

Feature Story

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ESG: Health communication organization or historical movement advocate?

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill. – Everything you need to know about Eta Sigma Gamma can be found at SIUE. ESG is a national health education honorary society. The SIUE Chapter was founded in 1967. At SIUE, ESG shows support for many different causes including Suicide Awareness Day, legalizing gay marriage and Special Olympics.

SIUE junior Jaime Pugh is a member of ESG and passionately supports many of their causes. One of those causes is the legalization of gay marriage. The SIUE ESG Chapter is participating in the petition to get the state of Illinois to legalize gay marriage. However, Pugh cannot communicate to her parents that she is a part of this organization because she knows that her parents would not be accepting of her participation in this cause. Even though she does not identify herself as gay, she wants to be able to speak out for those who have lost their voice in this fight. Eta Sigma Gamma is giving her that chance.

Pugh is a health education major, and she uses Eta Sigma Gamma to gain life experiences. ESG requires members to participate in at least 10 service hours each semester and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.7. As a health focused organization, it is giving many students the opportunity to grow professionally in a field they feel passionately about. Some past events that students have participated in are World AIDS Day, SIUE Health Brigade Day, a Thanksgiving canned food drive, the Madison County Youth Forum, a condom distribution event at local Edwardsville bars and participation in a variety of wellness fairs, both on and off campus.

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On Oct. 22, 2013, the Eta Sigma Gamma SIUE Chapter will travel to Springfield, Ill., to march for the legalization of gay marriage in Illinois. There have been many SIUE students talking about how excited they are to go and become a part of history.

“College students have a bad reputation for always talking about being able to change history,” said Ashley Howard, friend of Pugh. “This is an actual opportunity for us to be a part of a historical movement. Why wouldn’t I want to be involved in this?”

Pugh has invited all of her closest friends to go with her and support this cause. “I never felt happier than I did when all of my friends were more than willing to go with me to Springfield and stand up for an amazing cause, and not even think twice about it,” Pugh said. “It was a shock that they were so sure of themselves when it took me this long to be open about my view point, but I admire their strength.”

ESG invites all supporters to participate in the march and support the cause. For more information about ESG or the trip to Springfield, go to www.siu.edu/education/khe/etasigmagamma.shtml.

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