

Interview with Kim Green

Resident Advisor, Spaulding Hall (1988-1989)

A: "Anderson interviewing Kim Green, 21 year old Resident Advisor in Spaulding Hall. What kind of training did you go through this year?"

KG: "I came up a week and a half early for an intensive training session with all of the RAs on campus. It lasted around 8:30 every morning to about dinner time every night and each of the sessions included things like counselors that came in and talked to us about things like suicide and drinking and what to do if one of the residents wants to kill themselves or if they have killed themselves, what to do with other residents at that time, drinking problems that happen on campus, the amount of drinking, what can happen if someone has been drinking in an emotional state, how to deal with a resident who is being a little loud, and how if they've been drinking they may be a little bit more emotional than they might have been otherwise. The public safety department came and talked to us about emergencies; how to deal with a resident that has fallen down and has broken his leg, are bleeding, if they have exposure to cold, you know, hypothermia or frostbite, what we should and should not do, what we are not allowed to do: we are not allowed to transport residents to and from the hospital because of liability reasons, you know. Since we are staff of the university, we could be sued and therefore, the university could be sued. The fire department came and showed us how to use fire extinguishers and they set big fires and used barrels and we got to put them out. That was a lot of fun for us though. For orientation students and for residents who have come back early were kind of watching us like, you know, they get to play with fire extinguishers, why can't we? The ORC came and gave us handouts on programs that they do and special trips that they go on and how much they cost and how much the equipment costs, and events if the house wants to do something, or we as a staff want to do something, or myself, just as an individual needs to get away and I want to go on a backpacking trip what I need to do. Karen Reese came and did a personality type on all of the RAs, and then went through the results with us and we sat down as a staff and compared our results as a staff to see how we are alike and how we are different and how that may affect what we do as a staff and our interactions. And a lot of that was true, I mean we have, some of our staff are very organized people who need order and structure and others are just kind of free flowing and at times that clashes but at other times it bounce off each other and its pretty harmonious. We also did a lot of role-playing in terms of discipline situations and how to handle situations that crop up that involve drinking in rooms or violation of quiet hours or a fight; just things that we need to know and how to handle those kinds of situations. We also went camping for a weekend, and that was not really training, it was something fun to get us as a full ROP as all 60 resident advisors, 51 resident advisors and 9 RDs to get to know each other a lot better as a whole staff. We also learned how to hold our first house meeting with the whole house and ideas on structuring our house government and meetings and problems that you might run into with your house government. We had a presentation from Dave Bonsel, he taught us how to program events in our house and ideas for programming in our house, what the Student Activities' office can do for us and that kind of thing. And then our nights, we usually hit dinner together as a staff, maybe with other staffs at the same time. The rest of the time at night we were usually up until at least midnight, we did things like have building tour and we were shown where all of the fire extinguishers are, where the fire alarms are, where all of the

water mains are in case there is a flood, where the electric boxes are. We also had to design and make a bulletin board for the lobby as a staff and we were responsible as individuals for the bulletin boards in houses and those all had to be completed before all the resident came back. We also had meetings as a staff to go over expectations that the resident director had of us and that we had of each other. Then we had some fun times to just so we could know each other like one night we rented movies while we made bulletin boards cause making bulletin boards is basically just sitting there and cutting out, we'd be doing that to a movie. There were a lot of times between 5 and midnight you know you think 'Oh, the training session ends at 5, we have free time, we can do whatever we want,' that that doesn't work like that. You want to plan a day where you can come up early so you can have your room ready because you don't have free time until basically the first weekend after school starts because you are going right up until that first week when all of the residents come. And that week you don't really have free time because you sit out there and you want to greet the residents that come in, your own house members, you really want to get to know them because that is you first opportunity to meet a lot of them. And then school starts and, you know, even though you don't have homework necessarily, but you're just running around like a chicken with your head cut off trying to get your classes organized and buy your books and all that kind of stuff. So, you don't really have a lot of free time there. We also have some training sessions during the school year, and those are a little bit different. We have, they're called Saturday Seminars and it's only on Saturday, like 9 o'clock in the morning until like 3:30, and usually the morning is just kind of the big group with all of the RAs and all of the RDs, but then in the afternoons there are three one hour long sessions and each hour has three different session and you can choose which one you want to go through. So you can get information on something that you're interested in; something that you really want to know about."

