Hello Parents of the College!

My name is Christine Edwards and I am the Associate Director of Residential Community Life. I have been at the College since 1999 when I started here as a Residence Hall Director. I have a Bachelor’s degree in physics from SUNY Cortland and a Master’s degree in Higher Education Administration from Iowa State University. My position is part supervision of Residence Hall Directors and part working with facilities and operations. I am the person who works with building planning for renovations, purchase of furniture for the residence halls, damage billing and other areas of residence life that relate to facilities. In addition to my duties, I also sit on various College committees and enjoy the collaborative approach the College takes with creating a great college experience for the students we serve. I would say my favorite part of the job is the student interaction I have on committees, advising student groups, and working with student leaders on programs. It is fitting that the department spotlight me at this time as you may have questions related to a smooth and damage free check out process as the academic year comes to a close.

During the week before finals, the Residence Hall Director for your student’s building will be going door to door discussing the check out process and ways that the students can avoid damage billing. We want to be sure there is a ‘face to face’ conversation with as many residents as possible so they have ample time and opportunity to ask any questions they may have. This is also a good time for residents to communicate any damage that has occurred during the school year that will need to be repaired during summer to prepare for the fall opening. At the beginning of the year all residents received a list of damage billing costs as they relate to furniture, screens, window blinds, wall damage, etc. in their rooms. They will be checked out by a resident advisor. During this checkout, it is important to note that the resident advisor will give them advice on small things they could do to avoid billing (for example, sweeping the floor so the pile of dirt is thrown away). The RA does not have any authority to say that the student will not be billed for damage; they are only there to give some feedback, even though they sign off on the Room Condition Report (RCR) signifying the check out is complete. After closing, the Residence Hall Director and myself assess building damage. If damage is found in the room during this time, the damage will be billed out to the resident accordingly. Students will know if they have been billed for damage by July 1. If you have questions about the facilities, damage billing or other areas of residence life and housing, feel free to give me a call at the office and I can address any questions or concerns. Thank you!

Christine Edwards
Residential Community Life
(607) 436-3725

Move In Crew

After driving to campus, incoming transfer and first year students are welcomed by returning students who enthusiastically greet and assist them in getting their belongings into their residence hall room. This labor intensive tradition is always greatly appreciated by incoming students and their families, and serves as a special welcome to our campus.

At the end of the spring term, the Department of Residential Community Life seeks volunteers for this position. The requirements to volunteer mean returning to campus a day early so your student can be settled before assisting our new students and wanting to have a great opening day! Volunteers get a free t-shirt, a dinner on the night before opening and they must attend a mandatory training the night before opening day. Interested students should contact Maggie Ostrander at Margaret.Ostrander@oneonta.edu. Opening day is set for Sunday August 25, 2013, and classes will begin on Wednesday August 28, 2013.
Finals Preparation

As your students begin to wind down their school year, they will be getting ready to take their finals and finish the semester on a high note. The Office of Residential Community Life as well as the campus community put on various events to help the students. Over the course of finals week each Residence Hall Government will put on a finals food event. In this program, the building will provide food for your student as a quick snack so they can take a break during their studies to eat and relax for a few minutes to refresh themselves. There is also a big Midnight Breakfast event that happens during finals week every semester. This semester’s even will begin at midnight on Thursday May 10th. This is another way for the students to get a break in while they’re studying. Also, our college library will run extended hours during finals so the students will have a quiet place where they can go and study without interruption. Click below to access the final exam schedule for the Spring 2013 semester: http://www.oneonta.edu/admin/registrar/pages/spring/sp.asp

They’re coming home... Now what?!

"You can't go home again!" the famous quotation from Thomas Wolfe may leave students wondering as the college year comes to a close. As big as the transition is going from home to college, going from college to home can be just as difficult for both students and parents. Since last September your student has been coming and going pretty much as they like, until they return home to their old high school curfew. You might expect your student to be present for all family meals and functions, but they have other plans. Maybe your student is expecting the old time family meals, but in their absence, you have fallen into another routine and are enjoying the empty nest. Your student will probably be expected to help with household chores, but those could also have changed. Your student might be surprised to find that their clothes when placed in the hamper don’t automatically appear clean and folded in their room the next day. Your student will be exhausted from final exams, the end of the year socializing, and moving and just want to sleep for about a week.

