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A note from the editor-in-chief



By Masha Smahliuk-Bootz
Editor-in-chief

In the coldest month of the year, as we endure biting temperatures and snow-covered paths to classes, I hope love warms your heart.

After all these dark nights, daylight will steadily increase. Earth under the snow blanket will soon bear flowers. Despite the challenges life poses for you or the scary

things happening in the world, I hope you find a place for light and love.

This Valentine's season, I wish for you, our reader, to be surrounded by love, affection and friendship.

Show kindness and treat others with an open heart. But also remember to take care of yourself and love yourself.

In this edition, *Central Michigan Life* brings to you a true love story of a business owner and her flower shop. You'll also find a story about the brotherly love shared by *Central Michigan Life* basketball players Jordan and Durrall Brooks.

This edition also has one more theme – community. For example, Divine Nine members shared what

finding a community meant for them. The campus's beloved tradition, the Toilet Paper Toss game, emphasized the sense of community for the men's basketball team.

As you read this edition under the warm blanket and with your favorite Valentine's Day candy, remember to show love for yourself and share it with others.

In this and all other editions, I also hope you find that everything we do at CM Life is because of our love to the community of our readers.

Masha Smahliuk-Bootz is 2025-2026 Central Michigan Life's editor-in-chief.

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The Toilet Paper Toss didn't only bring a forth consecutive victory for the Central Michigan men's basketball team, but also the love of fans and a sense of community.

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Six Divine Nine organizations are active on Central Michigan University's campus, serving the community and rewarding their members with life-changing experiences.

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Jorden and Durrall Brooks are sharing the Chippewas' jersey this season. Beyond basketball, the brothers also share strong bonds.

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The scent of fresh flowers, a friendly smile and Stanley, the dog at 3 Wishes Floral, greet you when you arrive to purchase wedding flowers or corsages at this community staple.

Central Michigan Life, the independent voice of Central Michigan University, is edited and published by students of Central Michigan University the first Thursday of the month during the fall and spring semesters. The newspaper's online edition, cm-life.com, contains all of the material published in print, and is updated on an as-needed basis.

Central Michigan Life serves the CMU and Mount Pleasant communities, and is under the jurisdiction of the independent Student Media Board of Directors. Kathy Simon serves as the Interim Director of Student Media at CMU and is the adviser to the newspaper. Articles and opinions do not necessarily reflect the position or opinions of Central Michigan University. Central Michigan Life is a member of the Associated Press, the Michigan Press Association, the Michigan Collegiate Press Association, the Associated Collegiate Press, College Newspaper Business & Advertising Managers Association, the Mount Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce, Central Michigan Home Builders Association, Mount Pleasant Housing Association and the Mount Pleasant Downtown Business Association. The newspaper's online provider is SN Works.

Central Michigan Life is distributed throughout the campus and at numerous locations throughout Mount Pleasant. Non-university subscriptions are \$75 per academic year. Back copies are available at 50 cents per copy, or \$1 if mailed. Photocopies of stories are 25 cents each. Digital copies of photographs published in Central Michigan Life are available upon request at specified costs.

Central Michigan Life's editorial and business offices are located at 436 Moore Hall, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI 48859, telephone (989) 774-3493 or 774-LIFE.

On the cover: Photo illustration by Zoey Lawrence.

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SPORTS

Upcoming Events

SAT 7

- Track & Field Chippewa Invitational
Noon
- Women's Basketball vs. Marshall at home
1 p.m., ESPN+
- Men's basketball vs. Louisiana away
4 p.m., ESPN+

SUN 8

- Gymnastics vs. Eastern away
1 p.m., ESPN+
- Lacrosse away vs. Notre Dame
1 p.m.

'Moments and memories'

Inside the magic of the 2026 Toilet Paper Toss



Alivia Cranick | Staff photographer

Central Michigan senior center Nathan Claerbaut celebrates after completing the ceremonial first dunk at the toilet paper toss at McQuirk Arena, Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026. After the dunk, attendees of the game threw toilet paper onto the court.

By Chance Hamilton
Sports reporter

Ribbons of toilet paper dangled from the rafters of McQuirk Arena the evening of Jan. 31, as thousands of fans decorated in white celebrated the fourth consecutive Toilet Paper Toss victory for Central Michigan men's basketball.

In front of 5,352 fans, the fifth largest crowd in McQuirk Arena history, Central Michigan would emerge victorious 62-59 over Bowling Green. As the final seconds expired, the players and coaching staff embraced one another, allowing the energy of the moment to give way to raw joy.

"It's just pure emotion," head coach Andy Bronkema

said. "It's not something you can rehearse. We usually huddle up before or after the game, and then everybody gets into the stands and thanks people for coming out."

Since the beginning of the season, Bronkema has set out to emphasize this sense of community within the culture of his team. In doing so, they have built relationships with the CMU fanbase that inspires loyalty and fuels excitement in the long term.

"They see what this team is," Bronkema said. "This is a team that never gives up, that has resolve, character and whether shots are going or not, ... we're grinding out there, and that's something to cheer for."

Central Michigan was treated to a thrilling game, yet the pregame Toilet Paper Toss tradition was the primary attraction for the roaring crowd. The event has floated in

and out of the spotlight across the years. Beginning in the 1982-83 season, students would flood the court with toilet paper after CMU's first bucket of the game.

After rules were passed in 1987 by the Mid-American Conference, forbidding students from throwing objects onto the court at the cost of a technical foul, the tradition faded. The only exception was during the 2004 season, when the program celebrated its 100th anniversary with a revival of the tradition.

In the 2022-23 season, the program officially brought back the event as a pregame activity. Allowing the fans to throw the toilet paper before tipoff lets the Chippewas to avoid unnecessary technical fouls, significantly impacting the game itself.

For each of the previous three years, CMU faced its rival Western Michigan, in the toilet paper toss game beginning with a high energy game in 2023 which concluded with a game winning three-point shot. However, Central Michigan elected to move in a different direction this season, taking on Bowling Green instead.

