

The Campus Link

A newsletter for parents & families

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Summer Reminders on Student Safety

We do our best at NU to maintain the safest collegiate community possible. Campus officials work diligently to maintain effective security measures, provide safety education initiatives and create a forum for communication about potential threats.

The strongest weapon we have is prevention. And it takes a whole community working together to prevent crime and tragedy on campus.



Unfortunately, students often forget that our campus community is not immune from incident. As they get caught up in their day-to-day activities, it becomes easy for students to take a lax stance on protecting themselves and their community. Students often ignore advice and warnings about their personal safety on campus, leaving their doors unlocked, walking alone across campus late at night and leaving their valuables unattended.

Talk with your student about the importance of personal and community responsibility as he/she prepares to return — or enter college for the first time — this fall. A little bit of diligence and awareness can make a world of difference.

Taking Personal & Community Responsibility in the Residence Halls and Off-Campus Housing

Remind your student to:

- **Keep her room door locked!** Students commonly leave their doors unlocked while they take showers, sleep and go across campus. Why, you ask? They'll say, "I know everyone on my floor ... what's the big deal?" The big deal is this: crimes happen in campus residence halls.
- **Ask who is at the door before opening it.** Unfortunately, determined strangers may make their way into residence halls. Getting into the habit of asking, "Who is it?" isn't that difficult ... after all, do you just fling open the front door of your home without checking to see who is there first?
- **Keep whereabouts "under wraps."** Posting schedules on the door or online is not a good idea.
- **Unprop propped entrance doors.** Propped doors make public safety's job more difficult and compromise the overall security measures in place on campus.
- **Deny strangers access to the residence hall** (by not letting in people behind him/her) — even if he/she thinks the person is a student. Even though it can be hard to confront a stranger and deny access, his/her diligence will help keep everyone that much safer.
- **Follow university policies** — they're in place for students' safety.

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Millennials Rise Above Tragedy

Today's 18 to 22-year-old college students, part of the Millennial Generation, have demonstrated their strength amid tragedy and uncertainty these last few months. And it's not the first time.

The Millennial Generation, which USA Today has suggested could be called the "Melancholy Generation," has experienced quite a bit during their lives: the Oklahoma City Bombing, Columbine, 9/11, space shuttle disasters, Hurricane Katrina and, now, Virginia Tech. Although previous generations have certainly experienced their share of horrors, no other generation of youth has experienced such destruction through the "harsh, inescapable glare of the 24/7 mass media," the paper says.

A Hopeful, Connected Generation

Despite experiencing so much tragedy during their formative years, this generation remains hopeful and optimistic. And they're certainly a resilient bunch. The media coverage of these events has made it nearly impossible for them to remain immune to these disasters. While millennials have also been described as "stressed," they continue to overcome adversity together.

We've watched how quickly they can come together through technology via Facebook, Myspace, text messaging and more. Their strong sense of community — albeit different from that of the past and sometimes hard to understand — has proved their ability to mobilize and support one another during some of the nation's most horrific events.

They Still Need You!

They may be strong — and well connected to one another — but they still need support and guidance from adults. Have you processed through the Virginia Tech shootings with your student? During some quiet moments this summer, consider discussing the following questions with your student to reassure him that you care and are concerned about his/her well-being — no matter how far away he/she is:

- How did you feel about the shootings at Virginia Tech? What were discussions on the topic like with your peers and your professors?
- What kinds of things took place on campus in response to the shootings at Virginia Tech? Did you participate?
- What do you know about emergency procedures on campus? Do you know where you should go and what you should do?
- What is the best way for me to reach you in an emergency situation? Can you commit to contacting me immediately so I know you are safe?
- Do you feel safe on campus? Are there things that could be happening that would make you feel safer?

Today's Job Search Strategies: Paper, Electronic or Video Resumes?

Video Resumes Could Gain in Popularity

Do you have a student who is searching for a job? If so, you may not see her/him sending out copies of a resume on crisp linen paper with a matching envelope to prospective employers. In today's job market, most employers require the submission of a resume via the Internet — and conduct their own research by reviewing popular social-networking Web sites.

And now, some students are even using video resumes to hit the employment jackpot, reported the York Dispatch. Several Web sites offer online services for candidates to upload and send video resumes, and candidates are e-mailing links to their videos directly to employers or including them on their resumes.

Candidates should be aware, however, that employers have many concerns about the use of this new concept, specifically, the time commitment that it takes to review video resumes and the potential for discrimination based on age, race and other factors that aren't immediately identified from the review of a traditional resume.

While this new approach to "getting your foot in the door" is not widely used yet, it is gaining in popularity among tech-savvy millennial college students who might not be aware of some of the pitfalls of utilizing technology in this fashion. Encourage your student to contact the career services professionals in the Office of Career Development at Niagara University at careers@niagara.edu or 716-286-8500 for expert advice on how to effectively utilize technology and other strategies to maximize their job-search efforts.

- **Attend to fire safety** — eliminate fire hazards in your room and use extension cords and outlets properly. Do not run cords under rugs or mattresses. Make sure all exits are clear and take note of the location of fire extinguishers.
- **Take emergency preparedness drills seriously.** Tragedy provides an unfortunate reminder of the importance of being prepared for disaster to strike. Cooperating with emergency-preparedness drills assists in ensuring the campus is as safe and prepared as the community allows it to be.

