


## Separation Anxiety



Four years ago, Beth Belensky and her husband, John, dropped off their daughter, Sarah, at Thatcher Hall. College was her first time living away from home, and Beth sensed Sarah's excitement and desire to strike out on her own.

"My impression was that she was going to get so involved that she wouldn't miss us at all," Beth says.

Like any parents, Beth and John were both elated and saddened by Sarah's display of independence. They knew they had helped her move smoothly into adult life, but they also deeply felt her absence.

"There wasn't anybody else at home," Beth says. "I took on a second job and started to work evenings. It kept me busy."

Sadness over the absence of a child is a natural part of adjustment, says Marjorie Savage, author of *You're on Your Own (But I'm Here if You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years*.

"Brain research shows that parents get a flush of endorphins when they have positive interactions with their children," Savage says. "Students go away, and the parents aren't getting that chemical rush. It's actually a form of withdrawal."

Combined with the loss of their child-centered identity, parents can start feeling a sense of emptiness and loneliness. Savage has some advice for parents with an empty nest.

**Call and write your children.** Communication is important, but Savage

says parents shouldn't call their children every day. When you do call, keep conversations focused on your student.

**Learn to text message.** Savage says a quick "Hope you have a nice day!" or a text photo of the family pet is enough to let students know they aren't forgotten.

**Stay busy and fill your time with constructive activities.** Savage says the absence of a child "can be a positive learning environment for the parents." Try new experiences: travel, practice photography, take a course at the community college, learn to fly, buy a motorcycle, or take a new job.

**Understand your changing roles.** Your role is shifting from parent and caretaker to friend and counselor. "If there are questions, the first step should be for the student to find the answer," she says. "That's how they learn the resources on campus, the people who can be helpful, and the problem-solving skills they're supposed to learn."

But the most important element of a successful transition is a good relationship, and Beth offers her tried-and-true advice.

"Make sure that your child knows you're there, that you're open to hearing, but that you don't pry," she says. "Let them know you'll always be on their side and that you'll always love them, no matter how many hundreds of miles away you are."

~By Melissa Swanson, editor



with President  
Gordon Bietz



ASK THE PRESIDENT

### Can parents sign up for Southern Adventist University's emergency alert system?

Southern's emergency alert system, which sends preloaded text or voice messages to subscribed phones, provides immediate communication to those whose safety could be in danger should there be a crisis on campus.

Because the purpose is to warn those who would likely be in danger, and because more numbers will slow down the system, it is only available to Southern students and employees.

While communicating urgent information to students is our top priority in time of crisis, we also want to keep parents informed in a timely manner. The two primary means of communication we would use for this purpose would be our website and our parents email list. In addition to not slowing down the emergency alert system, these methods of communication allow us to share more details with parents.

The email list that would be used in crisis is the same one that the *Panorama* editorial team uses to send out its quarterly e-newsletter. If you haven't received an e-newsletter this academic year, check your spam filter and make sure to allow email messages titled "Southern Adventist University News." If you still have not received an email, you can sign up by going to [www.southern.edu/sites/parent](http://www.southern.edu/sites/parent) and clicking on "Sign up for the Parent's E-Newsletter."

Of course, we all hope and pray that our emergency alert system will never need to be used, yet I am not blind to the fact that as an open campus, we're not immune from the disasters of our world. This emergency alert system is just one of the many ways our campus has demonstrated our devotion to protecting our most precious assets—your children.

## Did You Know?

### Rescheduling Exams

Vacation times are always exciting for students and the parents who get to see them. But before your student packs up for midterm break, Thanksgiving, or Christmas vacation, you should keep a few things in mind.

It is important to always check with your student before purchasing an airline ticket. Airline tickets are rarely refundable, and your student may encounter some scheduling conflicts. Exams, final exams in particular, incur a \$65 rescheduling fee for students who do not take their exams at the time scheduled by Southern.

Rescheduling fees serve "to discourage rescheduling and to maintain the integrity of the examinations and the

exam schedule," says Volker Henning, associate vice president of Academic Administration. "Many professors create a new exam for the student who takes it at another time, requiring him or her to do a lot of extra work."

Scheduling fees are rarely waived, says Henning, except for instances of family catastrophes, an unavoidable scheduling conflict with another exam, or a university function that requires a student to be elsewhere during the exam. If a student has three exams in a row or four on the same day, the fee may also be waived.

Exam schedules for both fall and winter semesters are available for viewing at [records.southern.edu](http://records.southern.edu).

~By Natalia Lopez-Thismon

### Your Online Connection to Southern: [www.southern.edu](http://www.southern.edu)

Southern's redesigned website has a special section just for parents. This part of the website includes answers to frequently asked questions, Southern's event calendar, services offered to your student, and information that will make it easy to plan your trip to Southern.

When accessing [www.southern.edu](http://www.southern.edu), clicking on the "Parents" link at the top of the page will open a list of easily accessible links. The first category is called "Southern Now," and it includes the calendar, grades, and freshman blogs. The other categories provide local hotel information and directions for visiting

Southern, as well as services such as Campus Safety, Student Services, and the residence halls.

