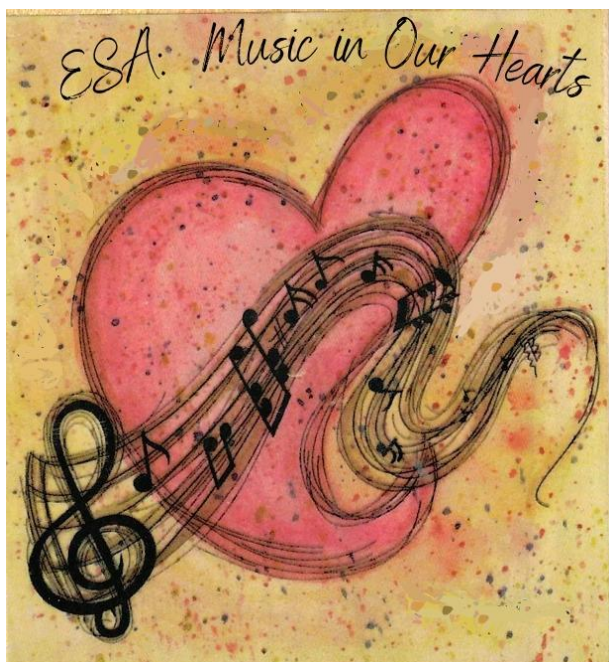




Southeast Regional Council of Epsilon Sigma Alpha

March 2025

Newsletter



Hello my SERC sisters. Are you ready for spring? I know I am! Or at least for it to stay one way or the other. We actually had about 4" of snow in January and was out for 3 days. New Orleans had about 12". Unreal!!

I hope everything is going well. States are gearing up for state, spring projects and conventions. I wish everyone great success for our philanthropic endeavors and a wonderful meeting.

Please check the Dates to Remember (below left). If you need anything, don't hesitate to call or email me.

Wishing you Happy Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter.

Love in ESA

Dawn Middleton

SERC President

Dawnmittleton1@gmail.com

601-810-6508

DATES TO REMEMBER

Bylaw revisions to Anita Hilburn by June 1, 2025

SERC Dues

State dues- January 1, 2025 and no later than June 1, 2025-
\$30 to Jennifer Gailey

Chapter donations-\$15 to Jennifer Gailey

IC Dues- present and no later than May 1, 2025

Chapters \$40, State \$45
to Margaret Kramer

State Conventions:

April 12 Bowling Green, KY

April 25-27 Pigeon Forge, TN

May 2-3 Sheffield, AL

May 2-4 Lake Buena Vista, FL

May 2-4 Conway, AR

May 16-18 Dawsonville, GA

May 16-18 North Carolina

May 16-18 N. Charleston, SC

May 30-June 1 Harrisonburg, VA

June 6-8 Kenner, LA

History of Mardi Gras



As your disaster chair, I ask you to delve into your state's budget and find some monies for the disaster fund. Unfortunately, disasters continue to ravage across the United States. In the Southeast this past year, the two most devastating were Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

It isn't just hurricanes that have been our paths. We've recently had horrible flooding in Kentucky, and we've seen snow in Louisiana and Florida, what's happening? Apparently, Mother Nature isn't happy.

Disasters come in many forms. Let's not forget the horrible health diagnosis that can deplete our savings. We, as an organization, aren't getting younger...so I ask that you dig and give to the disaster fund.

Our IC disaster fund chair is Terri Olson. I've attached the disaster fund form for your donations.

I pray for each one of you and your states. Love your ESA sisters and brothers always, not only in a disaster.

As our SERC President asks of us, "find the music in your hearts...may it be joyous".

