Winter Weather: Are You Prepared?

While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans, regardless of where they live, are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

One of the primary concerns is the winter weather’s ability to knock out heat, power and communications services to your home or office, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.

The National Weather Service refers to winter storms as the “Deceptive Killers” because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Instead, people die in traffic accidents on icy roads and of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. It is important to be prepared for winter weather before it strikes.

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

To prepare for a winter storm you should add the following supplies to your emergency kit:

- Rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. Visit the Environmental Protection Agency for a complete list of recommended products.
- Sand to improve traction.
- Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
- Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.
- Did you know that kitty litter under you tires can help you get traction if you find your tires are stuck in a slick situation?

Some other measures you can take include:

- Making a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or other local news channels for critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS). Be alert to changing weather conditions.
- Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.

During Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- Stay indoors during the storm.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy, walkways.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack—a major cause of death in the winter. If you must shovel snow, stretch before going outside.
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly.
- Watch for signs of frostbite. These include loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia. These include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms of hypothermia are detected, get the victim to a warm location, remove wet clothing, warm the center of the body first and give warm, non-alcoholic beverages if the victim is conscious. Get medical help as soon as possible.
- Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive: travel in the day; don’t travel alone; keep others informed of your schedule; stay on main roads and avoid back road shortcuts.
- Let someone know your destination, your route, and when you expect to arrive. If your car gets stuck along the way, help can be sent along your predetermined route.
- Conserve fuel, if necessary, by keeping your residence cooler than normal. Temporarily close off heat to some rooms.
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55ºF.

After Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- Go to a designated public shelter if your home loses power or heat during periods of extreme cold. Text SHELTER + your ZIP code to 43362 (4FEMA) to find the nearest shelter in your area (example: shelter 12345).
- Continue to protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in several layers. Stay indoors, if possible.

Source: http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather
Valentine's Day and college can make a fantastic -- or awkward -- mix. Make the most of your situation by enjoying yourself, enjoying the day, and -- if applicable -- enjoying the time with a significant other. Conversely, of course, you can also make the most of being single. Valentine's Day does not have to be a celebration only for those already coupled up!

**If You Are Single**

Being single on Valentine's Day does not have to mean being awkward or having a funky night. There are multiple ways to ensure you still have a great Valentine's Day -- without a significant other. Instead of letting the holiday get you cranky, check out these 5 things to do on campus if you're single on Valentine's Day. Because why should couples get to have all the fun?!

- **Plan a movie fest.** Invite some friends over and plan a movie marathon. You can spend the entire night eating funky snacks, watching great (or even horrible) movies, and catching up with friends. Why not let yourself relax and enjoy a night off? You don’t necessarily need a boyfriend or girlfriend to make it happen.

- **Cook yourself a nice dinner.** You can use the kitchen in your residence hall, the kitchen at a friend's house, or any kitchen that you have access to. After spending an hour or so putting together a nice meal for yourself or friends, it's practically impossible not to feel good afterward.

- **Throw an anti-Valentine's Day party.** Chances are, you aren't the only person on campus to not be thrilled about the holiday. Plan an Anti-Valentine's Day Party -- for just a few friends or the entire campus -- that shows that those without boyfriends or girlfriends can have a good (if not better) time, too.

- **Get yourself together.** It may sound strange, but when was the last time you woke up feeling totally put together? Instead of moping about being single, use the free time you have Valentine's Day evening to get yourself organized. Clean up your calendar, catch up on laundry, plan ahead for major papers and midterms, and get a head start on those assignments you've been avoiding. It may sound lame (okay, totally lame) at first, but you might be surprised at how good you feel after you're done. Who needs a date to go to bed feeling like a rock star?

- **Set up an online dating profile.** Alright, you may be single, and you may be at peace with it -- but you may also be interested in changing that single status. Spend some time at your computer, setting up an online dating profile. Who knows what might happen?!

**If You Have Date**

Have a date for Valentine's? Thought that was the difficult part ... until you tried to plan something? Check out these easy (and affordable) date ideas to help make sure your night is all you want it to be.

- **Head to a small, family-owned restaurant instead of a large chain.** Ask around campus to see if people know of smaller, delicious, and often cheaper places than some of the larger chain restaurants in town. The dinner will most likely be quieter, more intimate, and much more friendly.

