

# Welcome Home: Student Village residents come from far and near

September 2, 2015



In a well-orchestrated dance of cars, carts and helping hands, the Student Village welcomed its current batch of residents home.

Now in its second year, the residence hall is again full with 362 student residents, plus live-in residence hall director Calvin McKinney. On August 29, 345 of those students ferried bags and boxes to their new suites, joining a number of athletes and international students who moved in a little bit earlier.

“It’s going to be a spectacular year,” said Resident Assistant Keanu Fowler, a second-year paralegal major from the Bronx who was aiding students at the check-in table.



**Keanu Fowler talks to a reporter from WBNG – who is also a SUNY Broome graduate!**



**Housing Director Amy Zieziula**

As Dean of Students Scott Schuhert and Public Safety directed traffic, a swarm of campus volunteers helped them unload and transport their belongings to a lively beat provided by deejay Rich Birdsall. Volunteers from a neighboring church provided free hotdogs and snacks, and new Hornets had a chance to snap selfies with Stinger.

Ninety residents are returning students – which means there are plenty of new faces in the residence hall this year. Also new: two additional RAs, bringing the total number up to 10, noted Housing Director Amy Zieziula. Student Activities has also been revamped, including a new director, and will keep students engaged with additional programming on campus.

The Student Village also has its first faculty mentor – the English Department’s Virginia Shirley – who will hold office hours in the hall and help connect students with the academic services they need. That’s especially important, as many students are among the first in their family to attend college, noted Vice President for Student & Economic Development Debbie Morello.

“It’s a holistic experience,” she said of residence hall life. “We want them to do well academically.”

First-year student Leronn Goodman posed for pictures alongside proud family members and smiling suitemates. He’s from New York City, and plans to major in sports management.

“I’m going to try to focus and stay on top,” he said of the upcoming academic year.

### **Leronn Goodman (in the gray) and his family**

Like Leronn, about 87.9% of residents come from New York State counties other than Broome, with a healthy contingent from downstate. Other upstate counties are also well-represented.

Roommates Jessie Rice and Zachary Root are friends from Cincinnatus in Cortland County. The two – both guitarists who brought their instruments – were listening to Van Halen on an old-fashioned record player during Move-In Day.

### **Jessie Rice plays some tunes**

“You can’t beat that vinyl sound,” said Jessie, an engineering major who said he opted for the College due to its affordable price.

Another plus: the positive atmosphere on campus, noted Zachary, a communications major.

“When we visited here as high school students, the students here would talk to us. Everyone was open and accepting,” he said.

About 3.3% of resident students come from abroad, including two RAs from China and Morocco, respectively. Another 4.4% come from out of state, including Samantha Smith, a first-year communications major from sunny Central Florida. She wanted to start her educational career at a community college, she said. And while she’s not accustomed to the northern winter, she has family ties: her mother is a Binghamton native and her grandmother lives here, she said.

### **Samantha Smith and her room**

Samantha moved in two days earlier than her suitemates, toting her must-have items: family pictures and a stand-up bass.

“My first roommate walked in on me jamming out,” Samantha said with a laugh, indicating the bass in the living area. “It was a little weird.”

Not all Student Village residents face a long trip home: 4.4% are from Broome County, including Mary Chesna of Conklin, a future occupational therapist who just couldn’t bring herself to leave her horse blanket behind.

All of the residents of her suite – including dental hygiene major Crystal Fleet of Spencer – are Health Science majors. And while they didn’t know each other prior to enrollment, they’re off to a good start; they met at Orientation and have been in contact with each other over the summer, they said.

### **Crystal Fleet and Mary Chesna**

Now an RA herself, Kimberly Payano made lifelong connections when she came to the Student Village last year. She’s become best friends with her five roommates.

“We have each other’s backs, no matter what,” said the communications major from the Bronx.

As an RA, Payano hopes to foster self-love in fellow residents – and the confidence to succeed. Don’t be scared and don’t give up, she advises.

She paused as students headed toward the elevators with their belongings, which included a giant teddy bear and a foosball table.

“I don’t recognize half of them, but it’s cool because I can make a whole bunch of new friends,” she said.

Filed Under: [Uncategorized](#)