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Student inspired to start mentor program in Decker Hall



Megan Dellinger, the leader of Decker's new Big/Little Program. Photo by: Megan Hartman

By: Chelsea Sydnor

Gardner-Webb junior, Megan Dellinger is beginning a program in Decker Residence Hall for sophomores, juniors, and seniors to help new students adapt to life on campus.

"My freshman year I went through a lot of really hard things," Dellinger explained. "My grandfather died the week before I moved in, and there were a lot of emotions involved in adjusting to college."



"Big sisters" will be easily identified by name tags outside

Dellinger was fortunate enough to live in a suite with several upperclassmen that supported her throughout the transition. One of the upperclassmen in particular was Kate Barnett, a senior at the time. Dellinger was greatly inspired by her friendship with Barnett, and eventually conceived the idea for the Big Sister Program.

It was **Barnett's death** in a November 2014 car accident that ultimately motivated Dellinger to get the project underway. "This in in memory of her," Dellinger shared. "She's the one that has fueled what I want to do. She showed genuine kindness to others and shared the love of Christ."

Dellinger wants to uphold this legacy through her program by emphasizing the sense of community at Decker. The Bigs and Littles will host events such as movie and craft nights where all residents will be invited to attend.

As long as the program is effective this year, Dellinger hopes it will spread to

other residence halls in the coming years. She feels that the proximity and sharing required in dorms makes the activities involved in the program beneficial for all residents.

While only freshmen are eligible to participate as Little Sisters this year, Dellinger would eventually like to extend the invitation to sophomores, as well. She knows difficulties can still arise for students early in their college careers, and having an older role model can make the changes feel more natural.

"We have a lot of really great Bigs this year. They are more than willing to give their time and love to these girls," said Dellinger. "It is really great to see everyone come together in support of this program."