- **Find something fun (and free) in the community.** Is there a poetry slam this weekend? A reading by an author you both like? A band performing in a park? Check to see what's available that won't cost much and will allow you to get to know each other better while enjoying something new and fun.

- **Do something outside.** Buy sandwiches at a local deli, go for a hike, and have a picnic somewhere nice.

- **Visit a cultural center.** Many museums, art galleries, cultural centers, and libraries have reduced (if not free) admission for college students. Go see an exhibit and enjoy the time off campus.

- **Meet for coffee or a drink instead of dinner.** Getting together does not have to mean having a huge (and often expensive) meal. Meet for coffee in the afternoon or drinks in the evening. You can have an equally nice time without having to spend as much money.

**Sources:**

- [http://college.life.about.com/od/valentinesday/a/valentindayguide.htm](http://college.life.about.com/od/valentinesday/a/valentindayguide.htm)
- [http://college.life.about.com/od/valentinesday/qt/antivdayoncampus.htm](http://college.life.about.com/od/valentinesday/qt/antivdayoncampus.htm)
- [http://college.life.about.com/od/dating/a/cheapdateideas.htm](http://college.life.about.com/od/dating/a/cheapdateideas.htm)
The most important guideline for staying safe at school and college is to know the school's emergency policies and procedures. Many times students take a relaxed attitude toward safety, so it is recommended that this information be reviewed by parents with their children, before they attend school. But there is only so much school officials can do to protect students. By implementing the following safety guidelines students can help themselves and lesson their chances of becoming victims of crime.

1. **The Buddy System**
   Avoid isolating yourself by using the buddy system of walking in groups, or at the least in pairs and staying on well-lighted streets. Avoid being alone and keep a working cell phone within reach in case an emergency arises.

2. **Stay Alert**
   Pay attention to what is going on around you and avoid blocking sounds or using distracting devices such as cell phones. Your ears and eyes are your best defense to being taken by surprise.

3. **Listen to Your Instincts**
   If you think you are being followed, either on foot or by car, do not ignore the thought. Go to a safe environment. If you feel you are in immediate danger, run, scream, honk your horn, flash your lights - make a scene. Such action could deter a possible attacker from following through with their plans.

4. **Communicate Your Schedule**
   Communicate your schedule to friends and roommates. Let people know where you plan to be and when you expect to return, but exchange this information discreetly. Avoid leaving notes on the outside of your door or on a friend's car. Only friends, family, employer and school officials should be aware of your schedule.

5. **Use the Services of the University Police**
   If you must be alone at night contact the University police and ask for an escort. When working alone in labs or classrooms at night, lock the doors and contact the University police to let them know you are alone. Ask for drive-by patrol and an escort back and forth to your car. If you ever feel in danger do not hesitate to call 9-1-1 or the University police.

6. **Keeping Personal Information Personal**
   Avoid displaying personal information on mailboxes, key chains, book bags, apartment doors, etc. Get in the habit of using your first initial and last name. Leave a short, non-descript, computerized voice message on your answer machine. The less information a caller can learn from your message, the better.

7. **Get Background Information**
   If you plan to meet a stranger, for example for a date or a study partner for the first time, meet in a public place like the library or student center. Ask questions before meeting them - such as what activities they are involved in, who their professors are and where they live. Communicate this information to a friend or roommate.

8. **Do Not Open Your Door to Strangers**
   Do not open your door to strangers without checking credentials. Contact the office who sent the visitor for verification of their purpose. For example, call the apartment office for verification if a repairperson requests entrance into your apartment. If someone asks to use your phone, offer to make the call while the stranger waits outside the door. Do not open your door to see credentials, using instead the peephole. If your door does not have one, request that a peephole be installed.

9. **Stay in Your Car When It Breaks Down**
   If your car breaks down, stay in your car with the doors locked until police arrive. Purchase emergency signal banners and keep them within reach in your back seat. Place the banners in the back or front window and turn on your flashers when possible. Call for help if you have a cell phone. If you don't have a working cell phone, keep a non-working cell phone in hand. If a stranger approaches to help, pretend to be using your cell phone and wave them on.