Taking Personal and Community Responsibility on Other Campus Grounds

Remind your student to:

- **Walk with a buddy** late at night or in potentially dangerous situations. Whenever possible, use an escort system.
- **Be smart about the use of alcohol and other drugs.** Students tend to do unwise things and put themselves and others in harm's way when their inhibitions are compromised. Never accept drinks from others and do not leave your drinks unattended.
- **Get to know the campus public safety officers.** They're part of the community too — and they are always willing to help.
- **Be careful about the information he/she chooses to share online.** Whether it's in an away message or on a social networking site, more people have access to her/his profiles than he/she thinks.
- **Keep vehicles locked and store valuables out of site.** Be cautious and aware when approaching vehicles late at night.
- **Treat the campus grounds with respect.** Vandalizing and damaging directional signs, fire extinguishers and other safety equipment costs the college valuable funds and effort that could be directed to other areas. A "practical joke" can quickly turn sour if someone gets hurt.
- **Report suspicious behavior** to the appropriate campus officials, even if it's "just a hunch." Her/his tip may be one of many being received about an individual. Every little bit of information about a potential threat is critical.

St. Vincent's Circle on the NU campus in spring.



Seasonal Student Issues

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

- Missing friends at school and feeling like it'll be a long time until they see them again.
- Transitioning back to life at home after being away all year (for students who go away to school).
- Adjusting to a new routine.
- Working full time instead of going to school full time.
- Anxiety about academics — feeling like they have a lot of ground to make up if they did poorly last semester.
- Reestablishing relationships with siblings, parents and friends.
- Budgeting their money and saving for fall.

Family Summer Fun

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 realize it, August is here and it's time to pack up to 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 all will 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. In fact, the last in the Harry Potter series comes out in July!
- **Attend a local Fourth of July parade together,** followed by a lunch picnic or BBQ at a local park, and s'mores after dinner.
- **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!
- **Visit a local historical site.** You can even pick one your youngest has visited on a school trip — she/he's sure to appreciate being the “expert” for the day!
- **Cook a meal together.** Make it Sunday brunch or an evening dinner — or have breakfast food for dinner! It doesn't matter. The time together is what counts.
- **Pick a craft project to work on** throughout the summer. Maybe you want to make a quilt together for your student's bed or a scrapbook for an elder in a nursing home. Or make it something simple like decorating travel mugs to put away as holiday gifts.

Here's to simple, meaningful family fun!



A Summer Reading List

“I'll Miss You Too: An Off-to-College Guide for Parents and Students,” by Margo E. Woodacre Bane and Steffany Bane (2006).

“Let the Journey Begin: A Parent's Monthly Guide to the College Experience,” by Jacqueline Mackay and Wanda Ingram (2001).

“Parents' Guide to College Life: 181 Straight Answers on Everything You Can Expect Over the Next Four Years,” by Robin Raskin (2006).

“The College Dorm Survival Guide: How to Survive and Thrive in Your New Home Away from Home,” by Julia DeVillers (2006).

“The College to Career Road Map: A Four-Year Guide to Coaching Your Student” (parent edition), by Terese Corey Blanck, Peter Vogt and Judith Anderson (2006).

“Don't Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money: The Essential Parenting Guide to the College Years,” by Helen E. Johnson and Christine Schelhas-Miller (2000).

“You're On Your Own (But I'm Here if You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years,” by Marjorie Savage (2003).

Creating a Budget Plan

Budgeting. It's such an ominous word. Why is that? Creating a budget plan doesn't have to be a huge undertaking. And it's a great skill for your student to develop now, before she/he has to manage a whole host of bills on her/his own.

Take some time this summer to sit down with your student to create a budget plan for the upcoming school year. It could be as simple as something like this:

Amount of money I anticipate making this summer (less taxes): _____

Amount of money I already have saved: _____

Expected Summer Expenses:

Social: _____

Clothing: _____

Personal Care Items: _____

Medical: _____

Bills (credit card, cell phone, etc.): _____

School costs (summer tuition, etc.): _____

Special Occasions/Gifts: _____

Travel: _____

Gas/Transportation: _____

Car Repairs/Upkeep: _____

Amount of money I want to have saved by fall 2007: _____

Amount of money I anticipate making during the school year: _____

Expected School Year Expenses:

Books: _____

School Supplies: _____

Social: _____

Clothing: _____

Personal Care Items: _____

Medical: _____

Bills (credit card, cell phone, etc.): _____

Special Occasions/Gifts: _____

Travel: _____

Gas/Transportation: _____

Car Repairs/Upkeep: _____

Once this spreadsheet is complete, help your student develop a savings plan that works for her/him.

Five Money-Saving Tips to Share with Your Student

1. Make choices. You can't do everything or be everywhere. Select the things you most want to do and say no to the rest.
2. Track your spending. The best way to see where your money is going is to keep track of it — down to every last dollar — over the course of a few weeks.
3. Estimate upcoming expenses. If you know you have a lot of birthday gifts to buy in the month of November, buy some ahead — or start putting aside money now. It's much easier to set aside a little bit at a time.
4. Designate some "fun" money. If you know you need a Starbucks Frappuccino every Saturday when you go out with friends or the latest DVDs released every Tuesday, build this into your budget.
5. Be cautious with credit cards. Don't spend money you don't have. Set your own spending limit, regardless of the one provided by the credit card company.

