range from public opinion studies to art therapy to stem cell genetics. Dr. McGuire also discussed the application process, which usually begins by reaching out to a professor of interest and then working with them to develop a project. She emphasized the importance of learning about the topic and published work before committing to a lab, because passion for the subject is key.

A student speaker also came in to share his personal experience as a OUR scholarship recipient. OUR offers scholarships year round to support student projects, including the SURF grant, up to \$4,000 as a summer stipend, and a Supplies grant for \$500, which helps to alleviate costs from procedural materials.

Speaking from personal experience, research is an amazing opportunity to get real world experience in your field, and also to hone your individual interests.

For example, physiology research can encompass examining highly specific proteins domains but also the behavioral neuroscience of particular drugs or gene knockouts. By getting involved with a particular lab, you can learn what areas of information you would like to specialize in. For any further questions, feel free to get in touch with the Office of Undergraduate Research. Their website is <http://ugradresearch.uconn.edu/contact-our/>, emails are available for all faculty members. Get excited to discover what research at UConn has to offer!

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# The Peer Mentoring Program

By: Elishbah Nadeem

In the fall, ALD launched a new program for the purpose of promoting academic excellence: the Peer Mentoring program. Under the Academic Chair, Emily Liao, this program was started as a way to assist students requiring academic help. This program was aimed at students who were unable to go to a tutoring center, or wanted to form connections with other ALD members in study groups or mentor/mentee pairs. A lot of students ended up offering to tutor. This semester, ALD is attempting to expand the program to give more members the ability to form these connections. It's a great way for students to both seek and offer help with studying!



## PAINTING SOCIAL

BY: JENNY YUNG



Midterm season came to an artistic close on October 23<sup>rd</sup> when Alpha Lambda Delta members gathered together for a relaxing painting session in the Math and Science Building. Canvases, oil pastels, colorful paints, fun music, and an abundance of munchkins were present while ALD members unleashed their creative side. Paintings ranged from scenic to abstract, bright to muted, but had one thing in common: as a whole, they all showcased the diversity in our organization.

The painting social not only served as an outlet for exam stress, but also as a bonding experience for new and old members of the ALD community. As a member, I hope that this will be a continuing tradition. Check out the beautiful and unique pieces of work on the Alpha Lambda Delta Facebook page!



# Ice Cream Social

By: Kevin Keary

Towards the end of September many Alpha Lambda Delta members gathered in the Rowe Center for Undergraduate Education to share each other's company, and most importantly some delicious Dairy Bar ice cream. With a bevy of toppings including fresh strawberries and raspberries, assorted Hershey's candies, and chocolate covered pretzels, ALD members were able to create their own sugary sweet creation. Spending quality time with their brothers and sisters in the Alpha Lambda Delta family was a great break in the middle of the fall semester.



# Light the Night

By: Margaret Zimmer

This October, Alpha Lambda Delta members from the University of Connecticut were delighted to participate in the "Light the Night" event at Evergreen Park in South Windsor, Connecticut. Hosted by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the walk consisted of a scenic stroll throughout and around the numerous Promenade Shops. After a rainy day, the clouds parted leaving a clear sky to be illuminated by the hundreds of Light the Night lanterns in dazzling red for the supporters, yellow for those walking in the memory of a loved one, and white for the fearless survivors. The LLS event was sponsored and catered by Moe's Southwest Grill, giving plenty for the participants to burn off. After a rousing pre-walk pep talk led by a local radio station DJ with inspiring speeches by survivors and current fighters, the signal was given to start walking! Cheerleaders from a local squad were at every corner of the journey cheering everyone on to keep walking until the finish line, the whole trail was decorated with Halloween lights and flare, and the finish line provided a perfect photo opportunity to cap off a wonderful night of support.

The LLS is an organization dedicated to ending the days of blood cancer. With the help of generous corporations, friends, families, and individuals, they are able to put on successful events such as this one to raise thousands of dollars to fund treatments, provide patient support services, advocate for lifesaving treatments and support some of the most promising cancer research to be found today. The Evergreen Walk event succeeded in raising over \$100,000, with the UConn Alpha Lambda Delta members contributing over \$100 between five participants. To donate, please visit [www.lightthenight.org](http://www.lightthenight.org), where you can also search for Light the Night events near you, and help end blood cancer today.



# **Alpha Lambda Delta National Conference**

**By: Donovan Fifield**

The Alpha Lambda Delta National conference, held in Minneapolis this year, was convened in October with the purpose of connecting with members of other ALD chapters nationwide. With the goal of sharing ideas, representatives attended

workshops on promoting event planning.

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author of '101

Before you

an array of interest

UConn ALD was

our social chair

historian Abby

a great time in the

A big thanks is due for all of the writers and photographers that contributed to the newsletter this year!! If you would like to become a part of the newsletter for this semester, contact [uconnald@gmail.com](mailto:uconnald@gmail.com). No experience necessary. It's a great resume booster and a perfect way for new members to earn points!

**Newsletter Committee Heads: Elishbah Nadeem & Kevin Keary**

