

8-27-1997

08/27/1997 - Hands Across EIU.pdf

University Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_1997

Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "08/27/1997 - Hands Across EIU.pdf" (1997). 1997. 345.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_1997/345

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Press Releases at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in 1997 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

97-251

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 27, 1997

HANDS ACROSS EIU

CHARLESTON - WANTED: 1,200-plus people willing to hold hands with friends they've not yet met. No application required. Must be available at 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 28. All races, sexes and ages welcome.

And no, this isn't a dating service ad.

It's an appeal by organizers of "Hands Across EIU" to gather as many people as possible for the largest show of campus unity since last fall when nearly a thousand Eastern Illinois University students, faculty, staff and community members gathered on the Library Quad - amidst 30-degree temperatures -- for a campuswide "Unity Rally."

This time it's August and at least 40 degrees warmer and the agenda is slightly different.

With the help of more than 1,200 volunteers, organizers of "Hands Across EIU" hope to form a 6,111-foot human chain from the North Quad near Old Main to the South Quad in front of Lawson /Andrews halls and returning to the North Quad.

"We aren't stopping at 1,200 people," said Johnetta Jones, director of minority affairs. "That's just an estimate. We would rather have more than enough people than not enough, so upwards of 2,000 would be great."

Shirley Stewart, director of student services, who along with Jones, is working with a group of university students, many of whom helped organize the Unity Rally, to arrange "Hands Across EIU" echoed Jones' remarks. "It's going to take full campus participation to make this work. We've calculated that it's going to take, at the very least, 1,223 people (with 5 feet between them) to form a complete circle around Eastern's campus. We've never done this before, so we hope our calculations are correct. It would be much better to have too many people than too few."

The route for the event, which was published in the *Daily Eastern News* on Aug. 25 and will appear again on Aug. 28, has been sectioned into blue, grey and white areas where specific groups are asked to meet beginning at 4:30 p.m. Guides will be available to help direct participants to their appropriate places.

-more-

The beginning of the circle will form in front of Old Main curling around the east side of the building to the sidewalk on the west side of Blair Hall. The path will continue past the Student Services Building, under the University Union walkway, on past Fine Arts, Booth, Life Science, Klehm, Lumpkin, Thomas, and in front of Andrews and Lawson halls. It will turn back heading north on the sidewalk on the east side of Taylor/Thomas, Coleman, the Triad, McAfee, Physical Science, Pemberton and ending back at Old Main.

"We haven't had a lot of time to inform students and others, so we are depending on word-of-mouth, encouraging those who already know about it to tell as many of their friends as possible and to announce it in classes, at organizational meetings and in any other public forums," Stewart said. "Flyers have been printed and posted in the residence halls and other campus locations, table tents placed in the Union and ads purchased. But that isn't enough to draw a crowd. We need personal contact with students and that's where we are counting on members of our fraternities, sororities, recognized student organizations and residence hall residents, among others, to spread the word."

As participants are lining up they will be given free balloons which they should hold onto until the official balloon launch at 5 p.m. After participants are positioned and holding hands, three trumpets will sound - indicating that it's time to release the balloons. Everyone is then invited to the Library Quad for a group photo at 5:30 p.m. Free entertainment and refreshments (while they last) will follow. There will be a microphone set up on the Quad for anyone wishing to make comments.

"Although this is an event organized by and for the students, anyone can join us - EIU faculty, staff and administrators and community members. If for some reason an organization/special interest group is not listed on the 'Hands Across EIU' map, please don't let that keep you away. Come one - come all is clearly our intent," Stewart said.