

# IT'S GREEK TO US: A SLICE OF PI, KAPPA, BETA

By Zach Wetzel  
For the Plain Talk

The fraternities and sororities of the University of South Dakota focus on serving the community rather than partying. According to Nathan Christensen, President of Pi Kappa Alpha, the fraternity participates in many philanthropy events.

"For our Alumni Event on April 11, we will be hosting an international work day," said Christensen. "Local alumni and parents are invited to work on housing projects at the fraternity house. This is a great way to get alumni together and improve the fraternity house."

The event begins at 9 a.m. and refreshments will be provided. In prior years, projects have included putting up a flagpole, landscaping, and painting.

"Pi Kappa, or PIKE for short, will host a Week of Service beginning on April 13," said Christensen. "The event starts on Monday and each day we will participate in different service activities. We usually volunteer at food pantries and clean up garbage in Yankton."

On April 16 the fraternity will host a community philanthropy event for Cure Kids Cancer at Prentis Park.

"We will serve tacos at the park," said Christensen. "We really enjoy this activity."

The biggest part of the service week is also a long-standing tradition. Every



The Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity and Pi Beta Phi sorority enjoy serving the University, the community, and society as a whole.

COURTESY PHOTO

year PIKE teams up with sororities and everyone spends the week living in cardboard boxes outside the University Center.

"We live in the boxes all week and collect change," said Christensen.

These activities help serve the community and fund projects to help people in need.

The Week of Service will conclude during the weekend of April 17. On the final day, the public is invited to participate in the Dakotathon.

"The Dakotathon is South Dakota's largest student-run philanthropy event, and it is 24-hours long," said Christensen.

During this activity, participants are divided into groups of ten. They are given the opportunity to get to know kids who have survived cancer and hear their stories.

All funds raised at these

events will be donated to the Children's Miracle Network and the local food pantry.

"We take great pride in our service," said Christensen. "This is a lot of fun."

The Pi Beta Phi sorority will host an upcoming charitable event as well.

According to Mariah Gehle, Chapter President, the sorority participated in a charity dinner on Tuesday.

The Pi Phi Bow Tie at the Vermillion Armory "is our biggest philanthropy event and it is a pasta feed that is catered from Cafe Brule," Gehle said.

Between the taco feed for Pi Kappa Alpha and the pasta feed for Pi Beta Phi, there will be plenty of food and service opportunities for the entire community.

"All proceeds for this activity go to Read Lead Achieve, our national

philanthropy that supports literacy initiatives," said Gehle. "At this event we also have Pie a Pi Phi where guests can pay money to pie a member in the face."

According to Gehle, Beta Phi is a very unique sorority. Its' mission is to assist Vermillion and USD by enriching lives and serving the community.

"Part of our mission statement is to 'enrich lives through community service', and we strive for this every day," said Gehle.

"It is important to us to give back to the Vermillion community whether it be by doing downtown clean-ups or going to Jolley Elementary to read to the students. We receive so much support from this community every year and we enjoy the opportunity to show our support in return."

## TWO S.D. STUDENTS WIN NATIONAL SILVER MEDALS FOR THEIR ARTWORK

NEW YORK, NY - The nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers in partnership with their South Dakota Art Affiliate, the University of South Dakota Art Department, today announced the national winners of the 2015 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, the nation's longest-running and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens in grades 7-12. More than 300,000 works of art and writing were submitted for

adjudication at the regional level in the Awards' 28 categories, which include poetry, painting, architecture, short story, fashion design and more.

South Dakota students receiving awards are: Sophi Dudley, Vermillion High School, Silver Medal for her comic art "Ouija Date," her teacher is Justin Brunick

Jacob Boomsma, Brandon Valley High School, Silver Medal and American Visions Medal for his digital artwork "A Fast Food Nightmare," his teacher is Martha Sewell

"The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards reflect the diverse landscape of today's

young creative thinkers," said Virginia McEnerney, Executive Director of the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, the administrator of the Scholastic Awards. "Year after year we see more of the nation's most talented and innovative teens emerge from different parts of the country, and it is our privilege to provide them with a platform to share and amplify their unique voices with a national audience."