While a great many of these conflicts are inevitable, some of them can be avoided by discussing them beforehand. Ask for a family meeting to talk about expectations about curfews, rules about laundry and use of the washing machine, expectations around meal times, use of the telephone and long distance charges, how household chores are divided. It is important to establish if your student can entertain friends, and/or invite friends to stay over of the same sex, of the opposite sex. If your student doesn’t have their own car, you will need to discuss transportation needs. You may need to establish privacy limits and know when boundaries are being invaded even by noise.

There are some guidelines to follow in having a good family meeting. Everyone involved should know those guidelines and be in agreement. Have a clear agenda. Invite other family members to add to the agenda. Have a set time to begin and end. If you haven’t completed the agenda in that time frame, summarize what has been accomplished and plan another time to finish. For each agenda item, each family member should be able to say how he or she feels without interruption or criticism. After that you may begin to negotiate and work until you can form a consensus. A summary of the consensus should be stated. Sometimes it is helpful to be more formal and put the summary statements in writing. Just make sure that the agreements are still the same. A follow up meeting should be planned for about two weeks to see how things are going. Some things may need to be renegotiated. It helps if everyone can be patient. Remember that moving back home can be a happy experience, but it may take some energy.

Some families have more complicated challenges. They may be going through some kind of restructuring due to retirement, illness, death, divorce, remarriage, or lose of income. Every family is different. Every family has its own challenges.

The Counseling Center on campus is available to consult about transition issues. Feel free to use them as a resource! (607) 436-3368.

Looking for a good way to show your support to your student during finals week? Send them a Finals Survival Kit! Two dozen moist and delicious Otis Spunkmeyer cookies in a collectable cookie jar for only $12.50. Contact Katherine Nelligan or Kim Clark at (607) 436-3934 by May 2nd with your order. Choose your student’s favorite: Chocolate Chip, Oatmeal Raisin, or Butter Sugar.
Resident Student Organization (RSO)

The Resident Student Organization (RSO) is an organization comprised of and run completely by resident students on our campus. As a direct branch of the College’s Residential Community Life, we are the voice of the students working to provide and share information about the important happenings on our campus. All of our meetings are open to the community, with voting members being elected from each of our 15 residence halls.

All residents who attend our meetings will be exposed to enormous amounts of activities, programs, information, and opportunities to be involved in campus life. Everyone is able to help design and run large campus-wide programs as well as advocate for changes on campus. Though RSO, students are also front-runners to attend regional and national leadership conferences across the United States! These conferences are designed to provide leadership skills, a sense of campus community, and educational opportunities.

This past year, RSO did a lot on campus. We hosted numerous events and programs to benefit the campus community as a whole. We hosted programs such as 90’s Night, Field Day, and the annual RSO BBQ. This spring, we were the initiators of the national RecycleMania Program to try and increase our campus’ sustainability practices and sustainability awareness. We helped a lot of other clubs on campus too by funding their programs and events. Some of the organizations we donated money to include the Korean Culture Club, the Harry Potter Club, the Autism Awareness Club, the Political Science Club, and Sigma Delta Tau, among others.

Want more information? Email us at rso@oneonta.edu.

Trash to Treasure

As the semester begins to wind down, many students begin to look around and realize how much stuff they have accumulated over the course of the year. Many times students begin to purge items or even leave things behind that can cause issues with billing and overcrowding garbage rooms. One alternative is to donate items to community service based collections (drives) that happen right in each residence hall. There are clothing drives for various local organizations, food drives for various local food pantries, and towel and bedding drives for local animal shelters. Local groups that maybe interested in taking some items off of their hands and in turn help a good cause include:

*The Family Services Association* located at 277 Chestnut Street in Oneonta often looks for donations of hygiene products as well as cleaning supplies. They often times will take other items like alarm clocks, kitchen utensils, and other household items. Please contact them at 607-432-2870 with any questions and understand that they are open at limited days and times, so plan ahead!

*The Salvation Army* is also located in Oneonta at 105 Main Street next to the Public Safety building. They are available for many types of donations from clothing to furniture to other miscellaneous items that can be sold in the thrift store. Please contact them at 607-432-0952 with any possible donations.

There are also many other local organizations seeking items, so encourage your student to speak to their Hall Director or to the Center for Social Responsibility and Community for more options.

If your student has items that can be repurposed that they are looking to get rid of, please have them talk to their building staff to see if there is a new home for the items. Also keep in mind that just leaving items behind and not properly removing them can result in billing for the removal and cleaning that is left for building staff to do.