No matter the opponent, McGuirk Arena consistently has become fully packed. The venue has hosted over 5,000 visitors for the Toilet Paper Toss game each year, and it was the influence of these fans that was the key for powering the Chippewas' comeback this year.

"I wasn't getting tired out there," senior Nathan Claerbaut said. "That crowd earlier just energized us, and I don't know how many minutes I played, but I feel like I wasn't getting tired."

Standing at seven feet tall, Claerbaut was given the honor this season to dunk the ball, signaling the exact moment of when fans would throw the toilet paper onto the court.

The moment this season was initiated by Bronkema, who passed the ball to Central Michigan legend Ervin "Lightning" Leavy. Immediately after, Leavy tossed it out to Claerbaut who slammed it down into the net.

"We were in film one day, talking about the pregame ritual and what was going to happen, and Coach told me I was going to do the dunk," Claerbaut said. "To have my



Alivia Cranick | Staff photographer

Central Michigan freshman Ty Nagelkerk holds a sign while cheering on the Chippewas in McGuirk Arena, Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026.



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

The Central Michigan University men's basketball team plays in the toilet paper minutes after it is tossed on the floor of McGuirk Arena on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026.

name called out there, and then everyone starts throwing toilet paper ... it was pretty sweet."

In addition to this, it was a deeply personal event for Bronkema.

"To be able to do that was pretty cool for a couple different reasons. I talk about it a lot, my family went to school here, my dad was a student here. He's been to some of the Toilet Paper Toss games," Bronkema said. "To be part of it in that way, it was really cool. ... But to have [Claerbaut] on the other end of that and how great he's playing for the Chippewas and how far he's come, was really special for me too."

It's a spectacle for the fans, but the players relished the tradition as well, bonding together as teammates while toilet paper cascaded upon them. With no returning players or coaches from last season's roster, it was the first time these Chippewas were able to experience the event.

"When the toilet paper started coming down, I just started throwing it at my own teammates," sophomore Keenan Garner said with a laugh. "This was obviously one of the bigger things [Central Michigan] has to offer, as far as unique traditions. Getting the entire city behind you, the big fanbase, everybody out here. There's not a lot of other colleges that do that."

Garner, along with the rest of CMU's players, gave the fans a treat during the game itself. Despite an initially fast start, the Chippewas would cool down and face a 12-point deficit at halftime, struggling to hit their shots when given an opening.

They would then battle back in the second half: Garner led the charge with his first career double-double for 18 points, 14 rebounds and two assists. Crucial plays with under a minute to go propelled Central Michigan to its third conference win of the season, and the first back-to-back victories in Bronkema's tenure as CMU's head coach.

"That was a fun moment," Bronkema said of the excitement following the final buzzer. "We talk about what it is to be positive, what it means to be successful, what basketball is. But we also talk about moments and memories, and that's one you can write on the list of moments and memories. That feeling is a lot of fun."

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Rolling into tradition

When it comes to Central Michigan University's annual Toilet Paper Toss basketball game, there's much more going on behind the scenes than one might think. CMU Athletic staff and students arrive at McGuirk Arena nearly five hours before tipoff to start preparing the venue for what is easily the most-anticipated game of the men's basketball season.

The toilet paper is donated by Mount Pleasant's local Meijer. From there, one roll is placed on every seat in McGuirk for each of the 3,532 fans in attendance to toss after a CMU player makes a basket during the pregame program.

Before the paper leaves the hands of those throwing it, it serves as a photo prop, a fidget toy or even a costume

(of sorts) for fans while they wait for the main event.

After the smoke (or in this case, toilet paper) clears, several teams of athletic and custodial staff immediately jump into action, pushing thousands of rolls into the four corners of the arena as quickly as they can so the game can start.

As fans shift their focus to the matchup against Bowling Green State University, staff continue to clear the floor. They hoist an enormous amount of toilet paper into large recycling bins, which are later wheeled off into a separate hallway. Only then can staff take a breather and enjoy the game.



Cristin Coppess | Staff photographer

Community and legacy

By Kyle Chokas
Staff reporter

The first of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), commonly known as the Divine Nine organizations arrived on the campus of Central Michigan University in the fall of 1970. Fifty five years later, six of the nine historically African-American organizations are active on campus.

Each has a unique perspective to offer, as well as contributing to different philanthropies.

Senior Flora Kulang always knew she wanted to join the Divine Nine. This search led her to find Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. at Central Michigan University.

“I admired the legacy, the service and the sense of community that Divine Nine organizations represent, so my initial reaction was more excitement and curiosity, rather than hesitation,” she wrote in an email. “I was drawn to Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. because of its strong emphasis on service, education and uplifting the community, especially youth.”

The “Magnificent” Mu Theta Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho, CMU’s local chapter, was founded in July 1991. The sorority’s rich history goes as far back as the 1920s, after being founded at Butler University in Indiana by a group of seven educators who strived to make an impact on their community as women of color, according to its website.

Kulang wrote that her experience in Sigma Gamma Rho has helped her grow as an individual in her college career.

“Being in Sigma Gamma Rho has been a rewarding and grounding experience,” she wrote. “It has challenged me to grow as a leader, remain accountable, and serve my community with intention. I’ve gained sisters who support me academically, personally and professionally.”

Building strong bonds

In the spring of 2024, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. was revived at CMU and has been running successfully since then. President Marshall Dennis, a senior, was a new member when Kappa Alpha Psi returned.

“It has provided me with a platform to serve my community and given me access to a large network that spans across the globe,” Dennis wrote in an email. “Being surrounded by like-minded individuals is something I take very seriously, and this organization does just that.”

Kappa Alpha Psi was founded at CMU in November 1974. They have been on and off campus since then.

Prior to joining, Dennis had no intention of getting



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

Members of the Central Michigan University Divine Nine pose for a group picture at MainStage in the Student Activity Center, Friday, Jan. 30, 2026. The reinstatement of the Zeta Rho Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated brought six out of the nine historically African American fraternities and sororities back to the campus of CMU.

involved in a Greek organization.

“I came into college thinking I would never join one,” Dennis wrote. “The reasoning and research weren’t developed until my second year of college.”