10. **Strangers in the Residence Hall**
    If you encounter a stranger in your residence hall, ask them if you can help them. Let them know you are aware of their presence. Ask them to wait outside until you can contact the person they are looking for and lock the door when you go to relay the message. This can be done in a friendly but firm way. Do not allow the stranger to make you feel guilty about taking safety precautions or intimidate you into compromising your safety. If at any time you feel unsafe, contact your campus police to investigate the person. Do not engage in an angry exchange with a stranger.

**Source:**
http://crime.about.com/od/guideforvictimsofcrime/tp/collegesafety.htm
February is Black History Month

"To dream is to envision or imagine something beyond reality. We all have dreamed at one point in our lives. As a college student, our dreams should revolve around our academic strides towards a successful life. We choose to dedicate time, hard work, and passion into our major to fulfill a particular dream we have had. Dreams can come true for us all; no obstacle can hold us hostage, race, skin color, ethnicity, or social status can determine our future. It only takes a person who is willing to act on his or her dreams." T'keyah Dennis

If he were gazing down from above, Martin Luther King Jr. probably was smiling on his birthday of 2013. On the day set aside each year to celebrate his legacy, a black man was inaugurated president of the United States for the second time. In many ways, the dream King spoke of in his famous speech 50 years ago has become reality.

"King talked about how he had a dream that one day his four children ... would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character," Rev. Darryl Gray said at a ceremony Monday at Montreal's city hall marking Martin Luther King Day and the launching of the 22nd edition of Black History Month in February. "Dr. King is looking down upon us and shaking his head in affirmation. He is saying that a lot of his dream has been realized. ... We have overcome." But the inequalities and poverty that persist indicate more work lies ahead, Gray added.

The theme of this year's edition of Black History Month, "Now is the Time," is taken from King's "I Have a Dream" speech delivered in August 1963 before 200,000 supporters in Washington, considered a turning point in the U.S. civil rights movement. ("We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now," King intoned in his soaring baritone. "Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. ... Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.")

Among the 800 events planned for Black History Month - including talks, conferences, movies, music and artistic performances - is a free public exhibition called MLK 50, curated by Karl André St-Victor, and to be presented at Place des Arts presenting archival photos and text documenting the history of King and the civil rights movement, and the works of six artists who have reinterpreted King's speech.

"I think it's more for the young that we are doing this, because we have to pass on the message, the models, the history, the key elements to make them proud and to empower them," she said. "The message is not from black to black, but black to the whole community." Highlighting the contribution of black society to the city's history not only opens doors with all Quebecers, it also enhances the city's reputation, councilor Mary Deros said.

"Our city distinguishes itself through diversity, while the wealth created by these communities is a key factor in the development of a fair and inclusive society." Despite that wealth, councilor Frantz Benjamin noted there is a marked dearth of corporate sponsorship for the events. "It's not just a month for blacks, it's a month for all Quebecers and all Montrealers, so I deplore the quasi-absence of the private sector," he said.

While Barack Obama may have ascended, the dearth of blacks in municipal, provincial or federal politics, or as policemen or firefighters, and disproportionately high unemployment rates indicates the dream remains, Gray noted. In his time, King said the root problems of violence and incarceration seen in all communities were not based on racism, but borne of poverty. That, Gray said, has not changed.

Black History Month runs from Feb. 1 to 28, with events planned throughout Quebec. Special events include the civil rights exhibition MLK 50 to be presented at Place des Arts from Feb. 5 to 18; and the Ebony Writers Exhibition showcasing Quebec and Canada's leading black writers at Montreal city hall from Jan. 29 to Feb. 16. For the full program of events, visit moishistoiredesnoirs.com and click on Activities.

Source: Montreal Gazette; rbruemmer@montrealgazette.com
Most Common Misunderstandings between Friends/Family/Significant Others

All communication has two parts: a sender and a receiver. The sender has a message he or she intends to transmit, and s/he puts it in words, which, to her/him, best reflect what s/he is thinking. But many things can intervene to prevent the intended message from being received accurately.

If the communication is verbal, tone of voice can influence interpretation. Tone of voice as well as situational and relationship factors would influence the interpretation of the message.

Nonverbal cues also are important. Is the sender’s posture open and friendly, or closed and cold? Is her facial expression friendly or accusatory? All of these factors influence how the same words will be received.

