



COLLEGE UN-PREP

Responsibilities of independent living prove challenging for college-bound students

Charlie MacKenzie | Staff Writer

The ACT may not be the best predictor of college readiness.

Hundreds of seniors leave Mason High School each year to attend college and live alone. Relying on your parents for 18 years and suddenly leaving home to live independently can prove to be a challenge for some students. Managing a budget, organizing your time, doing laundry, and cooking are new aspects that come with everyday college life.

According to financial literacy teacher Jennifer Striker, managing a checking account is something she believes students must have an understanding of before going to college.

“(Students need) to know how to use a bank, how to manage a checking account, and how to use a debit card wisely, and how to maintain their financial record,” Striker said. “I have a lot of hope when it comes to that area, and that (my students) begin to see that interest is only a good thing when you are receiving it and not paying it.”

Independent Living and Wellness is a class focused on what life is like living in a college dorm room and what tasks are necessary when living alone. The class teaches students daily life skills ranging from maintaining a car to sewing on buttons. According to teacher Tiann Myer, her class prepares students to make the transition into college life.

“We talk a little bit more in depth about if you’re paying attention to who you’re really going to room with, so we really get them ready for that and in my opinion, it makes them be more aware of certain situations,” Myer said. “Then (we go) into life skills. It’s amazing that some know absolutely nothing about how to do any of those and some know some of the basics. I think overall, it’s a whole new world being independent in college versus being under mom and dad’s thumb.”

According to Myer, common sense, organization and time management are skills she hopes graduates will bring to college.

“Common sense is probably one of the biggest (skills), and to be aware,” Myer said. “We talk a lot about time management and being able to be that person that realizes, ‘Man, I got to fix this here,’ and it’s usually time management. So take some time management and make sure you have your organization down, because to me that’s one of the biggest things.”

The Register-Mail reported that an average college dorm room has 228 square feet of living space. According to senior Josh Reddington, staying organized in the limited space of a dorm will be his biggest challenge transitioning into college.

“For me, (the biggest challenge) is probably going to be organizing myself,” Reddington said. “You only have such a

small area to live in and I have a whole house right now and I find a way to make a mess out of that. I can only imagine what I’ll do with a dorm room.”

Parents are responsible for a majority of high school students’ financial needs, and Reddington says managing money without his parents’ help will be something he must learn while in college.

“Managing a budget would probably be the one that would be hard,” Reddington said. “I’d have to figure all of that out because right now my family pays for everything and I have a job right now so hopefully I’ll have enough money to live alone.”

Not all students will have trouble with the same aspects of living independently. According to senior Jessica Cooper, not having parents to rely on will pose as her biggest struggle next year.

“(The biggest struggle will be) not having parents to call if something goes wrong,” Cooper said. “If you forget to do something or you don’t know how to do something new then you would not really have parents right there to fall back on.”

According to Cooper, she hopes that she will be prepared for college, but also doubts her ability to manage the extra responsibilities that come with living independently.

“I’d like to say I’m prepared, but I don’t think that will be the case,” Cooper said. “I’ll go in thinking I will do a good job,

but then when I get there it will be a total 180.”

Craig Heim graduated from MHS in 2014. Heim is currently a freshman at The Ohio State University, and has recently experienced the college transition. According to Heim, doing his own laundry was something he had to master during his first semester.

“Doing my own laundry (has been a struggle),” Heim said. “There’s a laundry room in the basement of our dorm. I never grew up doing my own laundry. I knew how to, but I never folded my own laundry.”

A majority of colleges now offer XL twin sized beds, which are five inches longer than standard twin beds. According to Heim, making his XL twin bed is also something he needed to get used to this year.

“This may not be for everyone, but my mom always made my bed,” Heim said. “Making my bed, especially with my bed being longer, is quite a task.”

According to Heim, his piece of advice for future graduates would be to figure out your schedule.

“I would say figure out a good time management scale because that can make a world of difference,” Heim said. “If you plan out your week and know what you have to get done beforehand then you won’t find yourself running around. You won’t have anyone there breathing down your neck saying, ‘This is due in two days.’”