

THE PINNACLE

DESTINATION KNOWN

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

Writing this volume's Editor's Note was a bittersweet experience for me. Concluding my last semester at OTC and my tenure as editor-in-chief elicited feelings of nostalgia and hope. I am sad to be leaving this position, one I didn't exactly ask for in the beginning but fell in love with as we started producing our first volume of the newsletter last semester. I am also sad to leave the incredible Honors and Phi Theta Kappa community, of which I had the privilege to be a member. However, as this season comes to an end, I am optimistic about things yet to come. Seeing this semester unfold with many events and student distinctions left me confident that this program and publication would continue to shine brighter with each new day.

Needless to say, in trying to update you on the most recent happenings, our wonderful OTC Honors team and I ended up producing the lengthiest volume of The Pinnacle of the 2021/2022 academic year. This is to show the breadth and depth of the achievements of our most brilliant students and their relentless efforts to enrich themselves and the community around them. Moreover, we used this volume to acquaint you with the purpose of new projects, such as Honors In Action, and keep you updated as our officers work on developing it.

Yours truly,

Nikolina Lee



WELCOME NEW PHI THETA KAPPA OFFICERS!



NICK CRIDER
President



DARLA WILSON
Editor-In-Chief of The
Pinnacle



MICAH SCHAEFER
Vice President of Campus
Promotions



PAUL YOUNG
Vice President of
Leadership



AMELIA LAI
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Scholarship



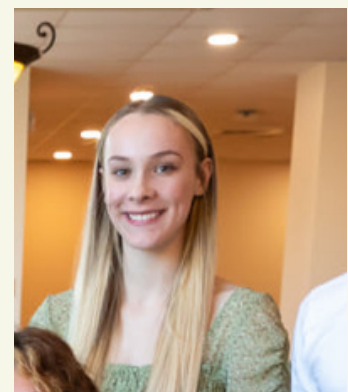
STEPHANIE CRUZ
Vice President of Service



AUTUMN SEELY
Vice President of
Fellowship



FIVE SHERIDAN
Treasurer



JESSICA SCHNEEWEISS
Secretary



**BY: DARLA
WILSON**

INDUCTION CEREMONY

On the night of April 27th, over 60 new members were inducted into OTC's Alpha Psi Tau chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. The event was managed by dozens of student and faculty volunteers, who arrived several hours early to ensure the event went as smoothly as possible. The ceremony only took about half an hour, but was filled with dynamic speakers including OTC Chancellor Dr. Hal Higdon, who made the ceremony's opening remarks, Phi Theta Kappa President and CEO Dr. Lynn Tichner-Ladner, OTC Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Tracy McGrady, and Executive Dean of Career, Technical, and Community Development at OTC and the Administrative Advisor for the Alpha Psi Tau chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Dr. Matthew Hudson, who provided the ceremony's closing remarks.

With Phi Theta Kappa having first been founded in Missouri, it's no wonder that Alpha Psi Tau is near and dear to the heart of the organization. This is why we were graced with the presence of Dr. Lynn Tichner-Ladner, who made us laugh with jokes about her accent and told us what this chapter means to her. With more than a thousand chapters and 3.5 million members, we're honored that she chose to speak at our induction ceremony. Next, Dr. Tracy McGrady honored the new inductees' chosen mentors, OTC instructors and staff who served as inspiration to the students, guides in achieving their academic goals, and supportive pillars in their educational journeys.



Photographs: Ozarks Technical Community College



CATALYST 2022

BY: NIKOLINA LEE

On Thursday, April 7th, 2022, the group of Phi Theta Kappa officers, including Nick Crider, Stevi Berry, Billy Dudley, Nikohl Watson-Lowe, and myself, along with our chapter advisors Mr. Yerby and Cassidy Bright, embarked on an unforgettable journey to Denver. We were going to attend the annual PTK Catalyst, a conference where chapter officers from across the country join together and celebrate the hard work done in the past year.

During the four days of the conference that took place in the Gaylord Rockies Resort, we had a chance to deepen our leadership skills, elect future international officers, and learn about various PTK-exclusive scholarship and transfer opportunities.

