

The JC Experience

Setting

- The students interviewed were JCs in Hoyme Hall. Ten students were interviewed, five male and five female. The JC program is a program unique to St. Olaf designed to help foster community among first-year students.

Problem

- JCs are upperclassmen who live in first year dorms so being JC most likely influences relationships they had before being JCs
- They are authority figures to the first-year students making it difficult to form friendship bonds while maintaining their authoritative position

Methodology

- Semi-structured interviews were held with ten JCs for informational interviewing to understand what types of people become JCs and how their relationships are influenced. One corridor meeting was attended as well to observe JC-resident interaction.

Observations

- JC personalities tend to be open, accepting, upbeat and nurturing. They became JCs to help others.
- The Hoyme staff fostered a positive, healthy relationship. Everyone was very respectful of each other and cared a lot.
- Residents and JCs formed friendly relationships, but barriers existed between them due to their authoritative position. JCs liked their residents but often admitted they were not the type of people who they would normally choose as friends.

- Authority caused a lot of inner dispute for JCs, especially in terms of alcohol policy. JCs do not want to bust the residents. Some said they would go to all lengths to avoid busting whereas others said they would bust if necessary. Those who avoided busting were found to have stronger relationships with their corridor than JCs who bust people.

Synopsis

- Being a JC is a time consuming process but overall positive for those who apply. They are able to help the first years adapt even though sometimes it can be hard when they have to bust them for rule breaking. Each JC came to their decision on policy enforcement individually for their own reasons.

The JC Experience:

How Being a JC Impacts Relationship Formations

By Claire MacDonald

Abstract

At St. Olaf first-years are welcomed to campus by their Junior Counselor (JC), who is there to help them make the adjustment from high school to college. Their JCs live with them in an all first-year dorm and assist them with questions, providing social support, and report anyone caught breaking rules. Viewing JCs as an important asset to St. Olaf, I set out to discover the effects being a JC has on their relationships. I interviewed ten JCs from Hoyme Hall, five female and five male. Based on their interviews I learned some JCs have a difficult time maintaining relationships outside of their really close friends because they are physically separated by living in an all first-year dorm. For others, however, it had essentially no impact on their

social life. I also discovered the Hoyme JCs to have a very respectful and caring dynamic among their staff. They each expressed a sense of compassion for their fellow JCs and knew they could count on any of them if needed, although they were not an exclusive clique. All the JCs reported forming respectful relationships with their residents. Some JCs were far closer with their residents than other JCs, and it later seemed this was a result of policy enforcement. Some JCs expressed an opposition to some of the policies and essentially chose not to enforce them while others did as they were told. Those who opted not to enforce policy formed stronger and more trusting relationships with their corridor.

The Setting and St. Olaf Community

One of many small, liberal arts colleges in the country, St. Olaf College is home to approximately 3,000 students. Sitting on the outskirts of Northfield, Minnesota, a town of about 17,000 people, the campus ambiance reflects the small town atmosphere. It is beautiful with green grass and blossoming trees in the summer and pure white snow in the wintertime. St. Olaf is situated on a hill keeping it somewhat separate from Northfield and Carleton College forming what many refer to as the “St. Olaf bubble”. The bubble refers to the isolationism on campus, where students experience almost no impact from the outside world. The campus feels safe and clean; it is obvious people care about this place and care for it. Although only 3,000 students attend St. Olaf, it is required to live on campus all four years unless a valid reason is given to the residence life office so there are eleven dorms. All dorms have been co-ed by floor since 1973 with the exception of Mellby, which was an all women’s hall until 1986 (Cohen, 2003). The campus is set up in a way that is welcoming to first-year students while still enjoyed by seniors. Part of this is the dormitory set-up of the campus, which designates specific housing arrangements for first-years and allows upperclassmen to choose from the remaining places. Of the eleven dorms on campus, five house first-year students four of which are exclusively for first-years. Mohn, the dormitory that houses both first-years and upperclassmen, separates them by floor giving it a first-year feel on the first-year floors.

Although each first-year dorm is made up of all first-years they also have a handful of juniors who work as Junior Counselors (JCs). JCs act as guides, counselors, and authoritative figures to the first-year students. They are fully

educated on St. Olaf's missions, values and policies and are expected to convey them to the incoming first-year students to help create a positive beginning to their St. Olaf experience.

In order to become a JC one must apply the spring before and interview for the position. JCs are paid a stipend of \$1,000 for the year, but considering being a JC is fairly time consuming students did not report taking the position for the money. Instead it is those who really value the position and want to be apart of the first-years' lives. Generally not enough males apply and are essentially guaranteed acceptance whereas an abundance of females apply making it a harder position to obtain. Being a counselor and social aid tends to be associated with a more nurturing, feminine quality, making it by and large more appealing to females than males.

After the interview process JC candidates are informed of their acceptance or rejection. Those accepted then part of the JC staff. Each dorm has its own JC staff meaning JCs have to choose which first-year dorm they would like to live in. Many JCs live in the dorm they lived in during their first year since they already have fond memories of it, but others feel they would never want to replace those memories so they opt for a different dorm. Each freshman dorm has a bit of a reputation, which can also influence one's decision on where to live. Ellingson is home to the Great Conversation program, making it known as a tamer, more academic dorm whereas Hoyme has been deemed 'the party dorm'. Kildahl has the smallest rooms on campus making for crammed living, but a strong sense of community, whereas Kittelsby has the largest rooms on campus, making for comfortable living but a feeling of isolation. Kittelsby is also somewhat disconnected from campus and is part of two connected dorms traditionally known as "HillKitt", with the other dorm for upperclassmen. Mohn tends to be the least desirable dorm for JCs because it is mainly a dorm for upperclassmen with the exception of the top three floors. The layout makes it difficult to form strong JC-resident relationships as well because instead of long hallways, rooms are grouped into pairs of 3s or 4s (Cohen, 2003). Room assignment is done through a special room draw held for JCs, their room assignment depending on both luck and preference.

