Dear Alumni,

SAAC is happy to report on another successful month. The athletics are stronger than ever at Williams both in and out of the playing arenas. SAAC has met a few times now and delegates come with exciting new ideas each time. This year’s delegation has the potential to be one of the most productive in recent years, with significant contributions coming from student-athletes like Merritt Harlan ’16, Dana Cohen ’17, and Katie Litman ’16.

The Williams Swim and Dive team kicked off their season on November 1st with the Dave Polen Hour of Power, honoring and supporting their long-time assistant coach as he fights off cancer. Over 40 alumni joined current team members to complete the hour of continuous sprint relays. With support from alumni coaches, team members and families, the team raised over $9000 for the event. Just 10 days later, the Ephs participated in the Ted Mullin Hour of Power, participating alongside almost 200 teams from across the United States to raise money for sarcoma research and treatment.

On October 30th we had our first Kids’ Night Out of the season, an event in which we invite kids from the community to come play games with student-athletes in the gym for two hours while their parents can have some time to themselves. Spearheaded by Merritt Harlan ’16, the evening was filled with fun games including capture the pumpkin and lifeguard. Children and student-athletes alike came in Halloween costumes, including some Men’s Hockey players’ dressed in kangaroo and penguin suits. The biggest hit of the evening was playing with a parachute, which brought back some memories of elementary school for our student-athletes. Our first Kids’ Night Out event of the year was a success and we look forward to hosting several more in the coming months. All of the proceeds from each event will go towards the Special Olympics.

As a member of both SAAC and The Apple Team (a group dedicated to addressing alcohol and drug use on campus), Dana Cohen ’17 gathered team pictures for a Homecoming poster campaign. The posters encouraged students to drink responsibly over Homecoming weekend and were very well received by the campus. Dana’s creativity, and that of the students with whom she worked, produced some very memorable posters and spread a positive message on campus.

Katie Litman ’16 has been helping to organize the Assist Program, through which student-athletes are paired up with North Adams middle school students to mentor one-on-one for an hour each week. Through mentorship, the Assist Program seeks to encourage young students to achieve beyond high school, inspiring them to pursue higher education and professional careers. The student-athlete mentors support their mentees in a variety of ways, including offering psychological support, helping them to work through problems, tutoring or finding a tutor for school work, and generally being a role model, friend and resource. Currently, there are 50 student-athlete mentors working with the Assist Program.