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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
TWO THOUSAND AND EIGHTEEN

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For more information, please contact Stacey Dawson at robin627@msu.edu
Summer is upon us, and we’re seeing the heat index rise above 100 degrees. We’ve gone from one of the coldest winters in recent memory to an aggressive summer in what feels like a short amount of time.

But we can’t let the heat get us down. The largest incoming class in MSU’s history has started their journey with us and is arriving to campus. This is the time of year when we refocus our energy. We want to make sure we are providing the best on-campus experience for our students and guests.

This uncomfortable state of being certainly impacts our team members, but it impacts our guests just as much, if not more. We must keep this in mind as we grumble and groan. Let’s look on the bright side. As playwright Anton Chekhov once noted, “People don’t notice whether it’s winter or summer when they’re happy.” And we have the privilege and responsibility to keep our students and guests happy.

It begins with and ends with safety. We have both a legal and moral obligation to provide a safe environment for our community — both physically and emotionally. If we can provide outstanding Spartan experiences in this summer heat, we can certainly provide them year-round. Our students and guests will feel that; they will understand how dedicated we are to making their Spartan journey a successful one.

This issue of Serving State provides a glimpse into student and guest impact, including our Web Strategy process, MSU Tennis Center partnerships and upgrades, RHS’ continued sustainability efforts, and a series of spotlights on student team members whose career paths have been enhanced by their time in RHS.

And as the weather cools, our services will ramp up. Move-in weekend promises to bring its ups and downs. Campus will be more crowded than it ever has been for not one, but two jam-packed days of welcoming our newest Spartans. We have the opportunity to make a difference in their lives. This is our responsibility and privilege.

Vennie Gore
Vice President, Auxiliary Enterprises
By the Dozen

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WHAT **RHS** IS DOING TO PREPARE FOR THE LARGEST AND MOST DIVERSE INCOMING CLASS

1. **new beds**

More students coming to live in residence halls on campus calls for a reassessment of where these students will be lying their heads at night. 373 new beds, which can be adjusted by students without any use of tools, will be placed into residence hall rooms to help students get the best quality out of their on-campus experience. Out with the old and in with the new.

2. **room refreshes**

To ensure campus stays on trend, Wilson Hall is getting a refreshing makeover. Replaced carpet and new paint on the walls will make sure the residence hall is inviting to our new students on campus.

3. **up to code**

RHS ensures all equipment and facilities meet Environmental Protection Agency and other funding programs' standards. Some of the campus improvements include Brody Square’s dish tank receiving brand new tiling and revamping the handicap-accessible restrooms in Wilson Hall.

4. **getting social**

In order to stay at the heart of the questions and concerns incoming students’ parents have, the Residence Education and Housing Services (REHS) communications team created a Facebook group dedicated to the parents of students of the class of 2022. Within the group, parents can ask questions, build a community and promptly receive information.

5. **playing with color**

REHS team members brainstormed what could be done to streamline the process of navigating foreign streets and brand-new territory come move-in. This led the team to shape a color-coded system of categorizing MSU’s five neighborhoods. Instead of consulting traditional and online maps to figure out where respective residence halls are located, cars will be able to follow the color-coded signage from entering campus all the way to their residence hall entrance. The color coding is rumored to be a part of the Live On webpage redesign as well.
As RHS prepares for the most diverse incoming class in MSU history, Associate Director for Diversity and Inclusion Sharon Chia Claros is working to facilitate varying programs to support students. RHS is pleased to offer two new classes to help team members gain an understanding of minoritized communities and the challenges they face on campus and in broader society. The sessions equip attendees with knowledge, awareness and skills to make the campus environment more inclusive for LGBTQ+ community members as well as students and team members who experience microaggressions.

In order to make sure students are being immersed in an impactful living and learning environment during their on-campus experience, the Residential Learning Model was created to promote student growth and training. As the academic year approaches, the team continues to cultivate unique, hall-specific lesson plans in order to best meet the needs of the incoming class.

The Culinary Services team is continuously working to make sure enough resources are supplied and ready based on an increase in customer count. With this year’s larger incoming class coming into play, additional considerations will be made regarding staffing and food purchasing based on menu forecasting. The forecasting process involves predicting menu item demand based on the number of students coming to MSU and any relevant food trends.

RHS is devoted to providing the best possible living and learning environment for Spartans. And in alignment with the division’s commitment to sustainable practices, RHS has implemented a few new practices. Beginning this fall, all Sparty’s locations will no longer use plastic bags. Come move-in, students will receive a free mesh recycling bag and a “Be Spartan Green” reusable water bottle, as well as free binders at a giveaway event using repurposed RHS office binders. Additionally, Clean Plates at State will begin its food audits in every residence hall in an effort to continue spreading awareness about and reducing food waste.