Additionally, we had an opportunity to listen to various speakers and world-class experts in their fields. Two speeches left an incredible impression on me—Dr. Moogega Cooper's speech about NASA's Mission to Mars, and Daymond John's talk about entrepreneurship and his journey to becoming a cast member and investor on the ABC's Shark Tank.

We are also proud to announce that our chapter, Alpha Psi Tau, achieved five-star chapter distinction and also ranked among the top 100 chapters out of over 1000 globally. Furthermore, Missouri Region also achieved a five-star regional distinction and our regional officers, Stevi Berry, Billy Dudley and Nikohl Watson-Lowe were named distinguished regional officer team.



Photo by Stevi Kay Berry, Nikolina Lee, Phi Theta Kappa



BY: AUTUMN SEELY

BASEBALL GAME

One of Phi Theta Kappa's most recent social events was a real home run! The Springfield Cardinals played against the Tulsa Drillers on Tuesday, April 19th and Phi Theta Kappa was generous enough to offer 50 free tickets and complementary Cardinal's hats to the first lucky students to go. With \$2 hot dogs and brats, the event was a fun time to be with friends and peers and enjoy the social parts of Phi Theta Kappa. Louie even made an appearance during the night and gave us a big welcome as we watched the game! As Vice President of Fellowship, it was great to see more fun opportunities to socialize with our fellow Honor's members and get some time to relax. If you haven't gotten a chance to come out to any recent Phi Theta Kappa events, I strongly encourage you to get involved, PTK is a great community, and we have a lot of fun at our social outings. Keep your "batter's eye" peeled and in the meantime, enjoy your Summer, we'll see you soon.



Photographs: Autumn Seely



HONORS IN ACTION



- **THEME 1: ESSENCE OF PLAY**.....
- **THEME 2: ECONOMICS OF PLAY**.....
- **THEME 3: SYSTEMS OF PLAY**
- **THEME 4: ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN OF PLAY**
- **THEME 5: SOUL OF PLAY**
- **THEME 6: NOSTALGIA AS PLAY**
- **THEME 7: PLAY IT FORWARD**

Honors in Action (HIA) is one of the largest projects routinely completed by Phi Theta Kappa chapters and is crucial for national and international recognition. It has two major phases: honors and action. Chapters are to research a question that fits into a broader theme provided by PTK, then they are to make a positive change in their community supported by their research. This year our subject is play, and more specifically how play is affected by the design of spaces or by roles and identities. At the moment, we are attempting to narrow down our question to something more workable. Possible options include the benefits and drawbacks of “rough-and-tumble” play, how play affects productivity in the workplace or on a college campus, or how the cost of play has changed as we transition to more online spaces. By the end of the semester, we will have selected a specific question and over the summer research will begin.

Each week brings us closer to the final deadline for a report about our work, so we as a chapter must make the most of that time. Completing this project well and in a timely manner requires assistance from as many people as possible. If you have any interest in making improvements to the campus or the broader community or if you’ve been looking for something larger to contribute to, your help will be invaluable. Right now, our chapter discusses HIA on Monday mornings in the Honors Lounge on the third floor of ICE—meeting times are still to be determined for future semesters, so more information will be coming. These meetings are open to the public and everyone already working on this will be excited to see new faces, so feel free to stop by.

This project is completely voluntary for members of our chapter, so please feel welcome to be present once to learn more about what we are doing, to be present occasionally as your responsibilities to your classes and your personal life allow you to, or to be present every time as a constant fixture of HIA. Additionally, this should not be another stressor in your life. Step away whenever you need to; we’ll still be here when you come back. I’m not looking to ask for more than you can give, as every bit helps. Whatever your contribution is, it will be appreciated. I’m looking forward to working with you!

AMELIA LAI

**BY: NICK
CRIDER**

2021 HONORS IN ACTION- GIRAFFE HOUSES

Phi Theta Kappa's Honors in action project (HIA) is designed to allow students to take the skills that they are building in the classroom and apply them to real world issues. Working not for a grade, but a goal. It is a chance for students to combine scholarship and action to address an issue on their campus or in their broader community. Students get the opportunity to work with college faculty, professional academics, and community leaders. This makes HIA a great way to gain job-related experience and engage the community in a meaningful way.

