Muhlenberg Athletics Community Service
Fall 2010
Teams That Ran or Walked
After playing their last home game of the season the previous night, the Muhlenberg field hockey team woke up early the morning of October 23 to participate in the Walk to Defeat ALS at Coca-Cola Park. The Mules completed the 2-mile walk on a team with other students and staff in memory of Tom Grace, the former Muhlenberg equipment manager who was diagnosed with ALS in April 2008 and passed away in November 2009. The walk raised a total of $154,074.
The men’s and women’s lacrosse teams continued an annual tradition by running in Ashly’s 5K Race for Freedom on September 4. The run is in memory of Ashly Moyer, an Emmaus resident who was killed in Baghdad in March 2007 at age 21.

Approximately 60 members of the two teams participated for the third year in a row. A portion of the proceeds from the race benefit the Ashly Moyer Memorial Scholarship Fund at Emmaus High School, Ashly’s alma mater. The majority of the proceeds are donated to The Lehigh Valley Blue Star Mothers, a group that supports our troops and veterans.
“As a team it is a great way to keep up our fitness while supporting a wonderful cause and a courageous solider from our community,” said Mule senior Lauren DeCarle. “It is always an emotional morning for the team and a reality check when we are running in honor of a young woman who was our age when she lost her life.”
The women’s lacrosse team took the concept of community service one step further, implementing a “charity challenge.” The Mules broke up into two groups, with each half choosing a cause and participating in a service project.

The challenge was to see who could raise the most money or donate the most time to their chosen charity.
“My group teamed up with the Sixth Street Shelter, which is a shelter located in Allentown whose mission is ‘to provide the opportunity and direction for all people to become self-sufficient, productive members of the community,’” said DeCarle.

“We had two visits to the shelter: one Saturday we gardened their landscaping, and another Friday afternoon we threw a Halloween party for the children of the shelter. Although gardening was hard work, my group had a great time doing it together and helping out the aesthetics of the shelter. Our Halloween party for the children was the highlight for everyone in the group. We put together crafts and games for them to play and we ended up having as much fun as the children did!”
Fellow senior Maggie Sullivan was in the other group. “Our group chose to donate our time to Roosevelt Elementary School in Allentown,” she said. “We participated in their Book Blast program.

“Kids and their parents from all over Allentown were welcome to come. Teachers and others who chose to volunteer read to the children and taught them lessons, for instance how to read critically. They then assisted them in different projects depending on the age level of the students. Some classrooms wrote their own poems, while others did arts and crafts. It is a way to encourage kids to read and to get their parents involved in the process as well.”
So who won the “charity challenge”? Everyone involved.

“Giving back to this shelter was one of the most rewarding experiences because we were able to see first-hand the positive effect that it had on the children,” said DeCarle. “It was a very humbling experience to know that there are others five minutes away from Muhlenberg College who live much less fortunate lives than we do. Not only was this important to the shelter itself but it was a great bonding experience for our team to give back and have fun.”

“We all really enjoyed the Book Blast program,” said Sullivan. “It is remarkable to see the kids’ enthusiasm. The dedication and time the teachers, volunteers, kids and parents put into Book Blast reminded us all that even one hour of our time can make a difference. We find it extremely important to give back to the community of which Muhlenberg is a part.”
A Team That Wanted to Run
The Muhlenberg baseball team was all set to run in Turning Point’s Step Out Against Domestic Violence 5K for the fourth consecutive year, but Mother Nature had other ideas.
Turning Point of Lehigh Valley is a safe place where victims of abuse and their children can find refuge. According to its website, its mission is “to work toward the elimination of domestic violence; increase community awareness of the problem; and empower victims of domestic violence by providing shelter and support services.”
“Being involved in Step Out is a great way for our team to get involved with the local community,” said senior Bobby Spindler. “Our team has been participating in Step Out Against Domestic Violence every year since I arrived at school, and it gets more rewarding every year we do it.

“But that isn’t the reason why we participate. We do it to help those victimized by domestic violence and raise money so violence such as this doesn’t happen again in homes around the country.”
This year, heavy rains for two days prior to the scheduled race day of October 2 left the Lehigh Parkway 75 percent under water. The committee had little choice but to cancel the event. In its place, a Step Out Washed Out Party was held at Rascals Food and Fun, a local restaurant, on Sunday, October 10.

According to the Turning Point Fall 2010 newsletter, “The Step Out Washed Out party couldn’t have been a better solution for a makeup event. More than 200 people attended, and because of their generosity in making donations at the door, as well as buying tickets for the amazing basket raffle, an additional $2,000 was recouped towards a final total of $38,000 for Step Out.”
The members of the Mule baseball team outdid themselves, raising $8,041 to earn an award as the top fundraising group. Pictured is senior Joseph DiCecilia accepting the award from Step Out chair Lauren Goff. In the past four years, the Mules have raised more than $25,000 for the cause.
“It was a little disappointing that the event was cancelled this year, because that is a way to give back to the community in more than a monetary way. Just talking to the victims of domestic violence and seeing how happy and thankful they were that we were there supporting them was something special,” said Spindler. “This community service event really opened my eyes to unfortunate situations that innocent people must go through, and in the future, I am sure that I will continue to support this important organization.”
A Team That Digs Service
The Muhlenberg volleyball team, which has been a part of the Centennial Conference’s “Digging for a Cure” campaign for the past five years, participated in an off-court project in 2010.
My Own Book is a non-profit organization that aims to fight illiteracy and encourage reading in children. Members hold book drives, and then visit disadvantaged K through 3rd graders, read a story aloud and tell them about the public library. Each child gets to choose their very own book from a selection of brand new books.

Finally, a book plate is added to the book with the child’s name on it. In this way My Own Book is spreading the love of reading: one book at a time, one child at a time.
The Mules spent Fall Break painting a bookcase that will be used to store the new and used books that are collected for My Own Book.
Then, a few weeks later, team members visited a couple of local child care centers.

They read to the children and acted out the story Snow White. Then they helped each child pick out a book and label it with the name plate.
“The most meaningful of our experiences was when we were able to work directly with the children,” said senior Caitlin Dombkowski. “After acting out Snow White for a great group of kids, we were able to give each of them a book that they could call their own.

“Such a small act, I hope, meant a lot to the children, and any steps taken toward getting children to value books and reading can do only good. We had a lot of fun and walked away feeling good to have given what we could.”