



Magazine

Students Help Run Mansion at Minnetrista With Hopes of Recruiting Doctors to Muncie Long-Term

By Dan Human

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One after another, medical students slogged through the summer heat and into their home, exhausted from their hospital shifts.

The property's manager, **David Martin '09**, observed them as they came in, stopping to exchange pleasantries as they climbed up the stairs to their rooms in the three-story Maplewood Mansion at the heart of the Minnetrista area of Muncie. In his hand, he clutched a resident handbook—one of several projects Ball State students have done since Maplewood began providing short-term housing for Indiana University School of Medicine–Muncie students completing their clerkships in the area.

Ball State began leasing **Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab** in August 2017 from the Ball Brothers Foundation for a nominal yearly fee. The goal: show future medical professionals that Muncie can be a nice place to live and work while at the same time empowering Ball State through hands-on experience.



“Maplewood Mansion is providing a unique learning opportunity for residential property management students that will help grow the program and make our graduates more appealing to the industry,” said Ronald Harrington, a student in the **master's degree in residential property management program** who was a graduate assistant at the mansion during the 2017-18 academic year.

Carla Earhart, professor of residential property management, meets with students at the Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab. Students help set up and maintain Maplewood's day-to-day operations.

"I really love the hands-on experience you receive while working at Maplewood and the snapshot of what to expect once you start working in the property management industry."

A look inside the mansion

Among its luxuries, the nine-bedroom, three-story Georgian-style mansion offers high-end kitchen appliances, a screened-in balcony, and a recreational lounge with pool table, TV area, and computer lab. The residents all have their own room with furnishings, a TV, and private bathroom.

"There's plenty of room for everyone to study and relax, throughout the mansion and outside," said Maplewood resident Cate Shamblen, who lived in the mansion while working on a rotation at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital. "Another benefit is getting to interact with other students in the house. The location is great and it's easy to get wherever I need to go around Muncie. Having a place to stay in Muncie during rotations is incredibly helpful and eliminates some of the stress."

Focused on the bigger picture

Students from two of Ball State's business programs help with both Maplewood's day-to-day operations and the long-term management.

In addition to creating the resident handbook, a group of **residential property management** majors helped devise emergency evacuation plans, plus conducted inventory control and other projects needed to keep the home running during its first year. One class, for instance, reviewed Maplewood's maintenance needs to trouble shoot and make repair suggestions.

"Their help creating these documents has given me the opportunity to focus on the bigger picture of managing Maplewood, and it has given them experience doing something that they will most likely have to do in the real world," said Martin, a graduate of the Miller College of Business.

The **hospitality and food management program**, meanwhile, has launched a 50-hour pre-internship requirement for its students, helping with day-to-day operations at Maplewood.



Residential property management students have created a resident handbook, developed a Facebook page as part of a marketing plan, and helped set up and maintain Maplewood Mansion through other projects.

“We are one of very few hospitality programs in the world where students work—and take classes—in a functioning lodging establishment,” said Sotiris Hji-Avgoustis, chairperson of the Department of Management.

Program benefits community

On top of the benefits to the students, the Ball Brothers Foundation supported the project because it will help recruit medical professionals to the Muncie area, ultimately benefiting the health and quality of life for the area’s residents, said **Donna Munchel**, AA ’97, a program officer for the foundation.

“This is a win-win-win as our community works to recruit doctors to stay here and to improve the health of people who live here,” Munchel said. “The earliest grants from the Ball Brothers Foundation—stretching all the way back to the late 1920s—focused on health care and education, and to continue this legacy in such an innovative way is exciting.”