Dennis said he joined this organization because he wanted to find a community. Across the world, there are currently 150,000 plus lifetime members in the organization, according to their website.

Kappa Alpha Psi’s philanthropy was founded by the organization in 1981 with the goal of giving educational opportunities to underrepresented communities around the globe.

The history behind Divine Nine

Omega Psi Phi was the first of the (NPHC) to make an appearance at CMU in 1970.

While not all nine organizations are currently active at CMU, six of them are:

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. (Howard University, 1908)
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. (Indiana University, 1911)
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. (Howard University, 1911)
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. (Howard University, 1913)
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. (Howard

University, 1914)

- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. (Butler University, 1922)

“The NPHC is a council of nine organizations, which include five fraternities and four sororities,” Dennis wrote. “As we are an umbrella of multiple organizations, we use the NPHC as a governing body to ensure bylaws and regulations are followed. We promote community service, cultural representation and leadership development.”

They were also one of the founding organizations, bringing together Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, Phi Beta Sigma and Zeta Phi Beta at Howard University in 1930. At that time, predominantly white organizations prohibited African-American members from joining their organizations.

“Through times of racial inequality, these organizations were created to provide a sense of community to Black students,” Dennis said. “Our council at CMU has grown since I was initiated in the spring of 2024 and now has five active organizations with over 30 members.”

Some of the distinguished alumni of the Divine Nine include former Vice President Kamala Harris (Alpha Kappa Alpha), Shaquille O’Neal (Omega Psi Phi), Michael Jordan (Omega Psi Phi), Wanda Sykes (Alpha Kappa Alpha) and Martin Luther King Jr. (Alpha Phi Alpha).

Neal: Finding my voice



By Sydney Neal
Sports editor

For most of my life, finding my voice wasn't about learning how to speak; it was about learning when it was safe to.

Growing up as a Black girl, I became fluent in observation long before I became confident in expression. I learned how to read rooms, read faces and read tone shifts. I learned when laughter meant comfort and when it meant dismissal. I learned that my words could carry weight, but that weight could feel threatening in spaces that weren't built to hold it.

So, I adapted. I listened more than I spoke. I softened myself before anyone asked me to.

I grew up in Metro Detroit, surrounded by my mom, dad, younger sister and my dog (my 'fur brother' according to my mom) Alex in a home where hard work and resilience were non-negotiable. At home, my voice mattered. My opinions were encouraged. I was told to stand up for myself, to be confident, to know my worth. But once I stepped outside that space, I quickly learned that confidence looked different on me.

As I got older, I noticed how Black girls were often labeled more harshly and misunderstood more easily. Being outspoken was normal for some, but for me, things felt different. There were times when I felt like asking questions was seen as challenging authority. Expressing frustration could be misread as anger. Over time, I started to edit myself before anyone else could.

I didn't stop having opinions; I just stopped sharing them.

That habit followed me into early adulthood. Whether it was in classrooms, extracurriculars or social settings, I carried an unspoken awareness of how my voice might be received. Working in predominantly white-male environments, there were many times I felt silenced because I didn't want to come off in a certain light. Not because I doubted my intelligence, but because I had learned to anticipate judgment before dialogue.

Being a Black woman means learning early that your voice exists in a narrow margin. You are expected to speak, but not too loudly. To advocate, but not too strongly. To be confident but not commanding. Finding my voice meant confronting the fear of being labeled "too much" or "too aggressive" simply for being myself.

I began to understand that this experience wasn't unique to me. Black women have always had voices; we have just lived in a world that has repeatedly tried to silence them. Historically, Black women have been organizers, writers,

journalists, educators and leaders, even when their contributions went unrecognized. From Ida B. Wells using journalism to expose racial violence to modern Black women pushing for equity in media, our voices have always been rooted in truth.

Yet even with that legacy, silence can feel safer.

When I entered my career in journalism, I hoped things would be different. In some ways, they were. I was surrounded by people who valued ideas, discussion and storytelling. But I still encountered moments that reminded me how fragile inclusion can be. There were meetings where my ideas were overlooked, only to be affirmed when repeated by someone else. Spaces where diversity existed, but true inclusion felt conditional.

Those moments were discouraging, but they were also revealing.

They forced me to ask myself why my voice mattered to me in the first place. Was I speaking to be validated, or was I speaking because what I had to say was important? Was I shrinking to make

others comfortable, or was I honoring the truth of my experiences?

The shift happened when I gained a platform. Having this platform made me realize that my voice carried something no one else's could: my lived experience. As someone who has always put people before myself, I realized that my perspective as a Black woman is an asset. It also allows me to have a voice for other Black girls who feel they don't.

I learned that objectivity doesn't require me to silence who I am. It means honesty, awareness and responsibility.

Still, finding my voice has not been a straight line. There are days when I hesitate. Days when I replay conversations in my head, wondering if I said too much or not enough. Days when speaking up feels exhausting. But growth has taught me that discomfort is not a sign of failure but a sign of presence.

I have learned that my voice doesn't need to sound like anyone else's to be valid. I can take up space without apology, and that doing so opens the door for others to do the same.

During Black History Month, we usually focus on big moments, and those moments matter. But so do the smaller, everyday choices. Speaking up in a meeting or even in class. Telling stories that often get ignored. Standing your ground when it would be easier to stay quiet.

I'm still finding my voice. Still, I continue to grow into it and learn when to speak up and when to take a step back. But now, I don't question whether it belongs in the room. I carry the younger version of myself who stayed quiet because she was afraid, along with the strength of the Black women who spoke even when it was hard.

My voice was never lost. It was silenced by society's expectations.

I didn't just find my voice; I reclaimed it in a society that never made room for it. And now, I refuse to adjust my truth to make others more comfortable.

Now that I've claimed it, I refuse to be silent.



Photo of two-year-old Sydney Neal.

Sydney Neal | Sports editor

Carpenter: A blizzard in the First Amendment

By **Blace Carpenter**
Managing editor

January was a cold month for Americans, and I'm not referring to the polar vortex that swept across the nation. I'm talking about the pressure and chilling effect our First Amendment has faced since the start of the new year.