A: "How much are you paid for this?"

K.G.: "We receive free room and board; it's approximately \$1700 per semester."

A: "What kind of responsibilities do you have as an RA this year?"

K.G.: "Some of them seem pretty basic, like making bulletin boards, like I said before, but making bulletin boards sounds kind of fun, but at times that alone can become a big responsibility because you're like 'This bulletin board has been up for 2 months, I really should change it,' and then you have to try to find time to change it, and that is one of your responsibilities, unless you can coax one of your house members to do it for you. Other little things that we have include writing on the chalkboards: we are expected to keep our chalk boards up to date daily, or, you know, if there is a week long program you can write the chalkboard for the week so the residents know what is going on. And, along with that, is a posting area: each house has its own posting area for university postings and we usually get a stack of them every week at some point in the mailbox, but that can pain because just taking the posters and taping them up on the wall is pretty simple, but when you have twelve of them you have to tape all of them up on the wall-that is just a pain. We are also responsible for aiding our house government and appropriating events and that can be fun, and depending on how much the house does, I mean, the events themselves can fun, but from my own experience, sometimes the house government plans something and then none of them will help do it and then here I am. And if can't get them to help, if I

have to do it myself or not do it at all then everybody is like 'Why didn't it happen?'. We have some administrative responsibilities such as Office Hours every week and filling out paperwork ROBs we have to make sure those are legible all the facts are in there. Before the residents come in the fall we have to do room checks. I have 26 rooms, and that was another thing that fell between the 5 o'clock and midnight slot was going through every single room and checking the walls, the ceilings the floors, the furniture for any little mark that might be there because at the end of the year, the resident may say, you know, 'It was like that when I moved in,' and we need a really good record of what was there at the because at the end of the year it is a mess if, you know, writing it down saying 'It is not on the sheet, you must have done it while you lived here,' and then they're like 'Well, I don't want to pay for it,'. Another thing would be, I mean, I guess we are kind of responsible for responsibility, we need to make sure that we are getting things done and that we are effective and that we are committed."

A: "Tell me about being on duty, what do you do when you're on duty?"

K.G.: "We are on duty approximately every third night and you must be in the building between the hours of 8 PM and 7 AM. In Spaulding we do rounds approximately 8 o'clock, always the 10 o'clock and then approximately midnight and then on Fridays and Saturdays we also do a later one at 2 o'clock to you know, be prepared for what is going on Saturdays. On the rounds themselves we check to make sure the fire extinguishers and the fire alarms haven't been tampered with, we turn off any lights that are, just don't have a reason like in an empty TV rooms, study rooms, and laundry rooms. We make sure the garbage hasn't been just thrown all over; we also are there to keep an ear out in case there are residents that are being really loud and disrupting the rest of the hall. That is all I remember right now for that."

A: "Are there things that your resident director expects you to do that maybe the other directors don't expect their staffs to do?"

K.G.: "Last semester, our resident director didn't expect some things of us: we didn't have to do office hours and we never have been required to do a certain number of bulletin boards in the semester; she would like us to do them, but she has never said she wanted us to make 2 bulletin boards a month, which is kind of nice, because I end up doing some of it anyway, but it is kind of nice not to have that pressure on me. This semester has changed in the respect of that we now do office hours and that is one hour a week and other than that, just being around in our house is something she expects from us, and I don't know how other RDs are on this, but our RD has this rubric filled with certain program requirements that of our own, such as personal image, and education goals."

A: "Now, when you talk about programming, can you explain what you mean by programming certain things?"

K.G.: "In programming an event, if it is an educational purpose or personal enrichment one, and maybe one that you can't hold yourself, you know like a special program event you can just pick up the --- and show them, but for an educational one you need somebody from outside the house to come like a professor or counselor to do a presentation, which means that you, well, hopefully your house government would contact the person and write thank-you notes and arrange the time, and you know,

you have to make sure there is enough publicity so that house knows what is going on, otherwise they won't be there and it is really embarrassing to have somebody from the outside come in and have two people there, you and one other, it is really sad. Sometimes I try to have the house government to do as much of the actual programming as they can."

A: "How much time to you actually spend being the Resident Advisor?"

