



Photo by MADISON MEYER

Two students prepare to pie University President Mike Williams in the face at women's social club Ju Go Ju's tent to raise money for Relay for Life on Oct. 14. Student organizations placed tents on the Front Lawn and hosted a variety of activities to raise money for cancer research.

Students, donors break campus record for cancer research fundraiser

EMILY STINNETT
guest writer

Harding University broke its fundraising record for cancer research through the Relay for Life event on Oct. 14 with a grand total of \$39,124.59. The previous record was \$26,057.47 in 2018. Students with clubs and organizations set up tents on the Front Lawn and stayed out all night raising money for the American Cancer Society through Harding's chapter of Relay for Life.

A week before Relay for Life, the committee expected students and donors to raise about \$9,000-\$10,000 and then planned to reach the goal of \$20,000 during the night-long portion of Relay for Life. However, they

met the goal of \$20,000 a day before the event and continued to raise about twice that on the day of Relay for Life.

One of the co-directors of the event, senior Mason Adams, said the committee did not expect the student body to demolish the goal. He said he was afraid that the numbers would slow down by the time the goal was met the day before the event happened.

"At the same time I knew that we were on such a roll that we just kept our foot on the gas, and I knew that we were going to go into the night, and we were going to work our hearts out, we were going to give all we had," Adams said.

He said he did not expect to exceed the goal by almost twice the amount and was

grateful to everyone for showing up and supporting and to his committee for the help.

Junior Eli Smith was on the entertainment committee for Relay for Life. His personal connection to cancer has inspired him to be a part of Relay for Life at Harding, as it has impacted several of his family members over the last few years.

"Knowing the impact that [the money] was going to have for so many people, like we were thrilled to raise \$20,000, but to raise almost double that, that's that many more people we're going to be able to help with that money," Smith said.

College of Business professor Rich Brown participated in the survivor walk at the start of the Relay for Life event.

He and his wife are both cancer survivors and have walked in more than 10 survivor walks in Searcy.

"When I go to that, when I go to Relay for Life, it just reminds me that I'm lucky to be here," Brown said.

Women's social club Zeta Rho raised the most money through the team competition with \$6,121. Women's social club Ju Go Ju placed second, and women's social club Delta Gamma Rho placed third.

Adams said he would love for everybody to be a part of Relay for Life in the next few years.

"It's a wonderful experience to actually impact the world," Adams said.



Photos by MADISON MEYER

(Left) Buff the Bison holds a balloon animal at Zeta Rho's tent on Oct. 14. (Right) Students and Relay for Life participants walk around the Front Lawn.

President Williams meets with students, alumni across South

WATKINS KELLY
guest writer

University President Mike Williams is continuing his presidential tour over the course of the semester, partnering with University Admissions and Alumni Relations to connect members of the Harding community past, present and future.

So far, Williams has visited seven different cities throughout Texas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Alabama and Arkansas. Four more stops are scheduled for the remainder of the fall semester.

Multiple members of the University's faculty and staff have participated in visits, primarily aiding in recruitment efforts at local high schools. The team has conducted "school takeovers," beginning with Williams speaking during the high schools' chapel services. Dr. Heath Carpenter, associate professor of English, attended the Dallas trip and co-taught a Bible class for the high school students.

Carpenter said the team aimed to give students a taste of a college classroom, while also developing connections through breakout groups and interactive activities.

"In the process, we have some reflective teaching time where we do work with the text in ways that try to take it to a collegiate level," Carpenter said. "We want to model

the level of scholarship that you can expect at Harding."

Carpenter and other members of the team encouraged the class to share their personal stories and form genuine relationships with the members of the Harding team. Carpenter said this team approach helped set them apart compared to recruitment trips from other universities.

"What we hear from the teachers and principals at these high schools is that nobody else is doing this," Carpenter said. "It's unheard of, that you would bring faculty on the road with you to model a college experience and connect with the students you would hope to come."

Williams said the University has already seen the positive impact of increased recruitment efforts. Due to more external messaging, the newly renovated welcome center and other factors, campus visits increased by 35% in the past year. Williams said the increase in numbers is a testament to the current students who shape the positive environment of campus, which is what prospective students see.

"We want prospective students to see that this is a school that prides itself on 'Inspired Purpose,'" Williams said. "We want to develop game-changers, people that move into a community and envision something better ...

and it's also a way for alumni to say, 'That's my alma mater. I'm proud of them. They're raising up a new generation of leaders."

Along with recruitment events, each stop on the presidential tour has included an alumni reception. Williams said he has seen an energetic response to these events and stressed the importance of an open dialogue with alumni who are still invested in the happenings on campus.

"A huge part of it is about listening," Williams said. "During the day, we're sitting down with individual alumni at coffee or lunch and saying, 'What does the next century of Harding need to be, in your view?'

Williams said he hopes that these events with alumni can build pathways between current students and alumni, both in terms of relationships and professional opportunities.

He also emphasized that this open dialogue will not stop after this school year and is going to become a part of the University's "new normal."

The presidential tour has energized the Admissions and Alumni Relations teams and renewed and stimulated interest from both prospective and former students. Junior Jayda Lynn, who attended a trip to Oklahoma City, said all students should be encouraged by the changes being made to the University's connection efforts.

"The tour lets it be known how important Dr. Williams' presidency is in shaping the future of Harding," Lynn said. "And it's also adding awareness and amplitude to what Harding is doing right now."



Graphic by WAGNER VALDEZ