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University  
Housing  
Contracts &  
Assignments  
Office  
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Iowa City, IA  
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# Parent Newsletter

UNIVERSITY HOUSING

AUGUST 2008

## From The Publisher

Welcome to a new academic year! Whether you're a "brand new" parent or a "returner" to the University, we hope this newsletter—geared specifically toward you, the parent—will provide helpful information for you and your student.

Watch for periodic issues of the *Parent Newsletter* for important deadlines and upcoming events for your student. Although these types of information are shared on a regular basis with students, they don't always tend to remember with all of the excitement of a new year. Therefore, we hope the *Parent Newsletter* will help you to help them remember those all-important items! And speaking of all-important dates, if your student wants

to change their meal plan (or cancel the meal plan if they are an upperclass student in a room with a kitchen), they have until Friday, September 5, 2008 to do so. These changes may be done in the Contracts & Assignments Office, 17 Burge Hall, with their University ID card.

Please take a few minutes to read the rest of this newsletter. You'll find helpful tips on your role as a parent, rules for survival, getting along with roommates, and even how to order them a birthday cake or other special treats!

Dicta Schoenfelder,  
Manager  
Contracts & Assignments



Questions?  
Call 319/335-3009

### DATES TO REMEMBER FOR FIRST SEMESTER:

#### September 5, 2008:

- ◆ Last day to change meal plan (or cancel meal plan if upperclass student in a room with a kitchen)

#### November 21, 2008:

- ◆ Meals end for Thanksgiving break at 3:00 p.m.
- ◆ Classes end for Thanksgiving break

#### December 1, 2008:

- ◆ Classes & meals resume

#### December 19, 2008:

- ◆ Meals end for Semester break at 3:00 p.m.

#### December 20, 2008:

- ◆ Halls close (except Mayflower & Hillcrest) for Semester break

## From Our Director—Your Role As A Parent

Welcome to Iowa! If you are sending off your first student to college, or if you are a veteran of sending kids off to college, there is always some excitement and apprehension about students "leaving the nest." Students find their most memorable experiences and best friendships will be

found at college and particularly in the residence halls. While there may be some low times, in general, the highs will outweigh the lows.

College is a different experience than when you were college-age. Parent roles were different, stu-

dent roles were different, and college administrators' roles were different.

Prior to the "freedoms" era, college faculty and administrators served "in loco parentis" or in lieu of parents.

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Prior to the “freedoms” era, college faculty and administrators served “in loco parentis” or in lieu of parents. Those rules included . . . dress codes, bed checks . . . “dorm” mothers, among others.

“Dorm” mothers have been replaced by professional live-in residence hall staff members who have masters degrees in college student development or higher education administration.



. . . Professionals . . . live in the halls, many with their spouses (and in some cases, children)

## Your Role As A Parent (continued)

Those roles included enforcement of dress codes, bed checks, curfews, required class attendance, “dorm” mothers, among others. Then the Baby Boomers came. Out went the “archaic” rules, and in came student rights to educational privacy. While some of you may wish that the “archaic rules” still existed, today’s students have followed in their parent’s footsteps with respect to independence.

Helen Johnson, author of Don’t Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money: The Essential Parenting Guide to the College Years notes that the Baby Boomers, who stormed administration buildings on campuses to demand the elimination of many rules in the late 1960’s, are now demanding to be involved in so many aspects of their children’s college lives. As administrators, we have tried to adjust to change over the years.

Administrators’ roles have changed from serving in lieu of parents to serving only as desired by the students (and parents) to serving in a partnership role with parents and students. We don’t assume to play the role of parents, but we are expected to know what’s going on in all students’ lives. I don’t know why, but students’ lives have become more complicated, with mental health issues, medical concerns, alcohol/drug use, and more. “Dorm” mothers have been replaced by professional live-in residence hall staff members who have masters degrees in college student development or higher education administration. Not only are residence hall professionals expected to partner with students and their parents, they are partners with student counseling, student health, alcohol education programs, academic support programs,

equal opportunity and diversity offices, and numerous campus entities. While it is not possible for the residence hall staff to be all things to all people, they have resources available 24 hours a day.

It may be frustrating to you as parents to not know everything that happens in your student’s life. I hope you can trust the fact that we have similar goals for your student. If you have any questions about our policies and procedures, feel free to call us. We can’t talk about student specifics without a release signed by your student, but hopefully we can allay any fears or concerns you may have.

I hope your student has a wonderful and healthy transition to college life and the residence halls.

