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Lydia Lockner of Gray is among the new freshmen entering Milligan College and making the transition from high school to college and from living at home to a college dorm.

Milligan helps freshmen, their parents adjust to college life

Milligan College is not that far from Lydia Lockner's home in Gray.

However, for the freshmen like Lockner, who are moving into the dorms and beginning their first college classes this week, the new life and experiences that await them at college might as well be a different world.

"As I was preparing to come to Milligan, the emotion I have felt the most is definitely excitement," said Lockner, a 2011 graduate of Daniel Boone High School. "But as the time grew closer to move in, I became a little more nervous about meeting new people, starting classes and just adapting to a whole new world."

Lockner is not alone. Like the parents of thousands of other college freshmen across the country, Lockner's parents are going through their own set of questions and experiences.

and move.

The first opportunity for new students and their parents to visit campus, meet their professors and even select their courses for the fall semester is Connections weekend. This 24-hour orientation for new students is held twice a year — in April or June. Many students meet and/or request their roommates during Connections weekend.

"Connections weekend was the single most important part of this transition for me as a parent," Diann said. "Seeing my daughter, Lydia, on the Milligan campus interacting with current and future students not only gave me confidence in her choice of college, but it also gave me the peace I need as a mother at this most important time in her life."

Lydia attended the Connections weekend in April. For her, the most important part of the weekend was the relationships she

placed into small groups, usually about 12 to 16 students, and then assigned a faculty mentor," Abner said. "As a faculty mentor, I usually meet with my mentees at least three times during the first semester. We meet during the first couple of weeks, before the first series of challenging exams of the semester and then again at mid-term."

A WARM WELCOME

When move-in day finally arrives for Milligan freshmen, they are warmly welcomed to campus through a series of Welcome Week activities. The week consists of orientation and social events to introduce them to their classmates and their new surroundings.

are all free."

The emphasis on relationship-building and student success doesn't end when Welcome Week is over. Throughout the year, students have a variety of resources including academic advising and free tutoring, as well as mentoring from peers, resident assistants, faculty and others on campus.

"The relationships students have with their classmates, the faculty and the staff at Milligan are nurtured and grow stronger throughout their college years," said Tracy Brinn, Milligan's director of enrollment management. "We want Milligan to be a comfortable community for our students, a place where they learn about the world and about their place in it."

On their first day on campus, new students and their parents attend Matriculation and the desert reception that follows. The Matriculation ceremony is a time-honored Milligan tradition where new students "sign-in" to the records of the college and formally become a member of the Milligan community.

"We make Welcome Week easy for students; they just have to show up," said Kate Anderson, Milligan's director of residence life and housing. "The Campus Activities Board plans a week full of fun events. From riding the lazy river at Wetlands Water Park, to listening to live music on campus to riding the zip line at Doe River Gorge, there are so many fun ways to meet other students, and they

Milligan is consistently named one of the Best Baccalaureate Colleges in the South in "America's Best Colleges" by U.S. News & World Report and one of the nation's Top 100 Baccalaureate Colleges by Washington Monthly. The college also is recognized as a College of Distinction.

"I am filled with emotion," said Diann Lockner, Lydia's mom. "I am so proud of Lydia and the realization of her dream to attend Milligan. While I am reminiscent of the past 18 years and how quickly they have passed, I am enjoying helping her to prepare for this next step."

"My biggest concern is that she might become overwhelmed with all the many changes involved with starting college. I try to remind her that there are many resources available to her and people who care who will be available to answer her questions or just simply talk if the need arises."

MAKING THE CONNECTION

Milligan has many programs in place to answer the questions and ease the anxieties of college freshmen and their parents. The college begins the process of acclimating students to life on Milligan's campus many months before it's time to pack their bags

developed.

"I saw firsthand at the banquet and in our small group times how well the faculty gets to know each and every student as an individual," Lydia said.

During Connections, Lydia also met her faculty mentor, Dr. John Paul Abner, associate professor of psychology. Abner, who is also Milligan's director of academic advising, helped Lydia choose classes and answered her questions about the upcoming academic year.

"At Milligan, the freshmen are