Visiting Sisters: The Houston City Council has a Friendship Committee that is in charge of helping visiting sisters with whatever they may need. These sisters may be visiting Houston for a number of reasons and the committee is there to help them in any way they can. One such instance where the committee helped a visiting sister was when a sister came to Houston with her fiance, because she was having surgery at MD Anderson hospital for a liver transplant. She contacted the committee and they helped her get around town when she needed, got her some appliances for the apartment she was temporarily living in, and other things. They were in Houston for a year, and whenever they needed anything, the chairman at the time helped them out. They have since moved to a new location and gotten married and are doing great. This year, Delores Fritz of Texas Torchbearer Iota, Houston, decided she wanted to be chairman of this committee. She thought it would be a good idea to post about it on Facebook, inviting all sisters to contact her if they were ever in town and needed help. She posted on her own personal page and the International page. The post said: “Dear sisters of Beta Sigma Phi, do you ever travel to Houston, TX? Do you have perfect attendance? Do you want to make sure you don’t lose all those years Whenever you are in Houston, either for a visit or maybe a doctor or hospital visit and you need a friend or want to attend a meeting, give me a shout out and I will see that you attend a meeting to keep your perfect attendance. If you are here because you are going to MD Anderson or another hospital give me a shout out and we will help you in any way that you may need. We are all sisters whether we live here in Houston or out of town and we are here for you. We are your sisters!!!” Delores said she got a response immediately. “Two chapters in Austin, TX and a chapter in Canada put out the same thing and then gave me credit for starting it,” she said. “I never expected to get such resounding results from my post. Later thinking about it, I thought this could lead to someone seeing the post and wondering what we are all about and also about this organization that does something like this. It may get them to make contact to find out about Beta Sigma Phi, getting interested and maybe finding a chapter or council, visiting and maybe joining.”

Pass it On: The members of South Carolina Laureate Rho, Greenville, celebrated their annual yard sale with 100 percent attendance and combined a Ways & Means and Service project all at the same time. Member Judi Nielsen had accepted many clothing items and shoes from her granddaughters for the sale. A lady came by with her daughter and mother explaining they would like to buy the remaining clothes and shoes to send home to her native country of Honduras. Of course the chapter greatly discounted the clothes, many with original tags and shoes never worn, to be able to help her with this humanitarian effort. Not only did members feel great when the sale came to a conclusion due mostly to helping the children in Honduras – but also after counting the profits, learning they had netted more than $1,000. Upon learning the events of the day,
Judi’s granddaughter was so impressed with how
one good deed can make a difference in so
many children’s lives in other countries, she took a
copy of the picture of her grandmother with the
family (shown here) to school and presented a pro-
gram to her class about how we can affect others
and “pass it on.”

A Special Sister: Sisters of Ohio
Gamma Alpha Master, Akron, chose a special
sister as their Woman of the Year last April - Mar-
lene Braunlich. “Why Mar-
lene?” said member Dura
Barbour. “Well, for starters
she has been our chapter
president. Then she leaves
us for three months for
North Myrtle Beach, and
is always an advocate for
Beta Sigma Phi, attend-
ing meetings and socials
out of state (see the No-

vember 2014 Torch for an
article about Marlene and
the sisters she has met on her travels).” Marlene
hosts the annual yard sale at her home, handing
out fliers and promoting sorority. She also opens
her home each Christmas to the chapter. “Mar-
lene is well thought of within the City Council and
is loved by her chapter sisters,” said Dura. “Actual-
ly, those that have met her are completely drawn
in by her happy, kind and generous personality.”

Medical Assistance: During the
previous sorority year, Oregon Preceptor Alpha
Sigma, Beaverton, chose to support the local
Medical Teams International offices. “We have
members who have family who travel to Guate-
mala each year to build latrines for the remote vil-
lages,” said member Jerrie Johnson. “We have in
the past supported MTI and this year, seeing that
international chose MTI as one of the International
Endowment Fund recipients, it seemed appro-
riate that we continue our local support.” In the fall,
members and their husbands spent several hours
at the local warehouse, sorting medical supplies
for shipment to areas in need. The springtime
project was hygiene kits. Each member shopped
for items from a list provided by MTI such as tooth-
brushes and paste, soap, wash cloths, hair care
items, and so on. Here we see the members and
Envoy at work in the MTI warehouse.