All art and writing submissions are judged based on the program's three criteria: originality, technical skill and emergence of personal vision or voice. Student works are

first adjudicated regionally through the more than 100 local Affiliates of the Alliance. South Dakota Regional winners receiving Gold Keys, Silver Keys, Honorable Mentions and American Visions Nominations were celebrated at the University of South Dakota with an exhibition and March 1 Award Ceremony.

Gold Key-winning works were then judged nationally by an impressive panel of creative-industry experts to receive Gold, Silver, American Visions & Voices, Portfolio Silver with Distinction or Portfolio Gold Medals.

Courtesy of Alliance for Young Artists & Writers

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around here other than to go the bars, and we want to help change that."

In 2012, Stephanie finished her four years in the military and began attending college classes on a G.I. Bill, and is currently a junior at the University of South Dakota majoring in Business. Upon Stephanie's return, the Uffords opened up their historic farmland to the community in an effort to offer more options for entertainment.

"The biggest thing we've done is the pumpkin patch and corn maze," says Stephanie "Parents and children really like it, but people have suggested that we add more things to do, so we are currently trying to add more stuff to enlighten people about agriculture."

The couple hopes their petting zoo, which can also be found at the festival, will help further visitors' agricultural knowledge. The zoo currently houses goats and calves, but the Uffords are continuing to think of ways to make additions and improvements.

Vermillion resident Lacy Long has been to the festival for the past two years.

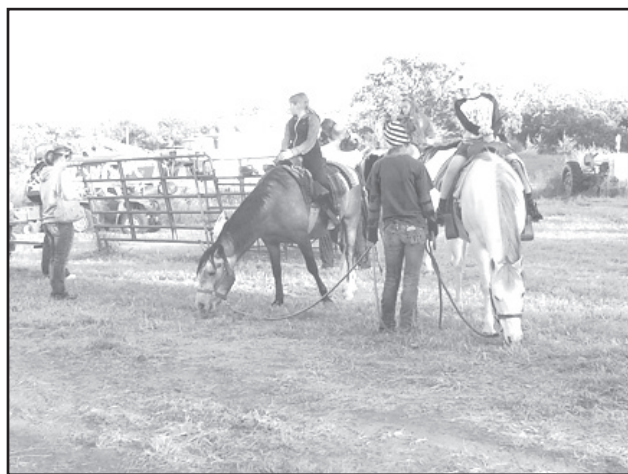
"I took my teenagers with me and they thoroughly enjoyed being outside and getting lost in the maze," says Long. "It's a fantastic opportunity for families to get out during the fall and enjoy themselves. Stephanie and Alex bring so much to the community, and I think they are just going to improve on what they already have to offer the community."

Vermillion resident Morgan Appley has also visited the farm.

"I went to their pumpkin patch this year and did the hay ride - I got to check out the property and thought it was really cool," says Appley. "It was nice to go to a pumpkin patch again - it's been a long time since I've done that."

The family's 500 acres of land is primarily utilized for agriculture in which they grow corn, beans, alfalfa and hay grass. They also raise goats and grass-fed beef, with an emphasis on the importance of buying and selling local.

"We always try to shop local and have a huge garden that we do for the



Visitors of the Ufford farm enjoy horseback riding among other of a myriad of things made available to them.

SONIA HERNANDEZ / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

farmers market," says Alex. "We also raise non-GMO corn to try and be as green as we can."

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs), have been the subject of rigorous scrutiny, sparking debates about food labeling, oil dependence, and the potential for negative impacts on health and the environment.

"We really want to help people get an idea of where their food comes from," says Alex.

In addition to hosting fall festivities, the Uffords sell fresh produce, grass-fed beef and goat at the Vermillion Area Farm-

ers Market. Additional information regarding the pumpkin patch and maze can be found on the Facebook page Ufford Hills Pumpkin Patch and Corn Maze.

Though many will agree that Vermillion is lacking in entertainment, the Uffords are hoping to change that by helping foster fun and educational community activities at their historic farm.

