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Move-in Orientation

Submitted February 13, 2013 by:

The City of Boulder & the University of Colorado Boulder

How the Move-in Orientation Began:
The AACT coalition, formed in 2010, is a campus-community coalition comprised of key community stakeholders who collaboratively address the high-risk use of alcohol in the Boulder community. The group includes representatives from the City of Boulder, the University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder County Public Health, Boulder Valley School District, Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Responsible Hospitality Group, neighborhood representatives, parents, property managers and CU students. The mission of the AACT coalition is to establish healthy cultural norms for alcohol consumption while eliminating alcohol and other substance abuse that leads to negative impacts on individuals and the community.

One of the roles of the AACT coalition is to develop strategic and experimental / innovative approaches to alcohol-related community problems through “issue” subcommittees that develop and implement action plans. One of the subcommittees is focused on community impacts of alcohol-related problems.

An ongoing topic of community conversation was how to educate students moving off campus for the first time about living on their own. Of special interest was educating them about the impacts of their behavior on their neighbors. The goal was to prevent negative impacts, rather than addressing them once they had occurred. In the Fall of 2011 and 2012, the Community Impacts Subcommittee worked with a local property management company named Four Star Realty and CU’s Off-Campus Housing & Neighborhood Relations office on a pilot project intended to teach these skills.

**Move-in Orientation Stakeholders:**

- Student Tenants and Parents
- Permanent Neighborhood Residents
- Four Star Realty
- University of Colorado Boulder
- City of Boulder
- AACT Coalition

**Move-in Orientation Description:**

In 2011 and 2012 Four Star Realty and Off-Campus Housing & Neighborhood Relations produced a comprehensive move-in orientation for student renters living on the Hill and in Goss Grove, two of the most densely populated student rental areas in Boulder. Four Star Realty added a three part orientation session as a requirement to their lease and tenants were required to complete the orientation session prior to move in and obtaining the keys to their units. The program is designed to educate new Boulder residents on their tenant and community responsibilities. Orientation begins with a [Prezi presentation](#) (see attachment) from Off-Campus Housing & Neighborhood Relations covering the following city ordinances: noise and firework violations, nuisance parties, alcohol
violations, littering, and trash and snow removal. Students are encouraged to get to know their neighbors and to treat their new community with respect.

The second part of orientation focuses on community, community expectations and tips for being a good community member. This section is facilitated by a Hill neighbor who discusses both the positive and negative qualities of a diverse community. The goal is to offer students a personal point of view and to help them make a connection to their new neighborhood. Students are reminded that the community "is in it together" and that the city ordinances don't just apply to students, but to everyone in Boulder. The idea that this community is no different from the one they grew up in is continually reinforced throughout program.

The orientation session ends with Four Star Realty staff reviewing the property management policies and detailing tenant responsibilities and expectations. Students are reminded to fill out their check-in sheet and to take pictures before moving in. Students also receive an orientation packet with information about Four Star Realty and a copy of CU’s Move-In guide before collecting their keys. Four Star Realty and Off-Campus Housing & Neighborhood Relations believe that the orientation program is a successful way to educate students before problems occur.

**Handouts:**

- **Your Move-In** – created as a guide for successful off-campus living
- **Smart Party** – designed as a tool for a safer and smarter parties
- **Roommate Agreement** – designed to facilitate conversations regarding values and expectations – minimizes conflicts that may arise (food expenses, cleaning chores, overnight guests)

**Results:**

Students are administered a pre and post survey.

**Pre Survey Questions:**

- What type of community do you think you are moving into?
- How well do you think you understand Boulder city ordinances (especially those about noise, trash and snow removal)?
- How well do you think you understand your responsibilities as a renter living in a residential neighborhood?
- What information do you hope will be discussed in the next hour?

**Post Survey Questions:**

- After attending this session, what type of community do you think you are moving into?
• After attending this session, how well do you think you understand Boulder city ordinances?
• After attending this session, how well do you understand your responsibilities as a renter living in the city of Boulder?
• Do you believe that this workshop will affect your behavior as a community resident?
• Was this information presented in a way that was interesting?

Survey results showed that students felt they had a greater understanding of their rights as a renter. Students had a greater appreciation that the neighborhood they were moving into was a combination of student renters as well as families with children. 61% of students indicated they had a much better understanding of Boulder city ordinances.

A January 2013 review of quality of life ticketing at addresses whose tenants attended move-in orientation sessions shows a significant decrease in the number of tickets issued. A study of all property addresses (84) that participated in the Move-In Orientation compared the rate of violations over the 3 years prior to implementation with the 1.5 years since the program began. Quality of life violations at these addresses have dropped by 50%. Quality of life violations include: noise, nuisance party, fireworks, obstructing/resisting, assault, damaging property, littering, urinating, snow removal and other related violations. Excluded are underage drinking and open container of alcohol violations.

**Current Status:**

The AACT Coalition, Four Star Realty, permanent residents and Off-Campus Housing and Neighborhood Relations found the orientation sessions to be valuable opportunities for conversation and connection, as well as for reducing quality of life violations. Four Star Realty will be mandating orientation sessions at additional properties in 2013. Additionally, we plan to offer the orientation sessions to other property management companies, including those that may have problematic track records of quality of life violations. We believe that this program could be beneficial to all students moving off campus and hope to have a discussion at the university administration level regarding the feasibility of making it a requirement.