Like the first-years, JCs live in doubles with other JCs. They may choose their roommate if they want, but it is not required to be part of a roommate pair in order to become a JC. A meeting is held the spring before where future JCs meet and tell the residence life director who their JC roommate will be. If they do not have a roommate they generally choose at that

meeting. The rooms JCs live in are distributed evenly all through the first-years rooms throughout the dorms, making the surrounding rooms their corridor. The number of rooms in each JC's corridor varies from dorm to dorm and on the number of JCs available. All corridors are same-sex, causing some male corridors to be exceptionally large due to the lack of JC applicants.

JCs work on community development, student wellness, and policies. They come to campus a week before the first-year students arrive termed Week 0. Week 0 is a time for the JCs to become acquainted with their staff, settle in on campus, and learn many of the aspects of being a JC. Workshops, meetings and paperwork consume a large portion of each day, covering everything from the leadership roles to fostering the St. Olaf community to rule enforcement. The rule that generally causes the most controversy and that is covered most thoroughly is St. Olaf's alcohol policy, which states that

the possession, distribution or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on the St. Olaf campus, on land owned by the college, and in college-owned honor and language houses. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited at all college-sponsored functions, no matter where located, that include students as guests (Kneser, 2004).

JCs are responsible for reporting any St. Olaf student they discover to be drinking anywhere on campus. If they are fully aware of students drinking alcohol yet do not report them to the college dean they can be fired. If they suspect alcohol is being consumed they are supposed to investigate but cannot be fired if they choose not to do so. Off campus, JCs are encouraged to leave any gathering or social setting where alcohol is present if they see first-year residents from their dorm, but since it is not on campus this is only a strong recommendation. Alcohol policy is just one of many topics discussed in Week 0 workshops. When they are not in workshops, residence life has teambuilding exercises planned to facilitate a strong, respectful staff. Many of these activities are run by the dorm's Area Coordinator, a non-student who lives in the dorm and is employed by St. Olaf. Each Area Coordinator is responsible for two dorms on campus. They are responsible for the dorm's well-being and making sure JCs are fulfilling their duties. Additionally, if a problem arises that is too difficult for a JC to handle the Area Coordinator is there to assist them.

The first week first-years are on campus is termed Week 1. This is a time when it is crucial JCs are energetic, helpful and understanding about all aspects of

transition. Their role is to inform first-years of the rules, help them start off life at St. Olaf on a positive note, and be supportive to anyone who is having trouble adapting. Once the academic year gets started, JCs continue to fulfill these roles for the first-years while also fostering a sense of unity within their own corridor. Weekly corridor meetings are held where important business is discussed and stories from the week are shared. Some corridors start corridor meeting traditions, such as giving an award to the person who got lucky in love that week or bringing treats to share. Meetings are generally between thirty and sixty minutes long and fairly informal. The main purpose is to get everyone together to socialize and relax. Other corridor events are planned by JCs, and whether it is a movie night or beauty makeovers, the group as a whole usually decides upon the activities. Some corridors get weekly “pack-outs” where the campus food service makes food to be picked up and eaten in the dorm. Sometimes they will have “screws”, where two corridors, one male and one female, get together for an activity. The activity can be anything from dinner in Minneapolis to bowling at Jesse James Lanes in Northfield; the idea is to facilitate dating among the first-years.

JCs have other obligations in addition to entertaining their corridor. They have weekly staff meetings and have to be “on duty” approximately twice a month. Being on duty consists of making rounds every two and a half hours starting at 7:00pm, when they walk through the entire dorm checking to make sure the dorm is in order and no rules are being broken. Hoyme has a duty log that the person on duty uses to make notes of unusual behavior or instances of rule breaking. If residents are suspected of breaking rules, JCs are supposed to knock on the door of the alleged rule breaker and enter after they have been given permission. If permission is refused they contact the Area Coordinator who comes and uses forced entry into the room. Once in the room, the JCs will write down the names and identification numbers of any students partaking in unauthorized activities. The alcohol policy tends to create the most debate and causes residents to be most upset when they are busted for breaking it. After the students have been written up, the information is given to the Area Coordinator who then meets with the students and gives the students a punishment. Punishments vary based upon the violation committed, the number of previous violations and behavior of the students while being busted. A typical punishment for a first time alcohol violation is a fine and computer-based alcohol information session.

The Problem

In theory the Junior Counselor program sounds like a wonderful idea, making everyone's life a little easier and better. The question arises, however, how does being a JC influence one's relationships? JCs live in all first-year dorms and dedicate a large portion of their lives to helping these first-year students have a positive experience, taking up time that would normally be put elsewhere. Furthermore, these first-years are their friends, yet JCs are also their authoritative figures. How does living among new friends influence a JC's ability and desire to act within their authoritative role? I figured an impact must be felt on the relationships they form with their corridor and I wondered what exactly the impact was. Forced to try and find a balance between their authoritative role and friendly, nurturing role makes role conflict theory undoubtedly relevant to the JC position.

Authority rarely falls all on one person. The rules and policies of St. Olaf were created long before these JCs joined Hoyme's staff, yet as the most visible authoritative figures they are often associated with both upholding the rules and supporting them. If a JC does not support the rules they are expected to impose feelings of bitterness are likely to arise (Borgatta, 1992, vol 3). When expectations of the JCs and the residence life office differ the JC is forced to make decisions about which aspects of the JC role they would like to emphasize and which they will downplay. Often when choosing to enforce rules and therefore upset residents, JCs are quick to comment they do so because they have to, not because it is something they enjoy, hoping to diminish personal responsibility for their actions and redeem their character to the Hoyme residents (Berry, 1974).