K.G.: "I don't think you can really call it 40 hours a week, I consider it a 24 a day job. Even when you're not on duty, you're going to a meeting that pertains to your job, you're still always thinking about your job or always there. Even if you're just in your house having fun with your residents, you know playing a game of Trivial Pursuit or Monopoly, something could happen at any minute that requires that you jump into your job, I mean, somebody could just pull the fire alarm and you have to be out and running to the lobby so you can get your piece of chalk to write on the doors, get your master and go through every room, you know, if we ever have the building burning down, and that may never happen."

A: "What other campus organizations are you involved in?"

K.G."I am involved in the Placement Office of Para-Professionals and we have students who are having career decisions, what they want their major to be, and what they want to do with their major, or how to find a job, or how to write a resume. The other organization that I'm involved in is more of a Resident Advisor organization and that is SSD and that is Staff Selection Development. We are responsible for planning Saturday Seminars that I talked about before, the training and we do some stuff with hiring new RAs and setting up the open interest meetings. We are also responsible for the RA News Letter which comes out every month."

A: "Do you have a specific job on the Staff Selection Development team, are there specific responsibilities that you have?"

K.G.: "No, it is just kind of open. There are 9 RAs and 3 RDs one RA from each hall and when it was started in the fall we each just kind of joined a committee if we wanted to join a few committees each. I have been involved with the RA News Letter the whole year, and this semester I am helping out with the RA end of the year banquet and the RA talent show, which is only one time."

A: "Even though you have a single room, how much privacy to you really have?"

K.G.: "At times it seems like there is none, because you can be in your room trying to study for a test and you have five people knocking at your door and the phone is ringing off the hook and you're not in there, but at other times you do because you can shut the door and you don't have to share it with a roommate, you don't have to share the bathroom with suitemates, which I don't some other RAs do, but I don't have to, which I consider a real blessing. But still, even when you're in your room with your door shut, even with your sleeping sign or studying sign in, at any moment could come just asking for anything from 'Where can I sharpen my pencil' to 'I am going to kill myself'."

A: "Tell me about your social life. What do you do for fun? Do you have time to do things for fun?"

K.G.: "A lot of the things that I do for fun are the things that I am expected to do, but they are fun to me, like one of my programmed social events like bringing all these ideas to me anyway so to me that is fun, but it is kind of expected of me as part of my house. Other things that I do when I have time is go out with friends, we go to a restaurant or something and just have a drink or have dinner on a Sunday night. Every once and a while, I walk to Presque Isle and just sit there forget about things for a while. That is about it."

A: "What kind of a relationship do you have with the rest of the staff?"

K.G.: "I think it fluctuates. We try and make it a supportive relationship with each other; we don't backstab each other in front of our residents because they could break down right there. If a resident comes to you complaining about their RA you can't really say 'Well, I agree with you,' but our staff has had some problems in terms of time. It takes time to build a relationship with staff and our staff, there is only like, one time where we can all be there, and that is at our staff meeting, and any other time, basically we can get five people, sometimes six and other times four...it is very rare that we can get a time for all seven people to come and be happy to be there. Sometimes we set up a time where somebody has to come late or leave early, but they want to be there to be with everybody but they have a lot of other things to do."

A: "What have you done as a staff this year?"

K.G.: "We have gone out to dinner a few times, especially on Sunday nights, we kidnaped our RD on her birthday and we tied her hands behind her back and put a blindfold on her and we drove her to a restaurant and made her walk into the restaurant and sit in the restaurant like that for a while. We've watched movies a couple of times. It is basically that low activity interaction type of thing."

A: "What about with other staff? Do you interact with the other resident hall staff?"

K.G.: "Not really, it is kind of a mixture between formal and informal, I mean we see them at Saturday Seminars and training sessions and things like that, and that is where everybody is there, but we don't do a lot of scheduling, saying you know 'Our staff and your staff, let's do something together,' It just doesn't happen that way. We might have friends on other staff that we do things with individually, but as a staff that doesn't happen."

A: "What about with other departments like maintenance or Public Safety or food service...?"