To supply updated merchandise that meets the standards of the incoming class, Spartan Spirit Shops are ordering from 268 different vendors to provide diverse product offerings in each unique retail shop. These shops are committed to providing merchandise unlike anything else to best meet the needs of such a large and varying group of students coming to MSU.
Residence Education and Housing Services’ (REHS) Associate Director for Diversity and Inclusion Sharon Chia Claros discusses the many diversity, inclusion, equity and social justice trainings offered by her department.

**BEYOND THE RAINBOW: LBGTQ CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

This personalized diversity and inclusion training is specifically tailored to meet the needs of a requesting RHS team and is facilitated by Chia Claros. The LBGTQ Cultural Competency training will take participants through a journey of defining sex, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation to better understand minority communities and the challenges they face on campus and in society.

“Participants will leave with an understanding on how we all participate in heteronormativity, both consciously and subconsciously,” Chia Claros said.

Chia Claros asks for a two-week notification when signing up for trainings to give herself enough time to shape the conversation beforehand.

**THE IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS ON CAMPUS AND YOUR ROLE IN ADDRESSING IT**

This personalized diversity and inclusion workshop facilitated by Chia Claros will explore how microaggressions manifest in higher education and within work environments. Microaggressions are defined as subtle statements, actions or insults used unintentionally or intentionally to put a marginalized group or individual down. The goal of this session is to help participants develop strategies to recognize, dispel and address microaggressions by discussing their psychological and physical impacts.

“The hope is for participants to walk away with the ability to recognize their own agency and empower themselves to create a positive change,” Chia Claros said.

RHS employees will continue to build a more inclusive environment for themselves and the department.
Competition within the Big Ten often takes place on a court. From basketball games to tennis matches, Michigan State University (MSU) is one of the best collegiate athletic programs in the country. The MSU Tennis Center is one athletic facility looking to remain competitive while also forming helpful partnerships with the MSU tennis teams, local high schools and even other universities and colleges MSU otherwise competes against.

The leader behind this balanced space of competition and collaboration is Heather Mactaggart, manager of the MSU Tennis Center. Her love for mentoring young players is a top priority and is clear through her demeanor. She has created personal relationships with tennis center frequenters, such as checking in on them and how their serves are coming along. All with a smile on her face. She is proud to show off the new facilities renovated two summers ago, including the men and women's locker rooms.

“It was a huge upgrade,” Mactaggart says. “We made it nicer for the men and women's tennis teams; our biggest partners in the building. They have their own lockers.”

The Spartan helmet logo adorns the carpet and one wall stands out, a collage created to commemorate MSU's long list of tennis greats. Pictured is a young Diane Selke, who eventually returned to her Michigan roots two years ago as a head pro for the center after a career full of accomplishments. This wouldn't be the first time Selke and Mactaggart would work together. They were teammates on the MSU women's tennis team in college.

“I'm excited I get to work here and build this program,” Selke says. “We are getting a good junior program and a good adult program, and now we are thinking of moving to outdoor courts.”

Local high schools and colleges, including Alma College, use the facility due to inclement weather or issues at their own facilities. The center is unique from other Big Ten schools, as it houses eight courts total, four on each side of a walkway, and allows optimal visibility for coaches, college recruiters and up to 1,200 spectators. And if one person knows a thing or two about watching, playing and coaching tennis, it's Mactaggart.

“My story is a very cool one,” Mactaggart says. “I've been very fortunate and blessed to work here for so long and to have such great people to work with.”

Born and raised on a court, after Mactaggart came to MSU for her collegiate tennis career, she never left. After competing came to an end, she transitioned to head coach of the MSU women's tennis team, leading them faithfully for 14 years. After retiring from coaching, managing the MSU Tennis Center seemed like the next logical step.

Providing more than just tennis lessons, the center offers cardio tennis classes, which are popular for all ages, drill sessions and even travel teams for adults. Everyone, from kids as young as 3 years old to adults can learn to play the game. The Tennis Center also contains a full-service pro shop where team members repair rackets and a Spartan Spirit Shop, one of the only places in town where you can buy official MSU tennis apparel. In addition to the site's many amenities, the MSU Tennis Center strives for affordability.

“We're the only public tennis facility in town where there are no membership fees or monthly dues. It's pay-as-you-play,” Mactaggart says.

The MSU Tennis Center serves as a stepping stone for many employees and players. Mactaggart watches players progress as they begin classes, go on to play high school tennis and then possibly pursue a college career. Several post-grad students or players with professional careers come back to work at the center, Selke being just one example.

“We've had people work at the center and then go on to coach at the high-school level and stay in the tennis profession, which is fun,” Mactaggart says. “Selke has great ties to MSU and the community.”

Teaching is the main objective of the MSU Tennis Center, and its reach expands past tennis lessons and leagues. The center also partners with kinesiology students and holds multiple one-credit tennis classes per semester. A wheelchair tennis program is also available.