Sweet Teeth: In the mid-1980s, mem-
bers of South Dakota Preceptor Xi, Aberdeen,
decided to gather together their favorite candy
recipes, make and sell them to the public at the
annual Winterfest Arts Festival. All recipes were
tried and true from members and their mothers.
This was the chapter’s first major money-making
project in 28 years. Proceeds helped fund dona-
tions to the Kidney Dialysis Unit at the local hospi-
tal. “Our booth was named the Sweet Shop,” said
member Carol Kvasnicka. “Our customers come
year after year with pans and boxes to carry
home their holiday goodies.” The members make
such treats as dipped pretzels, party mixes, cara-
mels (regular and chocolate covered!), fudge,
suckers, and old-fashioned popcorn balls. The
treats usually go for 25 to 50 cents each. “What
a great time we all had working together!” Carol
said.
North Meets South: Sisters from Ontario Xi Gamma Chi, Windsor, had been discussing a chapter trip for a couple of years. In September of 2015 they decided it was time to plan one. The question was where and when to go. It was discussed and decided that presentations would be done, with the majority vote to pick the location. New Orleans, LA was the winner, and the sisters decided to go over a long weekend in May. Wanting to get a local perspective for the trip and some tips of what to do while there, sisters Debbie Beaupre contacted International to see about getting in touch with a chapter in New Orleans to see if they could help. As it turns out, they got much more than that! The Xi Gamma Chi ladies received an invitation for lunch at the Maple Street Sorority House of Louisiana Mu Master, Gonzales. Xi Gamma Chi had nine sisters make the journey, and in May 2016 they met up with their Mu Master sisters. During talks before the trip, it was decided that the sisters of Mu Master would pick up their guests at the hotel and bring them to the sorority house. The Louisiana sisters gave the Canadians a taste of home with red beans and rice, crawfish bisque, shrimp roumalade, jambalaya, mufalata sandwiches and Hurricanes to drink. Each chapter surprised the other with gifts and tokens of their home area. Today the sisters stay in touch via Facebook and texting, and there has been chatter about returning the favor when the Mu Master ladies are able to make the trip north!

Weekend Program: The girls of Tennessee Laureate Oméga, Memphis, visited Cherokee Village for a program while spending the weekend at the McCabe House in Harding, Arkansas. This is the fifth trip to the house for a weekend of fun and fellowship with one another, and with those members who have moved away, all meeting at the house for a great time. The Cherokee Village trip was highlighted by seeing the waterfall which has overflowed and flooded the little town of Harding in years past, but is now a calm and beautiful park for visitors.

The Big Fifty: The ladies of Texas Preceptor Rho, New Braunfels, spent 2016 celebrating their 50th anniversary. All programs were taken from the Little Golden Books the sisters grew up enjoying. One serving project was donating 50 cans of beef stew to the local food bank. The ladies enjoyed going to City Hall to accept a proclamation in Beta Sigma Phi’s honor from the mayor, and received a certificate from International recognizing 50 years. All members were also showcased in the local newspaper! A traveling centerpiece of a Forever Friends statue by Jim Shore, surrounded by a gold paper chain with each member’s name was used by each hostess throughout the year. A Golden Gala Dinner was the last social for the anniversary year; members received a surprise 50th commemorative gift as the last golden act of the year.
**Play Time:** The ladies of Florida Alpha Gamma Eta, Titusville, like to have fun. They recently attended an appropriate production at the Titusville Playhouse – “Sister Act.” Ten of the members had this nice photo opportunity before the show (pictured). The chapter has done a “Casino Night” fundraiser for three local charities, and have donated $1,000 each to an Alzheimer’s care facility, a center for abused women, and a program for homeless veterans.

**Meet and Eat:** The members of South Carolina Laureate Rho, Greenville, have been celebrating each member’s birthday with a breakfast or lunch at a place of the girl’s choice each month. Those celebrating one month plan for those celebrating the next month – paying it forward. As it turns out, the chapter almost always has close to 100 percent participation, testifying to the closeness of the chapter. “Or,” says member Lina Buchanan, “it could be we just love an excuse to meet and eat!”

**Painting Petals:** Members of North Dakota Xi Alpha Beta, Jamestown, enjoyed “Painting Petals,” an evening of art instruction and acrylic painting on canvas. “This is our first foray into painting, but it may not be our last!” said member Karen Schumacher.

**Takin’ Care of Business:** Alabama Eta Omega, Mobile, recently took part in a local business expo sponsored by the Southwest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce. The event was a great opportunity to promote Beta Sigma Phi, pass out information, enjoy complimentary food and beverages and have a fun evening together and with members of the community.