



REPORT

From the office of the...
SWHAT Coordinator (Jenny Zhao)

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Jenny Zhao
SUBJECT: MSU SWHAT Report 3
DATE: Monday, October 2, 2023

Yearplan Update

I am happy to share that SWHAT's events, projects, and activities are on track with our year plan. The most exciting update since the last report is the completion of SWHAT's first month of operations in the 2023-2024 school year! We are currently in the process of hiring our remaining walkers, planning for our upcoming Walkathon, and planning volunteer events. We have made some adjustments, detailed below, to make our service easier to use. Team morale is high and overall, the communication between the volunteers and executives has been great. I am excited to share more in the rest of this report. Thank you all for your time and support!

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

SWHAT operations began Monday, August 28, 2023. Although we were expecting a higher call volume during Welcome Week, service usage has exceeded all expectations throughout the month.

From **August 28th** to **September 26th, 2023**, SWHAT completed a total of 137 walks. For reference, the 2022-2023 Coordinator reported that SWHAT completed a total of 107 walks from **August 29th** to **October 3rd, 2022**. The growth in service usage these past two years is incredible, and I believe these numbers show that student awareness of SWHAT is increasing.

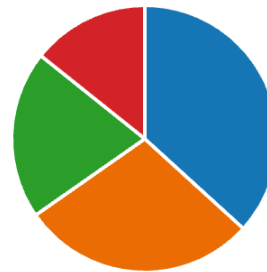
Service usage is highest on the weekdays. The highest number of completed walks in one night is 11. The average walk distance is 1.3 km. Service users can request walks in-person, over the phone, or online by form. We have also added a new option for users to book recurring walks if they are scheduled for the same time and location each week.

We added a new question to our intake form to determine how most walks were being requested. Please see the results below (This question was added recently, so it only includes 49 walks). I believe this breakdown shows that all our

request options are equally important, and that there is awareness among service users about the different ways they can request walks.

How was the walk requested?

● In person	18
● Over the phone	14
● Online request form submission	10
● Recurring walk	7



I anticipate similar numbers next month, especially as it gets darker outside during the earlier hours of operation. In addition, we are preparing for our promotional November Walkathon, where we typically see an increase in walk requests! I am hoping that the larger team this year can help accommodate for the increase in service use.

Projects & Events: Welcome Week Activities & ClubsFest (Complete)

Since the last report, SWHAT participated in the Services and Sites Webinar hosted by MSU Spark and Macademics, the Health Science Welcome Week Faculty Fest, the Maroons scavenger hunt, and ClubsFest. These opportunities were the perfect opportunity to answer questions about SWHAT and promote our First-Year/Transfer Priority Walker Hiring. We created an email list, which I used to contact interested students once applications opened. In addition, in-person events are a great way for the student community to interact and meet our volunteers. We had many volunteers help with our ClubsFest booth during the first week of school which was great to see. Also, our new dog stickers were a big hit at all these events!

Projects & Events: SWHATted at Mac Promotional Campaign (Complete)

Our Public Relations Executives, Reem and Yumnah, organized our SWHATted at Mac Instagram/Facebook campaign to highlight a three of our amazing volunteers. This campaign helped boost our social media presence before start of operations and first-year/transfer student hiring. The social media engagement of this campaign will be included in the next section of the report. Overall, I felt this campaign helped us introduce our service and gain traction.

Projects & Events: First-Year/Transfer Priority Walker Hiring (On-Going)

First-Year/Transfer Priority Walker Hiring closed recently on September 20th. We finished application review earlier this week, and we will begin interviews tomorrow. I hope to have all decision emails out by October 2nd so we can begin the onboarding and training process. If all goes well, our walkers will have the opportunity to complete at least one shift before November!