The center's future includes possible outdoor renovations and expansion of its classes and membership.

“My dream is to somehow have outdoor courts at some point,” Mactaggart says.

Whether you are looking to join a tennis league, take a cardio tennis class or simply want to be surrounded by people who have loved tennis all their lives, the team at the MSU Tennis Center aims to be the best part of your day.
The clock strikes one on the Thursday afternoon of spring semester finals week. Minivans and flatbed trucks begin to line the turnaround driveway of East Akers Hall. Students pack Spartan-green pushcarts full of Ikea decor and other first-year materials that made the past nine months unforgettable. Tented areas outside the hall begin to fill with discarded cardboard and plastic beneath signs that read “Pack Up. Pitch In.”

Later in the day, when the chaos has passed, a team of MSU Surplus Store staffers swoop in and collect discarded shelving units and broken-down cardboard boxes students left behind as they vacated campus. 250,000 pounds of material is collected, expertly sorted through and transported to a location on campus where it will be reprocessed to benefit the university’s environment.

MSU’s Division of Residential and Hospitality Services (RHS) takes delight in doing tasks just like these to display its genuine care for students and the environment.

“It just makes sense that MSU is a green institution,” says Sustainability Officer Carla Iansiti. “We’re all about the environment already, so why don’t we just add on to those things? It’s been a very exciting and rewarding position and to have students be a part of it.”

Iansiti helps carry down initiatives created on a university-wide level, such as the Be Spartan Green campaign, and applies them to RHS. Because RHS covers such a significant portion of on-campus activity, there is a greater responsibility to be sustainable and responsible.

“You see sustainability in little pockets of things around campus,” Iansiti says.

These pockets include landfill diversion, cost avoidance issues and being responsible for the students RHS serves. There are programs in place on RHS’ end that aren’t necessarily apparent to students on an everyday basis.

Facilities Supervisor Charlotte DeVaney is a symbol of all the behind-the-scenes work that occurs every day on campus. Devoted to earth-friendly practices, she oversees and promotes recycling responsibilities for East Neighborhood.

“I really love being a part of an organization that puts recycling at the forefront of thoughts and events,” she says. “It isn’t just a thought; it’s a top priority.”

Large university-wide events, like residence hall move-in and move-out, could easily have detrimental impacts on the environment, but RHS has made it known that these kinds of obstacles won’t deter them from making environmentally responsible choices.

RHS runs several waste-free events each year, including the RHS Team Member Appreciation Picnic and the first-year student welcome event, Sparticipation. In 2017, the picnic had a diversion rate of 89 percent and more than 300 pounds of leftover food was given back to the surrounding community and donated to the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

Move-in and move-out days may pose threats to sustainability practices, but passionate team members like DeVaney work day in and day out to ensure the best practices are in play.

She remembers an especially notable trip to the MSU Surplus Store where she felt in awe of how passionate so many people on campus felt about recycling and being sustainable. Meandering through the aisles and seeing an entire section devoted to
do-it-yourself projects where heaps of buttons were available for crafters, she took the moment to self-reflect and ask herself what more she could be doing to repurpose materials throughout the residence halls she oversaw.

It was that moment when she began to see ordinary, abandoned structures for the potential they had.

“I repurposed ancient telephone closets into accessible recycling stations for students,” she says.

And DeVaney’s solution to excessive landfill use during move-in and move-out?

“My team and I didn’t set out dumpsters this year,” she laughs. “I didn’t even give that as an option.”

Though these ideas got some laughs, they are the epitome of what RHS Sustainability stands for. Her team worked relentlessly to pursue DeVaney’s vision and successfully achieved the highest rate of diversion seen in 2017. A total of 80 percent of materials during move-in were diverted from landfills and recycled or repurposed on campus.

“It’s very exciting to be able to contribute in a positive way and influence so many people,” she says of her team’s relentless hard work.

Another example of that hard work is the close-list food waste process where food waste from dining halls is sent to the Student Organic Farm and converted into compost. The compost assists garden growth and allows RHS the ability to purchase vegetables directly from the university to serve in dining halls. Other non-compost viable waste is transported to the Anaerobic Digestion Research and Education Center where food waste becomes energy used for fueling various structures located on the southend of campus. Additionally, there is a push to create campus buildings with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification in mind.

Developing buildings that become LEED certified is the responsible way to build. All of Brody Neighborhood is LEED certified and 1855 Place, opened in fall of 2017, is looking to gain this designation as well. Iansiti explains every component built into the structure — the paint used, sealant chosen and amount of daylight let into the building — is taken into account. LEED-certified buildings like Brody Hall, which diverted 72.2 percent of materials in 2017, achieve incredible results toward being sustainable.

