

Sentinel & Enterprise (Fitchburg, MA)

November 3, 2007

FSC fraternity sleeps outside for homelessness

Kate Czaplinski

FITCHBURG -- Sigma Pi Fraternity brothers piled cardboard boxes in Fitchburg State College's main quad Friday evening, to eventually build their houses for the evening. The brothers were tossing a football and mentally preparing to stay outside all night in 38 degree weather.

"We sleep in the boxes and sometimes we'll sleep in the trees," fraternity brother Matthew Haney said. "It's really comfortable up there."

Sleep Out for the Homeless is an annual event for Sigma Pi, and has been running for 13 years, according to Haney.

All the fraternity brothers are expected to participate. This year 30 students will brave the elements. Each fraternity brother is expected to raise a minimum of \$50 that will be donated to **Our Father's House** in Fitchburg. This year the total money raised is approximately \$1,200, Haney said.

"We purposely do it this time of year when it's getting cold out," Haney said.

The fraternity is involved with a number of local charities, Haney said.

During last year's Sleep Out, temperatures dropped into the 20s, according to Sigma Pi brother Richie Vrancalone.

Sigma Pi brothers called the Sleep Out an exercise in understanding homelessness, even though they use iPods and other technology to pass the time.

"All the sororities come visit us during the night," Vrancalone said. "They bring us cupcakes and cookies."

Professors also visit, according to Haney. The brothers will stay outside until 7 a.m. Saturday morning.

"Most of us don't sleep, we just stay up all night," Haney said.