In this round of hiring, we received a total of 42 applications. In total, across both rounds, SWHAT received a total of 137 applications. We received a similar number of applications during last year's hiring, with 132 applications. This was our first year opening a first year/transfer priority hiring as well! I am grateful that most of our team was hired during the summer hiring because managing another round of hiring during the school year can be difficult for our executives, and for the applicants as well. Overall, I am happy that interest in SWHAT remains high and I hope that our efforts this year will increase applications for next year as well. By the end of hiring, SWHAT will have ~80 walkers, ~10 dispatchers, and 6 executives, for a total of 96 volunteers.

Projects & Events: Executive Introductions & Promotional (On-Going)

Our executive team recently participated in a photoshoot with Communications Officer, Will. Each executive received a headshot, which we are hoping to post within the next two weeks. We also took lots of group photos and merch photos as well to use for our upcoming giveaways. Our PR executives, Reem and Yumnah, also prepared a script and filmed a promotional video which will be posted shortly. The video is a short, informational Reel which will be used to provide information on SWHAT. Stay tuned!

Projects & Events: Fall Volunteer Intramurals (On-Going)

Fall volunteer intramurals started last week organized by our Volunteer Affairs Executive, Albi! We received lots of interest in the team, and great turnout to our first game. The SWHAT community continues to be a top priority this year. I hope to work together with Albi to create opportunities for volunteers to bond and make new friendships within SWHAT. Also, thank you to the MSU finance team for helping us sort out the intramural payment!

Projects & Events: Fall Volunteer Social (Upcoming)

Albi has also decided to hold our SWHAT Bonfire earlier this semester. We are currently planning the event for mid-October at the Altitude compound. A challenge, however, is that we anticipate more turnout than last year (since the event is earlier in the year, and we have a larger team). I am in the process of speaking with Sefa about moving our uniform budget to the volunteer appreciation line to accommodate for these expenses.

Projects & Events: November Walkathon (Upcoming)

Our PR executives and I are currently in the process of planning for our November Walkathon, where we donate \$1 to a local charity/non-profit for each walk. In the past, this initiative allows SWHAT to raise awareness for a local organization and helps our volunteer team feel more involved. This year, we are including our volunteer team in the process of voting for a partner organization. We will decide on an organization by the end of this week, and our PR team will contact them to plan the collab. We are currently in the process of brainstorming ideas for our Walkathon graphic/poster, which we will then send to the

Underground. If the trend in service usage continues, I believe we will have even more service engagement than previous years. I will have to be mindful of our campaign budget when deciding on the donation per walk. In addition, we may need to increase the number of volunteers scheduled each shift to accommodate for all the walk requests, this may be challenging given the office space. I will discuss more below.

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

We posted three volunteers as part of our “SWHATted at Mac” campaign. In this years campaign, we included a second photo highlighting where our volunteers “walked” this summer. please see the engagement on these posts below. In addition, SWHAT continues to post a nightly Instagram/Facebook story. These stories are a big hit amongst our followers and have become an unofficial part of SWHAT’s promotions. We try to post stories that are entertaining, funny, and SWHAT related. Our volunteers choose to participate if they feel comfortable, and it’s usually a fun activity that we look forward to on shift. Please see some of our most popular stories below!

