Programs Council gives out free pet fish to students

By Lexi White
Features Editor

Students were bubbling with excitement as they received their very own water-breathing companions.

ProCon gave students the materials to build their own aquarium: a fish tank, a gravel pit, rocks, plants, a year's worth of food and even provided students with their very own pet Betta fish.

"I never would have thought that I would be getting a pet from school," exercise and sport science major Haley Fitzgerald, a freshman, said. "I cannot believe I just got a free pet fish."

Fitzgerald said that she had six fish before and really wanted a pet for her dorm room.

Although the only choice was a fish, she said that she could not be any happier.

"Blue is my favorite color, and my new fish is the prettiest shade of blue," Fitzgerald said. "I want to name it either Dexter or Nilla, like a vanilla wafer."

Biology major Craig Huydic, a junior, was one of the members of ProCon helping to give students a new aquatic friend. He said this event was created to help encourage students to take on responsibility.

"By giving students something that they can care for, they can become better people," Huydic said. "This gives them an opportunity to care for something living while being on campus."

According to the university's student handbook, fish in a maximum 10-gallon tank are the only pets allowed in West Campus, Brownell, Chase, Hickerson, Neff and Wilkinson Hall.

North Campus Residence Complex and Schwartz Hall also allow pet fish in the same size tank. In addition, other aquatic pets such as turtles, snails and frogs are allowed.

"Fish are pets that can be easily kept in a dorm without too much attention," Huydic said. "As long as students remember to feed their fish and clean the tank, having this pet can be easily maintained."

Psychology major Taylor Green, a junior, was another student who wanted a free pet.

She said that she did not expect live fish to be given away on campus and wanted to see what ProCon's event was all about.

"I'm so happy to have a fish because he's so cute," Green said. "I think I'm going to name him Midnight because he's a dark blue color."

Green said that she was thankful that ProCon also provided the necessities a pet fish would need so she and other students would not need to spend money.

"Most schools wouldn't give away free animals, and I think that being given everything I need to keep my fish healthy is amazing," Green said.

Another student who said he was in shock at being given a free fish was computer science major Zachary Mercado, a junior.

He said that he has had four fish throughout his life and wanted another one because he is fascinated by them.

"I'm going to name my fish Blue because he's blue," Mercado said. "Being given all the supplies I need in order to take care of Blue makes things so much easier."



PHOTO | CARLY RUSSELL

Psychology major Taylor Green, computer science major Zachary Mercado, juniors, and exercise and sport science major Haley Fitzgerald, a freshman, holding their new pet fish.



Healthcare studies major Kayla Tirozzi, a sophomore, with her new pet fish and her decorated fish tank.

Owls Decide: Do you prefer headphones or earbuds?

By Lexi White
Features Editor



PHOTO | CARLY RUSSELL

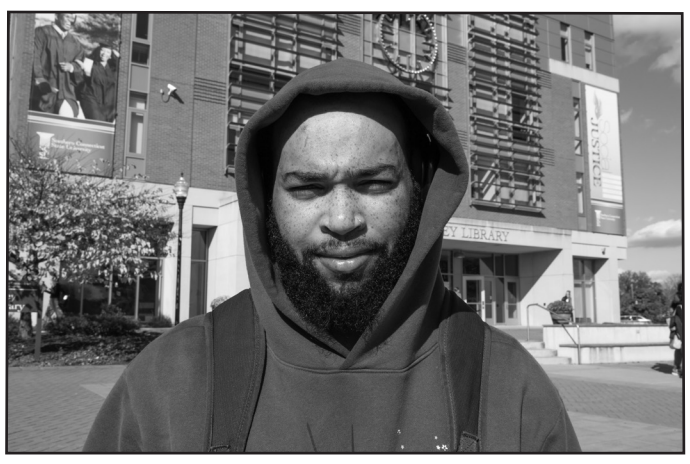
"I prefer headphones because I like the look of them more than earbuds."
-Elementary education major Kaylee Salas, a junior



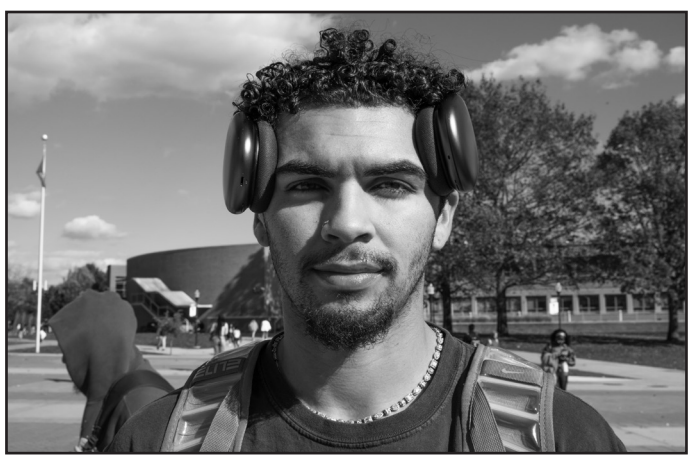
"The weight of headphones feels very restricting, and earbuds are just easier."
-Sociology major Kevin Umana, a senior