In January, agents for the Federal Bureau of Investigation appeared to violate shield laws by raiding the home of Washington Post Reporter Hannah Natanson, claiming that she was in possession of classified government materials.

Most recently, former CNN anchor Don Lemon and an independent Minnesota journalist, Georgia Fort, were arrested by federal authorities for their coverage of the ongoing anti-ICE protests in Minneapolis. This follows the death of Minneapolis

residents Renee Good and Alex Pretti, who were killed by federal agents.

"At my direction, early this morning, federal agents arrested Don Lemon, Trahern Jeen Crews, Georgia Fort and Jamael Lydell Lundy, in connection with the coordinated attack on Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota," stated U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi in a post on X.

Both Fort and Lemon have been released, and a federal judge has blocked the government from accessing Natanson's electronic devices.

However, I believe this has left a bad taste in the mouth that provides free information. These actions by the federal government are an attempt to create a fear of repercussions by providing the truth.

The freedom of the press is stronger than fear. It was created to hold our

leadership accountable for the decisions they make on behalf of our country, and that is not just my own opinion.

"Detaining or arresting journalists who are documenting a demonstration involving powerful institutions and government officials sends a dangerous message: that scrutiny will be punished," said Executive Director of the Society of Professional Journalists Caroline Hendrie in a statement following Fort and Lemon's arrest. "These actions chill coverage, erode public trust in authorities charged with upholding the law, and deprive the public of firsthand, on-the-ground reporting that is essential to an informed democracy."

Journalists don't report on behalf of the president, his administration or either side of the aisle on Capitol Hill. We commit ourselves to the truth and facts to help

maintain our democracy by informing American citizens.

Light is often seen as a symbol of information. The sense of clarity or understanding when learning something. This ongoing pressure from the federal government on the first promise-The First Amendment-they made to us is an attempt to dim that light.

If we don't maintain the radiance of free information, our country will be shrouded in darkness, and it will become difficult to see the path in front of us as we continue the American experiment.

The First Amendment has faced similar stress in the past, and I am certain it will continue to do so. As Americans, let's continue to hold the torch of freedom in the face of adversity in the hopes of a better tomorrow.

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Back to being brothers

Jorden and Durrall “Phat Phat” Brooks speak on their brotherhood, path to CMU

By Bar Belian
Staff reporter

After weeks of uncertainty for the future of the Central Michigan men’s basketball team, new faces arrived across the board from a variety of schools and backgrounds. Two of those faces have known each other for almost 20 years.

The last time that brothers Jorden and Durrall “Phat Phat” Brooks played basketball together, they were in high school. “Phat Phat” is a nickname given to Durrall by his father because of his chubby cheeks as a child. Now, they are playing Division I for the Chippewas.

The road to teammates

The last time they shared the court was at Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School. In those two years, they went 45-2, with two state championship appearances, winning one. Throughout it all, nothing was bigger than the support of family.

During Jorden’s senior year, they created a small tradition with their mom.

“Every single game, they came up and gave me a hug,” Nicole Tatum-Brooks, the boys’ mother, said. “I asked them why after the first time, and they said it was just in case that was their last time playing together. So every game, the rest of high school, I always got a hug from them.”

Less than a week before the announcement that head coach Andy Bronkema was hired at CMU, then University of Michigan freshman guard, and Jorden’s brother, Durrall, entered the transfer portal.

“Once I knew that I was gonna come here, it was (up to) what Jorden wanted to do,” he said.

Nicole said the younger brother, Durrall, chose CMU because of the freedom of its play style.

“He was mainly just looking for a coach that was going to let him play his game and have confidence in him,” Nicole said. “He’s just looking for a coach (who) believed in him and was going to allow him to get back to just playing basketball.”

Jorden was at Ferris State, which Bronkema had recently left. He considered whether to follow his coach and reunite with his brother.

“I didn’t think he was going to go at the time, but I was like, I’ll probably try to follow him because this is my fourth year of Bronx (Bronkema),” Jorden said. “Once (Durrall) hit the portal, we were just talking, ‘if you make the move out, I’ll go.’”

Jorden played a total of 18 games and averaged 2.7 points and 8.4 minutes per game in his three years at Ferris State University.



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

The Central Michigan University men’s basketball Brooks brothers, sophomore guard Durrall “Phat Phat” and junior guard Jorden pose for a picture to show their brotherly bond in McGuirk Arena, Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025. Phat Phat transferred to Central from the University of Michigan with Jorden transferring to continue his collegiate career with coach Bronkema from Ferris State.

For the brothers, their decisions went beyond their relationship with one another.

“We made sure they both made the decision based on themselves, more so than just so that they could play together for us,” Nicole said.

Eventually, Jorden took the jump to Division I basketball, just like his coach. He always liked Bronkema’s system according to Nicole, and he felt that the jump up a division was nothing to fear.

“It does feel good,” Jorden said. “I never thought we were gonna play together again.”

Basketball and beyond

Even though they’ve played with other teammates in the two-year gap, they still know how to succeed off of each other’s work.

“I feel like we are just very connected,” Durrall said. “We just know what to do. I always know where he’s at for

him to shoot the ball. He always knows where I’m at for him to kick it ahead to me.”

Despite not yet sharing the court this season, their relationship still shines amongst each other.

“We already know our play styles,” Jorden said. “I can shoot the ball, and he can pass and finish. So, it’ll be, like, a play where he’s dribbling up transition, and he’ll be like, ‘Get behind me. I’m about to kick it behind you. Shoot the three.’”

Off the court, they play consistent roles in each other’s day-to-day lives by just being present and playing their favorite game.

“Academically, we do our own stuff, but socially, we stay in an apartment together,” Durrall said.

Even with the two-and-a-half-year age gap, this dynamic is what they’ve grown up in and continue to have.

Growing up, Durrall would play up a level just to play with his brother. He said that most of their friends hung out with the both of them and became one big family.