This role conflict forces JCs to make decisions, most of which can be examined through the exchange theory. How JCs choose to react to the responsibilities that accompany the JC position is mainly a result of how they will be rewarded and/or punished for their actions. If a JC feels they are helping themselves or the student body by busting residents for alcohol possession they are more likely to enforce policy than a JC who would not feel they were helping. JCs are going to base their decision on what makes them feel most rewarded and how often they are rewarded (Borgatta, 1992, vol 2). For some, experiencing constant gratitude and ease among their corridor outweighs the reward of occasional approval received from residence life. Having become JCs to build friendly, nurturing relationships with their corridor, it is likely busting residents would have more of a negative than positive impact. These JCs are more likely to decide to avoid busting their corridor if at all possible. For other JCs, risking

damage to their relationship with their corridor is less important than knowing they carried out the duties required by their JC position.

The JC role has many expectations attached to it and JCs are forced to choose which areas they would like to emphasize, such as counselor, authoritative figure or friend. Often JCs cannot be all of these equally because the roles contradict themselves to some degree. A friend is rarely responsible for reporting policy violations of another friend and a boss is seldom viewed as an ally. In order to be an effective authoritative figure one's subjects must believe the threat of authority is real and the enforcer will willingly enforce the rules. This means the enforcer must be willing to assume a role with negative connotations, which not all JCs are willing to do. However, since being a JC is a job, JCs run the risk of being fired if they do not carry out the required tasks, such as rule enforcement. JCs must weigh the pros and cons of acting on behalf of the residence life office versus in a manner their corridor would prefer. Often a JC will decide if busting a resident is morally acceptable before taking action. If they agree with the rule and also feel the rule was being broken blatantly they are more likely to follow through with their rule enforcement duties (Airaksinen, 1988). How JCs choose to place themselves within this framework will most likely influence the relationships formed throughout their corridor. I set out to understand the social implications of being a JC at St. Olaf College and how JCs felt about them.

Methodology

After deciding on JCs as area of study, I narrowed my research even further to make it an ethnographic study of Hoyme JCs and their relationships. Hoyme houses 211 students, 102 male and 109 female. Of these students, seventeen are JCs, eight are male and ten are female reported Heather Limanen, Hoyme's Area Coordinator (email correspondence, April 29, 2004.). By limiting my research to one dorm I felt I could better get a feel for what was going on inside the dorm and how the same conditions affected people similarly and differently. Understanding the JCs' thoughts on their relationships could best be understood through interviewing different Hoyme JCs individually since I did not have the option of living with them before and after they became JCs.

In order to prepare my list of interview questions I first did some research on St. Olaf's ideas for JCs. I read "Color Outside the Lines" and "Residence

Life”, two handbooks JCs are given during Week 0. They explain St. Olaf’s expectations for being a staff member, community development, leadership, group dynamics, emergency procedures, campus and judicial policies and monthly events. After this I went on to learn more about the levels and layers involved in being an authority figure who lives with and forms friendly relationships with corridor residents. I took this one step further by examining the roles of nannies and how the gray lines between employee and parental figure can cause great complications in the working world. Once I had completed my research I wrote out a list of seventeen questions to ask each JC. I decided although I had a list of questions I wanted to be sure to ask, I would do a semi-structured interview so I could ask any probing or follow-up questions I felt necessary.

While writing the interview questions I decided it was important to talk to an equal number of males and females. Even though Hoyme has more female JCs than male JCs, for my purposes it was more important to be sure to understand both sides equally. How males and females form and maintain relationships are different in some respects, and in order to understand how being a JC affects both genders it was imperative I talk to both. I contacted the JCs through email after getting their names from a friend who is a JC in Hoyme. After they responded we set up a time to meet either in their room or in the Cage, an on-campus coffee shop, for an interview. Interviews generally lasted anywhere from thirty to seventy minutes. I also attended one corridor meeting to see how the JCs interacted with their corridor residents and whether the JCs’ and residents behavior correlated with what they had said in their interview. I had hoped to attend more corridor meetings but by second semester many JCs had stopped holding weekly corridor meetings.

My methodology had a few flaws as well. First, I was not able to see more interaction between the residents and their JCs or ask the residents how they felt about their JCs to compare answers with what the JCs said during their interview. Secondly, after the first couple interviews I realized other questions that could be useful but was unable to use them since I did not have enough time to put my proposal through the IRB a second time. I also noticed when I conducted interviews in a JC’s room they were much more relaxed and talked for much longer than when I met with JCs in the Cage. Unfortunately by the time I recognized this many of the interviews were already set up and the JCs had planned the interviews around times when they would be in Buntrock and did not wish to change the location. Finally, I am basing my research on only ten interviews, while there are seventeen JCs in Hoyme.

Findings

JC Personalities

Being a JC is not right for everyone. A large portion of the St. Olaf student body would not enjoy it nor would they be any good at it. When asked why they felt they made good JCs, it seemed Hoyme's JCs consider themselves to have a lot of the same qualities one would look for in a friend. The vast majority saw themselves as counselors and good listeners who give good advice and are concerned for others' well being. Being approachable and respectful of others came up a lot, both as qualities they generally felt they had and as qualities crucial to the position. Most saw themselves as fun, laid-back, outgoing and sociable. These personality traits are beneficial to a job like a JC because they help to put the new first-years at ease and feel they have entered into a friendly, fun-loving environment. Hoyme's JCs already knew this about the position and about themselves, so they were aware they would make good JCs before taking the JC position. Since one must be a junior to become a JC, they have all experienced life as a first-year and as a sophomore on campus, making them more qualified to offer guidance to their residents. Based on responses, it seems people who are eager and skilled in offering support to people are the type of person who applies for the JC position.

