FEATURES

Commuter Services host relaxed Halloween movie

By Brandon Cortés
Features Editor

The lights dimmed in Room 217 of the Adanti Student Center as the opening credits of "Scary Movie" flickered across the screen. Commuter Services hosted the Halloween-themed movie night as part of its ongoing effort to give off-campus students a place to relax and connect with one another.

The event was one of several small gatherings held throughout the semester, offering commuters a chance to take a break between classes, enjoy a film and spend time with fellow students in a laid-back setting, psychology major Heather Rae Gaydowen, a senior and member of Commuter Services, said.

"This is another one of the events we host throughout the semester," Gaydowen said. "We often try to plan smaller, casual gatherings where commuters can relax, hang out for a bit and still feel part of the campus community."

Earlier in the semester, commuter services hosted a screening of the movie "The Maze Runner," but this time, Gaydowen wanted something more in line with the Halloween season. Students were invited to choose from a few options, including "Twilight" and "Scream," before the group settled on the lighthearted parody.

"It's one of the chiller events," Gaydowen said. "People can come in, watch a movie, talk with friends and just have a space to unwind in between everything else going on."

Beyond offering a night of fun, the event was also part of Commuter Services's larger initiative to engage off-campus students through the commuter cash program — an incentive that rewards participation in events throughout the semester.

"This is basically an incentive for people to come to our events. The more they participate, the more commuter cash they earn," Gaydowen said.

Students can collect commuter cash at events like movie evenings or nights, karaoke sessions and scavenger hunts.

At the end of the semester, they can use their earnings during a December luncheon and auction, where prizes will be up for bid.

"We kind of did a scavenger hunt earlier in the semester and those who took part got extra commuter cash for the auction," Gaydowen said. "The next event is actually next week, but the big one is our December luncheon, where we'll have a full buffet and the end-of-semester auction."

Commuter Services hopes that through these casual, community-building activities, students who live off campus can still feel included in the broader university experience.

Gaydowen said that events like this are often designed to bridge that gap and bring people together in ways that feel natural and fun.

As students settled into their seats with bacon egg and cheese sandwiches and laughter, the room filled with the kind of easy energy that comes from shared downtime.

"These events give commuters something to look forward to," Gaydowen said. "It's a way to take a break, meet new people, and remind everyone that there's a community here for them."

Boo Bags spread awareness through Halloween treats

By Brandon Cortés
Features Editor

Tables filled with orange-and-black goodie bags lined the Adanti Student Center plaza as members of the Public Health Society handed out treats and an important message. The club's Halloween-themed Boo Bags event mixed candy and health facts to promote safe practices and awareness.

The event public health major Gracen Shippy, a senior and the president of the Public Health Society, said, was designed to spread awareness while keeping the tone approachable and fun.

"This is our Boo Bags event," Shippy said. "What's in them are candy, condoms and a fun fact about health. It's just to help prevent the spread of STIs and help people stay safe on Halloween because it's a big weekend, and we want everyone to have fun responsibly."

Shippy, who transferred to the university after switching her major from nursing to public health, said she wanted to bring the club's outreach to life through events that combine education and engagement.

For Shippy and other club members, public health is not just about treatment — it is about prevention and connection.

"I realized that nursing wasn't for me," Shippy said. "I wanted to work more with community members and focus on preventative health rather than helping people after they get sick. I'd rather prevent the illness first."

Under Shippy's leadership, the club has grown in both membership and visibility.

She said that while public health is still a smaller major on campus, events like Boo Bags help students understand what the field actually involves: protecting communities, promoting wellness and spreading awareness in accessible ways.

"We're doing more events than we normally would," Shippy said. "We're trying to get people to understand what public health is as a major, because a lot of students don't really know what it means. We want to bring awareness and grow the program."

Public health major Chekeenah Jeudi and Rikee Curtis, juniors and members of the club, helped distribute the Boo Bags and explained the event's lighter, welcoming theme.

"We wanted something that fit the Halloween season but still had a health focus," Jeudi said. "In the bags, we included condoms and candy to promote safe sex practices and make sure everyone's having a safe time while having fun."

Curtis said accessibility was key. Students were encouraged to grab a bag on their way to class or stop by to ask questions about safe sex and general health. Each bag also included short health facts and reminders about preventive care.

"It's just a grab-and-go kind of thing," Curtis said. "We wanted people to feel comfortable taking one even if they didn't have time to stay and talk."

The Public Health Society also plans to hold similar outreach events throughout the year, including its annual Kisses and Condoms program in February and a food pantry drive in November.

For Shippy and other club members, each initiative is a way to make public health visible — and relevant — to everyone on campus.

Shippy said the group hopes to continue finding creative ways to connect with the student body.

Whether it is through themed giveaways or larger service projects, the goal is always to make public health feel approachable and engaging.

She added that the club's success depends on teamwork and the willingness of members to bring fresh ideas that blends education with community spirit.

"We just want to make sure everybody's informed, safe and included," Shippy said. "That's what public health is all about."



PHOTOS | BRANDON CORTES

Public health majors Cheekenah Jeudi, Rikee Curtis and Diane Torres, juniors, and Gracen Shippy, a senior, in front of the Boo Bag table in the Adanti Student Center.



Bags filled with candy and health facts sit on display at the Boo Bags table in the Adanti Student Center.

Owls Decide: Do you prefer Coke or Pepsi?

By Brandon Cortés
Features Editor



PHOTOS | LILY RAND

"Coke: it tastes better."
-Nursing major Isabella Balseiro, a junior



"Coke because it tastes way better than Pepsi."
-Psychology major Mia Soto, a junior



"Coke because of the better fizz."
-Spanish major Emma Marelli, a junior



"Coke: I just can't stand Pepsi."
-Communication disorders major Kaiya Mercier, a freshman



"Coke because Pepsi feels like it's the copy."
-International business major Lorelay Cabrera, a freshman



"Pepsi because it has a better flavor."
-Nursing major Faith Mayo, a sophomore