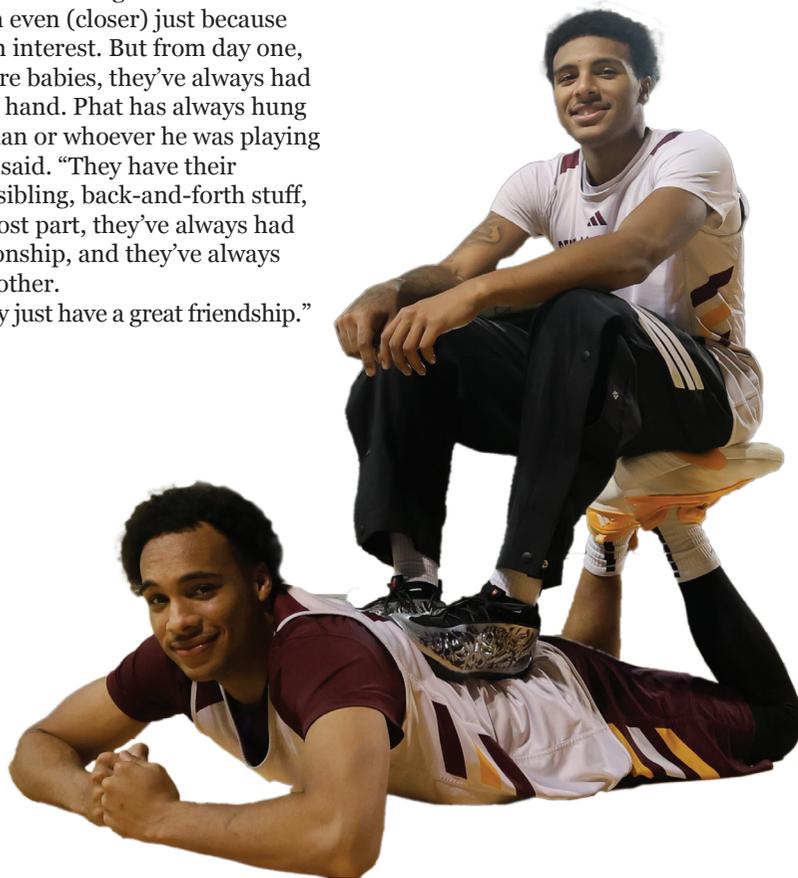
Alivia Cranick | Staff photographer

The Central Michigan men's basketball team lines up for the National Anthem before the game in McGuirk Arena on Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025.

This was the dynamic they had since they were little, strengthened by basketball.

"I think basketball in general has brought them even (closer) just because it's a common interest. But from day one, since they were babies, they've always had a ball in their hand. Phat has always hung out with Jordan or whoever he was playing with," Nicole said. "They have their normal little sibling, back-and-forth stuff, but for the most part, they've always had a great relationship, and they've always pushed each other.

"I think they just have a great friendship."



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

The Central Michigan University men's basketball Brooks brothers, sophomore guard Durrell "Phat Phat" and junior guard Jordan pose for a picture to show their brotherly bond in McGuirk Arena, Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025. Durrell transferred to Central from the University of Michigan with Jordan transferring to continue his collegiate career with coach Bronkema from Ferris State.

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FULL STORY

The Central Michigan football team welcomes 16 new players from the transfer portal. Over eight players hit the portal following CMU's loss to Northwestern in the GameAbove Sports Bowl.



Carnations and community

By **Cristin Coppess**
Staff reporter

When you walk into 3 Wishes Floral and Design Studio, you're first greeted by the subtly sweet scent of fresh flowers. About a second later, you're greeted by Stanley, the store's in-house dog and beloved community staple.

But unfortunately for Stanley, he doesn't own 3 Wishes or work as its florist. That mantle falls to his owner, Jodi Wischmeyer.

She's one of the three "wishes" who have owned and operated the shop since 2013. She's the face you see in the studio, and her voice is what you hear when you phone in an order.

The remaining "wishes" are her sisters, Mindy and Sheri, who handle the marketing and business end of things. All three graduated from Central Michigan University.

Wischmeyer said running a floral studio is their way of giving back to the community that gave them so much, especially when it comes to CMU. They regularly donate to university functions and often partner with its event planning department to take on students.

"I like to hire college kids because I've been there," Wischmeyer said. "They can come in and work two hours, then do class, then come back. It helps them not have to have a nighttime job, and they can still make some extra money on the side."



Cristin Coppess | Staff reporter

Jodi Wischmeyer, co-owner and florist at 3 Wishes Floral and Design Studio, adds stems to a bouquet in her shop on Mission Street in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, on Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2026. Wischmeyer's favorite thing to arrange is corsages, which she said most florists she knows despise.

The hands that tie the bow

Wischmeyer's floral career started off as a side gig she got at the age of 15. After 33 years of arranging and designing, she can knock out an arrangement in less than five minutes, without breaking a sweat.

She starts her days bright and early, typically getting in around 7 a.m. From there, her time is spent checking customer orders, managing deliveries and prepping to make the day's arrangements.

And she's not your typical florist. Ironically, she even claims not to like flowers (however, she is partial to zinnias and natural green roses). She even loves the things most florists say they despise.

"I love corsages," Wischmeyer said. "Almost every florist I know hates corsages. They're tedious, they're time-consuming. I love doing those, and I love doing weddings."

For her, it's more than the flowers

Wischmeyer said people often misunderstand her role as a florist, and that there's more to what she does than meets the eye.

"Everybody always thinks this business is, oh, when I

retire, I'm going to do what you do because it'd be great looking at flowers all day," she explained. "Well, half of my job is dealing with ... people who have lost a loved one. You just never know what the day is going to bring."

Although flowers are often seen as such a small part of a bigger happening, Wischmeyer prides herself on the quality and longevity of her arrangements. She strives to keep up with trends and offer unique arrangements that keep people buying her products rather than days-old flowers from supermarkets.

"My flower suppliers play a huge part in that, carrying the good, fun, different things so that people don't go to Meijer, they go to 3 Wishes," she said. "You've got to set yourself apart. So how do you do that? With the creativity of it and the quality of your flowers."