Promotional Materials

First-Year & Transfer Student Hiring

FIRST-YEAR & TRANSFER STUDENT PRIORITY HIRING

APPLICATIONS DUE
SEP 20, 11:59 PM EST

APPLY AT:
LINKTR.EE/MSUSWHAT

Email: swhat@msu.mcmaster.ca
Phone: 905-525-9140 x27500

MSU.SWHAT MSU_SWHAT

September 6 at 11:54 AM

123 0 93 53

Overview

Accounts reached	3,340
Accounts engaged	217
Profile activity	301

Reach

3,340 Accounts reached

2,419 Followers 921 Non-Followers

SWHATted at Mac

SWHATted at Mac

August 24 at 8:40 AM

235 6 3 3

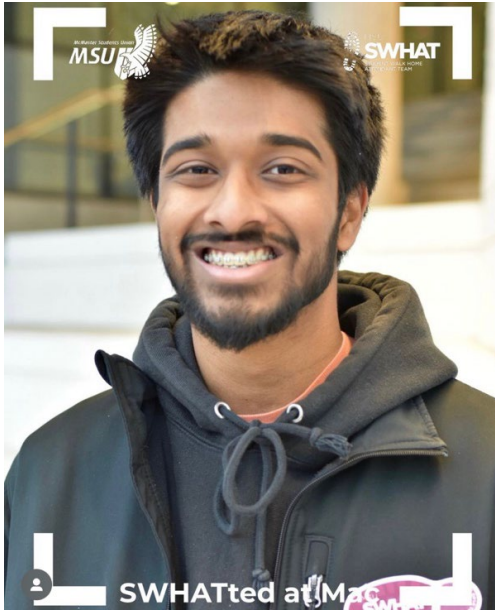
Overview

Accounts reached	2,803
Accounts engaged	240
Profile activity	118

Reach

2,803 Accounts reached

2,450 Followers 353 Non-Followers



msu_swhat



August 28 at 8:20 AM

141 9 8 0

Overview

Accounts reached	2,255
Accounts engaged	152
Profile activity	66

Reach

2,255 Accounts reached

1,938 Followers 317 Non-Followers

August 21 at 9:37 AM

165 5 10 1

Overview

Accounts reached	2,385
Accounts engaged	175
Profile activity	154

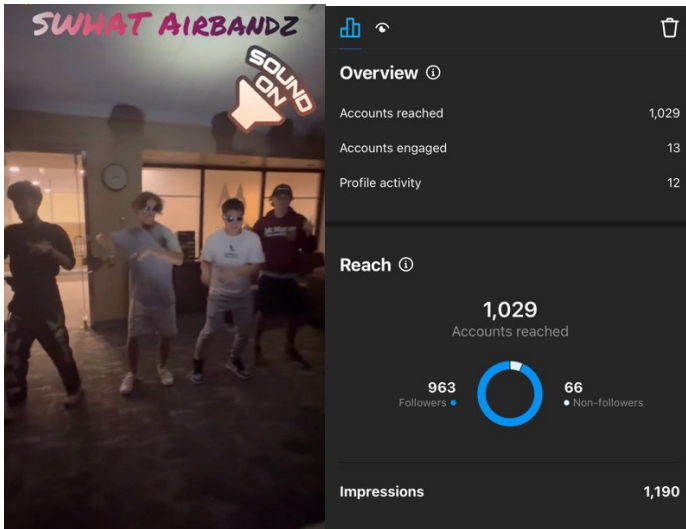
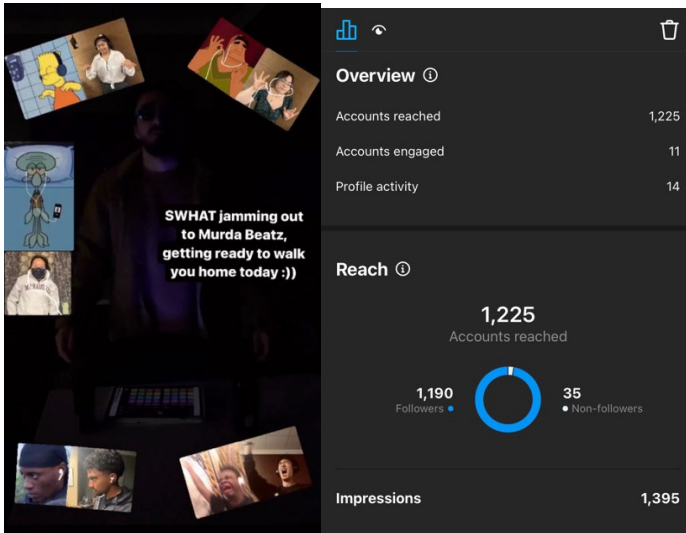
Reach

2,385 Accounts reached


2,002 Followers 383 Non-Followers

Daily Shift Stories

(Most of our stories are videos, I've included some screenshots, but you'll just have to follow us to keep up with our shenanigans)! We've received lots of positive feedback on the stories from service users, volunteers, and volunteer applicants. I think our stories helps show that we are an approachable, friendly service which makes new service users more comfortable requesting walks. Shoutout to our executives and volunteers for coming up with and executing these amazing stories!