K.G.: "I don't have big contact with Public Safety myself, because in my hall we don't have a lot of hardcore discipline problems. I mean, I know who the guys are and I would say hi to them, but that is about as far as it goes, unless I need something. Maintenance, I have a pretty good-okay relationship with them. Our maintenance man responsible for our building is located on the first floor and anywhere I go in the building I walk past his room, so I see him a lot just to say hi and if I need something I feel free to go ask. And I haven't had to myself, because we haven't a lot of problems in my house in terms of maintenance, we don't have bugs or anything like that. Food Service, at times it is frustrating because, they are responsible for us and making sure that people aren't having food fights in the cafeteria or

stealing food and they don't always feel they have the...the student workers don't feel they have the authority to stop people too, so sometimes you feel like you go in there...some of the student workers do, but they aren't always there."

A: "What do you do if your house's scheduling?"

K.G.: "I am their advisor, and this year I've tried to be a lot more of an advisor than a participant. Last year, I was more participating. I try to be really supportive of them and back them up on things that they do, unless it is totally off the ball and illegal, which they've come up with some illegal ideas, but they don't pout, you know 'You're right,' thank goodness. I try to go to as many of the programs that they plan as possible, just because that way it makes them feel that I'm supportive of them. I'll help them out with programming programs, but I refuse to let myself be the only one. If I turn out to be the only one that programs, the group gets cancelled unless someone decides to help me, because I won't do that to myself. Same thing with fundraising: if they want to have a fundraiser, I'll help them sit out in the lobby and sell something, but if I am the only one sitting out there, they aren't going to have a fundraiser. I have a government meeting every week, and I also try to meet with my president and vice president, not necessarily say, alright, we are going to meet at this time, but I simply talk to them and tell them things that I think are going on in the house government or if I think something needs to be brought up in the next house government meeting, I'll kind of tell her aside so that they feel that it is all coming from each other and not necessarily from me."

A: "How about the hall government: have you been involved with that at all?"

K.G.: "Not officially, there are two advisors to the hall counseling, one is the Resident Director and another is another RA, not myself. I do attend the hall government meetings, basically once or twice a month, give or take, and in my role in that I just kind of sit back and watch things and kind of see what is going on. If they're getting totally off the wall, even though again, I can speak up, or if they're talking about an event that they want to do that I've helped out with before, either with that organization or another, I'll tell them maybe something about my experience with that, and again, help to support their ideas and their activities."

A: "How were you involved with homecoming this past year?"

K.G.: "There were some pretty late nights there. The hall council, they kind of designed it, but as an RA, you're building the float and making sure things got done. It was more of the RAs making sure that, even though there were other people helping us, we were the RAs making sure that things got done rather than the hall council making sure that things got done."

A: "What about with Winfester?"

K.G. : "Basically the same thing, but I think we had maybe a little bit more help. Maybe it was just my imagination, because it was a late night, but at times I felt, I know from my own house I had more people helping out with Winfester than Homecoming, which is really strange because they don't like cold, but I had quite a few members of the house help."

A: "What was your hall's and your own involvement in Winfester? What did you actually do?"

K.G.: "Most of my time, during Winfester was spent building the snow statue. There were other events during Winfester but the only one I really remember actually participating in was broomball one and making the spirt play. The snow structure by far took the most time and the most energy. There were a couple of nights of that, hanging out until 2 o'clock in the morning hanging out in the snow and the slush and the ice, sliding on the ground and falling down. Just, building up the snow and trying to wait and trying to get too wet and catch pneumonia."

A: "Were you involved with Top Gun?"

K.G.: "Automatically as an RA you're involved with Top Gun; Top Gun is a competition between the halls and houses. Our job is to help keep track of the points our house...I mean our Vice President is the one in charge of what points we have, we just kind of make sure that she is doing our job or that she is not lying about things that are going on or forging her signature or something like that. Also, trying to promote Top Gun... we are not supposed to say 'Top Gun is bad, we are not going to do it.' Some houses end up with that decision, but we are not supposed to...if they want to reach that decision, that is fine, but we are not supposed to promote them for reaching that decision on our own. My house was Top Gun, kind of."

A: "How did you spend your time over breaks?"