“Sustainability is showing students we are responsible,” Iansiti says. “We want students to know that we’re safe here, to know that we’re taking care of them as far as food and the environment.”

Properly disposing of coffee grounds, filters and tea bags contributes to environmental conservation. The grounds are taken to the MSU Student Organic Farm and used to make compost to grow food.

**DURING 2017 MOVE-IN:**
There was an overall diversion rate of 72 percent where 116,873 pounds of material were recycled.

Each MSU Neighborhood had an individual landfill diversion rate of over 60 percent.

East Neighborhood had the highest diversion rate standing at 80 percent.

**DURING 2017 MOVE-OUT:**
There was an overall diversion rate of 33 percent with 240,484 pounds of materials were recycled.

RHS collected over 4,000 pounds of food and 800 pounds of personal care items which were donated to local organizations like the MSU Food Bank.

Holmes Hall, Brody Hall and Snyder/Phillips had diversion rates of over 50 percent.

Brody Hall had the highest diversion rate at 72.2 percent.

41,090 pounds of cardboard were recycled.

12,356 pounds of mixed paper were recycled.

134,608 pounds of additional surplus goods were collected.
SPRINTING TOWARD THE FUTURE OF RHS WEB

Ruthie Montgomery. 49. West Cornwall, Connecticut native. Mother of three. Active Pinterest user. Fifth-grade teacher. Enjoys a glass of pinot grigio with four ice cubes. Loves salad and her reusable water bottle. Helping her MSU bound 17-year-old daughter choose a room at MSU.

So, who are Ruthie and Kathryn, and what do they have in common? These two characters are actually fictional personas researched and sprung into creation by the Residential and Hospitality Services’ Web Strategy team during the discovery phase of re-designing the MSU Live On website, which serves as the foundation for students to access on-campus housing information.

The Web Strategy team is tackling a new approach to designing websites that involves an incredible amount of client collaboration. The key idea, Information Services Solution Engineering And Leadership Team Manager Larry Farmer says, is to have the product owner as an essential part of the team. Through a preliminary discovery process and then using “agile” design, clients are actively involved in the creation of their website. The result is getting the website up and running quickly with enough features to meet client needs while still implementing feedback, otherwise known as minimal viable product (MVP).

THE WEB PROCESS
IS Strategic Integration Manager Catherine Crane explains web design as an “endless cycle,” and by taking an agile approach to redesigning websites will mean each site remains relevant in today’s constantly evolving world.

“Recognizing that if we did absolutely everything to websites at one time, it would take forever, and that by the time we do that to each site, we’ll be right back where we started; our goal is to end this cycle of sites not being touched for several years at a time,” explains Crane.

When the project began, the team quickly learned just how much content was out there on the web regarding RHS and its affiliated partners. Through an extensive discovery and research period, team members were able to take about 50 websites and devise 10 “content categories” that sorted and gave a home to every piece of online web content existing for RHS. The Live On website — which is the fourth of the 10 categories tackled by the Web Strategy team — is currently getting its turn at a makeover.

The process follows a routine of a development period that lasts for about three weeks at a time, also called a sprint, followed by one week off, where there is an opportunity to take a step back and visualize what needs to be completed next based on what business goals were prioritized. During this break time, iterations of content are continuously shown to the client, all with customers like Ruthie and Kathryn in mind.

“It’s more about building something that works and that you can see,” says Crane. “It’s not about having a discussion with the client, disappearing for months and hoping they like what the team came up with.”

“We make up a person so it makes more sense to understand how to serve our customers,” RHS Web Strategist Annette Burge says.

Fictional profiles help the team decide what is most valuable — what needs to be prioritized in the redesign.
process — and how users similar to admitted students like Kathryn and prospective students' parents like Ruthie would navigate the site based on needs and wants. They are the driving force behind every decision made. Burge explains the goal of redesigning a website in today's world is to give the customer what they need with as few clicks as possible.

The thought for each website is to complete the MVP, which essentially translates to a fully functional website that has all the elements to be useful for customers. What the MVP included is decided through this discovery process. After the first public iteration of the website is online and running, everyone involved in its creation is able to collectively go back and fill in gaps that might have been left empty in order to get it live.

“It doesn't have to be perfect out of the gate, but it has to be useful,” Crane says.

COLLABORATION

The Live On team works in conjunction with the Web Strategy team on an everyday basis. Their connection is natural because they are involved in every step of the process and because of the responsibility REHS team members feel for their website.

“It really helps so there aren't any surprises at the end,” REHS Communications Manager Kaitlin Nye says. “We have realistic expectations and, dynamically, meeting with them every day really helps us to all stay on track and make the best site possible.”

Additionally, clients remain active in re-working once the MVP is published.