Von Stange, Director  
University Housing

## Tips for Survival (Yours & Your Student’s)

Greetings Moms, Dads, & Caregivers! As you get ready to send your son or daughter to The University of Iowa I wanted to tell you a little bit about who we are and some tips to survive move-in.

The Residence Life staff is a staff of 18 full-time professionals, 6 graduate students, 117 resident assistants, 6 community assistants, 14 clerical staff, and numerous student employees. All of our professional staff have their master’s degree in student development or a related field. Eleven full-

time professionals and four graduate students live in the halls, many with their spouses (one of our staff lives with her one-year-old daughter) and call the halls their home. Knowing that these staff members look at the halls as home should help alleviate your fears that you are sending your student into a huge dormitory where they are totally on their own. At any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, one professional staff member in each of the three neighborhoods is on duty. So anytime something happens in the halls we

have professional staff right there to help resolve the problem. When they are on duty, they deal with anything from a toilet leak, fire alarm, roommate issue, or policy violation to a student who may need some medical or counseling help. They even help serve ice cream at a floor community builder! These professionals are truly dedicated to doing what it takes to get the job done. Their number one priority is success of the student in and out of the classroom. They focus on the holistic development of students

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## Tips for Survival (continued)



*Has anyone told you about the 3-4 week pink wave that hits campus? That's when students have to do their own laundry for the first time.*

patience you have. Move-in, no matter what the size of the school, is a long and typically hot process (as I am writing this we are having a typical heat and humidity wave—expect hot and humid). My third area for you to think about—packing is crucial. Have a plan to unload before you pack the car. For example, if you have carpet or a rug for the room and that gets packed on the bottom, it will

be difficult to move other stuff into the room—so remember, first out at lowa means last in at home. Anything you can do to convince your child that they do not need everything they think they need would be smart too. After all, they will be home again and UPS can ship anything! In-room storage is a great investment. Residence hall rooms are small. No matter how big we think they are, get college students stuff in them and they get small. However you do it, every room on campus can probably be made more comfortable and useful with some additional storage containers.

Has anyone told you about the 3-4 week pink wave that hits campus? This happens at the point where students have to do their own laundry for the first time. Every year students think that even though at home they sort laundry by color, at college they can throw it all in one machine. The result: the pink or blue or orange tint that gets on all their formerly white clothes. My fourth area of advice is: talk to your student about laundry! Fifth, if this is your first or your last child you are sending to college, do whatever you can to encourage him/her to make wise choices—lock their room all the time, walk around campus in groups, report strangers, tell people where they are going, etc. Freedom and

independence mean different things to different people. Although we are here to help, we won't possibly be able to be everywhere at once—students need to take responsibility for their own safety and for the safety of those around them. Another area to think about is to have a communication plan with your student. When I was in college (a long time ago), my Dad and I decided we would talk every Sunday. I went off to college 8 hours away, but I looked forward to those Sunday chats with Dad. My final advice is no matter how adjusted you think your student is—send him/her mail or care packages. I cannot explain the pure delight and excitement I see on students' faces when they get a letter or cookies from home. I don't think email generates the same response so learn their address and buy some stamps.

I am certain you have heard about the flood waters in Iowa City this summer. If your student is being housed in Mayflower, you may be nervous. Let me tell you—the hall is safe. I am placing 14RAs and three professional staff to live in the hall along with your students. I have been in Mayflower numerous times this summer—it is clean and it is safe. If I had any doubts, I would not allow the institution to open the building. So rest assured your student's safety is my number one priority.

Sending a child out of the home is also hard on the family at home. If you have a hard time with sending your child to college there are some great resources available to help you in the transition as well. One such resource is Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years, Fourth Edition by Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger. Remember, we want your student's experience to be better than what you can imagine so let us know how we can help. Have a great end to your summer, and happy packing! See you soon!!

Kate Fitzgerald  
Assistant Director, Residence Life

***I cannot describe the pure delight and excitement I see on students' faces when they get a letter or cookies from home . . . so learn their address and buy some stamps.***



***Whether It's A Birthday Or Just "Thinking Of You", Our Hawkeye Birthday Gifts & Treats Are***

and they will do anything within their ability to help your student have a great living-learning experience in our residence halls. Should you ever have a concern these staff can be reached through the 24-hour desk in your student's hall or the Office of Residence Life. This year, we are focusing on having RAs interact purposefully with each individual student. Tell them to ask us for help—we have lots of resources for them to use!

