

New program celebrates diversity at Davidson

By ZEB KELLEY
Staff Writer

"Welcome to the Davidson family." These words are common for freshman orientation. Some might say that family means an academic institution, athletic team, hall, or something else. Like many others, Seth Davis '02 thought that a family should be a place where everyone feels included and accepted. This semester Davis hopes to communicate this value in a unique way.

In the upcoming weeks, all freshmen will attend an evening program that includes dramatic skits and group discussions on the topic of diversity at Davidson. Davis heads the group responsible for these sessions, which includes members of SGA, RLO, and many others who have a genuine interest in the diversity of Davidson College.

The main focus of the group is to, "reach out to all freshmen," according to Davis. He wants new students to know that there are people here who "care about all of those who are in the family that's Davidson."

Davis explains that there is no single issue driving this program, but rather a multitude of discussion-worthy themes. The sessions will focus on diversity in the contexts of race, sexual preference and gender, awareness, inclusion, and acceptance.

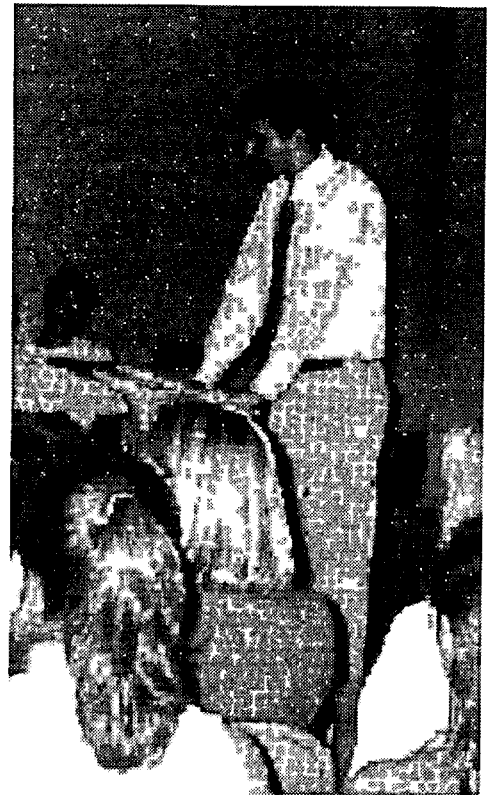
Davis explains that all of the people involved in these sessions truly "love Davidson," and "want to make it a better place." The group also has support from the Dean of Student's Office and many other student organizations such as SGA and RLO. With this kind of support, these sessions are sure to provide an introspective look at diversity at Davidson.

Davis is not content to stop after a few gatherings. He would like these preliminary sessions to open the door to the upcoming "diversity dinners," where students will further their discussion of diversity at the dinner table. Whatever the means, these Davidson students are truly dedicated to their cause and sincerely "care about these issues."

This idea is not a new one. Davis, along with SGA president Dane Erickson '01 and others planned to incorporate this program into orientation sections similar to the book discussion. Due to scheduling conflicts, however, these sessions were postponed until the fall semester.

Starting September 12, two or three freshmen halls will attend performances each week on either a Tuesday or Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in Perkins Auditorium. These students will watch and participate in skits that highlight many important issues at Davidson.

However one may define a family, Davis and others involved in the program want students to know that "we want to know you and we want you to be part of the Davidson family."



Erin Berry

Davis debuts diversity program.

Skunks,

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"I felt this cold stuff all over my leg. The skunk laughed at me, and then ran away," said McKoy.

Soon after the spraying, Reggie headed for Harris Teeter on a quest for a tomato paste remedy. He entered, the employees took a whiff, and without asking questions directed him to "Aisle four, left."

Reggie spent the day smearing himself with the paste. When he called his professors to explain his problem, they responded, "We heard, and thank goodness you didn't come to class."

To human noses, the smell wore off after a few days. But to the skunks, Reggie smelled like a friend for a week.

"I had skunks literally chasing me while I was walking up the hill," he recalls.

What has Reggie gained from his experience? "I have a sixth sense for skunks now. I can smell them from a mile away. It's really kind of scary."

Davidson presidents and students are not alone in their dealings with skunks. Maintenance worker Lisa Moose assumes the brave task of trapping the critters. Moose has captured and relocated numerous skunks for the last five years.

When I got to a hundred, I just stopped counting," she said.

Moose places wire cages containing plates of peanut butter in strategic locations around campus. She distributes them after dark to decrease the likelihood that more innocent animals such as chipmunks and squirrels will fall for the snack instead.

During the night, the skunk smells the peanut butter, enters the trap, licks the plate, and slam!, the doors on each end of the cage shut.



Aaron Houck

Watch your step . . . this smelly trespasser is waiting around the corner.

"I have tried Food Lion peanut butter, and I have tried Jif peanut butter," she explains, "Skunks choose Jif."

The next day, Moose returns to the site to face a skunk that has exhausted himself from trying all night to escape. "In the morning, they're ready to see somebody help them get

out," she says.

Moose begins by throwing a tarp over the cage to calm the animal. With help, she loads the imprisoned skunk into her truck. She then drives a good distance away from campus to release the animal in the woods. When she opens the cage door in the new setting, the skunk wanders away without looking back.

Though a few unlucky passersby have received an unwanted spritz, most folks remain unbothered by the animals.

Injury from an angry dog or any rabid animal actually outweighs the threat posed by skunks," said Holmes. "But given skunks unique ability to harass students, we will continue to respond to reports."

Area Coordinator Troy Williams believes that Davidson students have grown accustomed to the skunks among them. "They are something that's part of the landscape," he explains. "People just accept them."

THE STUDENT BODY



By JULIA PHILPOTT
Student Health Advisor

*With arms outspread
I fall upon the grass
And if, in this wide world, I come to die
Then I shall die from the sheer joy of living.*


-Yevgeny Yevtushenko

The other night I had the opportunity to listen to Yevgeny Yevtushenko speak. I can't think of a more fulfilling way to spend two hours. His presence was mesmerizing. He carried himself like a dancer, he moved his arms like a painter, and he pronounced his words in a way that let everyone know how alive he was inside. I wanted the enthusiasm he had and hoped that it was contagious. I wanted everyone to feel what he seemed to feel...so why then don't we? I wonder what makes us lose sight of our

joy. We are now entering our fourth week of school and already people seem to be carrying their worry with them.

I have no definitive method for "feel good mental health"; I only know that positive mental health is a crucial component of feeling good! Please remember to take time during the day for your heart and mind. This could be as simple as taking thirty minutes everyday to play outside, read a book for fun, write letters, sit still, or whatever else makes you happy.

The point is to take time for you. (Taking time to think about all the things you have to do does not count!) We cannot carry "the worry" around at all times; it will grow to the point where we will fall under its weight. Yet, if we put it down for a little time each day we can become accustomed to having our arms outspread. Then we can fall upon the grass and find the sheer joy of living. I wish you all love, sunshine, and a brilliant week full of weightlessness.



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