The redesigned website provides the opportunity to connect to Southern's campus during vespers on Friday evenings by streaming the program live. There's also a link to the student podcast, the Southern Breeze. Financial aid information, a directory complete with phone numbers, and websites for all of Southern's departments are right at your fingertips.

~By Natalia Lopez-Thismon

### Favorite Bible Verse

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

James 1:5 (NIV)

~Submitted by Chelsea Foster, senior biology major

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# Helen Pyke's Warm Welcome



The tantalizing aroma of cookies fills Brock Hall's third floor as Helen Pyke, associate English professor, walks to her freshman composition class with the fresh homemade treats.

"I have enjoyed how caring Mrs. Pyke is in class," says Rose-Merylyn Lewis,

sophomore broadcast journalism major. "She always welcomes us warmly."

Pyke, who came to Southern in 1987 as an adjunct professor, has dedicated herself to helping students succeed and become better writers. Because of her dedication, she often comments heavily on her students' drafts about how they can improve their writing, and because constructive criticism can be hard to take, Pyke has found a way to sweeten the deal.

"They won't get mad at me if they're eating my cookie and it's still warm," says Pyke, "and if they don't get mad at me, their chances of doing well on a final draft are much better."

Pyke understands what it's like to struggle as a writer. Growing up she wrestled with reading aloud. It wasn't until she became an adult that she discovered she

was dyslexic. But being dyslexic hasn't stopped her from publishing about 17 books (including one on dyslexia) and countless articles. Having dyslexia has also helped her understand how to assist other dyslexic students with their writing.

"I tell my students who are dyslexic, 'you are the person who will decide how far you will go in life,'" says Pyke. "You will succeed if you think of yourself as a gifted person.' Dyslexic people are almost always very creative, and the dyslexic brain can see a bigger picture. In a sense, I think that being dyslexic is a gift."

Along with teaching, Pyke has also opened her home to Southern's Writer's Club as its sponsor since 1989. As in her classes, she shares with students her talents in writing as well as baking at every meeting.

~By Suzanne Ocsai

## First Year Experience Builds Network

The transition into college can be challenging for freshman students. Southern's new First Year Experience program is helping to make that move easier for freshmen by offering them a supportive network of faculty and other students to connect with.

"The First Year Experience program is a network of resources targeted at helping freshmen be successful their first year," says Renita Klischies, First Year Experience coordinator. "It helps them get grounded and start on the right foot."

To create the First Year Experience program, Southern combined existing services, such as freshman orientations and student mentors, with a new class called Southern Connections.

Students are placed in the Southern Connections class sections based on their majors. The different sections are designed to help them make contacts with peers and faculty within their particular field of study.

"I think the Southern Connections class is a good addition," says freshman public relations major Hilary Prandl, "because getting to know a smaller group of people doing and learning the same things gives us an opportunity to feel more at home and in a family."

Along with helping students make connections within their majors, the class focuses on helping students succeed in college by addressing good study habits, time management skills, and test-taking tips. All freshman students are assigned to write papers that cover topics such as what they expect for the first semester, their goals and values, a personal integrity statement, and others on related topics.

"They need to figure themselves out now," Klischies explains, "and find out if their goals are realistic and if their major is correct for them."

~By Suzanne Ocsai



*Each First Year Experience class spends a day learning teamwork on the ropes course.*

# Students Say

College students have a reputation for being short on money. We asked students their techniques for saving and stretching their dollars.

"I don't purchase pre-made foods; I try to purchase fruits and vegetables. I also use my debit card so I can get cash back."  
~Alex Bates, freshman engineering major

"The way I try to save money is abstinence. I just say no! If my friends say to me, 'Let's go to the mall,' I'm like, 'Um, no.'"  
~Joselyn Ghulam, junior nursing major

"I live off campus, and one of the ways my roommate and I save our money is by making sure all of the lights and all of the plugs are off. So if we're sitting in the living room and I leave my light on or he leaves his light on, we get up and turn it off. Sometimes even if it's a hot day, we leave the AC off."  
~Ahad Kebede, senior nursing major

"I make sure that when I'm shopping, I always look for the lowest-priced items. I try to compare quality. Most of the time, off-brand products are the way to go. I think about what I have, and I am usually able to convince myself out of buying something, especially if it's clothes, because I have everything that I need and there are so many people out there less fortunate than I am."

~Aimee Burchard, sophomore mass communications and graphic design major

"I don't drive very far, just back and forth to school."  
~Jason Wilkins, senior theology major

"I buy gas at Wal-Mart with a gift card because it's way cheap and they give you a discount."  
~Heather Haynes, junior nursing major

"I eat on campus instead of going out to eat."  
~Erica Dalley, sophomore elementary education major

**Contact Us:** We want to know what you think! If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please call Melissa Swanson at 423.236.2582 or send an email to [southernparents@southern.edu](mailto:southernparents@southern.edu).

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