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Golden Key provides a network for service-oriented students

By Amanda Benjamin, student writer

Golden Key International Honor Society recognizes college students for their high academic achievement, focusing on education and community service. The organization is based on scholarship, leadership and service and was established at Oakland University in 1981.

"What really interested me in Golden Key was all the activities they did, especially volunteer work," said alumna Ronee Harvey, the former president of Golden Key.

Sophomores, juniors and seniors with a 3.62 GPA or are in the top 15 percent of their class are invited to join. New Golden Key members are inducted every winter and receive a lifetime membership.

Jean Ann Miller, group adviser and the director of the Center for Student Activities (CSA) at OU, notes that one significant aspect of Golden Key is that it includes some adult learners or non-traditional students, and that recognition is important because it makes the organization positive for returning students to get involved in.

Golden Key also inducts honorary members, including Oakland professors, administrators and staff, recognizing up to five people each year who have helped improve student life. For example, President Gary Russi is an honorary member.

Golden Key members participate in a number of activities on and around campus, and perform a lot of community service. Last year, some members helped out after Hurricane Katrina.

PB & J Day is Golden Key's annual community service event where students, faculty and administration come together to make more than a thousand peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

"We spend about one hour making as many peanut butter and jelly sandwiches as we can," Harvey said. "All the work we put into it is really worth it."

Last year, the sandwiches were given to the Detroit Salvation Army's Bed and Bread program where they pass out meals to the needy.

"It's nice for our community to come together and make these sandwiches," Miller said. "We know that they're going to be put to good use."

Golden Key also offers scholarship and internship opportunities, and is connected with graduate schools. The organization awards \$400,000 worth of scholarships each year. In 2008, one OU member won a \$1,000 math scholarship.

According to Harvey, students who are interested in volunteering or networking with different kinds of students should join the organization.

"You are able to make friends, network and make connections," Harvey said.

Members also have the opportunity to meet new people from all over the world through regional, national and international conferences.

Miller and Marta Bauer, the new president of Golden Key and a junior English and French major, went to an international Golden Key conference July 30 to Aug. 2 in Orlando, Florida. "The international conference was really, really amazing," Bauer said.

At the conference, Bauer said she learned how Golden Key can be a positive force on campus and how she can be a leader. She also met Golden Key members from Australia.

This year, Bauer plans to have monthly events for Golden Key, form a partnership with CSA and plan other community service projects, including PB&J Day. She aims to revive Golden Key by helping members realize what the organization has to offer.

"Mostly, we want the members to get to know each other and for them to get engaged that way," Bauer said.

For more information, visit the [Golden Key Web site](#).



Golden Key President Marta Bauer stands with advisor Jean Ann Miller at the international conference gala.

SUMMARY

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