Rental Life: the Real Story

The 2008-2009 academic year is still months away, however now is a good time to start thinking about housing options for next year. Students need not feel rushed into anything. While many deals sound tempting, it’s important to carefully study the details.

Family members can assist in the decision-making process by giving students a realistic picture of off-campus living. Along with the freedom of having one’s own place comes adult responsibility.

Even mature, hard-working students find it challenging to balance school work, jobs, and co-curricular activities with cooking, yard work, recycling, taking out the trash, home maintenance, cleaning, pet care, and laundry. Then there are the unforeseen headaches of malfunctioning appliances, leaky pipes, backed up sewers, faulty electrical wiring, defective smoke detectors, flimsy locks, frigid rooms, bats, bugs, and rodents.

First time renters will especially benefit from watching Rental Life: the Real Life, a 21 minute DVD that takes a humorous look at what happens when three Minnesota State students and an uninvited house guest move into a Lincoln Park duplex owned by a shady landlord, Jack. Rental Life: the Real Story is a loose parody of reality TV that considers the pros and cons of different living options including the residence halls, apartments and houses.

Minnesota State and the city of Mankato created the DVD to support neighborhood livability and to better inform students about the realities of off-campus living, especially in established residential neighborhoods where 10:00 p.m. is considered “late.” Rental Life: the Real Story was adapted from...

Continued on Pg. 3

Crisis and Coping

There are a number of common reactions students may have following upsetting incidents, such as the recent death of a MSU student. These can include:

- **Physical reactions:** Stomachaches, headaches, increased allergies, rashes, flu-like symptoms, sleep and appetite disturbances, fatigue, dizziness, pronounced startle reactions.
- **Cognitive reactions:** Preoccupation with the traumatic event, concentration difficulties, attention difficulties, excessive worrying, indecisiveness, memory difficulties, self-doubts.

- **Emotional reactions:** Sadness (including crying more easily or wanting to cry), anger, fear, guilt because you are okay and others are not, moodiness, irritability.

......continued on page 4
Socio-cultural Learning

Chris Tran—Interim Assistant Director of Asian American Affairs

Not many students realize the importance of academic and social integration until they have walked out of an interview and were unable to successfully answer questions like these: ‘were you active in extracurricular activities?’, ‘have you applied what you’ve learned in the classroom to the practical world?’, ‘how would you feel if you were to lead a small group on a project?’, ‘what is your experience in a teamwork environment?’, etc…It is very important that students do well academically but equally important is how they can apply what they’ve learned in the classroom to their social life on- and off-campus.

In today’s world of advancement in technologies, we are now able to reach out and communicate beyond local and national boundaries. We should take full advantage of the diversity of MSU. With an approximate student population of 14,000, MSU boasts more than 500 international students representing 62 countries. Domestically, MSU has over 1,000 ethnic minority students representing the four main categories: African Americans, Asian-Americans, Chicano/Latino Americans, and Native Americans.

With this diversity, students should take advantage of what MSU has to offer in academic and socio-cultural learning. Comments from students such as, “I want to travel and learn about the world when I graduate” are often echoed in conversations all over campus. Well, what about during your time here. Unused opportunities are wasted opportunities. My advice would be to seek out these diverse student groups, get involved, and participate in planning MSU socio-cultural based events and also invite your family to attend.

……continued on page 3

Back for Break

Rochelle Ament, Parent Services Coordinator, Adapted from www.collegeparents.org

As Thanksgiving Break approaches you are probably feeling a little anxious and apprehensive. A lot will have happened since late August and Move In Day at Minnesota State University Mankato. Not only will the leaves have changed, but probably so will your student.

In fact, it may take some getting used to, yet the truth is that your student is becoming a young adult. Yet just like it was a surprise to the turkey when it was "prepared" to go through the steps that placed it on your dining-room table, so might it be a surprise to you some of the changes your student has undergone.

The new found freedoms that accompany independence may have brought your student to consider dietary habits, a new hairdo, a new vocational/major interest, a new friend or a new political belief. To help digest some of the changes you may see in your student offer encouraging comments, sprinkled with diplomatic questions, about what you’re noticing. After all, part of the reason you have supported your student’s decision to go off to college was for them to learn about different points of view, different lifestyles, different everything.

Remember that your student is at a stage of life, just as you were once, where it is extremely "normal" behavior to challenge what have been, until now, "norms" of behavior. Also keep in mind that after

……… continued on page 3

2008-2009 Housing Reservations

On-campus room sign-up for the 2008-2009 academic year has begun! Through Friday, April 4 current students can choose a room for next year. There are many new and exciting options available for next year.

The brand new Julia A. Sears Residence Hall will open next fall with semi-suites for two and four students. Newly renovated spaces in Crawford D Hall have contemporary closets, great lighting, and the ability to control the heat, among many other updates to the rooms and public areas.

Plus, similar renovation projects are scheduled for Crawford A and B halls next year.

Single Rooms
There are approximately 130 single rooms that have been designated for the 2008-2009 academic year throughout the Crawford, Gage, and McElroy complexes. Most floors will have two single rooms, and each room will have one set of furniture. All rooms, including single rooms, are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Opportunities to Live in a Newly Renovated Space in Crawford

…….. continued on page 4
Rental World, a DVD produced by the Alcohol Task Force at Colorado State University-Fort Collins. The city of Fort Collins experienced a 46% reduction in loud party and noise complaints over a two year period as a result of consistent enforcement and educational outreach.

