

0

SHARES

[ShareTweet](#)

765 views

Melissa Houston

[mrhouston@radford.edu](mailto:mrhouston@radford.edu)

On September 15, 2012, Blacksburg Virginia hosted a walk to end Alzheimer's. This was just one of eight walks that community members could participate in the region. The Central and Western Virginia region for the walk consists of 52 different cities ranging from Culpepper to the North Carolina border, and Winchester to past Wytheville on 81.

The walk was approximately three miles around most of Virginia Tech's campus. Mary Pat Hanson works for the Association, and led the walk in Blacksburg. Her mother had Alzheimer's and that is how she became involved. She began as a volunteer in 2004 for walks, but a position opened up with the association and she began working full time for them. "It is important for college students to understand it is not just an old person thing," said Hanson. She believes students should understand the disease, and know the warnings because they are next to being out in the work force. If students learn the warning signs now, then when they are in the work force they would be able to see if any co-workers may have the disease. "Our goal is \$12,500 and we are already at \$30,000," explained Hanson. Mary Pat also said that walks for Alzheimer's Awareness raise the most money for the cause.

The walk consisted of a wide variety of people. Mary Pat Hanson said there were 241 participants registered before the walk, and people were able to register at the walk Saturday. The Alzheimer's Association hands out flowers to all participants at no cost to show how Alzheimer's is affecting them. If a person has a purple flower then it means they lost a friend or family member to the disease. Yellow means you are a caregiver to someone with it. Orange means you have no connection to the disease, but you are an advocate. Last, but not least, blue indicates you have the disease. There were many families and social groups that participated to help bring everyone from various walks of life together. One social group that participated was Alpha Kappa Psi here at Radford University.

Alzheimer's disease is the Radford University chapter of Alpha Kappa Psi's philanthropy. Last spring the chapter held their first walk to end Alzheimer's on campus. Alpha Kappa Psi is the team that has raised the most money in the region so far with \$5,262.21 donated to the cause. Virginia Tech's Sigma Kappa is right behind them in second place. "It's really great. It shows how much our fraternity cares about this great cause," said Junior Robbie Connors on the organization raising the most money. While walking with members of the

organization they spoke out on how they felt about participating in the walk. "I feel a sense of community," said Junior Megan Diederich. Alpha Kappa Psi will be hosting a walk on campus for the cause in spring 2013.

If you want to help promote Alzheimer's awareness, then you should wear the color purple on Friday, Sept. 21. Sept. 21 is national Alzheimer's Awareness Day. If you do not own any purple then you should go to Crumb and Get it on Main Street that day. Alpha Kappa Psi will be there from 1 pm to 4 pm promoting the awareness. The organization will receive 10 percent from sales between those hours, and are donating the money to the Alzheimer's Association. The Alzheimer's Association is taking donations until November 1. For more information on Alzheimer's awareness, go to [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).