JCs also appear to be people who think in advance. Five of the ten JCs reported their decision to be a JC was influenced by the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills and build their resumes. These same JCs described themselves as organized, indicating people who choose to become JCs are motivated and geared towards working for a positive future for themselves. None seemed to have become a JC strictly to improve their resumes, and they were all clearly involved in their residents' lives and wanted to help them as much as they could, but it was an influencing factor.

Acting as a counselor and helping the first-years get off to a positive start was the main reason all ten JCs said they applied. One of their big anticipations was to be a part of helping to foster a positive experience for the residents in their corridors, which is proved to be an accurate expectation for many JCs. Almost all had anticipated a combination of fun and work from the position, although some JCs said they had not anticipated quite so much work. Some had thought more about the social benefits of being a JC and had neglected to strongly consider the administrative obligations involved. Weekly staff meetings, reporting residents who break rules and being on duty were

among some of the most commonly mentioned tasks they had not fully considered. A couple of JCs even went so far to say that duty was a waste of their time. “I’m not their mother, so why should I have to babysit them?” wondered one JC, “I mean, they’re big kids and can take care of themselves. They don’t need me checking up on them.” Others, however, felt it to be an important aspect of the JC’s responsibility. One JC in particular felt that although first-years are adults who have moved away from home, they could get a bit crazy and sometimes need to be told when to slow down. No matter how they feel about the administrative obligations, none of the JCs felt it was enough to deter or make them regret the experience of being a JC.

Social Realities

JCs are faced with several social realities. They have chosen to step up to the task of welcoming first-years to St. Olaf, putting forth the effort of being their counselor and friend, and enforcing the rules of the college. Clearly this is a big commitment and is going to have an impact on their social life. JCs are placed in first-year dorms away from the rest of the upperclassmen. Six of the ten JCs said being physically isolated from the friends is challenging. When they lived in the same dorms as their friends they were able to just run downstairs and chat with their friends, but now they have to allot a chunk of time to go to another dorm to visit. This is not to say friendships are lost, but significant strain was noted by many JCs. As one JC put it “my good friends are still there, but I still feel out of the loop.” Many of the JCs reported having to make a lot of the effort because their friends did not want to come all the way to Hoyme. “If I want to just hangout, I have to go to them,” said one female JC, making it even harder to balance her two lives. JCs are expected to be around Hoyme a lot so they are available and accessible if one of the residents needs them, meaning many JCs are forced to choose between their old friends and the promise they made when deciding to become a JC. Most reported being too busy as is, between staff obligations, hanging out with their corridor and their academic obligations, so adding the responsibility to visit their other friends appeared demanding. Several JCs reported still being very close with their core friends but admitted most other friendships had disappeared. Some found this hard at first but then seem to have adapted and accepted it, realizing the position has its trade-offs.

It is also difficult because if a JC is found to be spending time with someone who is drinking on campus without reporting them, the JC will lose his/her job. This means JCs are sometimes unable to hangout with their friends during the weekends if their friends are drinking, which is hard because

weekends are an easy time to make large chunks of time to spend with friends. Unless they know exactly what their friends are up to, and that it does not involve any prohibited behaviors, showing up in at a friend's room on a weekend night could be risky. Some JC admitted to hanging out and drinking in other dorms regardless, but they were careful to make sure they knew everyone who would be there and nobody connected to Hoyme would be around. "Being a JC has forced me to make safer choices, which is not something I always want to be doing at age twenty-one," complained one female JC. Even if going off campus to drink, many times JCs said they would only go if they knew no Hoyme residents were going to be present. Of course, this problem only arose for JCs who either like to drink or have friends who like drink, so for some of the JCs it was not an issue.

Living in a first-year dorm also involves a different mentality than an upper class dorm. These students just arrived and are concerned with making friends and figuring out their major, whereas upperclassmen are thinking about jobs and graduate school. JCs are want to be there to help them, but at the same time it is challenging to be on a different wavelength than the majority of people surrounding you.

Not all JCs felt that being a JC had a negative impact on their social life. Two male JCs reported no impact at all on their social life and two female JCs actually reported a positive improvement. This was a surprising discovery, since the other JCs had experienced such a difficult time maintaining their old friendships. These two JCs felt their social networks to have expanded to include their residents and the Hoyme staff. Now when they are around campus they almost always see somebody they know, which never used to happen before.

It is clear the Hoyme staff has a great relationship and they look forward to seeing one another around campus. Almost no negative comments were made about anyone, which I found amazing. It would have seemed putting seventeen twenty and twenty-one year olds together could result in some power issues or disagreements over ideas. Taking a group of people from different backgrounds and putting them all in the same leadership position could be a recipe for disaster. But the Hoyme staff appears to have skipped right past that, having formed what almost all ten JCs described as a respectful, fun-loving relationship. They are very different and admit that, but nobody seemed to find that a problem. Staff meetings were described as long and tedious, but made bearable by the jokes and good spirits of the staff. It is a time when they all come together and are able to reconnect as a group; it is part of what keeps

them connected. They are all unique individuals and have become JCs for different reasons, with various expectations of what JCs should be like, but many feel this to be a positive factor because as a whole they able to offer the Hoyme residents so many more perspectives and resources. As with most large groups, smaller cliques have formed within the staff, but none are exceptionally exclusive or intimidating to other staff members. “Even though we’re not tight as rice, we all mean a lot to each other and care for each other,” said one JC with a huge smile on her face. It was obvious she cares a lot for her staff members even though she acknowledged she was only really close with a few of them. Part of this is most likely a result of the type of people who choose to be JCs in the first place. When describing themselves as people and as JCs, descriptive words such as ‘accepting’, ‘open’ and ‘respectful’ were extremely common. If one hopes to get along with an entire corridor, a mindset and personality to be able to tolerate people of all kinds improves the chances of a cooperative and considerate staff.