In addition to how the message is sent, many additional factors determine how the receiver interprets the message. All new information we learn is compared with the knowledge we already have. If it confirms what we already know, we will likely receive the new information accurately, though we may pay little attention to it. If it calls into question our previous assumptions or interpretation of the situation, we may distort it in our minds so that it is made to fit our world view, or we may dismiss the information as deceptive, misguided, or simply wrong.

If the message is ambiguous, the receiver is especially likely to clarify it for him or herself in a way which corresponds with his or her expectations. For example, if two people are involved in an escalated conflict, and they each assume that the other is going to be aggressive and hostile, then any ambiguous message will be interpreted as aggressive and hostile, even if it was not intended to be that way at all. Our expectations work as blinders or filters that distort what we see so that it fits our preconceived images of the world. (Conflict theorists call these filters “frames.” See the essay on Frames, Framing, and Reframing for more information.)

Cultural differences increase the likelihood of misunderstanding as well. If people speak different languages, the danger of bad translation is obvious. But even if people speak the same language, they may communicate in different ways.

Common differences are between high-context and low-context communication. Low-context communication stands on its own; it does not require context or interpretation to give it meaning. High-context communication is more ambiguous. It requires background knowledge and understanding (context), in addition to the words themselves, for communication. While everyone uses both kinds of communication, Western cultures tend to use low-context communication more often, while Eastern and Latin American and African cultures tend to use high-context communication. If such differences are not understood and adjusted for, misunderstanding is almost inevitable.

Culture also affects communication by influencing the recipients’ assumptions. As described above, our minds try to twist incoming information to make it fit in our worldview. Since different cultures have very different worldviews, cross-cultural communication is especially likely to change meaning between sender and receiver, as the sender may have a very different worldview from the receiver.

Given our tendency to hear what we expect to hear, it is very easy for people in conflict to misunderstand each other. Communication is already likely to be strained, and people will often want to hide the truth to some extent. Thus the potential for misperception and misunderstanding is high, which can make conflict management or resolution more difficult.

How to Avoid Misunderstanding:

In conflict situations, avoiding misunderstanding takes a lot of effort. Roger Fisher and William Ury list four skills that can improve communication in conflict situations.

The first is active listening. The goal of active listening, they say, is to understand your opponent as well as you understand yourself. Pay close attention to what the other side is saying. Ask the opponent to clarify or repeat anything that is unclear or seems unreasonable (maybe it isn’t, but you are interpreting it wrong). Attempt to repeat their case, as they have presented it, back to them. This shows that you are listening (which suggests that you care what they have to say) and that you understand what they have said. It does not indicate that you agree with what they said, nor do you have to. You just need to indicate that you do understand them.

Speak directly to your opponent. Avoid being distracted by others, or by other things going on in the same room. Focus on what you have to say, and on saying it in a way that your opponent can understand.

Speak about yourself, not about your opponent. Describe your own feelings and perceptions, rather than focusing on your opponent’s motives, misdeeds, or failings. By saying, ”I felt let down,” rather than “You broke your promise,” you will convey the same information, in a way that does not provoke a defensive or hostile reaction from your opponent.

Speak for a purpose. Too much communication can be counterproductive. Before you make a significant statement, pause and consider what you want to communicate, why you want to communicate that, and how you can do it in the clearest possible way.

Avoid inflammatory language. Inflammatory language just increases hostility and defensiveness; it seldom convinces people that the speaker is right. Although inflammatory remarks can arouse people’s interest in a conflict and generate support for one’s own side, that support often comes at the cost of general conflict escalation.

All opponents should be treated with respect. It doesn’t help a conflict situation to treat people disrespectfully; it just makes them angry and less likely to listen to you, understand you, or do what you want. No matter what you think of another person, if they are treated with respect and dignity — even if you think they do not deserve it — communication will be much more successful, and the conflict will be more easily managed or resolved.

Source: Misunderstandings By Heidi Burgess Original publication September 2003, updated June 2013.
How To Date Safely!

The Compass Connection

Date rape, also known as “acquaintance rape” describes sexual violation by someone that a girl or woman knows. It is different from a random attack on the street. Random attacks are much more rare. Women who are raped know, or are acquainted with, their attacker about 70% of the time.