It all starts with a research topic. PTK international provides a study topic and a number of themes to channel and drive the project. The 21/22 honors study topic was, "To the Seventh Generation: Inheritance and Legacy." Our chapter chose as our theme, "Trade, Craftsmanship, and Industry." Our research explored a type of architecture known as "Giraffe Stone", which is entirely unique to the Ozarks region. We learned about its unique place in the culture and history of the Ozarks. But the research revealed a troubling sign that many of these buildings are in danger. Lack of stable ownership has left many of them to fall into disrepair. Discovering this, we knew that we had found our issue and were ready for the second phase of the project; action.

As it was out of our means to purchase and renovate one of these structures, we decided that the best use of our efforts would be to raise awareness about this little known piece of local history. So we put together a team of experts from all across the state to partner with us on a webinar. The webinar was entitled "Written in Stone: The unique cultural history of Ozarks stone Architecture." Our panel consisted of two published academics, well known in the field of study concerning these structures, as well as a preservation expert. The Webinar focused on three areas of interest concerning these structures: cultural, technical, and preservation. The goal was to foster an appreciation of giraffe buildings and to equip attendees with information about how they might aid in preservation efforts.

My experience, as co-vice president of HIA, was unforgettable. I not only gained skills in research, correspondence, and teamwork, but I also immersed myself in a topic that came to enrich my personal life. Not to mention making professional connections. The thing about HIA is that there is plenty of work to go around. If you are a member of PTK, and this sounds like something you would enjoy, please reach out to your chapter officer team! There are many ways to get involved and many skill sets are needed to execute an award winning Honors in Action project.



VOLUNTEERING AT DICKERSON PARK ZOO

**BY: REBEKAH
WILKINSON**

I first started volunteering at the Dickerson Park Zoo around three and a half years ago. My main goal when I started was to gain more hours and experience when I applied for Veterinary School. I knew that I wanted to be a veterinarian, but I hadn't even considered being a vet at a zoo. However, the experiences I have had at Dickerson Park Zoo have shaped my career goals.

When I initially started volunteering, I was only allowed to do the basics. I was able to observe procedures and help the keepers out with taking care of the animals. However, as I got more experience working at the zoo, I actually became an active part of the team.

I spend most of my time up at the zoo hospital, and I have been able to help out with countless procedures. Some of my favorite procedures have been a cougar root canal, cheetah yearly checkups, and saki monkey yearly checkups. I have also been able to participate in multiple surgeries on animals such as snakes, cheetahs, and sloths. I have helped with the rehab and release of numerous raptors through our raptor rehab program, and I even got the opportunity to help bottle feed, take care of, and eventually release five fawns back into the wild. In addition, I had the privilege of helping raise three cheetah cubs from the time they were a week old until they were older juveniles, doing such tasks as feeding them, participating in their checkups, and even babysitting them in their exhibit in order to make sure they stayed safe and out of trouble.

Because of these incredible experiences, I am now planning on becoming a zoo veterinarian myself. Every day working at the zoo is full of surprises, but I consider it a privilege to be able to spend my free time helping the animals, the staff, and ultimately our community. Because of my service at the Dickerson Park Zoo, I was chosen to receive Missouri's Show Me Service Award on May 19. I am humbled to receive an award for something that I truly love doing. While I am very excited to receive this award, I have to admit that I will be sad to miss a day of working at the zoo when I go up to Jefferson City.



VOLUNTEERING AT DICKERSON PARK ZOO



MISSOURI COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP FORUM

**BY: BILLY
DUDLEY**

The opportunity to attend the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA) Student Leadership Institute was not taken lightly by any of the five of us that were a part of it from OTC. Stephanie Cruz, Micah Schaefer, Stevi Berry, Paul Young, and I traveled to Jefferson City on the morning of April 13, 2022, to spend the day learning about becoming leaders in the vicinity of our state's leaders, down the road at the Capitol Building.

We first met at the Bones Restaurant Banquet Center, where we were accompanied by the other participants from other Missouri Community Colleges. Anne Brackett and Alicia Wojciuch, both on staff at Strengths University, led an educational forum on "Communication as a Leader –Setting Expectations and Accountability." In this forum, we talked about how effective and efficient communication is absolutely essential to leaders. Clear and exact delegation can be one of the greatest marks of a leader. A second forum coming later in the day was entitled, "Want to Be an Effective Leader? Create Effective Habits and Systems." This forum discussed habits to stray away from and habits to strive for as leaders. Creating personal systems or groups of routines that propel each other forward and up and creating team systems to elevate leadership. It provides a clear outline for the members of a team and gives cohesiveness in concrete goals that can be held accountable.