“Clients have seen it throughout the entire process, and we’ve gotten their sign-off, their approval and their input, so they feel a sense of ownership as well because they’ve gone through this whole process with us,” Burge says. “It’s not just ‘Oh, tech does that.’”

Because RHS has a large number of departments, cross-promoting and ensuring everyone is represented correctly on the new website will contribute to providing additional knowledge, consolidating information and aiding in navigation.

“By having everyone as an active part of our meetings and process, we're reducing the amount of rework that is done,” says Farmer.

His favorite part of the new design approach? Getting immediate feedback from the clients. Instead of falling into the old pattern of presenting a complex end product and then receiving an abundance of edits from the client, (edits that, at that point, may be far more difficult and time consuming to work in) the team is able to present an interactive wireframe — a mockup of what the real site would look like — and when edits are given, the team is able to rework a few hours’ within what otherwise might only be accomplished over the course of several months.

The redesign is necessary to best serve the needs of students, Nye says. The primary function of the new site came per request of prospective students: They want to see what residence hall rooms look like. Through interactive 360-degree tours, incoming students will get the chance to tour fully decorated, lived-in rooms, mini-fridge and all. Secondary functions will give current students a portal to make maintenance requests, view up-to-date dining hall menus and find work on campus.

Because of the prioritization of collaborating with clients, the Web Strategy team is able to have efficient partnerships that facilitate and streamline the redesign process. Whether it's Ruthie, Kathryn or another Spartan seeking an entirely different experience from the Live On website, serving students is always the intent.

And as Burge says, “Any two people aren’t going to have the same needs, but we still have to create a product that meets all of them.”
Michigan State University (MSU) senior Chloe Lee’s origins are rooted in where she likes to call “the New York City of Korea.”

“Coming from Seoul to Michigan, I did not know what to expect,” she says. “I was only 15 when I arrived in Ann Arbor, where I spent five years. Everything was so different: the food, people, culture and all the things I saw outside of my window. When I came to MSU, the first thing I thought was, ‘Wow, this is big school.’ MSU was basically the whole city of East Lansing.”

She arrived to MSU in 2014 to study hospitality business (HB), hoping to prepare herself for some big-city dreams.

Lee did eventually adjust to the change in environment and went on to keep herself quite busy. A full-time student and teaching assistant, she is also a veteran of the hospitality professional development program offered by the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, a unit within MSU’s Spartan Hospitality Group (SHG).

“Traveling and planning social occasions has always fascinated me ever since I was a child,” she says. It came naturally to her, as she traced this love back to her days spent in admiration of her great-grandmother’s prosperous Hot Spring Tourism Hotel in South Korea.

“I realized I genuinely enjoyed socializing with new people and making sure everyone has a great time to the best of my ability,” Lee says of her past. “Exchanging different perspectives and past experiences with the guests from all around the world, learning world geography and greetings in different languages, as well as cultures, were some of my favorite memories from childhood.”

The natural next step for Lee was to apply to a professional development program to cultivate her early life’s passion and find where it would take her. Lee had yet to explore her niche within the expansive world of hospitality.

Open to current Kellogg and other SHG team members, the Hospitality Professional Development Program is a
10-week experience designed to familiarize students with varying facets of hotel management.

Lee was one of two students selected for the semester-long adventure. SHG Human Resources Manager and Lee’s mentor, Jill Respecki, says Lee was equipped to succeed because of her past internships as well as being the recipient of the Winegardner and Hammons Hotel Student Endowed Scholarship award.

“She consistently exhibited a great attitude and desire to learn about all aspects of hospitality,” Respecki says of her mentee.

The development program is unique in that every week, student participants shift job roles within Kellogg. Respecki says the structure gives students unique, outside-of-the-classroom education by exposing them to exclusive parts of the hotel industry and granting them the ability to access the entire hotel management team so students can ask questions and continue to learn about the trade.

“Without this, they would not know all the positions and opportunities available to them,” she says.

For Lee, she fell in love with every profession she got to try. “It’s just the matter of finding the one I love more,” she says, chuckling.

From housekeeping, sales, engineering, general manager duties, and food and beverage service, Lee expressed her gratitude for the versatility of the training.

She most fondly looks back on one seemingly small moment during her time in the program: a walk from Kellogg to the Breslin Student Events Center with fellow sales team colleagues for a staff meeting. The trek lasted no more than 10 minutes, but with each step she felt a greater sense of belonging. And as she crossed the Red Cedar River and participated avidly in the discussion, rushing feelings of equality, appreciation and acceptance came over her.

“I got to learn more things as I was watching them communicating with their clients, and that was the moment when I realized this is what I would like to do in my future,” she says. “I felt very professional and realized this is what I will be doing when I graduate and step into the real world. Everyone made me feel welcome and constantly involved me into the conversation.”

There was one goal Lee set for herself when she began her time at Kellogg, and it was to gain an understanding of which division she wanted to work in when she took off on her big-city journey.