K.G.: "Thanksgiving Break, even though I wasn't on duty, I was here. I just didn't feel like going home for such a short break. Christmas, I went home. We all went home, the building is closed. Spring Break, I was on duty for 8 days. During Spring Break, being on duty, it was just like regular nights of duty: you've got to be in the building by 8 until 7, but there were some really big differences. The building was locked automatically, so you didn't have to lock any doors. You could do the rounds whenever you wanted, and there were only 7 people in the building, so you really could do the rounds whenever you wanted because a lot of them went anyway. So, you know, some nights I didn't do a round until 9 and another at 1, some nights I did one at 8 and one at 11:30. It just depended on what was best for that night. I was still supposed to around sometimes during the day in case anyone had a problem, they could contact me."

A: "What kind of discipline problems do you deal with as an RA?"

K.G.: "Most situations I encounter are quiet hour violations. Our quiet hours...10 o'clock is supposed to be no noise outside the door and a lot of people tend to forget that and they are still having fun and it is 10 o'clock and you can hear them up and down the hall and meanwhile, you have above them, below them, next door, down the hall trying to sleep and study, and that is probably the major one. The other major one would be encountering guys wandering through the building, because in Spaulding Hall, our doors are locked at 10 o'clock and males are not supposed to be in here unless they are escorted by a resident and some of them tend to forget that too and try and get in or they just leave their female's room and try to walk out on their own. So, a lot of our time, whether we are on duty or not, is if there is

a guy walking down the hall at 10 o'clock is to escort them out of the building safely. I don't deal with a lot of busting parties or fights and that kind of thing. It just doesn't really happen here."

A: "What about your classes; can you tell me about them?"

K.G.: "They're there!"

A: "Do you like your classes?"

K.G. "I try, this semester it is easy because two of my classes are right back-to-back in the same building, so if I miss one, I tend to miss the other because they are both in the same day. I have one other class that is a night class. I try to go to class, I think there were only a couple of times when I missed the first one because I was up so late the night before that I just wanted to sleep that extra hour. My classes this semester are harder, and trying to fit study time in sometimes is a pain. Sometimes if my house is with me, because my house is 99% freshmen, and some of them haven't really realized yet what studying is and how you can benefit from studying. Sometimes it is hard, I can say, 'I have to go study now,' and they're like 'Studying? What is studying? You don't need to study, come do this with us!' And that is kind of hard."

A: "Is there anything else that you can tell me about being an RA this year?"

K.G.: "The one thing I think I've started to notice more this year, I think it is because I'm older, like I just said, my house is mostly freshmen which means they are about 17 or 18 years old, and I'm 21, that is a pretty big...three or four years doesn't sound like a lot, but it can be. It can be an advantage and a disadvantage. At times, I feel older, and times I feel like I'm mom, reminding them to go to class, do their homework, wear their coat, and all that kind of stuff...that they should go to the doctor because they are sick. Sometimes the problems they have like seem real minor to me because I'm older. Gee, my hair doesn't look good, I don't have anything to wear...to me, those are just problems from back in high school. But at times, it is nice too, because they are young, they are fresh, some of them have the kind of **heart** I need and it is kind of nice to not be surrounded by 21 year olds all the time."

A: "How is this year being an RA different from last year?"

K.G.: "I came into it with more experience and knowing what kinds of problems I would encounter. Knowing, maybe in my mind how I wanted to change from last year, because last year I was only an RA for the second semester, which meant I came into a house that had already had an RA and they were used to her. I had an idea of what I wanted by house to be like, what I wanted my house government to be like. Most of the time, I am pretty happy with it. There are times where things don't go the way I want them to go, but usually pretty happy about that. Sometimes I find it more frustrating than last year, last year it was just kind of a new experience entirely and everything was fun."

A: "Can you tell me about some of the good times you've had this year?"

K.G.: "I think some of them include, one night as a staff we all dressed up as 5 year olds, we all had pajamas on and we all had stuffed animals and baby bottles and we walked down the hall. Everyone was

