

Dear Parents:

During this past weekend I had drafted a welcome message for this newsletter that would touch upon our upcoming trip to New York City and provide introduction to the many exciting community events we have in store for the remainder of the semester. In lieu of the horrific events unfolding at Virginia Tech, I wanted to instead share information that may respond to your questions and concerns. All of us at College Park Scholars are shocked and saddened by the loss of so many innocent lives and hold the Virginia Tech community in our thoughts and prayers. Below please find resources available to your students should they be personally impacted by this tragedy or simply wish to sit down with someone to talk. To those families personally affected by this tragedy, we extend our deepest sympathies. As always, if any parents have any questions or concerns, we invite you to contact members of our program administration and our colleagues in the Department of Resident Life.

College Park Scholars & Cambridge Community Resident Life Contacts:

Martha Baer Wilmes
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Greig Stewart
Executive Director, Scholars
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301.314.2777

Kevin Baxter
Assistant Director, Scholars
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Andrew Goretsky
Cambridge Community Director
301.314.7925

Joshua Beeson (Cumberland)
Alan Rucker (Bel Air, Cambridge, Chestertown)
Tanesha Leathers (Centreville)

Cambridge Community Resident Directors
301.314.7925

Resources for coping:

Counseling Center (301.314.7651)

(Shoemaker Hall near South Campus Dining Hall)

Hours of Operation

Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Memorial Chapel (301.314.9866)

(University Chaplains)

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

(See contact information for at <http://www.chapel.umd.edu/chaplains>)

"A Day of Sympathy and Reflection in honor of our friends at Virginia Tech"

The Chapel will host a quiet reflection tomorrow (Tuesday, 4/17) in the West Chapel beginning at noon. Included will be the opportunity to light candles of reflection and leave words of sympathy. This will coincide with a memorial service to be held at the same time at Virginia Tech. Chaplains will also be available.

Mental Health Unit, University Health Center (301.314.8106)

The tragedy taking place at Virginia Tech University can obviously take a toll on students' emotional well-being. Consequently, there are members of the Department of Resident Life who are trained to deal with difficult situations and can refer students to the appropriate resources on campus. The Resident Directors (RD) and the Community Director (CD) are always available to sit down and talk with students who feel affected by the current tragedy. Students who feel the need to sit down with someone or perhaps seek out more direct counseling may first wish to visit with their Resident Assistant (RA) or one of the aforementioned Resident Life professionals. Commuters may want to be in touch directly with the Counseling Center or our offices to connect them to the appropriate resources.

Please encourage your Scholar to seek out the support of our Resident Life colleagues, Scholars administrators, or Campus support units if they are concerned about what is going on in Virginia and how it might affect them. Scholars will keep our community members updated of information surrounding this tragedy through our website at:

<http://www.scholars.umd.edu/execdir/vtech.cfm>. Again, please be in touch if you have additional questions or concerns.

Take good care,

[Kevin Baxter](#)

Assistant Director
College Park Scholars

10th Annual “Step to Bat for Kids” Charity Softball Tournament

As May rolls around, so does the 10th annual Scholars Softball charity event. May 5, 2007 is the date of this College Park Scholars tradition, which has grown over the years and generated thousands of dollars for local area charities and other aid organizations around the world. Founder of the Softball tournament and Assistant Director for External Relations & Development Kevin Baxter said, "There are few things that I am more proud of than this softball tournament. The fact that students in Scholars have given more than \$10,000 to area charities that support children and families speaks volumes."

This event will commence at 10:00 a.m. that Saturday morning. The students are responsible for everything, from the planning, and the fundraising to the promotion of the entire event. According to Martha Baer Wilmes, Associate Director for Student Affairs, the members of the Scholars Student Advisory Board are the heart of the fund raising efforts, the students in the programs select the child-related charities, and student interns are the leadership that oversees management of other logistical planning details. "I think one of the most notable parts of the event is that it is an example of student leadership within Scholars," Wilmes said.

Support has been raised from local businesses to offset the costs associated with the event. Through the financial contributions of smaller local businesses, the College Park Scholars are able to purchase things like cups, napkins, and Under Armour sweatbands without any monetary losses. "It allows us to have equipment for everyone," Sara Zabihi, External Relations Development assistant for College Park Scholars said, relaying the benefits of these contributions for the College Park Scholars.

Aside from the friendly competition fostered throughout the tournament and the sense of community that is promoted, the College Park Scholars serve a worthy cause and work together to make life for others a little bit better.

Wilmes expressed this sentiment best. "It brings out the best of community spirit in Scholars--both in terms of our connection with the communities around us as well as our communities within Scholars," she said. If you are interested in offering your business or personal sponsorship for next year's event, please be in touch with [Kevin Baxter](#) at your convenience.

