

Neal Friesen

Resident Assistant of the Year



Haymaker Hall: 2005

By:
Christopher J.K. Hancock

Incredible. Considerate. Active. Open-minded. Friendly. There are many words or phrases that could be used to describe Neal Friesen, resident assistant on the sixth floor of Haymaker Hall. We feel that there is one more phrase that should be added to this list: 2005 Resident Assistant of the Year. Not only is Neal an excellent role model with many great ideas for Haymaker Hall, he is also an outstanding student. When asked why he felt he was nominated as Resident Assistant of the Year for Haymaker Hall, Neal replied with some of the following quotes (listed below).



**“I feel that I am a very social person,
which definitely helps when you’re an
RA...”**

Neal is an excellent role model for the residents in the hall and is an outstanding student. He has involved himself in many of the programs Haymaker has offered this year for it’s residents, including helping plan and coordinate a Super Bowl Party, a Diversity Ice Cream Social and many other activities. He is often seen playing football, Frisbee and many other sports with residents in the lawns across from Haymaker Hall, Neal also enjoys grilling food on Sundays outside of Haymaker with residents. When participating in athletic activities, or any other activities, around Haymaker, he welcomes everyone to join. When grilling food outside, he welcomes all to join in the festivities. He offers to grill their food for them as long as they produce it. He even promotes these Sunday dinners to all of the residents on his floor, encouraging them all to join.



“I did my best to get the girls on my floor to be as social as possible...”

Neal occupied himself this year by trying his best to promote floor unity. His floor won the race for floor points first semester and they currently hold the most points for second semester, almost triple the amount of any other floor. One issue he chose to emphasize this year was the involvement of the girls on his floor. He knew from the beginning that the girls would only be in the hall for a semester but he wanted them to make solid, lasting friendships that they could carry with them even after leaving Haymaker second semester. He was very active in making them feel welcome. He made a considerable effort to help them feel as if Haymaker were their home, not just a temporary place to rest their heads. Many of the women who lived on his floor the first semester still visit frequently to converse both with their male friends and Neal himself.



“I have tried my best to be as visible and available to my residents as much as possible...”

Another goal Neal has worked hard to complete is to make himself accessible to all the residents of Haymaker, not just the ones on his floor. He has done an excellent job of doing this consistently throughout the year. He believes that RAs are most approachable when their residents see them as a friend, not as a parent or guardian. He can be found regularly in the lobby conversing with the residents. In one instance, an out-of-state student had to check out early in the morning (6:30 AM). This individual resided from another floor and his RA was unable to wake up that early. Even though Neal had a final exam the next day, he assisted the resident. He also makes a concerted effort to keep his door open to promote his availability to his residents and anyone else who is walking by.



“I just love being able to hang out with the guys, you know? I just love being with my guys on the floor.”

Having random visitors come to or pass by his door has become less frequent since being moved into the actual hallway second semester, but he has made the most of the situation. He has utilized this opportunity to form closer bonds with his residents. Living in the hallway has allowed him to see the residents more often, whether in the bathroom or the hallway. It has allowed him to get a closer look at the day-to-day activities that occur in the hallway and allowed him to be a more integral part of them. By seeing them more

regularly, he has been able to learn each of their personality quirks, their routines and their personalities. He does many other things to reinforce these bonds, too.

“We lost last time, but we had a good time being out there. Chanting stuff, just joking around, it’s just a good time”



Neal tries many different avenues in attempting to connect with his residents. One of these is participating in his floor’s intramural sports. He is currently a member of the softball team. While playing on the team, Neal and his residents constantly joke about the game. For example, one game the floor’s pitcher was not pitching particularly well. After the pitcher threw a pitch behind the batter, he turned to Neal, who was playing third base and said, “Just trying to brush him in.” After he did it a second time, Neal replied, “I think he’s in far enough!” This sort of thing shows the camaraderie he has formed through playing sports and living with his residents in the actual hallway.



“My voice was gone by the end of it. It was a great time.”

