

open to all

A WELCOMING PLACE FOR STUDENTS

President Mark Gordon and wife, Anne, are proving that their home is the College's home

by Michele Tinker, Director of Annual Giving

The home of the college president is about five blocks from the campus, but Mark Gordon and his wife, Anne, have worked to make it an intrinsic part of Defiance College by opening the house to students on a regular basis.

Study nights are a good example. Monday through Thursday, 7 to 10 p.m., students are invited to bring their books and laptops and study at the president's house. This is a feature the Gordons started last year that is gaining in popularity.

Study nights at the president's house have drawn many students, generally freshmen, and many of the participants are athletes who have mandatory study tables. That means they can choose to study at the library or go to the president's house. Not all the participants are athletes, however. Some are students who like the feeling of studying at home, being accountable and taking advantage of the food always available at the Gordons'. And there's always the opportunity for a bowl of ice cream and a game of ping pong with President Gordon once you're done studying.

Anne Gordon says the study nights give her and President Gordon a chance to know some of the students they might not have a chance to meet otherwise. While the house is usually set up for about 12, "We've had as many as over 20 a night," Anne reports. "It's another way to make the President's house a more useful part of the campus. We get to know the students as part of our family."



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It also gives them a chance to see what classes are giving the students trouble and to lend a hand to a struggling student. Math is Anne's forte (she's a structural engineer), and it is not uncommon for her to do some tutoring or help a student prep for a quiz. Plus, she adds, the study nights set a good example for their own two sons.



Anne Gordon, top photo, lends a hand to students, from left: Zach Joseph, Aaron Spence, Brian Arcario and Kevin Ferguson. Above, Brian Norris gets comfortable with a book on the couch.

Matt Coons, a freshman from Sadieville, Ky. (near Lexington), is a regular at study night at the Gordons'. He likes the environment of the president's home for studying, and he likes having a chance to get out of the dorms. "His family is very inviting," Matt adds.

"When I came to visit, President Gordon asked what he could do to help me succeed, and I told him I was worried about keeping up with assignments. The study nights help." Matt has set aside Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7 to 10. "The Gordons always have snacks. There's been hot cider this fall, and frequently there's ice cream, too," which all the students know is a favorite with President Gordon. Are the study nights paying off for Matt? He reports his midterm grades were great, "What I was hoping they'd be."

A self-professed geek, Matt says he is involved "in everything." He is a service leader, in the honors program and a member of HTCIA – which is High Tech Crime Investigation Association, a group made up of mostly professionals in the business. Defiance College is one of the few colleges who participate in this professional organization.

Brian Norris, a football player from East Lansing, Mich., echoes Matt's sentiments. For him, the study nights are part of the personal attention students receive at Defiance College. His mid-term grade average was 3.6 – but his goal is 3.8. Brian is currently a business major.

One of the young women who participates in study night at the president's house is Gretel Briand, a freshman from Oskaloosa, Kansas. A volleyball player who is studying athletic training, she calls studying at the president's house fun. "I can get a lot of work done." Study nights at the Gordons' reflect the close family atmosphere of the DC campus, Gretel says, much different than the huge state university in Kansas where her mother works.

The Gordons have reached out to students in other ways as well. Anne has provided each incoming freshman with a coupon for a home-cooked meal, and some students have become real regulars for those meals. President Gordon is known for showing up at the dorms to collect students for an ice cream run. He and Anne extended an invitation to all students not going home for Thanksgiving to join them for a pre-Thanksgiving dinner the Wednesday before the holiday. ◆



LET'S COLLABORATE

A Defiance Hall classroom has been transformed into a lab that is both functional and comfortable

A new Defiance Hall student workspace named the CoLab has been implemented in response to student and faculty interest in creating "open" student work spaces that facilitate collaboration on group projects. The CoLab is similar to the Pilgrim Library Learning Commons in both design and purpose in that it is a comfortable yet functional workspace.

Defiance Hall was a logical site for the CoLab since many adult, commuter, and graduate students have classes there and often have trouble finding a functional workspace between classes.

The CoLab has two independent PC workstations, two small group PC workstations, one large work group station, two large white boards, and four "soft furniture" independent work stations.

The CoLab is a great place to read or study between classes, finalize and print papers before class, or to meet for small group project development. The CoLab was designed by Pilgrim Library Director Andrew Whitis (who came up with the CoLab name) and Interim Academic Dean Dr. Tim Rickabaugh, and thanks go out to Jim Coressel and the maintenance staff, Todd Harpest and the computer services staff, and Kathy Panches for the implementation of the project over the summer.

Dr. Rickabaugh commented, "I am sure that our students will appreciate the CoLab and use it on a regular basis. It is our experience, as in the recently developed Pilgrim Library Learning Commons, that students value these areas as their own space." ◆