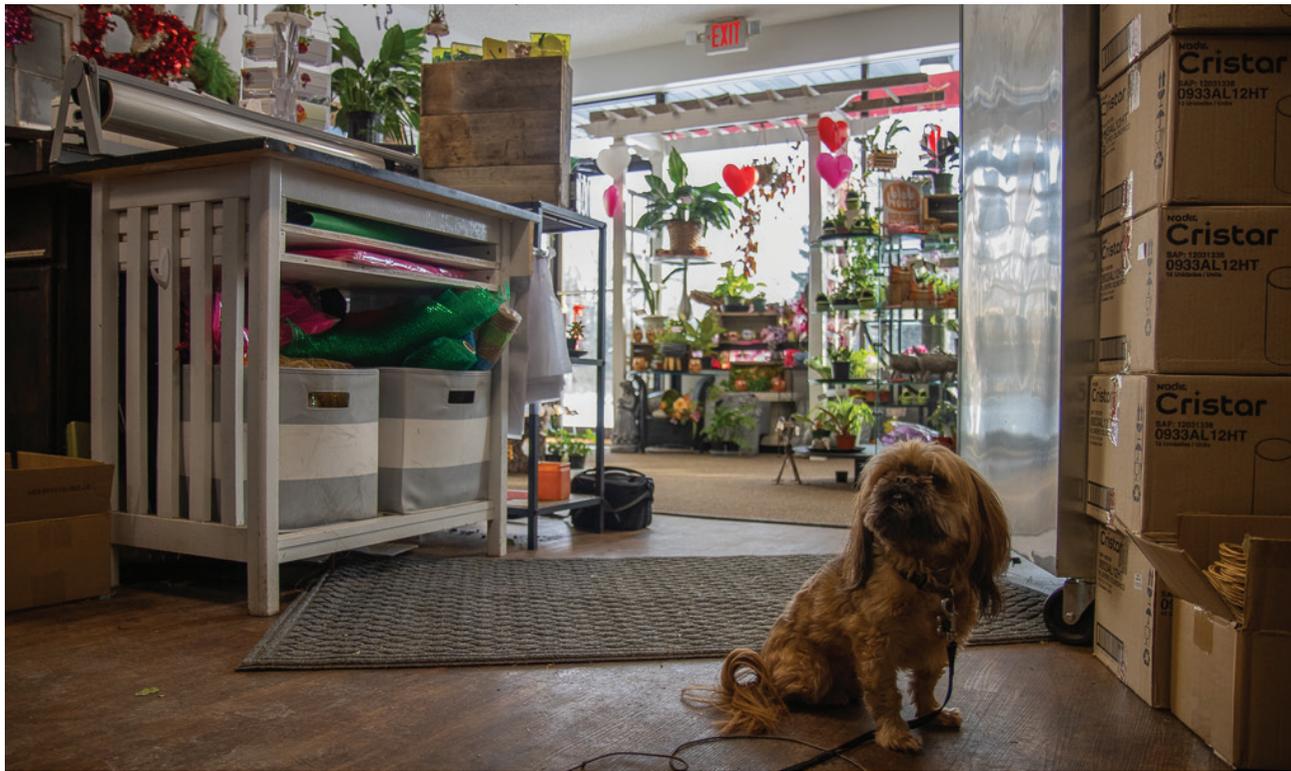
Wischmeyer's passion lies in the creative aspect of arranging and the connections she is able to forge with members of her community.

"My customers are what keep me going," she said. "I love my customers. I know my customers. A lot of my weddings are people that are from here. A lot of them are people (who) aren't from here, but they went to school here. This is a special place for them. It's really kind of fun. That's why I do what I do."



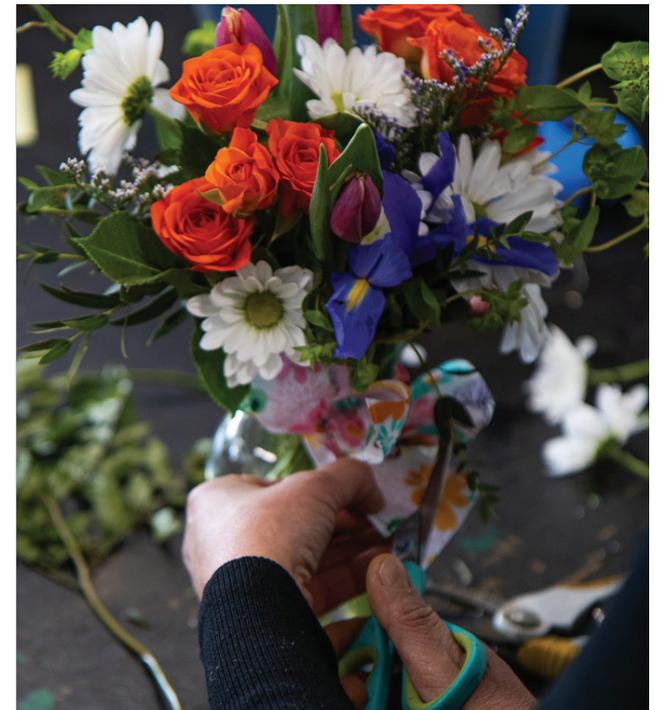
Cristin Coppess | Staff reporter

Jodi Wischmeyer, co-owner and florist at 3 Wishes Floral and Design Studio, de-thorns a bunch of red roses in her shop on Mission Street in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, on Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2026. Wischmeyer sources her flowers from growers all over the world.



Cristin Coppess | Staff reporter

Stanley the dog watches over his owner, Jodi Wischmeyer, co-owner and florist at 3 Wishes Floral and Design Studio in her shop on Mission Street in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, on Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2026. Stanley is a beloved part of the family owned business, and customers often drop by the studio just to visit him.



Cristin Coppess | Staff reporter

Jodi Wischmeyer, co-owner and florist at 3 Wishes Floral and Design Studio, trims a bow as she puts finishing touches on an arrangement in her shop on Mission Street in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, on Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2026. After spending over 30 years arranging flowers, Wischmeyer can complete a small arrangement from scratch in less than five minutes.

