

The

# Campus Link

Niagara's newsletter  
for parents and friends

JULY 25, 2009

## Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- Feeling sad about leaving established friends and family at home
- Concern about issues of "belonging" and finding a comfortable place on campus
- Excitement coupled with anxiety about making a fresh start
- Worry about academics being "hard" and beyond their abilities
- Thinking about what type of first impression they'll make
- Concern about roommates and housing
- Wondering what to pack

# NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

*Education That Makes a Difference*



## Spending Time Together

We know that you know how to have fun as a family. But in the craziness of busy work and social schedules, the summer weeks can quickly pass by. Before you know it, it will be time to pack up and send your student off to college.

Carve out some time now to spend quality time together. It doesn't have to be anything fancy—or expensive. A night spent on your back porch talking and watching fireflies will do. And so will a day trip to a local state park. Just pick a few things that you think you will all enjoy and have some family fun! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Volunteer at a local shelter for a morning. A soup kitchen, an animal adoption center, whatever! You'll feel good about helping—and your family will learn something too.
- Make ice cream sodas, serve them up in cool glasses, and then take a walk together.
- Pick a book and read it together. Carve out time weekly to have "book chats" over coffee—or another fun treat—and learn from one another. The book doesn't have to be a classic. Read or re-read the Harry Potter series to get ready for the new movie that opened this July!
- Go to the beach for the day. Load up the car with Frisbees, buckets and shovels, and other sun fun. Don't forget the sunscreen!
- Attend a community festival or event. There is always so much happening. Take advantage of a local fun stop and support local businesses too.



## “Cell Phone Elbow”

Doctors have a new name for overextending the ulnar nerves in your arm—cell phone elbow. According to CNN (6/2/09), orthopedic specialists are reporting cases of “cell phone elbow,” in which patients damage an essential nerve in their arm by bending their elbows too tightly for too long. This causes the pinkie and ring fingers to tingle or

feel numb. People who have this condition, called cubital tunnel syndrome, can feel weakness in their hands. They may have trouble completing tasks such as opening jars or playing musical instruments. Doctors recommend that cell phone users who start to feel a tingle or numbing in their fingers switch hands, before it gets worse. “It could impede your typing ability,

your writing ability,” Dr. Peter J. Evans, the director of the Hand and Upper Extremity Center at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, said. He added, “People get very unintelligible writing if it gets severe.” Doctors are not suggesting that using a cell phone is dangerous, but they are advocating that cell phone users maintain common sense. Encourage your student not to talk on a cell phone for hours,

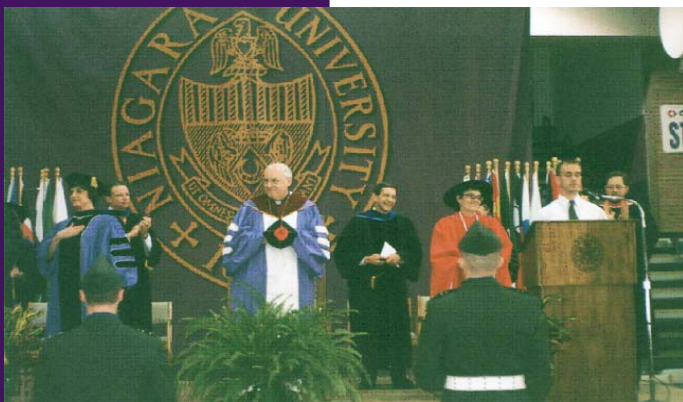
*“Off to a  
great start”*

## New Student Convocation:

The convocation is the official welcoming ceremony of new students and parents to the university community. It conveys the importance of academics and the commitment of faculty and

students to intellectual development. During the convocation, and throughout all of the “new student” orientation weekend, students will also experience Niagara University’s strong sense

of community derived from a Catholic education and the values of St. Vincent de Paul. The convocation is on Friday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. in the upper level Gallagher Center.



