

## **Minton Hall 2007-2008**

Over 400 students this past fall walked into Minton Hall with different expectations. Nine Resident Assistants and two hall directors watched as their new residents unloaded their cars to begin a brand new semester. There were new faces, new personalities, and a large amount of potential. The residence hall was split into WKU Honors students and the Nursing Living Learning Community. Almost immediately, each floor built a strong community amongst themselves and began branching out to other residents. It was a foreshadowing of the year ahead. Minton Hall was looked at as the underdog, but came out on top in many campus wide events and activities, as well as academically. There are many things that played a part in its success; however, the deserved recognition of The Western Kentucky University Student Life Foundation Award for Leadership and Excellence should go to the hardworking residents of Minton Hall.

One of the major concentrations that the residence hall focused on was community service, not only on the WKU campus or in the Bowling Green area, but also around the world. Shantytown was the first campus-wide event that called for more than just absentminded participation. It called for a desire to help the unfortunate and those that lack the means to help themselves. It raised awareness for the homeless by encouraging students to get into the minds of those that live on the streets. Retrieving the cardboard was no problem thanks to Wal-Mart, but the canned goods appeared to be an issue. But the students rose to the challenge by winning the awards for most canned goods accumulated, the best shanty overall, the most people standing at the end of the night, and more. Minton Hall also had a number of students actively involved in the ONE Campaign against world poverty. They created the WKU chapter and performed various measures to promote awareness for the cause which has led to their victory in the ONE

Campus Challenge over thousands of universities nationwide. The Living Learning Community also took part in its own set of community service by establishing a group for Relay for Life. Being outnumbered by the Greek society as well as other campus organizations, the small group of nursing majors stayed all night to endorse the funding of a cure for cancer.

The staff at Minton Hall is unlike any other staff on campus. A group of seven women and two men make up the work force of Minton Hall. Coming from D.C. to Indiana, majoring from history to biochemistry, this staff is one that has come together and used their differences to form a well-balanced, effective team, with the awards to prove it. This student staff worked together to win the Best Staff Award during the fall training for outstanding participation, roll calls, and overall enthusiasm and dedication.

Programming is an important way to keep the residents involved with their peers and fellow residence hall occupants. Minton's Hall Council worked with the Resident Assistants to form a unique, fun-filled environment. In the fall, the staff sponsored such events as a hall-wide Halloween party, including games, refreshments, and a personal ghost tour of VanMeter Hall. Other programs include a Comic Book Academy, tailgating during the football season, a Coffee House in the lobby, an educational political series including voter registration and the hall-wide game Marshmallow Assassins, piñata making, and many more programs. These programs have combined academics with fun and community building. The staff refers to these to components as the "broccoli" (the educational part of programming) and the "cheese" (the fun part of programming). Combining this "broccoli" and "cheese" gives the right balance to programming that makes it both informative and makes it fun for residents to attend.

One of the strongest attributes of Minton Hall is its overwhelming sense of community. But this would not have been possible without the smaller occasions and events that helped in the

development. The football Hallapalooza was a giant burst of encouragement to the residents as they walked away with \$350 to put into their own hall's banking account. The money was theirs because they gathered together for one common goal – to represent Minton Hall. But it didn't stop there. Even basketball games were attended as an assemblage of their residence hall. They “painted-up” in the lobby, cheered together in the stands, and created an atmosphere of outstanding pride in both the university as well as Minton Hall. Their Hall Council also put on programs such as a Valentine's Day party where various food items were served. Four Minton Hall couples voluntarily played a version of the “Newlywed's Game” to see how well they knew their significant other. Around Homecoming, the residents came together once again to show their competitive side as well as their creativity. They transformed the lobby into a giant washing machine, where the old jerseys came out as new, division I jerseys. A storybook displayed in the lobby told the “true story” of the Red Towel and Big Red's untold part. Placing second in the overall judging set well with Minton because they were proud of what they had accomplished and believed it to be the best no matter who said it wasn't. The Hall Council also plans to reward its residents with a free end-of-the-year party featuring carnival games and live music that will be made up of “Mintronians,” as they call themselves. With all the money accrued throughout both semesters, Minton Hall can help pay for t-shirts for the residents and still be able to put on a stress-relieving event the week before finals.

To be a great hall, you don't need millions of dollars or a state-of-the-art building. You don't need a massive group of people to gather every week in order to make one decision. You need residents that will create their own community because they care enough about their lives as well as the lives of their peers. Minton Hall itself does not deserve this award, but rather, the people that occupy its rooms, walk through its hallways, and deal with its elevators should

receive this honor of Leadership and Excellence. It takes guts to be a freshman and conquer a campus event of which they know nothing about. It takes guts to be an upperclassman and live amongst incoming freshman. It takes guts live in a community with such high standards. But because its residents created the atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement, Minton Hall came out on top as not only a residence hall, but as a home away from home.