The residence life office attempts to help produce this friendly atmosphere too. During Week 0 the staff spends a large portion of time on icebreakers and allows staff members to engage in friendly rivalries. Once the academic year starts this is continued by teambuilding activities. The most regular of these is the Stellar Staff award. Every week at their staff meetings a new staff member is chosen to receive the Stellar Staff award and then the entire staff comes together in a circle and the Stellar Staff member stands in the center. Then each person goes around and says something nice about the selected person. Some JCs greatly value this experience, saying “it really shows you how even though we’re all so different, we really do value each other as people.” People are so personal and when it’s your turn you realize, “wow, they really do care about me,” commented one JC who really felt it to be a highly effective technique. Others find it to be tedious and time consuming, although nobody deemed it worthless. The residence life office also has each JC make a list of all the things they hope to do in their lifetime and post them. After this each JC chose one activity off their list for the group to do as a whole, such as rock climbing down at Tostrud athletic center or skydiving. The events really bring the staff together for a fun time while helping each other reach their goals. They also go on two staff retreats during the year, one in the fall and one in the spring, when they partake in group bonding activities, campfire songs, and relaxing. Based on the overwhelmingly positive dynamics among the Hoyme staff Stellar Staff, the life goals’ lists and staff retreats appear to have been successful tools in promoting a positive environment among colleagues.

Much like their positive staff relations, most JCs depicted the relationship built between them and their corridor as very understanding and respectful. Not all JCs are paired up with residents who necessarily clicked with their personality, but nobody reported any major problems. All the JCs seemed to enjoy and value each individual in their corridor regardless of how similar or different they were from each other. A lot of this probably stems from the fact the vast majority of JCs portray themselves as open and accepting, indicating they are receptive to all sorts of different people. Most JCs reported being closer to some residents than others, which is expected since the matching of JCs and residents is somewhat random. On the whole, most JCs felt themselves to be friends with the vast majority of first-years in their corridor. These friendships entail hanging out in each other's rooms, watching movies, playing video games and having corridor pack-outs. Female JCs are expected to handle a lot more emotions as well. None of the male JCs reported ever being asked to assist a resident who was experiencing some difficult emotional issues whereas all of the female JCs made it clear it was a large part of the job. Clearly this is typical and somewhat expected as males are simply more emotionally reserved than females. A few female JCs conveyed themselves to have a big sister relationship with their girls, someone who is older and wiser who they are comfortable around and can go to for fun or advice. Most JCs made it clear to their residents on the first day they were not there as babysitters but rather friends and counselors. The beginning seems to have been the hardest part for many JCs as they had to make sure the first-years knew the rules and understood consequences would follow if they were broken while at the same time trying to represent themselves as positive and likeable figures. It was a complicated experience and it appears JCs had to choose which aspect they wanted to emphasize to their corridor.

A couple JCs explained their relationship as “interesting”, yet still respectful. For one JC this meant having to spread herself equally among the four different circles that have emerged within her corridor and for another it meant coping with the vast differences between her and her girls. “I’m a hippie and I know it,” she said, “so having been put with a group of fairly conservative girls is somewhat difficult, but we make it work.” She did not describe her connection with her corridor as a friendship, but more as pleasant. They know she is there for them if they need her, which they have grown to find comforting. Even though they find her to be a bit eccentric for them, they trust her a lot and she has had several people come to her about extremely personal and confidential matters. She knows although they may not think she’s “cool” or even fun to hangout with, they are grateful for her presence. If they are throwing up in the bathroom from drinking excessively

they will generally ask for her or her roommate. It is the counseling and trust that has really come through for her as a JC. She has not compromised her liberal ideology in order to be accepted by her girls but remained true to her beliefs without pushing them upon others. As a result she has been able to come across as a very real person. Being true to oneself is an attractive quality and although it may not make her girls want to become her friend, it does give them the sense that she's going to stand up for what she believes in, so if she believes in her girls, she will be there for them.

Of course, even though JCs are trying to become friends with their residents, it is not ever going to be entirely the same as their other friendships. JCs and residents do not choose each other, so they are not always going to get a perfect fit. It is apparent some JCs are going to prefer some residents to others, but unlike with other friends they will need to treat all the residents equally and not play favorites. Of course, eventually things sort themselves out, but it appears JCs find it hard not to favor some residents over others. Based on the given descriptions, it is obvious residents and JCs get along very well and are sometimes even friends, but would not usually select each other for their friendship base. Some of this may come from JCs and residents having to censor conversations. With their friends outside of Hoyme they can discuss drinking, drug use or sex without any hesitation, but they need to be careful not to allow their residents know what they have been doing. A couple JCs have disclosed to their residents that they drink, but they still do not generally share stories from a crazy Saturday night or who-said-what at the bar with their corridor. This applies even more so to the residents, because they cannot tell their JCs if they plan to drink in the dorms before going out to a party because then they will be busted.

Political and religious beliefs are also often suppressed in the corridor. JCs are not supposed to push their ideas on their residents, so for a politically active or strongly religious JC, this can mean covering up a large piece of their personality, creating a more shallow relationship. Conversations tend to revolve more around sports or mindless gossip than serious issues. And although residents are strongly encouraged to go to their JCs with any emotional trauma, JCs are discouraged from doing the same. With their other friends JCs may discuss something that is bothering them or hurting them but generally keep these issues from their residents.