<http://www.scholars.umd.edu/events/softball.cfm>

Scholars in the News:

The Black Girl's Guide to College Success

(<http://www.scholars.umd.edu/news/http://www.scholars.umd.edu/news/>)

The Black Girl's Guide to College Success was recently published by College Park Scholars alumna Sheryl Walker. Various sources have reviewed Sheryl's work as being a very thoughtful and accommodating tutorial-esque novel on how to deal with and make the most of college life. Not only is it a source of knowledge for the college novice, but it is also a page-turner. Walker, an accomplished graduate of the university, featured the College Park Scholars Program in the author's biography of personal accomplishments. On behalf of all of us at College Park Scholars, we would like to extend our congratulations to Sheryl for her recent achievement. Be sure to check out the reviews commenting on the success of her new book:

<http://www.blacknews.com/pr/theblackgirlsguide101.html>

<http://www.authorhouse.com/BookStore/ItemDetail~bookid~41009.aspx>

<http://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewwork.asp?AuthorID=55267>

Resident Life Diaries

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we will be providing you with a series of narratives over the next few months that put parents and guardians in the loop regarding your Scholars' college lives. It seems that in between classes, papers, and weekend fun, students sometimes forget to tell their loved ones what it is exactly that they do at college. So consider this the fruits of our labor to relay to you what the resident halls are doing to foster a sense of unity among scholars and to provide them a home away from home--the best gift a guardian could ask for. This month, we travel to Centreville Hall, a focal point in the Cambridge Community. RAs Hilary Lane, Rushi Patel and Jessica Jacques are in the midst of planning and organizing a dance party in the basement of C-ville (as it is fondly called by many residents.) This dance event, which began last semester, has been dubbed "Xplosion" and saw much success in its first go-round, as it had an attendance of around 300 residents from the Cambridge Community. "The three of us hosted it last semester and it was one of the biggest turnout RA programs

in Centreville history," Lane said in regards to the event. The highlights include a night of rap music and dancing along with contests (and prizes.) Lane said, "Some people won \$100 gift certificates as well. It was so much fun... If we do it again, we expect close to 500 residents!"

The inspiration for this dance party came from a common diversion that some residents and RAs took to early into the semester. "I remember the first weekend the freshmen were here, we were all bored, just sitting around, and I was like 'Hey, let's start a dance party in front of the elevators.' It was such a great way to break the ice with people. It was also a way to let them know that even though I'm an RA, I like to have fun in a lot of the same ways they do. People would come up the stairs, or get off the elevators, and just join in. Ever since then, people have dance parties all the time," Lane said.

With strobe lights and fog machines purchased, a copious stock of refreshments and prizes ready to go and security services ready, the residents of Centreville Hall will hit the dance floor on Friday May 4, 2007. Festivities begin at 4p.m. with a billiards contest, followed by a movie. The dancing is to begin at approximately 10:30 p.m. Thanks to the hard work of Resident Assistants, this event will provide a night to look forward to within the comforts of "home", as Centreville houses this newly begun tradition.

Spotlight on Environmental Studies

Each year, College Park Scholars in Environmental Studies travels to various locations for field trips that are meant to enhance the experiences of their students. The field trips maintain an objective of exposing students to the "natural, built and cultural resources available in the mid-Atlantic region", according to its website. For Environmental Studies Scholars, there is a requirement of attending one field trip per semester, but there is no limit to the amount in which one student can participate. "I think it's important because it's hands-on learning ... what you're learning about is actually being implemented and used," said Mark Lessans, sophomore Environmental Studies Scholar, in relaying his experience at the National Building Museum in D.C. last semester. With little to no fees required, depending on the particular trip, this April has offered opportunities to visit diverse sites including Eastern Village Cohousing in Silver Spring, Maryland, which provides exemplary architecture and design. Environmental Studies also supported *Saturday of Service*, which took place at Lake Artemesia in College Park, and involved cleaning up the surrounding area of the man-made aquatic body that is located near the juncture of Indian Run and Paint Branch creeks.

"We try to offer field trips that reflect the interests of our students," Dr. Wendy Whittemore, Associate Director of Environmental Studies said. On April 21, 2007, ES will participate in the Appalachian Trail Walk which will span a distance from Gathland State Park to Weverton Cliffs and on May 4, Scholars they will travel to House-in-the-Woods Organic Farms in Dickerson, MD.

"Our field trips complement the classroom learning experience and are designed to help students see new things and try new things. Many students have never been on a hike before; others have never been to some of the museums and monuments in D.C.," said Whittemore, "Field trips are some of the activities that ES students appreciate the most. "They are a great way to get off campus; and it's great to tell stories afterwards about all the things seen and done."

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/es/Activities/ThisSemester.htm>