Walking home




Accounts reached	1,400
Accounts engaged	10
Profile activity	37

Walking home with SWHAT



Applying to be a SWHAT volunteer by September 20th




Reach ⓘ

1,400
Accounts reached

1,371 Followers • 29 Non-followers

Impressions **1,506**

going back to the MAPS office for another SWHAT walk



Overview ⓘ

Accounts reached	1,599
Accounts engaged	7
Profile activity	25


Reach ⓘ

1,599
Accounts reached

1,590 Followers • 9 Non-followers

Impressions **1,678**

Choose your SWHAT Walker



Overview ⓘ

Accounts reached	1,533
Accounts engaged	15
Profile activity	28

Reach ⓘ

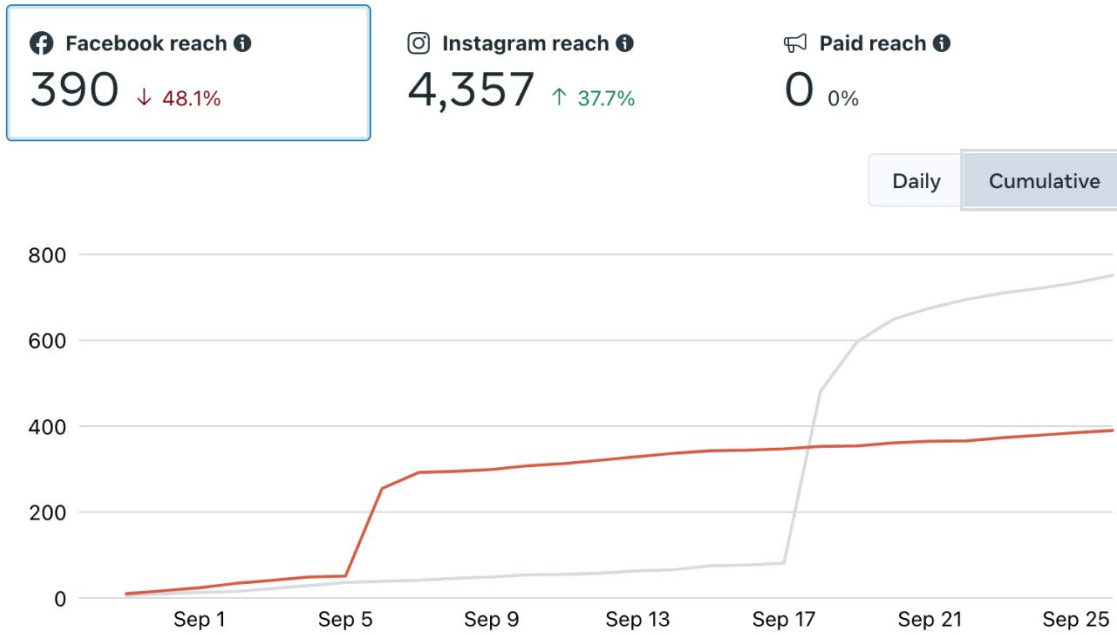
1,533
Accounts reached

1,523 Followers • 10 Non-followers

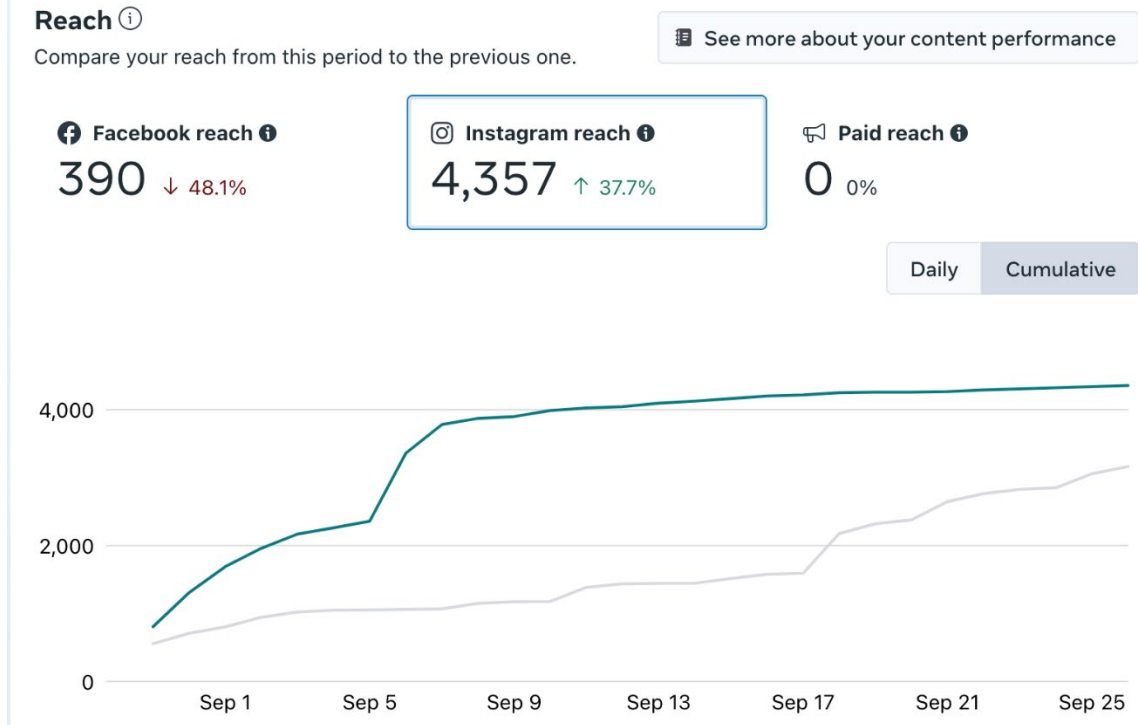
Impressions **1,577**

Social Media Engagement since the Previous Report

Facebook Reach



Instagram Reach



Instagram Insights (last 30 days)

During our last report, SWHAT Instagram Insights from **Aug 6** to **Aug 19** (prior to the start of operations) showed 1428 accounts reached, 18 accounts engaged 3624 followers. Here are our most recent insights:

Insights	Aug 28 - Sep 26
Accounts reached	4,487 +56% >
Accounts engaged	456 +37.7% >
Total followers	3,730 +2.4% >
Content you shared	73 >

Finances

Budget Summary

Since our last report, SWHAT has begun using our standing order for Uber travels. The Uber budget is meant to send volunteers home during extenuating circumstances. However, this month, we also found that the Uber credit was useful in accommodating special walk requests (more on this in the Challenges section of this report). Since operations have started, I will also be purchasing snacks for the office on a monthly basis. This month I was surprised to find that the snacks ran out faster than expected, and I will likely need to purchase more snacks moving forward (more on this in the Challenges section of the report). I also ordered a single, foldable desk from Amazon. Our dispatchers have requested this desk because they must sit on the couches to answer the phone, and they would work off of a desk. The desk is foldable and should easily be stored away under the MAPS couches and in the lockers. If volunteers find the desk helpful, we will likely order a second foldable desk next month. We also paid for our fall intramural team from our volunteer recognition line, however, I am worried that we do not have enough from this line to organize the SWHAT bonfire (see Challenges section).

ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST
	Walker Dispatcher Hiring Package	100.00
	Executive Hiring Package	100.00
	500 Rave Cards	150.00
	300 Footprint Stickers	183.00
	300 Dog Stickers	20600
6501-0117-0200	New Sticker Design Cost	55.00
	ClubsFest	20.00
ADV. & PROMO	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	814.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	426.00
6901-0117-0200	Volunteer Uber Ride	16.93
	Volunteer Uber Ride	14.05
TRAVEL & CONFERENCE	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	30.98
	REMAINING IN LINE	969.02
6494-0117-0200	Volunteer Volleyball Intramurals	110.00
VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	110.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	640.00
5003-0117-0200	Snacks (September)	98.24
	Snacks (October)	130.00
	Foldable Office Desk	55.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	283.24
	REMAINING IN LINE	716.76
TOTALS		
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		5850.00
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		1707.24
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		4142.76

Executives & Volunteers

Executive and volunteer morale remains high. Our volunteers are adjusting well to their responsibilities on shift and our executives have done a great job at facilitating conversations/introductions on shift. In addition, there has been smooth communication between the volunteers and executives off-shift regarding shift swaps, scheduling, etc. Shift swaps are going well, and most volunteers can find cover for their shifts. In addition, attendance has been great so far! Thank you to our scheduling executives (Bailey & Mihir) and our dispatcher executive

(Jonathan) for updating the schedule to reflect any shift changes/requests. The start of volunteer intramurals and volunteer socials will hopefully also help volunteers feel integrated into the team. My executives have been particularly busy this month, but I am glad we were all able to participate in the executive photoshoot together and get bubble tea afterwards!

Successes

Service Engagement

Initially, I was also worried that we did not promote the service enough leading up to Welcome Week. However, I was happy to hear that we started receiving walk requests the very first day of operations. During Welcome Week alone, we completed a total of 26 walks. Now that the month of September is coming to an end with 137 walks, I can confidently say that SWHAT once again exceeded all expectations during Welcome Week and the month of September. I am proud that SWHAT continues to build a reputation as a reliable and trustworthy service that students can feel comfortable requesting.

Team Communication

The communication on-shift has been excellent. Our walkers and dispatchers have been using the radios and instant messaging appropriately to send timely updates or communicate any changes to the walk request. The executives have also done an excellent job informing me of any incidents/challenges on shift so that we can problem-solve together. Overall, I am so impressed with how our team has come together.

Service Delivery

Our volunteers are doing an excellent job at upholding our SWHAT principles while on walks/in the office. There was an adjustment period for our new volunteers, but I am impressed with the way that our dispatchers can handle multiple walk requests at once, and the positive, welcoming attitude that our walkers bring to every walk. I am mindful that volunteers may feel burnout once school picks up/later in the school year, but I am hopeful we can maintain this level of service throughout the year. Our executives have also done a great job in exercising their judgement to solve equipment problems or miscommunications on shift.

Team Culture

From the shifts I have supervised or from the times I have visited the office, I am happy to see that the volunteers are interacting and getting to know each other. Our returning volunteers have been very inclusive and welcoming to the new volunteers, and I am happy to see that our executives have taken the time to get to know the volunteers on-shift. In addition, our volunteers are respectful to the MAPS space and have followed the rules set by MAPS.

Current Challenges

EB, I would greatly appreciate your advice on the following, if time allows:

SWHAT Uber

SWHAT has a \$1000 standing order for volunteer travel by Uber. The purpose of this Uber credit is to send volunteers home after shift due to extenuating circumstances (bad weather, public transit down, etc.). Last year, SWHAT received \$500 for travel by Uber, and I believe most of the credit remained unused.