Fortunately for Lee, her mentor says it’s common for students to find their way professionally after completing the program.

“It gives students exposure to all the areas in the hotel so they can see what area they are most interested in to pursue their career,” Respecki says. “It builds their resume and sets them apart from other hospitality graduates, helping them secure their first job after graduation.”

Because of an especially notable and skillful experience with Kellogg’s sales department, Lee is pursuing her aspirations with a more comfortable idea of what her future looks like. After graduation in December, she plans to move to her favorite city of Chicago to make her big-city dreams come true.

“Chicago gives me a new experience every time I visit,” she says. “It is heaven for hospitality business students as well, with many opportunities waiting for us.”

As far as long-term goals, Lee sees herself one day soon becoming a general manager within the hotel industry to “fulfill that powerful role as a female.”
Climbing the steps of Brody Square Dining Hall, the aroma of fresh-baked pizza dough and melty cheese is unmistakable. Passing through the entrance, the sizzling of sautéing vegetables and the faint clink of utensils can be heard. As patrons weave through the expansive dining hall, MSU Culinary Services team members are hard at work perfecting custom lunch orders, restocking the salad bar with leafy green spinach, arranging warm chocolate chip cookies on a serving tray and wiping down tables to provide the quality dining experience MSU students and the East Lansing community have come to expect at Brody Square.

Ashlee Sanders, student cook supervisor and five-year Brody Square veteran, surveys the floor. While the MSU senior may now refer to the dining hall as her second home, a career in culinary services was not part of her original plan.

“I was pre-nursing until sophomore year when I switched to interdisciplinary studies with a health and society cognate with a business minor,” Sanders says. “Yes, it is a very long title.”

Sanders started working at Brody as a level one team member — or a general kitchen worker. It wasn’t long after she started when Chef Jonathan Hughes, full-time sous chef at Brody, noticed her talent and her dedication to the job.

“Chef Jonathan recommended me to go for the student cook promotion,” Sanders says, adding that she believes he saw an opportunity for her to become an even more valuable asset to the team. Already enjoying the work she was doing at Brody, she took the chance and scored the promotion.

It was around this time Sanders recognized, though she loved the profession of nursing, her true passion was in food and the dream of owning her own restaurant someday.

“As I got more involved, I realized I loved talking to people,” she says. “And when I would cook food here, and people liked it, I would get this sense of pride I couldn’t find anywhere else.”
That love continued to grow, and Sanders realized she needed to change her major to something that could help her transition into food management. Her switch to a health and society concentration allowed her to focus on the social, behavioral and economic determinants of health.

Maggie Lazzell, MSU marketing graduate student and Sanders’ best friend, says a part of the reason she switched her major may be more sentimental — having to do with her grandmother, who raised Sanders and holds a special place in her heart.

“Ashlee has always wanted to open a diner and name it after her late grandmother, Dixie,” Lazzell says. “When she recognized this, she changed her major and decided to stay at Brody to learn all she could.”

The friends met while both employed at Brody Square, and Lazzell says they spent countless hours working, talking and fostering a friendship.

Embracing her new role, Sanders dove into her responsibilities and tried to absorb as many learning opportunities as she could.

This dedication did not go unnoticed. Fellow Student Cook Supervisor Mary Nguyen says of Sanders’ work ethic, “She walks in every day with a positive attitude, ready to give the best Spartan experience possible.”

Sanders’ former Brody Square mentor, Alexis Clark, says, “She is a natural leader and isn’t ashamed to get done what needs to get done.”

Clark explains she wanted to mentor Sanders because she knew she had the potential to be an amazing asset at Brody. “She had and has so much potential in this field. So, I wanted to make sure I trained her properly so she could learn all that she needed to from Brody,” Clark says.

Sanders’ reputation of dedication and hard work spread throughout the Division of Residential and Hospitality Services. Culinary Services Communication Manager Leah Ball explains: “We hold our annual Culinary Throwdown against the chefs at the University of Michigan. This year, Ashlee competed in a timed-cooking challenge where she was presented with mysterious ingredients. Ashlee was a finalist, and our Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski, knowing of her reputation, noticed her talent and asked her to be on the team.”

Sanders’ role was to assist in the preparation, cooking and presentation of the team’s dish, which was an entrée consisting of pork, squash and balsamic-soaked blueberries.

“I was a little nervous for the experience, like anyone would be,” Sanders says. “But I was more excited to be a part of the Spartan team.”

Sanders commends her education at Brody Square for her ability to calm her nerves.

“As Brody has taught me so much, from cooking to just plain life skills,” she says. “Skills that have really prepared me for a lot of things.”

She explains her work experience and interactions with colleagues at Brody Square enhanced her cooking, management, communication and supervisory skills.