No one who has been raped ever “deserved it” or “had it coming,” but many girls and women put themselves into unwise situations that can lead to rape. The rape may not have been her fault, but the end result is that she has been raped and will have to cope with the trauma for life. There are steps you can take to avoid becoming a victim of rape.

Watch Your Intake. Drinking dulls your senses and good judgment. Many women have drunk to the point of passing out and then woken up realizing they had been violated. Don’t get to this point. Watch your intake of alcohol and never mix alcohol with prescription drugs, especially narcotic painkillers. Not only is this combination potentially fatal, it can seriously impair your reflexes, strength and ability to make decisions.

Watch Your Glass. Rohypnol, also known as “roofies” or the “date rape drug,” if slipped into your drink, will completely immobilize you, making it impossible to fend off an attack. Many women who have been raped after unknowingly taking this drug reported that they knew they were being raped, but were unable to defend themselves. Get your own drinks. If a guy you don’t know (even if he seems really friendly) brings you a glass or an opened bottle, take it to the bathroom, dispose of it and get your own. Keep your glass or bottle with you at all times. Don’t drink out of random glasses or bottles at parties.

Check Your Gut. If you are on a date or at a party and something seems sketchy, end it. You do not owe a guy an entire night’s date, nor do you need to keep hanging out with someone you’ve met at a party who makes you feel uncomfortable. Your senses are telling you something – pay attention to them.

Stick With The Group. When you are just getting to know someone, group dates are best – get a bunch of friends together and go to a movie or hang out at someone’s house. Be especially careful with friends of friends who go to other schools or universities. You might know your own guy friends are trustworthy, but you can’t always say the same for their friends.

Many women have been raped at parties when they left the crowd with a guy to go “somewhere quieter,” to a bedroom, or to his apartment or dorm. Often this was under the pretense of just hanging out or talking, but quickly turned ugly when she was away from the group. If a guy you don’t know tries to entice you away from the crowd, be on guard. Attending a party with a friend gives you an excuse to stay with the group.

Remember You Have A Voice. Women do not owe a man sex for any reason whatsoever. If you are uncomfortable in a guy’s presence and want to leave, you have the right to make that request. Just because a guy suggests heading to the bedroom doesn’t mean you have to follow. You have a vote too and it’s okay to vote no. Explanations and excuses are not required.

If you have been date raped or know of someone who has, it is important to report it immediately and while this is extremely difficult, given how disgusted it feels, do not wash your body. Go immediately to the Emergency Room and request a rape kit. If you bathe after being raped, which is an extremely natural response, you wash away any evidence to catch this predator. Remember, rape has nothing to do with sex or love, it is solely about violence and removing your control. To take back your control, report it and press charges. Don’t let this perpetrator do this to another woman!

It is normal to feel “icky” and need to talk with someone. There are numerous outreach programs available for any man or woman who has been raped. The people in these programs are trained to help you survive your attack and help you move on with your life. There is no reason in the world to tough it out, not when there these outreach programs are available to you.

Source: http://outreach.org/2011/06/05/how-to-avoid-date-rape/

Need Help Finding A Job? Career Services Can Help!

CAREER FAIR PREP WORKSHOPS
Shidohay Meeting Room (2nd Floor of Student Union)
Tuesday, Feb. 19, noon-1 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 19, noon-1 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 20, 5-6 p.m.

CAREER FAIR
Student Union Ballroom
Thursday, Feb. 27, 3-6 p.m.
Log into your CareerWeb account to see a list of employers in attendance.
Check out the LinkedIn photo booth!

CLOTHING CLOSET
ONE FREE Professional Outfit
FEBRUARY 12, 4-7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 13, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Student Union Ballroom

ARE YOU CAREER READY?
Recreation and Wellness Events for February

Get Fit Challenge: Registration December 16th-January 30th for session 1 and December 16th-March 20th for session 2. Cost is $65 for each session or $75 for each session which includes a t-shirt. Program dates are February 3rd-March 1st for Session 1 and March 24th-April 19th for Session 2. Groups of 4-5 people work with our nationally certified trainers 3 days a week for one hour group sessions. Don’t miss this great opportunity: Sign up for session 1, 2 or both!