# Beyond the Mask

By Anne La Brake  
For the Plain Talk

"From the standpoint of the media world, 'Beyond the Mask' is a landmark for Christian films that says, 'we're not doing corny films anymore,'" Ryan Chartier assures. "We are creating works that will help influence future cultures and future generations."

Chartier was a member of the Locations and Security Department within the film.

"It's really been a long time coming," Daniel Stibral impresses, art director for the film that, according to him, is the biggest film of the age. "We filmed in 2012, but by far, even after all the other films we've done, it's still one of my favorites. There's the action adventure for the young boy in us. There's the romance between the leading actor and actress. There's even the romance in just the idea of finding life and redemption. This film speaks to adults, men, women, children, grandparents, any and all walks of life."

Both presently live in the local area, surprisingly along with other members who had a part of the film set, and with that said; Chartier and Stibral are fired up over this very versatile film that though filmed mostly over in Michigan, actually has a great deal of local interest.

"Beyond the Mask' is a family, action-adventure movie, mixed with a little romance, mystery, and historical fiction," Stibral expounds. "Basically it's set around an assassin, William Reynolds, played by Andrew Cheney, who sort of gets double-crossed, then presumed dead by his employer. He tries to start a new life outside of that corruption which actually works out great for him because he ends up falling in love with a lovely lady. Seems like, finally, his life becomes back on course with this new beginning when he is discovered, ending up back on the run once more. At this point he ends up over in Colonial America. The film is set right before the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1775. Once there, however, he ends up putting on a mask and becoming a vigilante superhero."

"The center of this movie is really about identity because of the past our hero led," explains Stibral, "He's trying to create a new life outside of that image, but that past keeps coming back to haunt him. Eventually he has to learn to find an identify not only in the mask that he wears but through a complete change in his life through Jesus, so this show is really about finding your identity in God and being redeemed from your past."

'Beyond the Mask' is, also, not without experienced writers and actors backing it either.

Paul McCusker partici-

pated in the writing of this script and is known not only his experience in that area, but, also, his writing of the 'Focus on the Family' radio drama, 'Adventures in Odyssey'

Another big name you will find in the movie is John Rhys-Davies, known not exclusively for his roles in "Lord of the Rings," "Indiana Jones," and "One Night with the King."

Both Chartier and Stibral personally became involved in films about four years ago, though the interest began long before that.

"Movies vibed with me in a way that a book couldn't necessarily, and what impressed me, also, was just how much they impact the culture," Chartier admits. "With technology changing, films are reaching more and more homes, so I saw that it was an important area of ministry."

"Walk down the street and you'll probably overhear someone's conversations," agrees Stibral. "Chances are they're talking about a movie they saw or quoting a line from a television show."

"Much like music, film is a universal language that people all around the world can relate to," continues Stibral. "For me, that's a huge part of why I want to kick into the Christian industry. To do something I love, but to do it with a deeper meaning and 'Beyond the Mask', for sure, is one of those movies. It's a fun movie. You don't go there necessarily because you want to promote the message, you go there because it's awesome, it's exciting, and it's creative. Yet on that deeper message, you can stand firmly behind. You can feel good about going, about taking your family, and about telling your friends to go."

Right now, 'Beyond the Mask' needs 36 more individuals to reserve his or her \$10 ticket with the Yankton Theater, in order for the film to be premiered on April 27 at 7 p.m.

If more interest is generated, the film may even be able to expand to even more local theaters.

Tickets will not be sold at the door and in the case that enough interest is not generated for the film to be shown, there is no risk, as the reserved tickets will not be charged to your payment card.

Go to [www.beyondthemaskmovie.com/showing/9375](http://www.beyondthemaskmovie.com/showing/9375) to reserve your tickets before the deadline of April 17 to ensure that this film, backed by passionate individuals rooted from our local area, is premiered.

"This movie is going to speak to people in a lot of ways, because it will not only explain and clearly emphasize the idea that there is a renewed life in Christ where you can leave your past life behind," defines Chartier. "You don't have to hide and run from it."

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