awake and saw us, we went to our RD's apartment and knocked on the door and acted like we were children until she let us in. She just kind of looked at us like 'What the hell are you doing?' And we all came in. It was pretty funny because we were prank calling her too. The last time we pranked called her and she knew it was us and she was on our way to meet us and that was pretty funny. Another thing we did to our RD was one night after a staff meeting we were all standing in her office and there were 6 of us and our RD and we all looked at each other and the same thought crossed our minds and we just rushed her grabbed her and pushed pulled and shoved her out the door into the snow bank. One of the things my house did is we were painting the house this semester and that took a while when it started but once we did it kind of took off. One night, we had a real tough night, you can't get paint on the carpet, and if you get paint on the carpet you can get charged for it. So we all had painter's pads over all the carpeting and some of them got into a paint fight and they were painting each other and the walls at the same time, and actually the paint fight lasted a week. It started one day and we didn't paint again for a while and the next time we painted it all started up again and they wrote on each other's clothes and it just kind of lasted a while. We did real well; they didn't get any on the carpeting. My house was pretty into slumber parties, we had a couple of those where we tried to stay up all night and we sleep in until noon, they were all about that. We played a lot of games together, everything from card games to Trivial Pursuit, Monopoly, Yahtzee, you name it, and we played it. There was one other thing I started with my house this year, actually it started this semester, and it was my own little personal thing, it was called quotes of the day, and it goes up on the chalk board, and anything that a resident says that's stupid or idiotic or hilariously funny, will be put up on the chalkboard for quotes of the day. This all started one night because we had actually had our first slumber party and we were all in the TV room, I think there were like 8 of us in there, and one of the resident's father is a mortician and he had come up to visit her for the weekend, or for the day, and she had told one of her friends that also lived in the house that he may be picking up a body to take him home for a funeral. So we were sitting in the TV room with the friend that she told, and the girl walked by the TV room and the other girl looked out the TV room and said, 'Is there a body in the trunk?' Well, the girl's father, the mortician was walking behind her and the girl that asked the question just sat down on the floor and turned beat red, and the rest of us are just kind of looking at her like 'What is going on,' We didn't understand what was so funny, and when the girl finally got in her room the other girl turned to us and said, 'Her dad is a mortician,' and we laughed so hard, and we laughed for so long. Every time we think of it now, we just die laughing. So, that is what started quotes of the day. That has been pretty popular we've gotten a lot quotes up there, even some of the things that I haven't personally been around, things that happened and they say, 'Kim, here is this, put this up on quotes of the day.' And we always include who said it, so nothing is nameless; it is totally...you know."

A: "Of all of the things that you've done this semester, you've been involved in a lot of house, hall, resident's life activities, what stands out as being real memorable, if that, maybe not the most memorable, but very memorable happening, good bad..."

K.G.: "I think one of the most memorable would be, it was a Saturday night, and I was on duty with one other person and it had been a real strange night anyway, I think there was a full moon. I mean, it was one thing after another, you're always shutting a door here, shutting a door here, escorting guys out of

the building and we had finished a round, and we were sitting the office which is kind of next to the entry of the hall and we were just sitting there, just chatting away and one of the night clerk came in and he sitting there talking with us and we just sat there. The other people who don't live in the hall; they try to find ways to break into the hall and we heard this key in the door and it sound a little weird because it didn't sound like somebody who knew how to unlock the door, and so we all just sat there and looked at the doorway, and this was after 10 o'clock so any guys had to be escorted by a resident. And as we sat there, six guys walk through the door, and we all kind of looked at each other and we all ran out the door and the night clerk was the one who ran out and said 'freeze!' and three of them kind of looked at us and turned away and walked back out the door but the other three took off up the stairs, so we are chasing them through the entire building, and this was like 1 o'clock or 1:30 in the morning, and there are people sleeping, and here we are chasing these three guys through the building and the night clerk is yelling 'Stop, I'll call the police!' and you know, I couldn't keep up with them, it was pretty funny, you know, we got them out of the building and we passed some residents and they're like 'What is going on, it sounded like a heard of elephants,' we're like, 'It is okay, we were just chasing three men through the building. Nothing to worry about, just go back to bed.' The whole night, I mean everywhere on campus, the night clerk was sitting there talking to us, everywhere on campus was like that. It was the only night I remember being that strange. It was, it was like there was a full moon and everyone was talking about it. And, to top it off, our RD wasn't there that weekend, there were three or four of us in the building that the time. We had that happen, and one of my residents had found a cigarette burning in the hallway, and if she hadn't found it, it was like 2 o'clock in the morning, and if she hadn't found it, the hall could have caught on fire and that was just one more thing we didn't need at that time. Anything that could have happened that weekend happened."

---END TAPE---