

Mu Chapter Educational Foundation Honored Nationally by College Mentors for Kids

I was privileged to travel to Indianapolis recently to enjoy a special fund raising event for College Mentor for Kids in Indianapolis which honored both Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation and **Kurt Rasmussen '80**. The evening called an "UnGala" was well attended.

It was special to me to be present not only to be a representative of Sigma Pi but it was also for me a chance to say "thank you" to Kurt for bringing the College Mentor for Kids program to Cornell.

When the Mu Chapter Educational Foundation was founded I served as chairman for several years. I had dreams of finding activities that were noteworthy and character building that would appeal to our alumni as worthy of support through contributions to the new foundation. Many fraternity foundations become simply tax havens designed to supplement the operating budgets of a fraternity. I hoped that Mu Chapter could be different and find activities that would enhance the education of the undergraduate brothers and bring positive notice of Mu Chapter. Kurt suggested College Mentor or Kids. The foundation board moved forward with a significant cash grant and the Cornell Chapter of College Mentor for Kids was chartered. It was the first such chapter outside of states near Indiana. It was the seed for other chapters that have followed on the east coast. The foundation continues financial support of the organization with an amount based on participation in the program by the actives.

The brothers of Mu Chapter dominate the Cornell Chapter. Over half of the brothers have "little buddies" and work with great enthusiasm and joy to introduce young elementary school age children to the notion that they can someday be students in college. A bold concept for most of the children who participate.

Kurt is a leader in the program having served on the board and also as chairman. Many spoke during the Ungala Event. I thought that Kurt's remarks were succinct and meaningful. Here is what he said:

Good evening, my name is Kurt Rasmussen. I am a Research Scientist with Eli Lilly. I was first introduced to College Mentors for Kids by the founder, Heidi Schmidt, when she worked in my laboratory completing her Master's Thesis research. Heidi's passion for the program inspired me to get involved, and I served for nine-years on the national Board of Directors, including one year as chairman.

Throughout my time on the board, I advocated expanding the program outside the Midwest. In 2013, that vision became a reality when College Mentors for Kids expanded to my undergraduate alma mater, Cornell University.

This expansion was, in large part, thanks to the generosity of the Educational Foundation of my fraternity, the Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi, an organization who's Board I am also proud to serve on.

For me, the under-appreciated power of College Mentors for Kids is its self-propagating nature. By helping one child, importantly, you affect that child's life; but, just as importantly, you can also change the trajectory of the lives of that child's entire family circle, including his or her children, grandchildren, and so on. Thus, by helping one child, College Mentors for Kids can have an impact on generations of people.

I strongly believe that College Mentors for Kids is nothing less than a way to improve our modern society. My College Mentors for Kids story began many years ago; but, I hope it will continue until this program reaches every campus across America.

Thanks, Kurt!

Jim Keene '57



Kurt Rasmussen '80 and Jim Keene '57 at the "Ungala" College Mentors for Kids fundraiser event in Indianapolis.