Students turn flowerpots into icons of self-expression in 'Planted in Purpose'

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On April 8, members of the University of Connecticut's Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Phi Beta Chapter came together to host an event called Planted in Purpose, which took place in the Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center's program room.

The environment was very tranquil and relaxing. There were two tables that had an array of art supplies such as markers, paintbrushes and paint. There were also dozens of plastic flowerpots that attendees could decorate and collections of succulent plants that could be inserted into the pots. Some of those plants were Chinese Jades, Jelly Bean Plants, Peperomias and Strings of Buttons.

Each participant adorned their flowerpot by adding unique designs to it. One person used a few markers to etch the Delta Sigma Theta symbol onto their pot. Another embellished their pot by drawing a dozen colorful waves on it. Some attendees wrote their names while others painted their flowerpot in one single color.

While decorating the flowerpots, attendees had conversations ranging from homework to summer vacation plans, filling the program room with a sense of community.

Jenelle Henry, an eighth-semester molecular and cellular biology student, elaborated on that sense of community and how it contributes to the significance of hosting Planted in Purpose.

"I think this event's very important," Henry said. "It builds community, and students can come in, chill, connect with one another, meet new people and have fun in general."

Tanaeja Simpson, a sixth-semester communications student, also mentioned that events like Planted in Purpose allow students to build community.

"Everyone walked in here to chill, pick up a flowerpot and start painting it," Simpson said. "I feel like you can come across anything by having events like this. People that were having a normal day can find a community here."

Simpson also declared that the event gave students an opportunity to fill a blank space in their calendar.

"They can take home a plant and say 'Hey. I did something today,'" Simpson said.

The purpose of hosting Planting in Purpose goes beyond community and letting students decorate a flowerpot and illuminate it with one or more plants. According to the event's description, Planted in Purpose was hosted to promote stress relief, mental wellness and self-expression among students. Furthermore, the event provided a serene and secure space for attendees to reconnect with their peers, engage in self-care practices and regenerate themselves after a long, stressful day.

The event also allowed students to freely express their identity. Students could paint symbols related to their background, write down messages that resonated with them, draw something that represents an organization they're a part of, paint one of their friends — anything they wanted to put on their flowerpot.



Student decorates potted plant with markers. The event, Planted in Purpose, was held on April 8.

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Students decorating plant pots with markers and paint. Planted in Purpose, an event hosted by Delta Sigma Theta on April 8, was meant to help students express themselves.

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