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## Daley leads the Black Student Union's quest to march in DC

Jordan Houdeshell

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## Daley leads the Black Student Union's quest to march in DC

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The rain on Friday afternoon drove many people into the Memorial Union to socialize and do homework, but fourth-year Kirsten Daley didn't mind the influx of people as she tabled and tried to raise funds for the Black Student Union's (BSU) trip to Washington D.C. for the Unity March for Puerto Rico.

"We are trying to go to DC to go to the Unity March for Puerto Rico to stand in solidarity with Puerto Rican hurricane survivors as well as protesting the Jones Act, which is keeping aid from getting into Puerto Rico where it needs to go," Daley, who is president of BSU, said.

Although they were able to receive funding from student government for transportation and hotel costs, they recently found out that student government will not provide funding for gas or tolls.

This briefly set the group back on their plans to go to DC. Daley called an emergency meeting of the officers to come up with a solution. After meeting for just 35 minutes they came up with 11 ways of raising the \$500 they would need for the trip. Some of these events included fundraising at Culturefest, 50-50 raffles at sports events, the Darling's ice cream truck and the Block Party Friday.

The Block Party was originally scheduled for last Tuesday, Oct. 31 with a Halloween theme, but the weather changed that plan when school events were canceled due to the power outages. Instead of giving up on the idea, the group rescheduled it for Friday, Nov. 3.

"I think that just speaking that into the universe, that we are going to DC, not if we go to DC, when we get to DC, when we do these programs, when we make this change. I think that that helps me stay on track and it helps people around me," Daley said.

The trip on Nov. 19 for the march will not be BSU's first trip to D.C.

On Sept. 30, they attended to the Black Women's march for reproductive justice. This time around, the trip will take close to 14 hours, and with the number of members going there doubling, the group has to take two vans.



"It's a pretty long drive and people who want to go, they desperately want to go to do this type of underground advocacy and see what that looks like," Daley said.



Although this type of advocacy has existed for a long time, the BSU has recently been reactivated here at the University of Maine. Daley reactivated the club in the fall of 2016, after being contacted by the Office of Multicultural Student Life.

"I came into college wanting to do advocacy work for marginalized people. And once I started to get into anti-racist activism, I was contacted by the Multicultural Student Life Office."



(<https://mainecampus.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/YouMaine5-WEBSITE-1.jpg>)

*Kirsten Daley, president of Black Student Union speaks about the upcoming Unity March in D.C. and her future plans in Americorps. Photo by Maggie Gautreau, Photo Editor.*

The office heard that she was interested in BSU and were putting out feelers because there was no actively running BSU at UMaine.

"Getting involved was definitely me deciding that BSU was going to be a thing and just finding people who wanted to do that," Daley said.

Although they were re-started last year, this year they have been doing more programming. Last year they did events for Black History month in February, but a big issue they had was getting people involved and willing to dedicate time.

"It's hard to get people's time. Getting students to do things is a lot like herding cats. Just getting everyone in one space together and motivated for one goal is incredibly difficult, but we have been lucky enough to have people sign up this fall who were ready to work and ready to get things done," Daley said.

Her work with the Multicultural Office is helping her with her future career goals. After college she wants to go into the Americorps with a service fellowship. She is currently looking at positions in Baltimore and New Orleans where she would be able to work within school systems with youth at risk and help them get into college.

After that, she plans to go back to school to get her graduate degree.

"I just need a break from homework for a little while," Daley said.

She hopes to go to graduate school for Black Studies and Restorative Justice. Since UMaine does not offer undergraduate or graduate programs in Black Studies, she hopes to go to a school near where she ends up with Americorps.

Daley works frequently with student interested in advocacy and is herself an advocate. Her best way of dealing with the emotions involved in this type of work is being self-aware.

"If you wake up one day and you don't want to do anything and think, 'hey I can't deal with politics that day,' then that's something that you need to be aware of."



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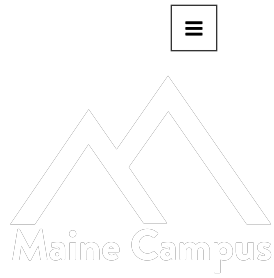
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