The Niagara University New Student Orientation program supports the first-

## New Student Orientation:

year experience by aiding new students in their transition to university life on campus. The primary goal for the NSO is to provide various opportunities for new students to learn about college from current student leaders that serve as orientation assistants, Niagara faculty and staff, and the campus community. Students are introduced

to the true spirit of Niagara, including that of school spirit and the Vincentian values through community service opportunities. Many of the programs within NSO are designed specifically to help new students connect with each other so they can begin to make friends and be comfortable with their surroundings.

Whether a sibling is feeling lonely or confused about their new perceived role in the family, there are a variety of ways that parents can help those children still at home stay connected with an older sibling at college.

## Plan family gatherings

- Plan a dinner out for just family when the college student comes home to visit.
- Explore a new city by meeting halfway between home and college for a day.
- Have the younger sibling(s) and college sibling(s) collaboratively plan a family weekend getaway.

## Virtual connection

- Plan weekly phone calls for younger siblings to talk with their older sibling.
- Provide access to email for siblings back home.
- Help a sibling prepare a college care package.
- Snail mail is always fun to get, so encourage siblings to write each other regularly.



## Plan a campus visit

- Family Weekend
- Athletic Events

## Design on a Dime

As your family prepares to send a student off to school, it's quite likely that money is on your mind. First it's the tuition payment. Then the insurance. A trip to campus for orientation and the big book purchase. And, of course, furnishing a living space. Sheets, school supplies, carpets, bathroom caddies, a computer...the list goes on and on. But you don't have to break the bank in order to design a comfortable living space for your student. Here are some tricks for making the process cheaper:

- Take stock of what you have on hand already. Got an extra desk lamp lying around? There's no need to buy a new one if so! Everything in your student's residence hall living space doesn't have to be brand new. In fact, it's almost better if it's not. Stuff will get banged around during the packing process anyway.
- Make sure to coordinate with your student's roommate(s). You don't want to end up with two of everything in a small living space! Plus, coordinating could help you split the cost for big ticket items.
- Visit flea markets and garage sales. This is the sea-

son for them! You can find so many great bargains—and since the vintage/retro look is “in” right now, your student will likely enjoy hunting for cool buys.

- Take advantage of back to school sales.
- Avoid buying a lot of things in bulk. Finding space to store it will be tough and it might end up being more than is needed anyway.
- Talk with other college students. Find out from them what they took to school that wasn't needed. You can definitely learn from others' mistakes, and then pass on your newfound knowledge to others.
- Take just the essentials with plans to purchase additional items after your student has settled in for some time. Of course your student will want to have everything he needs from the get go. But sometimes it's best to wait it out until after he gets into a groove.

If all of the reality TV home improvement shows can “design on a dime,” why can't you? With some thought and planning, we think you can save lots of money—and still design a living space that your student will enjoy and be proud of.

### *Just the Essentials...*

It's so easy to purchase more than is needed. Don't get carried away. Instead, purchase just the essentials. After a few weeks, your student will have a much better idea of what she/he actually needs. Contact us directly at <http://www.niagara.edu/housing/> or 716-286-8100 with any questions.

## Tricky Transitions

With so much focus on your college student, it can be easy to forget about the impact that leaving can have on younger siblings. Sibling relationships can be enduring, and a sense of loss can be felt in a number of ways when an older sibling heads off to college.

- Take the time to talk with younger siblings. Ask them how they are feeling about the upcoming transition and explain some of the ways things might change at home. Consider discussing...

- How family dynamics might change

- How resources such as transportation and bedroom space may need to be reallocated appropriately among those still at home

- How the cost of sending a student to college may change your family's financial situation and that might impact day-to-day functioning

- Be careful not to send a "guilt trip." Consider...

- Allowing connections among older and younger siblings to happen naturally, rather than forcing them to spend time together. This will lead to a long-term renewed relationship, rather than resentment.

- Not making your college student feel guilty about wanting to spend time with friends and to do the things he enjoys before leaving home. Bringing some closure to these aspects of life is really important too.

- Involve younger siblings in planning and preparation for your college student's departure. Consider asking younger siblings to...

- Help in picking out items for a residence hall room.

- Put important college dates on their calendar, such as family weekend, homecoming and more.

Working together during this tricky transition will build lasting memories and could help make the process go smoother too.

“family dynamics might change”

“Education that makes a difference”