Having to take so many considerations about a friendship into account can be tiring. Although they all stress the amazingly positive experience they have had, every JC interviewed is eager for the year to come to an end. Next

year sounds very appealing to them. "It's just time for a change," explained one JC, "Spring fever I guess." The chance to be able to relax and not have to worry about what other people are doing is what most JCs are really looking forward to. Two of the JCs are going to be on staff again next year, but even they admit they are ready for the summer. A large portion of the JCs interviewed are living in off campus houses next year. Possibly they have had their fill of residence life by not only living in the dorms but also being on staff and they are now ready to move off campus. For all JCs not on staff next year, but especially for the ones living off campus, they will be able to really relax and spend sometime focusing on themselves.

The Role of Authority

Authority is one of the most complicated aspects of being a JC. When asked why they wanted to become a JC, what they expected as a JC, or what they enjoyed about being a JC, authority and rule enforcement were never mentioned. It is clear each of them became a JC for the social and counseling aspects; they wanted to help people. Imposing the rules often came up as the worst part of being a JC, and some blatantly admitted they would go to all lengths to avoid busting a resident. It seems it would be even harder to enforce a rule if the person enforcing it did not agree with the rule, which is exactly what faces many Hoyme staff members. None of the JCs agree with the inner visitation rule, which states a person is not allowed on the floor of the opposite sex between certain hours at night. This rule is rarely enforced and residence life openly admits it is only in existence to allow roommates some power if they feel uncomfortable.

The alcohol policy is where the rules become more complicated. Fifty percent of the JCs interviewed say they disagree with St. Olaf's alcohol policy and the other 50% support it only half-heartedly. It is generally not supported for moral reasons but rather because they feel it keeps the campus cleaner or that first-years sometimes take drinking to the extreme. Even some of those in favor of the alcohol policy feel it is out of line for those over twenty-one and it is clear they are not eager to bust anyone for drinking on campus. Put plainly by one JC who supports the rule, "I bust people because I have to, not because I want to." Those who oppose it say it is unrealistic and treats the student body like children that need to be watched over. What is even more interesting is that two of those who are in favor of the alcohol policy admit to being drinkers themselves while three of the JCs who oppose the rule do not drink at all. Half

of the JCs who support alcohol policy are male and half are female, indicating this has no gender basis to it.

Since half of the JCs interviewed disagree with the alcohol policy and the other half are not eager to enforce it, the role of authority poses a problem for many JCs. If they enforce policy many feel it could damage the relationships they have worked so hard to build and make life awkward in the corridor. It may also cause a moral dilemma for some. Since many JCs have portrayed themselves as accepting and understanding, it is understandable it would be difficult to write someone up for a rule that is commonly broken. Instead they accept their residents for who they are and the decisions they choose to make, causing cognitive dissonance when told to enforce alcohol policy. Many clearly state the authoritative portion of being a JC to not even be a part of the relationship they have with their corridor. By explicitly stating this they imply they are aware and work hard at not allowing the residents to view them as a rule enforcer. To avoid this negative label they are often reluctant to bust residents. Many have admitted they will only bust a resident if they are being incredibly foolish and others have said they still might not bust them.

Motivation not to bust students is also most likely a result of contact level. JCs have constant contact with their residents versus their contact with the residence life office, which is minimal. JCs are forced to choose between getting a friend in trouble and having to live near them or busting a friend and avoid *possibly* being reprimanded or fired by residence life; the former is clearly more appealing to many JCs. One JC admitted to having seen alcohol in a resident's fridge and doing nothing about it since she liked the guy whose fridge it was. The implications of busting someone are negative so it seems it is not worth it to many of them to jeopardize their relationships. Even if she were to bust someone in another corridor word would spread among the Hoyme residents she was one of the "bad" JCs who should be avoided.

Several JCs mentioned rule enforcement as the most challenging aspect of being a JC. One girl admitted to keeping her distance from her corridor in case she would have to bust them one day. Another laughs as she says "If I was a good JC I'd say [the most challenging aspect of being a JC is] trying not to cross the line between JC and resident, friend and illegal factors, but apparently I'm not a good JC because I just don't even bother with the illegal factors part." For those who have busted someone they generally said it took some time to get their relationship back to the way it was. The residents have been told and know it is their job to bust people so they understand JCs are not busting them by choice, but it can still be damaging. Even for JCs who have made it clear to

their corridor they are not going to bust them, other residents are still weary of them, which makes it difficult to form bonds with residents outside their corridor. One JC talked about how when she is on duty residents will often see her walking around with the duty log and get a distrusting look in their eyes as they go into a room. “They don’t know that I’m not out to get them. A few JCs are out to bust people and it’s hard to have these freshmen I don’t know as well look at me as though I’m the ‘bad cop’ here to get them in trouble. I just want to try and help them love St. Olaf, not ruin their fun.”

Instead of going out of their way to bust people for alcohol consumption, many JCs choose to emphasize safety. They started off the year saying although they did not encourage drinking, they understood some would anyway, so they wanted to make sure they were safe about it. By doing this they felt their residents would be more likely to come to them if trouble arose. By opting for this route, JCs have had to make conscious decisions about how to respond if a situation involving alcohol does arise. Two JCs said that if a party were blatantly taking place they would go talk one-on-one with the people first and tell them to tone things down. If their warning was ignored, then they would bust them. Others have said they would call the room where the party was taking place and say if things did not quiet down they would be coming up to bust them. Generally though, these JCs have said they will ignore a room where drinking is happening if the residents are being quiet and respectful.

For other JCs, they will bust the residents if drinking is suspected. Although they do not enjoy it, it is part of their responsibility and they do so reluctantly. One story was told about another JC who gets down on hands and knees to smell for alcohol in the rooms, indicating some JCs do take their authoritative role very seriously, but I did not interview this person. The people who do bust residents admit it is fairly awkward at the time and sometimes still the next day. Sometimes the residents assume since you are supposed to be their friend you will be lenient on them and are surprised to find out this is not the case.