I would like to propose that this Uber Credit be used to improve our service. This year, we have received some farther walk requests, just outside of our 30-minute walk radius. I would like to be able to accommodate these walk requests, because many service users have expressed discomfort about travelling alone outside of the McMaster area and student neighborhoods (where SWHAT typically operates). I am proposing that SWHAT uses Uber for volunteers travelling *back to campus* after completing these walks/bus rides. I want to specify that these Ubers will be ordered for the commute *back*, and for volunteers *only*. The budget is limited and I do not want others to take advantage of the “free” Uber ride. I believe this will reduce the total walk time for our volunteers so that we will not have to turn down other walk requests that come in. For instance, our volunteers will take the bus to and from these longer commutes. The total commute time is around 40 minutes for a round trip, but there have been times where our volunteers have waited 20+ minutes for a bus, which would make them unavailable for another walk. In addition, this will make the longer walk requests more comfortable for our volunteers, particularly as the weather gets colder. Another time I could see this credit being used for our service is when we receive walk requests close to 1 am. In the past, we turned down walk requests that came in just before 1 am, because our volunteers were unable to stay until 2 am. However, by using Uber to help our volunteers travel *back to campus* after the walk, we could cut down the total transportation time so that volunteers do not feel obligated to extend their shifts. Overall, I would like to use our Uber credit to accommodate for the walk requests that we would be unable to fulfill otherwise. EB, please advise!

Scheduling for Peak Hours

Weekends are very quiet and SWHAT will usually receive between 0-2 walk requests. However, weekdays can get very hectic. During our peak hours from 9pm-11pm, we have a total of 5 walk teams in the office, and we can have anywhere between 2-5 walk teams out at once. Since it has been getting darker earlier, I've noticed that our off-peak hours from 7pm-9pm have also been getting busier. During my last shift, some of our service users cancelled their walks because we were unable to arrive to their pickup location on time, since we had other walks going on. In the past, when we let service users that we would be available in 15-20 minutes, they decided to travel alone instead. I would like to add at one walk team during the early shift (7pm-11pm), which means that during our on-peak hours, we would have a total of 14 people in the office (1 dispatcher,

1 executive, 12 walkers). There are enough seats in the MAPS office to fit 14 volunteers, however, desk space would be limited. I am thinking a possible solution would be to order two more of the foldable desks that I ordered this month, so that volunteers can have some personal space (if they prefer not to sit two to a table). The desks can be stored under/behind the MAPS couches and potentially in the SWHAT lockers so we can continue respecting MAPS requests. EB, please advise!

Budget

My main concerns for the budget is regarding the Volunteer Recognition and Office Supplies Line. The 2022-2023 SWHAT Volunteer consisted of volunteers 82 volunteers (65 walkers, 11 dispatchers, 6 executives), while the hired team this year will consist of ~96 volunteers (~80 walkers, 10 dispatchers, 6 executives). We would like to be able to hold a bonfire event for our volunteers, however, the Altitude compound cost and cost of food will increase considerable. Consider last year, the compound was \$90 for since we had <40 attendees, plus \$6/person for pizza. The total cost came to \$288. This year, we will likely have >40 attendees, which raises the compound cost to \$150, and the cost of pizza has also increased to \$7/person. In short, I believe the bonfire will cost close to \$500 from our remaining \$640. Two options we are exploring: 1) We do not provide pizza at the bonfire 2) We move the \$800 "uniform" budget line, since I was informed that there will be a pooled MSU budget for all merch. EB, please advise!

Regarding the Office Supplies Budget Line, I am finding that I need to spend more than \$100 to keep the snack locker stocked all month, especially since the cost of groceries has increased. I spent around \$99 on groceries this month. I kept some snacks in storage in the Committee Room this month and restocked the locker slowly during the month so that the snacks wouldn't be finished right away, but we unfortunately still ran out before the end of the month. I originally budgeted \$700 for 8 months of operations, but I believe we will spend closer to \$900 (\$112.5/month). We will have enough to cover these costs with our budget. However, our SWHAT radios have recently been displaying flashing lights indicating they are reaching the end of their battery life. I am concerned that if I need to replace these batteries, I will not have enough budget from the Office Supplies line, unless we stop providing snacks (which is one of our major volunteer perks). EB, please advise!

Thank you EB for your time, looking forward to hearing your input.