



## Community Living *Kansas State University Housing & Dining Services*

There are many positive things that can come from living in the residence halls, and one of them is building a community among the residents on your floor. Building a community means coming together as individuals, respecting one another, cooperating and compromising. We have compiled a list of tips and facts about community living that we hope will inspire you to make the most of your experience in the residence halls.

### **OPENNESS TO DIFFERENCES AND THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY LIVING**

Living in a community is a new and exciting change for college students. It's a unique opportunity that most will never have after college. Take time to enjoy the variety of personalities and perspectives that you will encounter. You'll meet people from an array of backgrounds who may be quite different from (or very similar to) yourself. Whether you have floormates from China, Kentucky or Kansas, you should embrace your differences and celebrate your similarities. Countless resources are at your fingertips when you live in the residence halls. Living in a community environment provides a place where there are ongoing activities and supportive leaders who care about you. We're looking forward to getting to know you and to being a part of your K-State experience!

### **MYTHS AND REALITIES OF COMMUNITY LIVING**

**Myth 1:** Community bathrooms are not clean.

**Reality 1:** The housekeeping staff clean the bathrooms in each community on a daily basis. Many floors also have bathroom decorating parties each semester.

**Myth 2:** I will never get any quiet time to study in a hall full of people.

**Reality 2:** Each hall is equipped with study rooms for use by the residents. It is also very common for residents to set up study groups with others on their floor. We encourage dialogue with your neighbors if they are too loud while you are trying to study – most are very understanding ... they are students too!

**Myth 3:** I will lose my independence by living with so many people.

**Reality 3:** You will learn more about yourself through living in a community setting. Exposure to such a diverse group of people will provide many opportunities for you to venture out of your comfort zone and try new things — some you may like and others you may not. A sense of self is established and valued within community living.



**Myth 4:** Everyone will be so different, we won't all get along.

**Reality 4:** Although it is unrealistic that everyone will be friends, living in a community provides you with an opportunity to learn from people who are different from you. In order to build a strong community among the residents on your floor, you need to be open to new experiences, ideas and people. You will learn a lot about yourself by interacting with a variety of different people.

**Myth 5:** I will feel isolated with so many people living on the same floor as me.

**Reality 5:** You have to be willing to join in on programs and events that are meant to build a strong, cohesive community. Instead of spending time on your computer or watching TV, try to walk around and meet new people that live on your floor and spend time getting to know them. The community will only be as strong as you help build it!

### RESPECT

Building a community with fellow residents on your floor is a natural occurrence. This allows you to form relationships with those around you. One of the most important parts of building a community is to make sure everyone is treated with respect. When living with other people, it is expected that you understand and appreciate each person on the floor and treat them with the respect they deserve. As a member of a residence hall community, you have a voice in developing expectations for each other, from negotiating "rules" with your roommate(s) to developing community standards for the floor. Make sure you do your part to ensure that your community is built on a foundation of respect.

### RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The responsibility to observe quiet hours, control noise and limit distractions that inhibit study or sleep.
- The right to personal privacy.
- The responsibility to abide by visitation hours and respect the personal space of others.
- The right to facilities that are clean, healthy, safe and orderly.
- The responsibility to respect all property, to keep common areas free of litter, to report vandalism and to request necessary repairs.
- The right to be free of intimidation, physical and/or emotional harm including freedom from peer pressure or ridicule.
- The responsibility to respect others and their wishes and avoid discriminating or harassing tactics.

### WHO'S WHO IN THE HALLS

In each hall at K-State, there is a team of staff members whose job is to ensure that you have a great experience while living in the residence halls. These staff members consist of RAs, MAs, CAs, ARLCs and RLCs. You're probably wondering what all these abbreviations stand for, so here is the breakdown:

#### Resident Assistants (RAs)

RAs are full-time students, selected and trained by Housing and Dining Services, who offer you day-to-day living assistance. RAs live on each floor to help residents with problems and concerns. One of the RA's most important roles is to help you and your neighbors maintain a community environment that supports your ability to learn and succeed in college. RAs develop this environment through special programs, intentional interventions, management of resources and hall leadership responsibilities. RAs are responsible for communicating and interpreting university and residence hall policies and regulations. They respond to unacceptable behavior that violates policies and regulations.

#### Multicultural Assistants (MAs)

MAs are full-time, upper-class students whose trained role is to address the needs and concerns of ethnically diverse students in the residence halls. The main focus of MAs is to help facilitate ethnic minority student development. They use one-on-one support to provide opportunities for students to take advantage of both the academic and social experiences of the halls and on campus.

### Community Assistants (CAs)

CAs are undergraduate students who staff the residence hall front desks 24 hours a day (except Smurthwaite) when the halls are open. CAs provide information and services such as checking out sports and kitchen equipment, providing wake-up calls, reporting needed repairs and more.

### Assistant Residence Life Coordinators (ARLCs)

ARLCs are full-time graduate students pursuing academic work in student counseling/personnel services who also live in the residence halls. Most halls and complexes have at least one ARLC who assists the residence life coordinator in all areas of hall management, community development, student group advising and staff supervision.

### Residence Life Coordinators (RLCs)

Each hall or complex has a full-time, live-in professional staff member. The RLC is a graduate of a master's program, usually in college student personnel. The RLC is responsible for planning and supervising all services and operations in the hall or complex. Duties include helping residents with academic, housing and personal problems; advising residence hall student groups; providing educational programs; supervising and training RAs and MAs; and helping residents develop and maintain positive communities.

## SUITE-STYLE LIVING

Living in suites can be a wonderful way to live! It's important to recognize what makes it unique in comparison to corridor/hallway living. First there's the privacy factor — you'll have your own bathroom! Some students prefer this type of living, while others do not. On the one hand, you'll be responsible for cleaning it yourself, but on the other hand, you won't have to share it with more than three people. Something else to prepare for is the fact that not all suites are equally created. Some house two people while some house three or more. What matters most is that you recognize the benefits of your style of living and take pride in having such an opportunity. Like any other residence hall option, floors of suite-style rooms also have their own RA to help foster community and solve issues. Programming is still important and can really make a difference in the search for exciting new friendships! So settle in and get involved! There's so much to experience in and around your new "home suite home."

## GETTING INVOLVED

The K-State residence halls offer abundant opportunities for students to experience and develop leadership skills through involvement in various student groups. Hall and floor governments develop, plan and implement various activities: educational and cultural programs, intramural events, dances, movie nights, picnics, formal and informal dinners, community service projects and more. The Judicial Board provides an opportunity to address one another regarding policy violations that impact the community. The Kansas State University Association of Residence Halls (K-State ARH) plans and coordinates various programs and activities during the academic year. Also, K-State ARH works closely with hall representatives to develop and implement policies that promote respect and acceptance of all students in the residence halls.

## COMMUNITY LIVING

Community living is definitely a highlight of the residence hall experience. It allows you to make connections with new people, explore new ideas, learn how to be supportive and cooperative, and have fun! No matter where you end up in the future, the skills you gain from being a part of a community will help prepare you for living and learning with other people!

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