After vigorous competition at the Culinary Throwdown, the Spartan chefs came in second by only a few points.

Sanders laughs. “The judges were all Wolverines,” she says. “I mean, let’s think about this for a second!”

Despite the loss, Sanders wouldn’t change a thing. “I had a really great time at the event. The campus was beautiful, and it was great working with Chefs Jason [Strotheide], Kurt and Ethan [Rutherford]. Although we lost, the positive experience outweighed everything else.”

As her MSU experience rounds its last lap around the Spartan academic track, Sanders follows the same mentality she did for the Culinary Throwdown when looking at her time at Brody Square.

“Like any job, it hasn’t always been sunshine and roses, but I couldn’t have asked for a better job. The things I learned here are invaluable and will ensure my success in the future,” she says.

That future? The near-Spartan alumna is hoping to work as a restaurant manager after graduation and continue to hone the skills that will aid her in accomplishing her goals.

“Long-term, I want to open a restaurant, maybe even a chain of restaurants, and I know I can because of Brody.”

“As I got more involved, I realized I loved talking to people,” she says. “And when I would cook food here, and people liked it, I would get this sense of pride I couldn’t find anywhere else.”
Hill, a recent fifth-year senior and now Spartan alumna, came from Southeastern High School in Detroit, which was named in the lowest achieving 5 percent of all public schools in 2016. The transition to college posed a threat for her. Nevertheless, she persisted and set her aspirations high by declaring a major in Special Education and Mathematics.

Thinking she had been equipped and readied for college-level classes, she was surprised when professors consistently gave her Bs and Cs. All she could think was, “I want more.”

Living in McDonel Hall at the time, Hill looked just outside of her residence hall room and set her sights on the neighborhood engagement center. She began utilizing the scads of free tutoring and help rooms.

“I think the resources are amazing,” Hill says. “I come from one of the lowest achieving high schools. For me, I didn’t know transitioning was going to be a big thing academically, but having those resources helped a lot.”

From the Math Learning Center (MLC) guiding her through mathematics classes, The Writing Center at MSU steering her Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures (WRA) classes, the Economics Help Room offering its helping hand and other general academic advising, Hill felt these resources bolstered her success.

“They taught me how to frame what I was doing, center in on what I was writing about, and really organize my thoughts,” she says. “If I didn’t have that, it probably would’ve been really tough for me to go through my WRA and other education classes because I didn’t have that background.”

Though the MLC served as a strong crutch as she struggled through math courses, Hill decided her skills were best served elsewhere and altered her major so she could instead teach language arts.

She deeply involved herself as an engagement center attendee, applied and ultimately accepted a job as a Brody Engagement Center coach so she could help students in the same way she was helped as a struggling first-year student.

“We get so much information as freshmen,” she says. And though it’s hard to pay attention to all the new things being offered to you, Hill liked reminding students of what is available on campus for their benefit.

Hill enjoyed her time on campus so much, she lived on every year.

“And anywhere I was living, I was in the engagement centers,” she says, laughing.

As she got her feet underneath her and saw significant improvement in her academics, Hill looked for other ways to get involved on campus. Hill had always taken it upon herself to stay active in high school but felt a lack of involvement during her first year at MSU. Her suitemate served as the floor’s resident assistant. It was she who suggested Hill join the Residence Hall Association (RHA).
Hill described the group as an organization that focuses on those who pay tax dollars to them — essentially, RHA is an on-campus government that gives back to more than 15,000 Spartans.

“We build programs and give back funds so communities can put on their own programs for their halls and neighborhoods,” says Hill.

So, she joined and served as representative for Hubbard Hall briefly where she says the most alluring part of her job was planning events for the building. However, she quickly took notice of the absence of African-American students on the executive board.

Because she was able to get the help she needed at the engagement centers, Hill felt academically and mentally prepared for her next big jump in life. She climbed the ranks of the RHA, taking on the role of vice president and ultimately serving a term as president.

“I wanted to be [on the executive board] so that I can represent students of color and really have a seat at the table and give a voice,” she says.

During her time as president, Hill coined the phrase, “give the money away,” and with the help of advising staff, she created the Cash for Change program, which grants $25,000 to any MSU student group on a yearly basis. Eligible groups didn’t need to be a Registered Student Organization — just submit a proposal that explains how the money will be spent.

Her world moved quicker during her time as president as she became well-recognized throughout the university, and her words became more notable as a student.

Hill became a respected and well-known student within the Spartan community. As president of the RHA, she was invited, as a student liaison, to sit in on the Board of Trustees. Hill described this time as invaluable when it came to thinking about college student’s experiences. She became even more intentional with the things she did and for the communities she represented. She was then endorsed to sit on the 2017-18 MSU Homecoming Court by a friend she made in the engagement center her first year.