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black history month

A Century of Black History Commemoration 2026

Tuesday, February 3rd

*A Century of Misrepresentation:
Black Women in Media*

Hosted by Laniyah Golden-Bentley

6pm: Anspach Hall, Rm. 161

wednesday, February 4th

*Legacy in Color: 100 Years of Black
Queen History*

Hosted by Office of LGBTQ Services & Gender
Equity Programs

6pm: French Auditorium (EHS Building, Rm 118)

Thursday, February 5th

Hustle Bootcamp 101

Hosted by CMU Program Board

6pm: Kulhavi Hall, Rm 141/142

saturday, February 7th

OBU 26th Annual Fashion Show

Hosted by Organization of Black Unity

Fashion Show

6pm: Placta Auditorium

monday, February 9th

Black Deaf Experience

Hosted by Kaitlyn Hatter & Dan'Yale Wright

6pm: French Auditorium (EHS Building, Rm 118)

wednesday, February 11th

*BHM Keynote Speaker: Dr. Marc
Lamont Hill*

Hosted by Organization of Black Leaders & the
MASS Office

7pm: Bovee UC Rotunda



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Thursday, February 12th*Golden Table Talk*

Hosted by National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People
6pm: Bioscience Building, Rm 1010

Tuesday, February 17th*Sickle Cell Awareness*

Hosted by Alexia La'Fave, Flora Kulang, &
Datherine Guzman
6pm: Health Professions Building, Rm 1020

Tuesday, February 24th*Social Justice Walk*

Hosted by SGA / Akua Acheampong
7pm: Bovee UC Rotunda

Friday, February 13th*Black Care Starts Somewhere*

Hosted by Black Care Starts Somewhere Committee
6pm: Bovee UC Rotunda

Thursday, February 19th*Gather for Culture: BHM Edition*

Hosted by Black Girls Rock, Organization of Black
Leaders, CMU Dining, & MASS Office
4:30pm: Dine & Connect (East Residential Community)

wednesday, February 25th*Black Excellence in Practice, A
Conversation on Career, Culture,
and Leadership*

Hosted by Black Business Alliance & Rho Epsilon Iota
7pm: French Auditorium (EHS Building, Rm 118)

Monday, February 16th*Between Worlds: The Biracial Experience*

Hosted by Troy Hufnagel
7pm: French Auditorium (EHS Building, Rm 118)

Monday, February 23rd*The Culture Speaks*

Hosted by Derricka Johnson
6pm: Pearce Hall, Rm 127

saturday, February 28th*BHM Gala: A Dream in Silk & Silver*

Hosted by National Pan-Hellenic Council
6pm: Bovee UC Rotunda



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N Z H E I B P A R T N E R M B
C A N D Y O M K U S Q S D O Q
J H C A N O O D L E L C G V K
R A U V Z U Z H V T B X Y I N
N P F Z B K C E L V C V Y E H
D A F L A A V I P S D B T I E
L O I F L O W E R S A O C N A
H N N S W E E T Y G N I U X R
J H G Y B A B E M Z C S X B T
I Q I B L I B J J E I F U F S
I E T V L U I M V V N G T O S
P C U F F L E T M X G Q X C J
A B C E S D I N N E R R K L S
T O D V A S F R W Q R I Z Z Z
A O B A A T B E O Y U E K C C
C X V C T L N E T F L I X Z W
E C M O W I E S N T Q B L T H
O C H U A O N N V S X A B Q A
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Y G C C H I L L Q O F E H I C

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| Dancing | Netflix | Partner | Love |
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| Sweetie | Dating | Cuffle | Tace |
| Candy | Haze | Boo | |

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LIFE

To Roommates, you guys are the cutest and the best roommates I could ever ask for, keep being cringe and free. From Danica

To Jayden, I will always love our media watching nights ❤️ From Breanna

To, my roomies Love all of you guys so much, never again will someone match my chude like you all do ❤️ From, Paige :3

To my Izzy and Cece! I love you so so much! Keep being amazing and strong! -Ella

To my roommates, thanks for making my days better everyday. -Allison

CM Life- thank you guys for all of your hard work everyday and for making the office such a fun environment! I am so grateful to work beside all of you and to have each one of you as a friend. I can't wait to see what amazing things you accomplish. ❤️ Mickie

Shoutout to my amazing roommates, Emma, Lauren, and Olivia. You guys made CMU my home and I can't wait to be besties for the rest of our lives! Love you guys! -Grace

To: Olivia Garcia Thank you sooo much for hiring me!! Ur literally so cool please don't ever die From: Keigan Garcia

To my design team, words cannot describe how much love I have for you guys. I could never do all of this without you guys. So excited for the future!! ❤️

To Sydney: Thank you for always having my back and supporting whatever delusional idea I have! You truly have reminded me of what a tru bestfriend is. I love you! -Quinn

To my CM-Life family : Thank you all for helping me find a home here at CM-Life! You guys have helped me in ways you can't imagine. #CMLife4life

To: Quinn Deighan you have been my favorite person for 3 years now, i love and appreciate you so much from: Syd

To Clara from K, I love you forever... glad to be cooked with you. :)

To Alex, whom I love full heartedly. Forever yours, Charlie.

To Kennedy From Kamari. i'm so happy we're sisters! and im so happy to be close with you my love!!!

To:Kamari Barksdald I love you sister you're the greatest person I've met through all of this! Me & you forever👩 From: Kennedy Butler

To Ava: you are my very best friend I love you a million. From Zoe

To Zoe I love you queen #mydayone

To: Abby
You are the best little and I'm so glad that we got to become better friends through SAI!! I can't wait to see all the things you do:) From: Delaney

To my roommates, you guys are pretty chill I guess-Biju on that beat

To my amazing Thorpe baddies, I am so lucky to have such amazing friends!! - PeeJay

To roomies-I love you guys with your big booties -Courtney

To women in music
You should join Sigma Alpha Iota! It is an all women's fraternity group! Add us on instagram @cmu_sai We love you!