A direct correlation can be found between JCs who have very positive and trusting relationships with their corridor and JCs who choose not to bust their residents. The residents who feel JCs are much more their friends than they are their authority figure are going to feel more comfortable coming to them for fun or advice. It would seem JCs need to make a choice between abiding by the rules of the college and forming strong bonds with the first-years in their corridor. Busting residents could only hurt their relationships, many feel, which is why they choose to try and avoid it. Initially it can be awkward to

form friendly relations with one's corridor and some JCs felt it was necessary to put it out there that they were not out to get them and were not going to attempt to bust them unless they were being stupid. It would appear once the residents understand their JC is there to be their friend and not to impose punishments on them they will relax and allow real, comfortable relationships to develop. Gaining the trust of residents is not easy and one JC reported still not being able to get through to the girls in her corridor who are big drinkers. I suspect they keep this distance to avoid feeling guilty. If they are friends with their JC and then break the rules it could easily seem like they are challenging the friendship they have formed with her, so instead they choose to keep their space.

Conclusion

Realizing the similarities between JCs was a very interesting finding. As people they are all very different, but still display many of the same qualities and goals. It would seem such a demanding role would require a certain type of person, and based on each JC's positive experience, the position looks as if it attracts the type of people it needs. This understanding and realization really shows why the JCs find the JC program to be so successful and effective. Part of this may well be the interview process, which weeds out those not fit for the program, but this is only part of the process. Due to the shortage of males who apply it is clear the job position is mainly what attracts the correct personality types for the job since all the males interviewed appeared to be a positive JC fit. Something I had not expected to discover was the large role authority plays in the lives of JCs. As I listened to JCs explain the continual inner struggle about how to remain true to the college while still following their instincts I learned the complexity of their decisions. Each JC came to a different conclusion for a different reason, each being carefully thought out beforehand. It is clear they all care very much there for the residents in their corridor and do what they consider to be in everyone's best interest.

Research on the social implications of being a JC is critical to the college. The concept behind JCs is very important and many students will say their JCs played a large role in helping them make the adjustment from high school to college. How these relationships form and the steps JCs take to make them work are what make the entire idea behind JCs work. Although the residence life office can create rules and keep the logistics on file, it is the social areas that are important. Hearing what JCs are happy about and what they consider

to be negative is of great importance. They are the people who experience the job firsthand and who watch the effects of their actions on their relationships. They understand what works and what only damages their relationships. In order to ensure the JC program is as positive and useful as possible, taking the time to analyze and understand the social side of being a JC is crucial.

For further research, one may want to interview JCs from other dorms. It is highly probable the relationship formed between the members of Hoyme's staff and residents is not what one would find in the other four first-year dorms. This is only one dorm with one set of people, so to really know if this is how the majority of first-year dorms operate other dorms would need to be examined. Many factors, such as the type of people who chose to live in Hoyme, the residents who were placed in Hoyme and the events that happened through the year, have played into the results and feelings of Hoyme's JCs. To further understand the JC experience interviewing JCs from a different dorm could prove useful. Consulting the Hoyme first-years would bring in another crucial aspect to the study. Seeing if JCs do come across as they portray themselves to the interviewer, and whether the techniques they have used have proven as effective as they believe, would add an entirely new perspective to the study. Some JCs may feel they come across dramatically different than they actually do. By talking to the first-years one could better learn what they look for in a JC and if their JC has fulfilled their needs to the best of his/her ability. The effects of being a JC has on relationships are an important part of this small, liberal arts college's foundation, so understanding it should be as well.

Sources Consulted

Adleemann, Fredrick J., ed.

1974 Authority. Vol 3. Chestnut Hill: Boston College.

Analyzes the role of authority figures, individual freedom and morals based on “rules of authority”. How people justify their actions is largely based on what they have been told or how they have been instructed and if something becomes just solely because it is passed by authority.

Airaksinen, Timo.

1988 Ethics of Coercion and Authority: A Philosophical Study of Social Life. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh.

The role of the authoritative figure and the identity they must assume to be credible is the focus of this book. How they act on behalf of their institution and why they behave in order to maintain their authoritative position.

2004 Being an RA. Looking Forward, Electronic document

<http://gretel.usr-bin-mom.com/archives/000045.html>, accessed May 15, 2004

An online journal of an RA at Concordia University. Discusses her frustrations with having to turn in students for rule breaking such as drinking and noise violations. She feels a lot of cognitive dissonance as she knows it is her duty to discipline the people in her hallway, yet she feels guilty and rotten. What she feels is the right thing to do and following the rules does not align.

Berry, David.

1974 Central Ideas in Sociology: An Intro. Itasca: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.

Further clarity about role conflict and how it applies to authority positions. I used this mainly for background knowledge but some specific knowledge was utilized for understanding actions forced upon a person by their role they would rather not have to perform.

Boppert, Trish.

2002 The Nanny Chronicles. Philadelphia Citypaper.net, Electronic document

<http://www.citypaper.net/articles/2002-05-30/cover.shtml>, accessed May 12, 2004

The role of a nanny is fairly similar to that of a JC, as the caretaker lives with and forms friendly relations with the people who they report to and watch over. Feelings of isolation, contact formed with other nannies, and unclear boundaries were all largely discussed.

Borgotta, Daniel, ed.,

1992 Encyclopedia of Sociology, vol 2: Exchange Theory. New York: Macmillian Publishing Company.

Explained the social exchange theory's history and development, examining it from the perspective of several different theorists. Helped convey how and why the relationships formed by JCs fit into the social exchange theory.