Another one of the many activities Neal was active in was Homecoming. He participated both in the construction of the float and the parade itself. He was on the float for the parade. He used his energetic personality to arouse both the crowd and his own team members. His spirit became contagious as his team went on to take first in these two activities. He has also been part of many other activities that involved all of the halls.



“I enjoy hanging out and having fun but know when it’s time to study...”

Neal is a very focused student. He received Semester Academic Honors for carrying a 4.0 grade point average last semester and is often sought by people in the hall for help on their chemistry and physics assignments, amongst others. Many residents know that Neal is “the guy” you turn to when you are having trouble with balancing a chemistry equation, figuring out a star’s distance or just trying to come up with a paper topic. As an example, he once took a class called Descriptive Astronomy. Two residents of his, one male and one female, took the course upon his recommendation. Although the course has proven harder than they initially thought, Neal has been a valuable resource for them in solving the homework problems and studying for the tests. He even sits with them as they do their homework for class every Monday evening and helps them as needed.

Neal has made an impact on many people. Many of these people, whether they’re his boss, coworkers or residents, have positive things to say about him. Following are a few testimonies on Neal:

Trisha Gott, Multicultural Assistant, Haymaker Hall:

Working with a person like Neal Friesen is a true pleasure. Neal has made himself into an integral part of the Haymaker Staff. He is not only committed to the hall and his work, but he is dedicated to each and every resident in the building. Neal's efforts to befriend residents on and off of his floor are unparalleled. He is kind and welcoming to every person he come in contact with and is a genuine friend. I have enjoyed every second working and hanging out with Neal this year. He is a leader, a motivator, a friend and a mentor. The title "RA of the Year" does not do Neal Friesen justice; he is that and so much more.

Tanya Massey, Residence Life Coordinator, Haymaker Hall:

Neal is full of life. Always pleasant, he approaches the job with enthusiasm. His laid back style makes him a favorite of the residents and staff, and he is always willing to lend a helping hand. With the transition that Haymaker has been through this year, Neal constantly works to keep our spirits up and pull an extra work load to help us out. For many of our residents, Neal was a surprise. After a few minutes of conversation, anyone can see that while he seems like an intimidator; he is really a big teddy bear. He has been a great asset to our staff and we wholeheartedly recommend him for RA of the year.

Chris Hancock, Community Assistant and sixth floor resident,

Haymaker Hall:

Neal has easily been the best RA I have had in my five years in the halls. It has been a pleasure both working with him and living on a floor with him. I intend to keep contact with him even after I leave the halls. He has been extremely understanding of my unique views as well as other residents' views, while still holding his own. He has never been offensive towards anyone, and has been a great resource for the younger students.-

It is clear why Neal Friesen was chosen by Haymaker Hall as their Resident Assistant of the Year. We feel that there is overwhelming evidence that Neal should not just be considered for Resident Assistant of the Year in Haymaker, but rather for all of Kansas State University. No matter if he gets the award or not, he will be Resident Assistant of the year in the eyes of all who he has aided in some way. Although his residents have a tendency of being rather wild, he has kept all problems off of his floor. His control over negative influences is amazing, and he has done nothing but prove that he is worthy of all the recognition he receives.

Neal and Residents



April 11, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

Throughout this current school year I have had the privilege of working with Neal Friesen. He has been a welcomed addition to the staff of Haymaker Hall. Neal is always very optimistic and encouraging toward hall programming and the activities of other staff members. He is very well rounded he has the ability to handle situations with out being judgmental or encouraging of belligerent behavior. Neal has continually impressed me with his calm easy going demeanor.

I am very aware of Neal's commitment to school and his other activities. I have seen him on several occasions tutoring his residents and others in chemistry and math. Somehow Neal is able to conjure up supernatural forces and balance his commitments to Haymaker Hall, his academics, friends, family and faith. Neal makes the life of complicated college students seem simple. It is with out any hesitation that I give Neal my highest recommendation.

Sincerely ~

Jake Crockford
4th Floor Haymaker
Resident Assistant