Laura Gnewuch
2024-2025 Jr. Past President, Disaster
Fund Chair



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL DISASTER FUND DONATION

State Council _____ Report # & Date _____

State Chair Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Check#	Chapter Name	Chapter #	Contributed Previously this year	Amount Contributed this report

Total Monies This Report \$ _____

Previous Total \$ _____

Total to Date \$ _____

Total Number of Chapters Contributing to date _____

Total Number of Chapters in State _____

Make Checks Payable to: **ESA DISASTER FUND**

Send Report & Checks to: IC Disaster Fund Chair
 Terri Olson
 1668 Ranch Loop
 Cheyenne, WY 82009-1802

Lauren Ryan – 1st Vice President

We are both inundated with winter weather and seeing signs of spring here in NC.

I have some excellent news! The Nominations Committee & The Executive Board have worked hard on overhauling the Nominations & Willingness to Serve forms to both be in line with our bylaws as well as more efficient and streamlined. I can't wait to see your form in my inbox!

The other exciting news is that the Executive Board will be doing another Double Goods fundraiser the week of March 24th. We will be posting more information about this as we get closer to the date.

Lauren Ryan

202 Chateau Place, Chapel Hill NC 27516

607-351-5470 Cell, laurengeryan@gmail.com

[Elected office nomination form](#)

[Willingness to serve form](#)



Hope you all have been staying warm and dry! I know here in Kentucky we have had record flu out break and that has a few people down in the dumps. Spring is just around the corner. The sun is out today and it feels lovely.

I received an official bid from Florida to host the 2026 SERC Convention. I know we all loved it that last time we attended. (I wonder if my good chocolate is still in the fridge at the hotel.) I know we will have sunshine in Florida.

I am still looking for bids for SERC Convention 2028 and 2029. If your state is thinking about it please send me a bid. We would love to visit and explorer your beautiful state.

Kelli Thornberry
SERC 2nd Vice President

Recording Secretary

2025 has been moving very fast - it will be spring before we know it. Spring is always a time to start anew - it smells fresh in the air with lots of opportunities to make some changes and try new things. Yes, it can be difficult to step out of your comfort zone but growth only takes place when you are challenged, not when you are comfortable.

Can you get overwhelmed by making changes? Yes, it is scary and difficult. But you don't have to do it all at one time, break it down into small tasks - it has been said that "Have courage and start now, even if you start small. Just go for it!"

So think of something new or some changes that you would like to make in your life and start small. Before you know it, you will be achieving all of your goals in life.

Keep the faith!

Sandra



History of St. Patrick's Day

Hello Friends!

I am your 24-25 Corresponding Secretary, Casey Hoffman, from Mississippi. I am currently at home recuperating from a broken hip I suffered on my way to a fabulous cruise. Instead of two weeks on a ship, I spent two weeks in a German hospital. Anyway, since I am a captive in my home, I am kind of bored. Send me correspondence for Dawn or the board and give this girl something to do!!

Please!! Any correspondence can be sent to:

Casey Hoffman

830 North Street

McComb, MS 39648

kchoffman@hotmail.com

SERC PARLIAMENTARIAN NEWS

Laisse les bons temps rouler! Mardi Gras is going strong in my area. We are having the last two parades this coming weekend. I am writing this article while I am sitting at dialysis with my oldest daughter. Stacey, my daughter must have 24 hours of care. She had several strokes and heart attacks that have left her almost completely blind and nonverbal. Nicole, her daughter and main caregiver, while going to nursing school, she is doing weekly two day clinicals, so she needs a little help from me and her papaw. That is what "family" does.

I am excited to represent the SERC executive board when I go to Alabama's State Convention in May. I plan to drive since it is such pretty country.

The SERC state presidents have received an email asking them to share the SERC bylaws and stand rules. Please submit in writing to sercparliamentarian@gmail.com any changes by June 1st.

Let the Good Times Roll!

Anita Kay Hilburn

SERC Parliamentarian



Happy March everyone! I am so ready for warmer weather and state conventions right around the corner! Most of all, I am excited to report that ALL state SERC dues have been paid!! Please continue to send in chapter donations. If you need a donation form or have any questions please feel free to contact me!