"Headphones because I like how you can't hear anyone else. It just blocks everything out."
-Nursing major Zahra Hutchinson, a sophomore



"Headphones because of the noise cancellation, and I won't have to hear anybody talking."
-Healthcare studies major Jasiah Cooper, a senior



"I prefer headphones because I like the noise cancellation, and I can really lock in on the music."
-Sport management major Sean James, a senior



"When you move too much with headphones, they can get out of place. That's why I prefer earbuds."
-Theatre major Nick Allen, a junior

Neff Hall RAs teach their residents about STIs

By Lexi White
Features Editor

Many students took a sexual education class before graduating high school, but the Neff Hall Resident Advisers said that they wanted to help their residents learn even more.

On Wednesday, Nov. 6, the Neff Hall lobby filled with students who were eager to obtain insightful information about sexually transmitted infections.

"We wanted to teach students about the common types of STIs and clarify the stigmas about them," psychology major Aaralyn Torreira, a senior, said.

Torreira is an RA for the second floor of Neff Hall and helped to host the educational event. She said that there are resources on campus that are available for students when needed.

"The Health and Wellness Center is a place where students can get tested, address any concerns and get free condoms," Torreira said. "Each dorm also has its own free condom dispenser."

Along with students gaining awareness of their sexual health, the Neff Hall RAs provided an incentive for students who attended the event: empanadas and a raffle for a $20 Amazon gift card.

"The food attracted most of the students' attention, but that got them to sit down and actually think about these issues," Torreira said.

Psychology major Dalice Urena, a sophomore, was one of the students who originally attended the event because of the empanadas. Urena said that she enjoyed the free food but was glad that she got to learn something new while being at the event.

"I learned that if someone keeps getting chlamydia, the antibiotics will stop working," Urena said. "Not everyone in college was able to get the proper sexual education, so it is really important that people were able to get more information tonight."

Another student who was drawn in by the empanadas but ended up learning something was psychology major Trician Johnson, a junior. She said that by learning about STIs, the stigma around the condition can stop.

"College gives people this new sense of freedom, and it's important to help them know how to be safe," Johnson said.

While Urena and Johnson originally attended the event thinking about food, nursing major Madison Calvo, a sophomore, said that she genuinely wanted to learn more about specific STDs and STIs.

"Whether people were paying attention or not, they took in that information," Calvo said. "While the food drew people's attention, they got access to information that they can use later."

An RA from the fourth floor in Neff Hall, studio art major Jaizier St.Hilaire, a senior, also helped to inform students of the consequences of unprotected sex. He said that it is important for students to understand how to prevent getting an STI and stay healthy.

"There have always been high cases of STIs and people transferring it without even knowing," St.Hilaire said.

According to Yale Medicine, STIs can put sexually active individuals at higher risk for various conditions. This includes fertility problems and even cancer.

"Students will be sexually active, so they need to be aware of what an STI is and how big of an impact it can have on their life," St.Hilaire said.

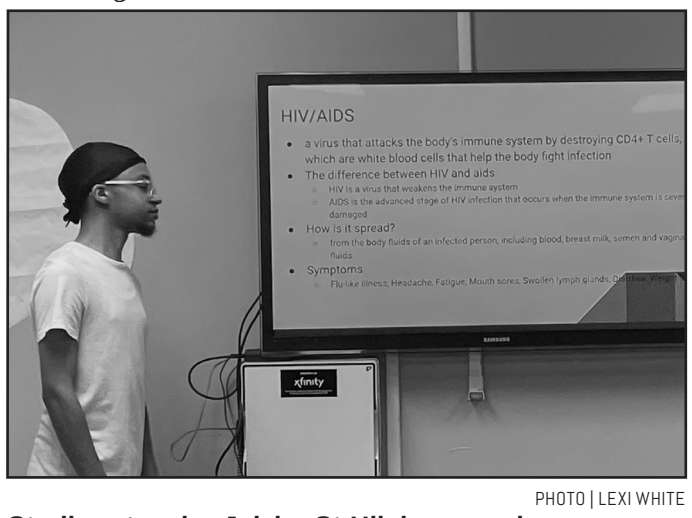


PHOTO | LEXI WHITE

Studio art major Jaizier St.Hilaire, a senior, explaining what sexually transmitted infections are to the residents of Neff Hall.