

## The Mystery Behind Greek Village

### *What to know if your student is looking to be a part of Greek Village.*

I sat down with the Residence Life Coordinator (RLC) of Greek Village to explore an area on-campus with a huge amount of energy and life and yet it is an area that some know little about. Tucked away in the North corner of campus is a residential area that holds 350 Greek-affiliated students. Spanned over 14 houses, representing both Panhellenic and the Interfraternity Council (IFC) members, Greek Village is a hub for events both philanthropic and social. But what is it really comprised of? What makes it any different than the other residence halls or even Greek Life functions on-campus? Luckily the RLC for Greek Village, Stacey Jaksa, gave me an inside look. Particularly, she pointed out what to know or to think about if your son or daughter is considering moving in to Greek Village or has already decided to do so.

One of the first things that Stacey explained to me is the differences between Greek Village and the rest of the residential buildings on-campus. While Greek Village is a part of USF's Housing and Residential Life, it also has a partnership with the Greek Housing Association, which is comprised of House Corporation representatives from each chapter. This makes the community accountable to all of its partners, especially in regards to following policies and creating community standards. In addition, those who live in Greek Village have a 12-month contract which is different from a typical residential hall or apartment. There are also Community Managers (CMs) instead of Resident Assistants (RAs) who live in each house. They fulfill the same basic role as an RA within the residence halls but are actual members of the house's affiliation. They serve as liaisons for Housing and Residential Life, their sorority sisters or fraternity brothers, and for other partners.

One of the greatest things about Greek Village, as explained by Stacey Jaksa, "is how the community is very supportive of one another. We have a big family feel. If you look at how Greek Village is set up, it actually looks like a village as opposed to the common Greek "rows" you will see on other campuses. This allows the different affiliations to not only see the other houses on a daily basis but to interact with all members as well." Greek Village also has great community spaces including chapter houses, study rooms, a pool, a sand volleyball court, and large open fields. These spaces allow for the greater Greek community, even if they do not have a house in Greek Village, to still use the space and come together as a whole. A unique feature within the community is how those students who are members of an organization that have a house in the village but do not live there, can still have access to the house's common spaces. This is just another example of how Greek Village allows all members of a particular fraternity or sorority to really feel connected to the community.

For parents with students looking to join Greek life or to move into Greek Village, Stacey offers the following advice: "Support your student's choice but keep up on what's going on. Remember that in this tough job market being affiliated with a Greek organization can set them apart and provide them with skill-sets like supervision experience and peer accountability that they may not get in the classroom. Make sure your student takes the time to check out every option they're interested in because while each organization is similar in purpose, they all have a different personality. Becoming Greek is a lifetime commitment that will offer your student numerous opportunities to learn, mature, and network. If your student wants to move in to Greek Village, make sure he or she knows there are differences from the other residential communities, and overall this community has one of the highest residential retention rates on-campus and provides a fantastic mentorship opportunity. People love living in Greek Village and once they move in, many continue to remain residents until they graduate." Overall Greek Village is a unique residential community that is full of energy and supports all aspects of Greek and residential life. It is an exceptional opportunity for students to feel connected to their sorority and fraternity as well as the campus as a whole.