Jennifer Gailey
Treasurer

Greetings SERC Family,

I am honored to serve as your Awards Chair this year!! I know that we are only a few months into our SERC year, but I wanted to reach out and let you know that I am available if you have any questions about Awards. I am sure everyone is keeping up with their good works and writing down everything that you do in the name of ESA. Be sure to note your time, mileage, money, and value of items donated and get that information to your State's Awards Chair by your State's designated deadline.

The time period for SERC awards is June 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025. So, to all the State Award Chairs, I look forward to receiving reports from each State. We still have a while as the deadline is September 1, 2025. So, again, if anyone has questions, please feel free to reach out to me. My information is located on the Awards form on the SERC website.

Many thanks!

Susan Garner
SERC Awards Chair 2024-2025



From The Desk of Mary P Smith

Greeting from Wilmington, NC and a very cold beach. Our weather has been unreal this year. We even had 5 inches of snow!!

As a member of the nominating committee, I want to remind everyone to give a lot of consideration to being a part of the future of SERC. Please think about running for an elected office for the coming year. Nomination

Forms are due by June 1, 2025. If you are not quite ready to run for an elected office, consider volunteering for a position on the Appointed Board. There are a lot of appointed spots the need you. Your willingness to serve means a great deal to our SERC Council. We have to grow our membership and remain strong in the commitment to our pledge to ESA.

Now, I will put on a different hat as the 2025 IC Convention Local Chair: It is an honor to serve as chair of our IC Convention for 2025. I am very excited and determined to make it my goal to help the SERC Regional Council host a successful event. The committees are working hard to plan a fun and exciting convention. Please go to the ESA IC Website and select "2025 IC Convention" to see all the information about convention. We are counting on all SERC members to help make the 2025 event a success.

SERC needs your help and support to get the job done. Get your registrations in early and plan your trip to Cary, NC the week of July 13-20, 2025 at the Embassy Suites. I am looking forward to seeing you as we enjoy a "2025 Southern Serenade".

HOPE FOR HEROES

What a winter we have had. And, I think it has extended through the SERC states. I am ready for Spring. We have about 6" of snow on the ground and temps close to zero. And, that doesn't include the wind chill.

I am your Hope for Heroes Chair this year and I want to share a couple of things with you. First, everyone can participate in this project by cutting out coupons for the **SUPPORT OUR TROOPS ORGANIZATION**. Many of our military use these coupons to help ease the cost of groceries. **One Military spouse in Germany wrote "It is AMAZING to me how many coupons are sent and how much we can save by using them. It is truly a blessing to us all! Thank you for your dedication to supporting our military and their families overseas! P.S. LOVE the baby, diaper and Pull-Ups coupons!! Oh, who am I kidding. I love ALL the coupons. THANK YOU!!!! Dawn, Happy Military Spouse and Mommy to Two Wonderful Angels in Germany."** This, in itself, should be motivation enough just knowing how much we are appreciated we are in supporting this program.

Support Our Troops have changed their address as to where to mail the coupons. It is **Support Our Troops, P O Box 16575, Boise, ID 83715**.

Other ways you or your chapter can help include: Help at your local VFW, send care packages to deployed troops, **provide meals for the homeless veterans**, help families when they are away from their loved ones & stock military bases with food banks, home starter kits, laying wreaths in November & December and of course, **there is Folds of Honor**. This is only the beginning. Check in your area to see if there is a VFW where you can help. Also, check the ESA website for more information on Hope for Heroes. There is something for everyone to do.

Did you know that ESA's support for military personnel and their families began during World War II? Much of ESA's early growth was a result of military members forming new chapters as they moved to new bases.

Send me your chapter's involvement with Hope for Heroes. Others would like to know.

Theda Hall, Hope for Heroes Chair

tlhent@aol.com



Easterseals is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing exceptional services, education, outreach, and advocacy for individuals with disabilities, veterans, seniors, and their families for over a century. Founded in 1919 by Edgar Allen, the organization has grown into a nationwide network of affiliates that deliver vital resources and support to enhance the quality of life for millions of people.