Hill looks back on her time as a Spartan with pride. She owes being able to participate in impactful programs and roles to getting involved on campus early on. She ended her time as a Spartan with her graduation in May and is currently in South Africa teaching cross-culturally. Come the fall, she will complete her student teaching requirements in Chicago for one year.

“I think the resources are amazing,” Hill says. “I come from one of the lowest achieving high schools. For me, I didn’t know transitioning was going to be a big thing academically, but having those resources helped a lot.”
Having recently joined the Division of Residential and Hospitality Services, Samm Martin is the new community director at Case Hall. “One thing about residence education is that day to day it could be very different. So right now I’m in training,” Martin says.

As a community director, Martin will supervise three graduate assistants, one full-time union professional and residence assistants. They will also be working with the living-learning community within James Madison College.

Originally from Maryland, Martin attended Grand Valley State University as an undergraduate and grad student in education.

“I knew I wanted to go to grad school and figure out what life could be like if I worked with college students,” Martin says.

Outside of their new role, Martin can be found listening to music and even owns a couple of ukuleles.

“I’m also into nature photography,” says Martin. “So, I’ve spent a good time at the Horticultural Gardens.”

IN THEIR WORDS:
“Now that I’m here, I’m super invested in the community Michigan State has and just seeing how people are on fire for this school. It’s really awesome to be a part of. I am really excited to get to know the students and to see what their community looks like. There is something that really winds a school like this together, so I’m really pumped to see what that looks like.”

Forest Akers Operations Manager Jason Edick traveled throughout the country before coming full circle and settling in at a job located just 25 miles away from his home and current town where he fell in love with the links after a high school job at the local course.

“I really fell in love with golf,” Edick says. “Working at a course, seeing what the professionals did there and being a part of the golf operation was such a fun atmosphere to be in.”

Edick attended Ferris State University for the golf management program but ultimately was drawn back to Michigan State University last August.

As operations manager, he helps with day-to-day responsibilities keeping both East and West courses running smoothly. Additionally, the courses host 40 leagues, equating to about 800 players, and nearly 120 outings each year, which Edick coordinates. From food to tee times to keeping score, every aspect of these events is his responsibility.

He says the best part about working at Forest Akers Golf Courses is having 36 holes to work with, the flexibility that gives him and being able to show off a different set to golfers each week.

IN THEIR WORDS:
“The great part about working at Michigan State is the student staff. We have anywhere from 80 to 100 students on staff throughout the different operations and I get to work with a lot of educated, fun students.”
Without the advice of a trusted faculty member during her undergraduate career at SUNY Courtland State University, Brittnie Daugherty never would have ended up a Spartan. As Daugherty begins her new role as community director of Holmes Hall, she remembers her first time hearing about MSU. “A faculty member suggested I pursue student affairs and told me about her friend who had studied at MSU. I came from a small town and had never heard of MSU. I applied on a whim, and by some miracle got in.”

As a graduate student, Daugherty worked with Residence Education and Housing Services as an assistant community director in Bailey Hall and University Village Apartments. “I have a unique perspective when transitioning to this role because I was a grad in this department for two years. I experienced what it's like to work with students on a first-hand basis.”

Outside of work, Daugherty volunteers with a social justice reading group for kids at East Lansing Public Library. “I'm really excited to be in Holmes since we have the river trail right behind us,” Daugherty says, who also enjoys spending time in nature.

**IN THEIR WORDS:**

“For me, I've never encountered a group of students or a community so proud to be who they are. I honestly am inspired every day by the things our students, employees and faculty are doing and changing within our world. Being associated with being a Spartan is just a humbling experience, recognizing I am a part of this community that is actively working to make a difference.”

Colorado-native Sydney Cronkhite felt pulled to Michigan State University when it came time to head off on her college adventure. Cronkhite worked with MSU Bakers as a Spartan undergraduate, and it was a year and a half post-graduation when she became involved with Starbucks on campus.

Cronkhite has been the operations coordinator for the Wells Hall Starbucks since May 2017. “It's such a great company, and it's cool getting to work for both Starbucks and MSU because they have really similar values,” she says. Some of the values both organizations uphold are inclusivity, sustainability, a relaxed environment and emphasizing personal relationships. Cronkhite fits in perfectly with both cultures.

She runs the Wells Hall Starbucks, assists with the Coffee Master program, organizes health inspections and assists in administrative functions in harmony with other on-campus Starbucks managers. “I love not only the staff in the building but the Starbucks staff as well,” she says. “[I love] interacting with new customers and getting to know people. It's different every day, which is a lot of fun.”

**IN THEIR WORDS:**

“I admire Howard Schultz, [who is] the most notable CEO of Starbucks. He grew up poor in Brooklyn, then created this Starbucks empire and even though he became involved in the corporate world, he never lost his values and made sure the company upheld the values he had. He was able to push through that and stay true to himself.”