So now that move-in is around the corner, I thought I would give you a few tips on moving in survival. I have been opening residence halls in August every year since 1986. That is longer than your first-year Iowa student has been alive! It will be my sixth opening at The University of Iowa. Over the years I have seen many disasters as well as many successful move-ins. First and foremost, remember that your student is not only going to be anxious about moving away from home but he/she will also be very conscientious about the type of first impression they are making on other students. Thus, my first piece of advice is don't do anything to publicly embarrass your student. This means—don't cry in public, don't fuss over how the bed is made, and don't run up and down the halls trying to make friends for your student. My second piece of advice is to be ready to wait in line, have to carry stuff up stairs, and muster all the

## Hawkeye Treats

**Your student may be away from home, but certainly not forgotten.** Our Market Places have the perfect gift for any occasion from their selection of Hawkeye Treats that say "We're thinking of you."

From a variety of special treat bas-

kets to hand decorated cakes, let us prepare a personalized gift for your student to celebrate a birthday or for that occasion when you feel their spirits might need a lift. What better way to say "Happy Birthday" or "Get Well Soon" than with a gift fresh from our kitchens!

More information is available

through our web page:

<http://housing.uiowa.edu/departments/residentialdining/littleextras.htm>

Sorry, we're not set up for on-line orders, but we'd love to talk to you! Call us at 319/335-3000 to place your order today!!

**“No room needs two futons and two TVs, and no rooms are even allowed two refrigerators.”**

**“Besides negotiating who is bringing what, it is important that students start getting to know each other. What are their likes, dislikes, habits, interests, etc.?”**

#### **DID YOU KNOW???**

Each residence hall room has a telephone jack for a land-line phone with free local service.

This jack is the officially publicized telephone number for your student.

Although cell phones are the norm anymore, you should be sure to bring a land-line phone and answering machine for the room.

# Getting Along With Roommates

## Advice For Parents On How To Encourage Students To Get Along With Their Roommate

For most students, sharing a room with someone they do not know is one of the biggest fears of beginning their college career. In most homes today, students have their own rooms—so sharing a small space is a new experience. As a parent, please encourage your student to contact his/her roommate before moving in. It is important that they negotiate who is bringing what. No room needs two futons and two TVs, and no rooms are even allowed two refrigerators. This negotiation can help move-in go more smoothly, as well as prevent you from having to turn around and take things back home!

Besides negotiating who is bringing what, it is important that students start getting to know each other. What are their likes, dislikes, habits, interests, etc.? Most students think their roommate needs to be their best friend. This is not always a realistic expectation, and often great roommates are simply people who respect each other and share a

room. Oftentimes, being best friends means spending time apart. As the saying goes—too much of a good thing is not always good!

We recognize that many students may not have lived with someone before and don't even know where to begin or what to think about in regard to sharing, boundaries, expectations, and courtesy in living with someone. To help with the transition, we require all roommates to complete a roommate agreement within their first two weeks here. The roommate agreement points out some of the typical areas students raise concerns about in regard to conflict and differences in expectations when living with others and covering different personal preferences and habits in the hopes of preventing issues or conflicts from occurring. It is a tool students should use to talk about expectations of one another on a wide variety of topics including room cleanliness, visitors, borrowing or use of items, etc. Even if a problem arises down the road the agreement allows for those concerns to be re-addressed and visited with a staff person to better clarify intentions as

peoples' routines, habits, and lifestyles conform, adjust, or contrast with what was previously agreed upon. The agreement is only as good as the effort students put into it in regard to taking it seriously and using it as a means to convey what they expect. It empowers students to express and negotiate their needs with the people they are living with. It also provides them the grounds students often feel they need in order to hold others accountable to mutually agreed upon expectations and solutions to concerns—with or without the assistance of staff members.

So, encourage your student to talk about issues with their roommate, and with good open communication along with some respect they should get along fine. If, however, they don't—please instruct your son or daughter to talk with their RA or hall coordinator for help.

Submitted by:  
Kate Fitzgerald,  
Assistant Director for  
Residence Life  
D. Wolfgang Homolka,  
North Side Neighborhood  
Area Coordinator

# Getting Along In General

**We hope all the information in this newsletter has been of help to you, but we also know that many other little “concerns” will pop up once your student is here. For those occasions, we offer the following 3 tips:**

- **Have your student check his/her email—University Housing will be sending a weekly newsletter to all students living in the halls with information about temporary housing, residence halls in general, and transition to campus life in general.**
- **Have your student get to know his/her RA—the resident assistant who lives on your student's floor is there to help with a number of issues, or just to talk!**
- **Have your student read their Guidebook—this publication, given to your student at move-in, has valuable information about the residence halls in addition to policies and regulations they should familiarize themselves with.**