Following a break for lunch, we walked to the Missouri Capitol Building to meet with our state leaders, if we could find them! With the information provided, we split off as an OTC group to find our representatives to thank them for what they do for us, and to encourage their continued work at the legislation level by sharing with them our testimonies of how OTC students have been aided by what they have done for us by advocating for students. We had an amazing opportunity to meet with Missouri State Representatives John Black and Bill Owen. We took the opportunity to tell them how much the A+ program has helped several of us personally, and how it has helped so many other students, some of whom were only able to attend college because of A+. We shared with them our five respective programs, getting to represent both transferring students and students in a trade program.

To end our day, we traveled to the Governor's Mansion and stood in awe of the craftsmanship and history that it contained. We were extremely fortunate to have Governor Mike Parson spare his time to talk with us about the necessity of continuing Missouri's legacy of young leaders to continue leading our state and our country.

The MCCA Student Leadership Institute was nothing short of amazing, and I and the other four OTC participants are grateful we were able to experience it!

LEADERSHIP

MISSOURI COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP FORUM



I AM GEN Z

**BY: STEVI
BERRY**

In early March, OTC hosted a documentary screening and panelist discussion on a documentary featuring one of our own students, Preston Schaffer. The 'I am Gen Z' film targeted the impact social media has had on this generation, in particular, our mental health. The panelist was somewhat unique to other OTC events and discussions, featuring three staff members (Provost Tracy McGrady, Dean of Students Joyce Bateman, and Director of Recruitment Jordan Schreiber) and three students (Preston Schaffer, Elle Fabro, and myself).

As a part of the 'I am Gen Z' panel, I had the opportunity to share my experience with social media and what solutions I could offer to mitigate its effects. For me, social media was less than beneficial to my mental health, and like many young people, I had the stereotypical 'influencer' dream. It seemed like it would be easy, but it was anything but that – the constant content demand was straining, the 'brand' maintenance confined my personality into a box, and I became addicted to the 'like'. Not to mention, the industry was highly abusive to young girls. For several years, my self-esteem was tied to how many likes my post received – because if I wasn't getting those likes I was not 'successful' or 'worthy'. This had lasting effects, even today I struggle to share photos of myself where I'm not 'on brand' or 'esthetic' enough, I still find myself checking for 'likes after I post'. I was eventually brought back to reality when I was in negotiations with a company for a brand ambassadorship and their contract was essentially a complete sign away of my rights to my image and identity. In the process of negotiating, I realized that these companies had no care for me and my mental well-being, only their gain. This of course made me shy away from social media as a whole – I went through a complete cleanse of my social media, but I still had those lasting effects.

At the end of the panel, the student panelists were asked to share what we believed OTC could do to 'solve' the problem. Overall, we came to a consensus – engagement was the first step. The more engaged we are in the real world, the less time we'll spend online and the less time we spend online, is more time to make meaningful connections with our environment. So – I leave you with this – find ways to get engaged, find ways to interact with your community, and most importantly – find ways to connect with yourself beyond your 'brand'.



**BY: CASSIDY
BRIGHT**

PHI THETA KAPPA AND HONORS BOOKCLUB

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.” – Dr. Seuss

We’re very excited to announce beginning this Fall 22 the **Honors lounge (ICE 354)** will begin hosting an annual book club! This will be an all-inclusive meeting where we get together to share thoughts, engage with our peers, make connections, and grow our minds.

We will meet three times a semester and provide snacks/drinks and a fun chance to engage with other readers. Don’t have a lot of time? No worries! You can join us via zoom, or chat with us on **Goodreads** by joining the group: **OTC Honors Book Club**. On Goodreads you’ll be able to vote on what books we read, times we meet, see suggested titles from us, and comment on our discussion questions at your own pace. You can also set a yearly reading goal; my personal goal this year is 100, we’ll see how that goes!

