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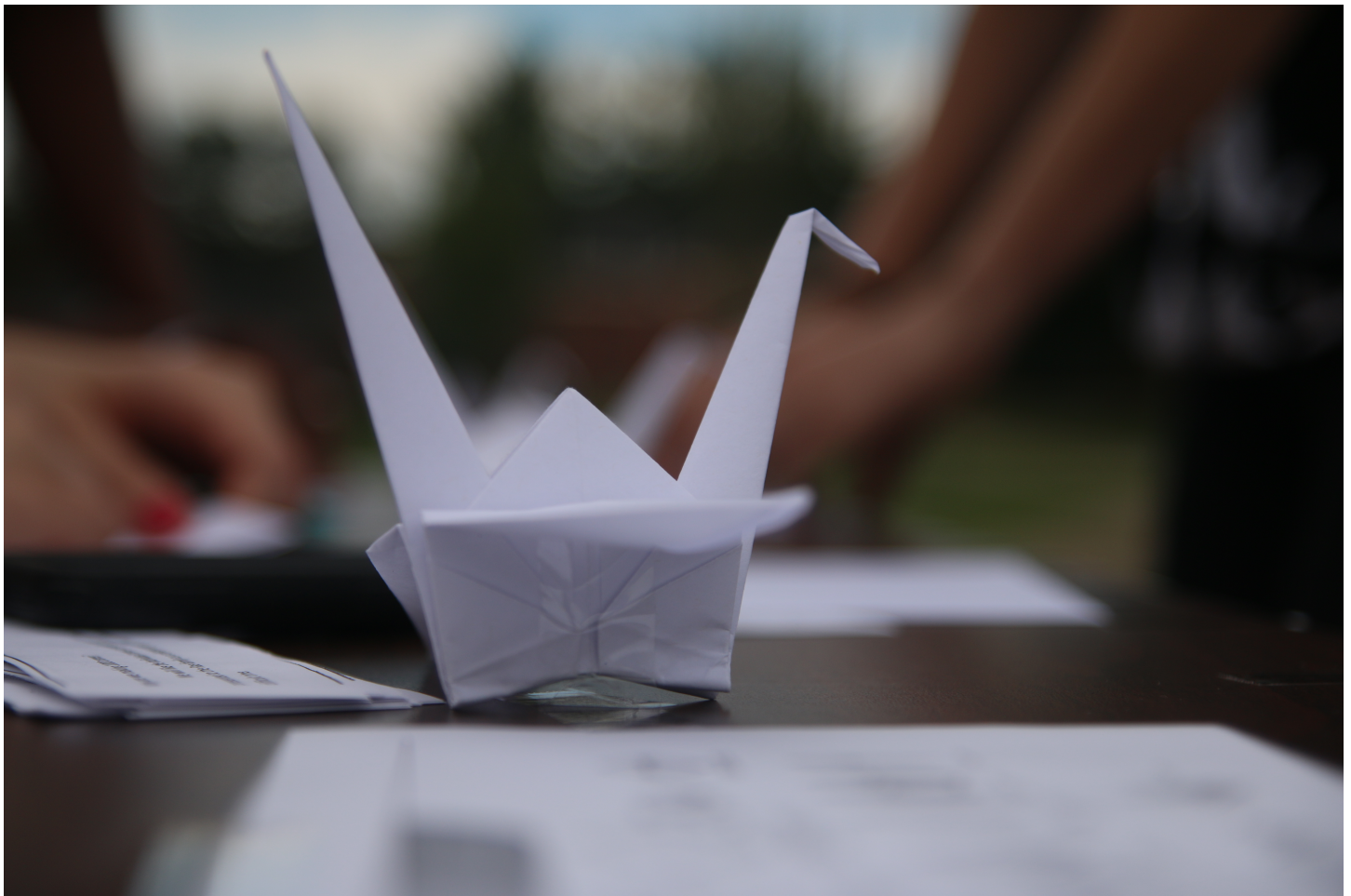
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A thousand origami cranes for Charlee Rae



Origami cranes symbolize hope for recovery in Japanese culture. Photo by Megan Hartman.

By Chelsea Sydnor

The Gardner-Webb community is coming together in support of one of its own faculty members, American Sign Language professor Russ Gribble. The Japanese Language and Culture Club is sponsoring an effort to encourage his family in the midst of his daughter Charlee Rae's illness.

Charlee has been diagnosed with Mucopolysaccharidosis Type I (MPS I), a rare genetic disorder that prevents the breakdown of excess materials in the body, leading to progressive damage. She will face chemotherapy followed by a bone marrow stem cell transplant.

"This project is a way for us to show Charlee and her family that they are not alone in this situation and that we care about them," said Japanese Club president, senior Nikole Roland.

The club is following the Japanese custom of presenting a thousand paper cranes to share hope and well wishes. Traditionally, all of the cranes must be completed within a year, which is a large task. The organization is relying on its fellow students for assistance in reaching their goal.



The Japanese Club folds paper cranes. Courtesy of Dr. Pagcaliwagan.

"The first time we folded, we worked for an hour and only made thirteen," recalled Dr. Lorene Pagcaliwagan, the club's sponsor. "We have quite a way to go."

On Wednesday, September 16, the Japanese club hosted "Origami on the Quad," an effort to attract the attention of students passing by to help fold cranes and raise awareness about Charlee's condition.

Fortunately, students are more than willing to help, especially those that have come into contact with Professor Gribble.



The Japanese Language and Culture club encouraged the student body to fold origami cranes for Rae.

Photo by Megan Hartman.

language professors," said sophomore Emily Szalkowski.

"He's got a really great personality, and I know he cares a lot about his family."

"He's very humble and supportive, and you would never know that he was going through something like that," said first-year student Allie Williams. "He's never mentioned it in class."

The next few months will be a challenge for the Gribble family, as Charlee will spend much time at Duke Hospital undergoing treatment. Her mother will also be taking leave from work to be with Charlee.

During this time, the Japanese club will continue to host events to collaborate with many students to construct the cranes for the Gribble family. According to Roland, the club will hold events in Tucker every few weeks to fold cranes. A collection jar to benefit the family will also be available at each folding session.



Photo by Megan Hartman.

"Each of the thousand paper cranes will be a prayer for Charlee," explained the club's secretary, senior Eddrinia Jordan. "We're hoping she'll get well soon."

You can find out more about Charlee Rae's condition and how you can help the Gribble family [here](#).

To see more photos of the event, visit photos.gardner-webb.edu.