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Day of Caring drives campus support

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor



PHOTOS | WILLIAM GAGNÉ

Students lined up at an ice cream truck during Day of Caring on April 8 at the Academic Quad.

While students lined up at ice cream trucks, grabbed free giveaways and enjoyed music in the spring sun, April 8, something larger was unfolding behind the scenes.

Throughout the day donations climbed as the university's 11th annual Day of Caring broguht a powerful wave of support.By midnight, the numbers told a powerful story: 1,687 donors had raised $692,424.

"It was a celebration all day," Kristen Welton, associate director for annual giving, said. "We were monitoring everything really closely, and when we hit milestones, we celebrated throughout the day."

Although this year's fundraising total was slightly lower than the past two years, the reach met new levels.

"We had a record number of departments and programs and athletic teams funded. This year, we had over 80 different departments receiving donations, which is amazing," Welton said.

Welton expressed that this tradition is a true all-hands-on-deck effort, bringing the entire campus community into the experience.

"It's a day that everyone can come together and ask for support and share what's so special about their program," Welton said.

That storytelling played a major role in this year's success.

Welton said that in addition to emails sent to about 40,000 people and campus-wide promotion, organizers encouraged faculty and staff to take a more personal approach.

"Something really exciting we did this year was give faculty and staff tools to connect with their contacts," Welton said. "Whether it was alumni, friends or family, they could share why their program is important and why it should be supported, and that seemed to really make a difference."

This new approach led to creative outreach efforts, including personalized messages, phone calls and even videos posted on LinkedIn.

A major driver of the day's momentum came from the nine Power Hours, where athletic and academic departments and programs competed to secure the most individual donors in a short period of time.

"We had sponsors contribute about $1,000 for most of the Power Hours," Welton said. "Whichever group had the most donors during that time won that bonus money."

One of the most meaningful moments came during the 3–4 p.m. Power Hour, when many donors chose to support the swimming and diving team as well as a scholarship program in memory of late Head Coach Tim Quill.

"I'm very happy that they're doing something like that for him," health science major Molly Kennedy, a junior and swim athlete, said. "He has a very long legacy here, and he deserves this."

For Welton, the outpouring of support for Quill was evident, as supporters poured in steady waves of donations and messages throughout the day.

"Just anecdotally, we saw a huge number of donations come in support of Tim Quill and the swimming and diving team," Welton said. "His spirit continues to be here, and athletes and those who remember him continue to support his memory."

Donors ranged from alumni to faculty, friends and a handful of local businesses, with contributions of all sizes coming together to make a difference.

Apart from the fundraising efforts driving the day, the Academic Quad carried an upbeat tone. Between classes, students had the opportunity to connect and enjoy the sense of community around them.

"It feels nice to see everyone come together and be outside again," nursing major Gianna D'Eugenio, a freshman, said.

Looking ahead, Welton hopes Day of Caring continues to grow as both a tradition and a memory for students that stays with them after they cross the stage.

"I just hope it's something that they remember as one of their Southern memories after they graduate, and then they'll want to keep participating in some way," Welton said.



Day of Caring staff participating at the event.

Campus community responds following peaceful protest

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

A peaceful protest on April 6 showcased a moving display of solidarity, as roughly 150 students, faculty and local community members gathered in front of Buley Library in response to the recent detention of a university nursing student, Keyla, by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Hours before the protest, Sam Norton, spokesperson for Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, addressed the community in a statement that emphasized safety and stability.

"The safety and well-being of every member of the Southern community is our top priority," Norton said.

While recognizing the emotional impact of recent events on campus, Norton reaffirmed the university's ongoing commitment to inclusion.

"We understand that recent events may be distressing for students, faculty, staff and families, and we are committed to providing support while ensuring that our campus remains safe and welcoming for all," Norton said.

Norton continued by outlining the atmosphere of the campus community.

"Southern has always been a place where everyone is valued, and we remain steadfast in protecting that inclusive environment," Norton said.

Norton also pointed to the importance of upholding the right to peaceful expression, especially during moments of tension when students are still processing the news and searching for answers.

"Southern Connecticut State University respects the right to peacefully express views and supports our community's ability to gather and engage in lawful, respectful dialogue that demonstrates care and consideration for one another," Norton said.

While university officials focused on institutional reassurance and policy, members of the campus advocacy community also stepped forward during the protest to speak directly to students and offer support.

Among them was Esteban Garcia, chair of the DREAMers Action Alliance, who addressed the crowd on behalf of the organization.

"I'm speaking today not as a representative of the university administration, but on behalf of the DREAMers Action Alliance — a dedicated group of faculty, staff and students who believe that every person on this campus belongs here," Garcia said.

Acknowledging the weight of the loss, Garcia released a statement promoting solidarity and the broader systemic challenges faced by many students within higher education and beyond.

"Our hearts are heavy today for our fellow student and their family," Garcia said. "This situation is a painful reminder of the challenges many in our community face."

Garcia highlighted the organization's purpose as a support system for those currently struggling.

"We want to be clear: you are not alone," Garcia said. "Our alliance exists to stand in the gap, offer support and ensure that our campus remains a space where you can feel safe, seen and protected."

Garcia also pointed students toward additional information regarding support services for undocumented students at the university.

Garcia reinforced the message that help and support remains accessible.

"We are stronger when we look out for one another," Garcia said. "To our students: we see you, we support you, and we will continue to advocate for you every single day."

Garcia urged that students who are looking for advocacy and institutional support can access a variety of campus resources online.

Detailed information is available at www.southernct.edu/undocumented-students.



PHOTO | LILY RAND

Esteban Garcia, chair of the DREAMers Action Alliance, speaking at the peaceful protest on April 6 in front of Buley Library.