We understand our students are busy, so you will not be required to read a ton of books (fun fact: if you wanted to read a literal ton of books, you’d need to read between 2,052 – 2,909 trade paperbacks. Now that’s some heavy knowledge.)!

We will aim to read one book per semester, so we can really pace ourselves and focus on some important real-world topics. As a bonus the first 25 students to sign up at the beginning of each semester will get a free copy of the title we’re focusing on! If you’re late to sign up, we will also have copies accessible to borrow via the Honors lounge and our friends at the OTC libraries.

This Fall semester we will be reading *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie, which will be the perfect book to kick off our club and help us learn how to make connections. In this book we’ll read about Carnegie’s time-tested advice on how to take action and rethink our mindset in the business and social world.

We welcome everyone to participate in this exciting chance to make friends and learn about helpful topics. Watch our Canvas announcements, soon, to see how you can get involved!

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” - Benjamin Franklin

GET INVOLVED!



Calling all PTK members! Are you looking for ways to get involved in what our chapter is doing? If so, I have great news; there is plenty to do and WE WANT YOUR HELP. If you are at all unsure about whether or not to get involved, let me attempt to gently push you over the line.

What are the benefits of active chapter engagement?

For starters, PTK offers a number of scholarships, and while simply being a member qualifies you to apply for these scholarships, it does not guarantee you will receive them. However, if you show that you have actively participated in chapter activities, you greatly improve your chances of receiving these scholarships. Second, PTK projects are a good way to build real-world, job related skills. You have a chance to work with college and community leadership, thus building your network, and getting exposure to different fields of work and study that you may not currently be aware of. Third, getting involved with PTK is a great way to meet like minded students. It affords one the type of social engagement that can be difficult to come by at commuter campuses such as OTC. And this is even easier now that we have our own space. The **Honors Lounge at ICE 354** is a great place to study, work, or just hang out. It is available to all Honors and PTK students, and it is the centrifuge of all planning and activities.

What are the levels of engagement?

There are three levels at which you can get involved. The first level is that of an active chapter member. This includes attending chapter meetings, coming to chapter events, and volunteering for chapter activities. The second level of engagement is that of Chapter Representative. As a representative you would be directly assisting chapter officers in their duties and supporting PTK projects and initiatives. There is a time requirement for this as it requires that you enroll in the **HON-290 Officer Development Course**. The class is totally **free of charge** and you will receive OTC honors credit for participation. Representatives are in a good position to see what the officers do and are the natural candidates for selecting the next round of officers when the current officer terms are complete. The third level of engagement is that of Chapter Officers. Officers are responsible for planning and executing all the PTK initiatives, on the performance of which, our 5-Star chapter status depends; holding events, leading by example, and participating in the main PTK projects.



GET INVOLVED!

What are current projects in which I could get involved?

We are currently in the planning phase of two main PTK initiatives; Honors in Action, and College Project. Honors in Action involves researching an issue, then planning an action that responds to that issue on a college or community level. College Project is our way of serving our local college. It involves working with college leadership on a project to benefit student life at our local campuses. We are currently forming committees for each of these initiatives. Any PTK member is welcomed to join these committees, not simply officers or representatives. These can be expansive projects, so all talents and skill sets are welcomed. If you wish to know more about either of these projects please email ptk@otc.edu or drop by the Honors Lounge and ask.



Photographs: Stevi Berry and Alpha Psi Tau



BY: APRIL BOLLINGER

NEW PHI THETA KAPPA WEBSITE

This semester the OTC Honors staff had the challenging task of uniting the Honors Program and the Alpha Psi Tau Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa and learning how to better serve both organizations. During this process, we realized that we needed a way to represent ourselves not only as part of Phi Theta Kappa, but as a part of OTC, and what better way to do so than to make our presence at OTC well known through the OTC website. Now, if you search for PTK (Phi Theta Kappa) on the OTC website, you will get more than just a couple of paragraphs, you will find a series of engaging and interactive pages designed to explain who we are, what we do, and how you can become a part of it. This site can inform you of the benefits and scholarship opportunities available to you. It can also answer some of your questions about PTK, the Alpha Psi Tau Chapter, and graduation.

If you would like to check out the new PTK website, please visit <https://students.otc.edu/ptk/> or search for Phi Theta Kappa on the OTC website.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the help of the OTC Honors and Web Services staff.