Rock Climbing and Pool Day: Saturday, February 8th from 11am-3pm. Registration is January 6th-February 4th. Cost is $10 for students, $15 for affiliates, and $20 for non affiliates. We will be traveling to Georgia Southern University and have access to their rock climbing wall and indoor pool. Please bring a packed lunch. Transportation is limited to 28 people.

Extreme Challenge: This is an 11 week self-motivated fitness program beginning on February 10th and ending on April 25th. Attend 25 or more group fitness classes to receive a prize (an average of just over two classes a week). Registration opens on January 6th in the group exercise room and is FREE! Attend a class and work your way to a fun prize!

Rec Night Bowling: Join us on Tuesday February 18th from 8-11pm at the AMF Bowling Alley at 115 Tibet Ave. Cost is $10 for students, $15 for affiliates, and $20 for non students. This includes shoe rental and reserved lanes for unlimited bowling. Transportation limited to 19 people.

Being a Resident Assistant: What’s your motivation?

What would possess any undergraduate student to want to become a Resident Assistant? If you have not taken the time to think about this question, do it now.

A Resident Assistant wears many hats. The RA is an event coordinator: planning and implementing a wide variety of educational and developmental programs. The RA is a conflict mediator: helping to calm roommates ready to do battle over who ate who’s hot pocket without asking. The RA, although sometimes the least liked role, is a police officer: monitoring floor behavior and documenting offenses of the code of conduct. The RA is a tutor: often putting aside his or her own studies to help students pass that impossible midterm exam. The RA is a caregiver: always needing a hug, but giving one away instead because someone else needs it more. The RA is a medic: almost always the first —person of authority on a scene that would make the most seasoned professional a bit squamish.

The Resident Assistant is all of these people wrapped up into one young student leader trying their best to make an impact in the lives of their residents while keeping up their own grades, goals and aspirations. More often than not, you will never know if, when, and how you impacted your residents. A majority of the time a —thank you for doing your job and documenting me last night because I really learned a lot from this experience! Rarely is received. Obviously you are doing it for some reason, and I would think that there is more to your desire than possibly the pay check, the room, the meal plan, or any other perk you receive as part of the position.

I want to share with you my story of becoming a Resident Assistant, which has ultimately led to my profession in higher education.

When I was a kid, I got very little encouragement from my parents when I told them how I was going to go to college someday and be a college professor. Since I was very young, that’s all I have ever wanted to do. Having not gone to college themselves, my parents felt this was a pipe dream and that I should concern myself with normal things such as finding a —regular job, settling down with a husband and having a family. College wasn’t for a girl like me who came from a small rural town and a family with no money. Even with that discouragement, I promised myself that I’d someday go to college and I didn’t care what it took.

Though I did manage to get to college, I have to admit that I barely got through by the skin of my teeth. I couldn’t find a major I clicked with... nothing interested me. I must have changed majors five times. I finally settled on one major only because I was already quickly approaching a 5 year graduation rate. My dad was starting to get angry that it was taking me so long and he often showed disappointment in my aimlessness and lack of motivation.

If not for my own RA freshman year, I might have packed up and left for home after the first week. She found me, made me feel comfortable, and helped me to come out of my shell and get over my home sickness. She was there for me when I needed guidance on campus resources, and now that I look back, she was just a great person to look up to in a world where I knew very few people. She helped me—a first generation college student with little home support—get through to a bachelor’s degree. That lead to a master’s degree and a career helping students just as she helped me.

The only thing I really liked in college was my experience working with residence life and housing. Nothing feels better to me than knowing I did a little something that helped someone feel comfortable in their residence hall, or made them think about their college life from a different perspective.

I’ve now lived my dream of being a college professor. I get to wake up every day of my life knowing that I’m working in the profession that I was meant to do. You can’t believe how satisfying that is. I get to come into work every day and help students (many of whom are just like me) overcome the obstacles in their life and work toward their degrees. It’s a wonderful thing doing what you love and loving what you do.

If you’re thinking about applying for an RA position, think about your motivation. Are you applying to be an RA because of the benefits to you, or how you are able to benefit others?

The RA application is now available on the Armstrong jobs website. If you have questions about being an RA, feel free to contact me at 344-3384 or by email at Angela.Storck@armstrong.edu.