To Kaleigh:
I love being your Sigma Alpha Iota sister! Love you! From: Abby

Hey Emma!! Hope you have an amazing birthday and I'm thankful for everything you've done for me and I love you so much-Callie

To: Music Majors From: ET
You are so loved! Keep up the lovely work you all are doing!

I LOVE YOU ROOMIE! I'M SO PROUD OF YOU! To: Mickie, From: Lindsay

To Joel I'm incredibly proud of all the amazing things you are accomplishing! - From You're amazing Girlfriend ❤️

To: Adam Place From: Lucy LaLone, I LOVE YOU ALWAYS

To: Eden. I love you dude, I think you're genuinely the person who taught me about love. From: Emily

You Matter! ❤️Hannah

To Jordyn Washington, Thanks for always being my partner in crime. I love you so much lil sis❤
Love, your big brother Joshua

To Varisty Esports Teams
You guys are doing great! Continue rocking on!!

TO: MOM Thank you for all of your encouragement and support leading me to where I am now. ❤️❤️
LOVE: LIV

To my love: I couldn't ever imagine my life without you
❤️ From Ashton

To Keyshawn, I'm so incredibly proud of you. I love watching how hard you work everyday. Can't wait to spend forever with you!

To:Ethan Youre the coolest fella in the all the world you're him From:Jayden

To Brooke From Ryan I'm super excited to spend college with you and I'm excited to see how we both grow

To Ava, I'm so proud of you and how far you've come in your CMU journey. Can't wait to graduate with you. From, Megan

To: Ryan From: Brooke
Meeting you has been one of the best things that's ever happened to me, you've made existing a trillion times better here's to the future :)

To Kylie Hi From Nate

TO: Megan I am beyond grateful to have you as my roommate throughout all of college. You are the greatest partner in crime anyone could ask for. FROM: Ava

Josie, YOU ARE AWESOME!!!! FIRE UP!!

To: Josie Thank you so much for being an awesome friend. You have such a kind heart :) From Josie

To Abby and Katie thank you for showing me what true friendship is i love yall from stephanie

To my lovely roommates love having silly tv nights and adventure Happy Valentines

TO: Ella Pierzecki Have Valentines Day Ella!
FROM: Sarah Kelly

Happy Valentine's Day. -Lily

To Grandma Christina, I appreciate everything you do and continue to do for me I love you so much. From Leanara

To Claire, your the best wife to hailey I love you. From Abby

TO: Dad Thank you for being my biggest supporter and best friend. I love you so much! FROM: Liv

To: Alex Happy Valentine's Day!!! From: Sara

Love you goober - from Lainey

To: Whoever needs it You are a shining star that deserves to be loved

To rinku thank you for being my side

From Grace Forkpah to Olivia Neewray

Can't do this without you! -Autumn

To, My one and only love of life. I love you to the moon and back !! From Your wifey

To my parents: thank you for accepting me for being me and loving me unconditionally💜

Nathan- Thanks for being the best bf, I'm so lucky to have you! I love you! ❤️ Mickie

To Echo
You're so cool ❤️❤️❤️ Thank You for being cool
❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️!!!!!! -Chris

U r my moon - Nutalapati

I love you - Harsha

You're amazing -Molly

To my sweet angel Albita, you are the most wonderful gift God has ever gave me. I love you to the moon and back, my baby. -Edie

To Mel, i love you the most roomie. love Ava

Thank you for being my best friend and best roomie ever. I don't know how I ever lived without you as my bsf/sis. Ily -Peeps

To Me Love yourself like there is no tomorrow
From Me

To: Math From: Sierra We have a love hate relationship. But I think I love you.

To Katelyn
I love you best friend!
From Hailey

To: Hailey from: Katelyn

To Gabe, I love you so much and am so happy to celebrate our 3rd Valentines together! Love, Bre

Dear Kiley, I hope you're having fun at CMU and I'm always a hip, skip, and jump away if you ever need anything! Love, Allie B

To Zoey: Happy Valentine's Day!! Thanks for always being there for me, I promise I'll always be here for you too! -Daniel 😊

To: Ellie From;Thomas You can do it, I believe in you and I'm looking forward to our future events. Have a great day!

o: Adri From: Lexie ily my fake ginger bestie

To: Lexie From: Adri LOVE U BESTIE ❤️

To Greene, so glad I met you. Can't wait for more years of friendship. From La'Niya

I love you to the moon and back Mom!!!

To: Connor From: Liz
I love you so much! Thank you for being my rock and supporting me through everything. <3

You're so sweet

I love you always

You are amazing!

Dear Dad, Thank you for everything you do for me and being my biggest supporter!
Love Chloe Russell

To Hailey Novak: I love you wifeyyyyy! <3

To Sylvia, I LOVE YOU SO MUCH QUEEN, #007 for life!!! From Emily

Thank you for coming into my life

To: Chase
From: me
Thanks for being sigma

To: Chase
You are awesome sauce love you
From: Paige

Hi Oakley!! You're the cutest cat ever

Dear Mom I love you so much and I hope you have a amazing day sincerely your favorite daughter

Dear Darla, I hate your stinking guts you make me vomit. You're scum between my toes love alfalfa☐❤️

To: Kami
I love you! Feel better soon! Sorry about your toe!
From: Claire

To: Charlie
You're such a superstar and you are doing amazing with recruitment!
From: Lauren

To Porter Gavin Connor. TURN mMMmm TOWARDS THE SUN~~ Stone

To Kadence, thank you so much for being the absolute best roommate and friend Oliver and I could ever ask for!

Love you

To Bar, you can definitely bring back the nae nae.
From Bar

Jack, you're pretty freaking cool and I really love you a lot. 143, Your Ivy

To: Ciaira
From: Joel
You make life sweeter just by being you. Always grateful for us. 1 Corinthians 13

To Daniel Happy Valentine's!! My favorite person in the whole world thank you for always being there for me and keeping me sane <3

To: Gamma Phi Omega Sisters From: Villa Cassandra .
I Love you ladies so much! <3

Sup my homie! Have an amazing day! Hope the words search is awesome! - Tyler

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