Students may pick up a free copy of the Rental Life: the Real Story DVD by contacting the Office of Student Affairs, 228 Wigley Administration Center, 389-2121. The DVD is also available on streaming video at the following web sites: www.mnsu.edu/conduct and www.mnsu.edu/sldsl/housing.

A couple of tips when considering housing for next year:

1. Don’t assume a new construction is problem free. Ask current and former tenants about security, parking, snow removal, and the timeliness of repairs.

2. Know city rental policies. Be aware of occupancy restrictions and the city of Mankato’s three-strike policy that can result in eviction.

3. Know your roommates. Make sure you are compatible with your roommates and discuss expectations about behavior, the distribution of chores, etc prior to signing a lease.

4. Seek assistance. Minnesota State University Mankato offers free legal services to students. Consider going over a possible lease agreement with a staff prior to entering into an agreement.

Thanksgiving Break students will go back to a stressful period of fall final exams. A stressful Thanksgiving Break will not leave your student feeling relaxed and geared up for the final push of the semester.

As much as you are eager to spend time with your young adult, they are probably just as anxious to see some high-school friends, catch a movie, go to the mall or maybe even visit a former teacher or coach. Tell them upfront: "We’d love to see you tonight, but we totally understand if you want to see (fill-in-the-blank)."

At the same time, do set some expectations for attendance at family get-togethers, whether it is at your house or dear old Aunt Millie’s. Show you are reasonable by suggesting a timeframe of togetherness. It is the rare returning college student who wants to watch the Macy’s Parade and have a five-hour supper.

In short, if the Thanksgiving break period is a pleasant time for your student, then you may build up some bonus points when it comes time for your young adult to visit again – for a much longer stretch – during winter break.

Going easy on the chores – and the rip-roaring chortles – this weekend will pay dividends when you are all back together for semester break.

Winter break may be the time for your student to fix the blinking 12:00 on the new DVD player, time to install the anti-spam software, time to clean the garage, time to get the oil change and, most important, time to talk.

And when he or she does talk, be sure to listen. It will be the best holiday gift you can give.
Crisis and Coping

These are all normal reactions. Symptoms may vary widely from student to student; each individual grieves differently, and students who were closer to an upsetting incident may have more pronounced reactions.

Here are some things parents and families can do to help their student handle the stress of an upsetting incident:

- Help your student look at whom and what you value. It may be helpful to reconnect or touch base with loved ones or old friends.
- Encourage your student to talk. Allow them to talk with you or others about what happened and how they feel about it.
- Give your student permission to think about the upsetting event and realize that their perceptions and thoughts may change.
- Encourage them to stick to their usual routine.
- Remember the basics. Help your student maintain good nutrition and healthy sleep habits. Encourage them to exercise regularly in moderation. Eliminate or restrict caffeine, alcohol, and cigarettes. Do not use controlled substances.
- Consider asking your student to seek professional counseling. Should it seem that they are having an unusually severe or prolonged period of distress following this event, ask them to reach out for help.

The Minnesota State Counseling Center offers free, confidential services to enrolled students. Any student who wishes to speak with a counselor may contact the Counseling Center at 389-1455.

Check out the Counseling Center’s webpage for more information at: http://www.mnsu.edu/counseling/

Prepping for Finals

As the end of the semester approaches, so do final exams. Many students feel a good deal of stress during this time period and may express anxiety over impending exams.

Here are a few ways in which parents and families can help their student through the challenges of the end of the semester.

Remind your student that preparation is the best policy. Students should be continually reviewing course materials and prepping for end of the semester work. Pulling all nighters can add more anxiety and stress to an already tense situation. Students should remember to eat well and get plenty of rest prior to the test. A well maintained body means a well maintained mind.

Families and parents can help their student during the crunch surrounding finals by sending small reminders of home. Students enjoy receiving mail and tokens from those that care about them. Prepare a small treat basket that can be shipped easily and attach a short note wishing your student luck with their upcoming paper, project, or test.

Well wishes and a little chocolate will boost their spirits and their energy as they prepare to tackle their end of the semester assignments and exams.

2008-2009 Housing Reservations

To live in a newly renovated space, students can choose one of the following options:

- Choose a room in Crawford D Hall. While the room charges are slightly higher, the renovated space is definitely worth it!
- Choose Crawford B hall to live in a renovated space for the second half of the year, at no additional cost.

Both Crawford A and B Halls will be renovated next year, resulting in halls much like Crawford D. The Crawford A Hall project will occur during fall semester while students live in Crawford B Hall. Then, at the beginning of Spring Semester students living in Crawford B Hall will move to a corresponding room in Crawford A Hall. Then, the Crawford B Hall renovation project will begin.

How to Sign Up:

When students visit the Residential Life Office to choose their room or semi-suite for next year, they need to:

- Provide a picture ID
- Make a $250 prepayment
- Choose their space
- Sign a Residence Hall Contract—remember this is a legal contract for an academic year

Academic Resources for Students:

Center for Academic Success:
The Center for Academic Success offers tips and strategies to students regarding fighting procrastination, motivation, test preparation, and test taking strategies.

Tutoring Center:
The tutoring center offers help in most subject areas including: math, biology, chemistry, physics, accounting, Spanish, French, and writing.

Check out these resources and available tutoring times at: www.mnsu.edu/supersite/academics/success