If your state would like to become more involved with Easterseals, I have provided telephone numbers below so you can reach out to your state's Easterseals office and find out how you can help.

I hope this information will assist you in reaching out to a wonderful organization and helping those in need.

See you all soon!

Joy Lehnert

ALABAMA Easterseals Alabama (main office) Phone: (334)395-4489	ARKANSAS Easterseals Arkansas Corporate Office Phone: (501)227-3600
FLORIDA Easterseals South Florida, Miami (main office) Phone: (305) 325-0470 Easterseals Southwest Florida, Sarasota (main office) Phone: (941) 355-7637 Easterseals Northeast Central Florida, Daytona Beach, Explorer Academy & Autism Services (main office) Phone: (386) 255-4568	GEORGIA Easterseals Middle Georgia, Dublin (main office) Phone: (478) 275-8850 Easterseals Southern Georgia, Albany (main office) Phone: (229)439-7061 Easterseals West Georgia, Columbus (main office) Phone: (706) 660-1144 Easterseals Bluegrass (main office) Phone: (859) 367-7217
KENTUCKY Easterseals West Kentucky, Paducah (main office) Phone: (270) 443-1200	LOUISIANA Easterseals Louisiana Phone: (504) 523-7325

<p>NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA</p> <p>Easterseals PORT Health, North Carolina & Virginia (main office)</p> <p>Phone: (800) 662-7119</p>	<p>SOUTH CAROLINA</p> <p>Easterseals South Carolina (main office)</p> <p>Phone: (803) 466-4089</p>
<p>TENNESSEE</p> <p>Easterseals Tennessee, Lexington</p> <p>Phone: (731)968-1050</p> <p>Easterseals Tennessee, Brentwood</p> <p>Phone: (615) 292-6640</p> <p>Easterseals Tennessee, Lebanon</p> <p>Phone: (615) 444-0597</p> <p>Easterseals Tennessee, Cleveland</p> <p>Phone: (615) 444-0597 ext. 432</p>	



Hey everyone-

I can't believe that it is already 2025! Hope your year started off great and that it continues to be awesome. We had our winter meeting this past weekend and everyone who attended had a lot of fun. We had everyone present answer a random question to see how well we knew each other and start getting to know our new member, a new arrival in Knoxville via Louisiana that has transferred into our ranks. We did miss our beloved state and SERC treasurer Jennifer Gailey as she and our President Elect Jackie Belair just spent the previous weekend in Denver at Leadership and could not attend our meeting but she still let us know what all was going on with the upcoming IC convention next door in North Carolina this summer.

Tennessee has been enjoying some cold weather the last couple months and a snow-mageddon so we are very ready for spring. As we all know that in addition to all the brightly colored festive holidays that spring gives us (so many chances to head outdoors, fingers crossed), spring brings state convention season for a lot of us. Tennessee will be having its annual convention the last weekend of April in our beloved Smoky Mountains. There is nothing like enjoying the company of your fellow ESA members in the comfort of a cabin in Pigeon Forge, TN. This year we are going to start the weekend with my theme -ESA in the Circle of Life- and will spend a little time in the jungles and plains of Africa with the lions before ending the weekend enjoying a seaside paradise out on the open oceans as we "Seas the Day with ESA" and our current 1st VP/President-elect Jackie takes the reigns. We cannot wait to welcome Lauren Ryan back to Tennessee, I'm sure she will once again have a great time with us and who knows who else might show up to join in the fun. You know what they say- the more the merrier! I am very honored that my state gave me the opportunity to be President this year. 2024 was a year that was determined to never be forgotten for many reasons but the opportunities I have had, the new friends I got to make, and the things I got to do as state president made this year a very memorable year in the best way.



Tennessee State President 2024-2025
Emmie Owens