Borgotta, Daniel, ed.,

1993 Encyclopedia of Sociology, vol 3: Role Conflict. New York: Macmillian Publishing Company.

Gave a clear description of the role conflict theory. Made it clear how the role of JCs played into the role conflict theory. Gave a concise yet thorough description of the theory.

Cohen, Daniel

2003 Finding a Home: Where St. Olaf Students Choose to Live and they Residence Halls They Live In. Northfield: Saint Olaf College, Sociology 373.

A report written about the different dormitories on St. Olaf's campus, Cohen discussed the different connotations associated with each dorm and why students chose certain dorms over others. First-year halls were briefly covered and gave me an insight to the most desirable and least desirable dorms for both first-years and JCs.

Feagin, J. and M. Sikes

1994 Living With Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience. Boston: Beacon Press.

How African-American teenagers deal with college is a significant portion of this book. Discussion revolves around those they choose to identify with, how they go about doing this, ways they expand and ways they contract and how they interact with the faculty and administration. It helps to observe a complicated issue JCs have to deal with from the perspective of the first years.

Gathorne-Hardy, Jonathan.

1973 The Unnatural History of the Nanny. New York: The Dial Press.

Lots of focus on top authority figure being forced to delegate power to others (e.g. the nanny) and how once this power is given, the nanny often does as she sees fit with it. Actions are supposed to and generally do represent the wishes of the mother, but not always since the nanny is the one who is with the children. This is much like a JC.

Harris, R. Baine, ed.

1976 Authority: A Philosophical Analysis. University: The University of Alabama Press.

How to deal with punishments one in a position of power feels unjust or unnecessary and what one should do if they truly feel it unworthy. Also, do authority figures forget they are not the only ones in positions of authority and if so, how this can be dealt with.

King, Bethany.

Being an RA and a Christian. Electronic document.

http://www.reslife.net/html/so-now_1101a.html, accessed March 15, 2004

As a practicing and dedicated Christian, King writes about her struggle to understand her position as an RA and how it fits with her faith. The way she interacts with the girls she is in charge of, the manner she monitors her behavior and her reasoning for responding how she does is all analyzed and discussed.

Kneser, Greg.

2004 Policy on Alcohol and Illicit Drugs. Electronic Document,
<http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/thebook/general/alcohol.html>, accessed May 19, 2004.

This web page clearly explains St. Olaf's views and policies regarding alcohol and the possible punishments that follow an alcohol violation. It is used in the paper to clarify specifics regarding JC duties but can be used by readers who may want further explanations.

Stender, Ryan W.

2004 Duquesne University's Emergency Response. Electronic Document. <http://www.residencelife.duq.edu/testimonies.html>, accessed March 15, 2004

Explains reasons behind why students choose to become JCs or RAs. It talked about the rewards, the friendships that are built and the amount of self-discover that takes place. Although nobody knows what they're going to end up with, it seemed to really emphasize the positive influence it has on everyone.

Saint Olaf College

2003 Color Outside the Lines. St. Olaf College Residence Life. Northfield: St. Olaf College.

Covers St. Olaf's purpose for having JCs, their goals and their vision.
Covers the expectations, community development, leadership and group dynamics, emergency procedures and campus and judicial policies St. Olaf counts on their JCs to learn, understand and execute.

Saint Olaf College

2003 Student Staff Programming Packet. St. Olaf College Residence Life.
Northfield: St. Olaf College.

Includes activities JCs can or should do with their corridor, a monthly calendar and methods for keeping students involved.

Leonard, Thomas J. T

1996 Top Ten Keys to Understanding Boundaries and Standards. Electronic document

<http://www.topten.org/public/BJ/BJ28.html>, accessed May 12, 2004

JCs are often faced with issues concerning boundaries and where exactly to draw the line. This essay talks quite a bit about the struggle between balancing yourself and setting appropriate boundaries and standards. It also deals with how and why boundaries are crossed and how people try to understand the boundaries that are set.

Appendix

Questions asked to Hoyme JCs

What is the relationship like that you have formed with your corridor? How it is similar and how is it different to other friendship relationships you have on campus?

How has being a JC affected the friendships you had before becoming a JC?

How has being a JC influenced your social life?

If you have a significant other, has being a JC influenced your relationship in anyway?

Describe the relationship you have with the other JCs in your dorm and around campus.

How has being a JC affected the manner in which your daily life is organized?

For what reasons did you decide to become a JC?

How would you describe the overall experience of being a JC? (Positive? Negative? Challenging?)

What is most challenging?

Is being a JC how you expected? Why and why not?

How do you think life may be next year when you are no longer a JC?

How does the fact that you are responsible for reporting your corridor and entire dorm for rule breaking (e.g. alcohol consumption) affect the relationships you build with them?

What aspects of your personality do you think are valuable as a JC? Talents or skills? Aspects of your life experiences?

How would you compare yourself to other JCs you know?

What are the rules you disagree with and what are the rules you agree with?
How come?

How do you feel you come across to your corridor as a person?

As an authoritative figure, how is it challenging to form real friendships with your corridor? Does this ever alter?

How is your experience with other JCs on campus?

The email that was sent to the JCs of Hoyme Hall:

Dear Hoyme JCs,

My name is Claire MacDonald and I am a junior at St. Olaf. I am currently enrolled in Sociology 373 – Ethnographic research methods. I am conducting a study on JCs at St. Olaf and have selected Hoyme as my target group. I will be looking at how relationships students had before becoming a JC have been affected and the circumstances under which new relationships have formed. I am wondering if I may interview each of you sometime within the next month. The interview should take about an hour and any questions you feel uncomfortable answering you are free to pass over. Please email me at macdonal@stolaf.edu. If I do not hear from you I will try calling in about a week. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Claire MacDonald

