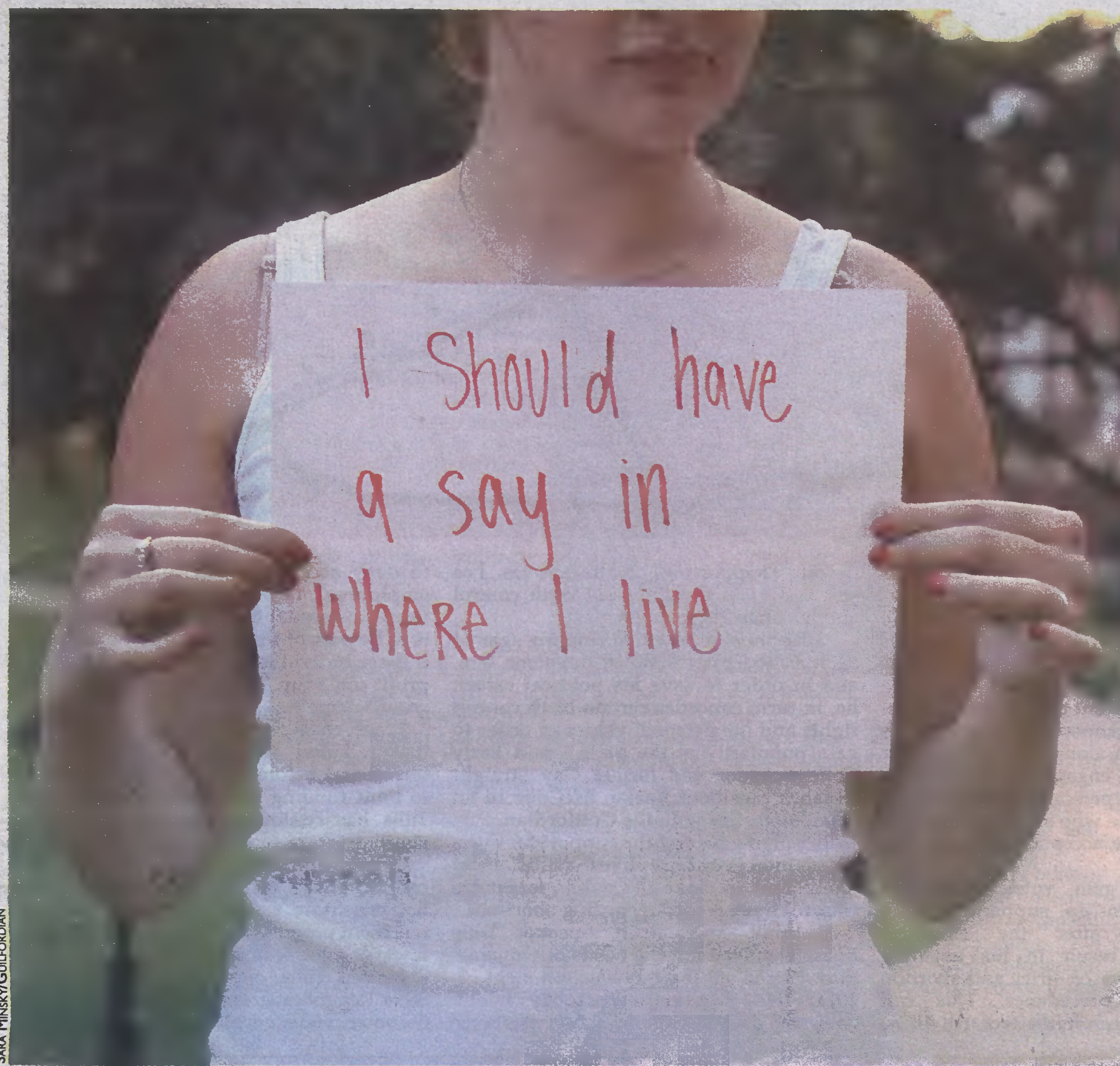


## Is Guilford giving enough thought to whom they grant off-campus housing?



SARA MINSKY/GUILFORDIAN

College: the first step taken towards true independence. Most students lived with their parents full-time before Guilford, so living on a college campus away from their support system is a big deal. But can Guilford's campus truly satisfy every student's needs?

For those who believe Guilford's campus isn't exactly their niche, there is an alternative option: off-campus housing. There is a set of requirements to apply for off-campus housing, but just because you are 21 or have ADA accommodations doesn't mean your request to live off-campus will become a reality.

Sophomore Holly Haid, who now lives off campus, shared some distressing information regarding her experiences with Residence Life.

"I requested for off-campus mostly because I have an eating disorder and severe anxiety," said Haid in an email interview. "When I submitted my medical paperwork stating I had been diagnosed with anorexia nervosa along with my release papers from my treatment centers, the response I got from Residence Life was that it was a past diagnosis (and) thus was not relevant."

"Just because I have gained the weight back does not mean that I am mentally recovered, and anyone who took the time to research anorexia would quickly discover this. Their ignorance was shocking to me."

Once Haid was denied, her therapist wrote another note explaining that it would be best for Haid to have access to a kitchen as well as more seclusion. It was likely that if she were to remain on campus it could trigger a relapse.

Some might argue that Haid could opt to live in the apartments or a theme house, but when you add the cost of living in those options on top of

tuition and a meal plan it can become very unaffordable.

"I found that I had a hard time finding a place I liked enough to live after my first two years," said junior Julia Beveridge, who also lives off-campus. "I would have loved to live in the apartments, but I couldn't afford them."

The costs of the apartments and theme houses range from \$3,645 to \$4,470, or roughly \$900 to \$1,100 per month, per person.

The policy is pretty concrete, and it was started back when CCE students were integrated onto Guilford's campus.

"The line was put at 23 because that was the line for CCE eligibility," said former Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Aaron Fetrow. "We didn't want say, a 30-year-old student living in the same space as a bunch of 18-year-olds."

It seems a little off that a policy designed to keep a particular group of students off campus would aim to hold unwilling students, like Haid and Beveridge, on campus.

Beveridge also had trouble applying for off-campus. She ended up having to jump through a loophole: becoming a part-time student.

Though it worked out for her in the end, should it have been so hard for her in the first place?

Not to knock living on campus, as many students find it a vital part of their First Year Experience when integrating into the Guilford community.

"I think the (first year and even the second year) of living on campus, learning to live in a community with

people you go to school with, is incredibly essential and necessary," said Beveridge.

But once she had successfully integrated into Guilford's community she decided to move off campus.

"It's tough to be living around so many people," said Beveridge. "I am pretty introverted. I love hanging around people when I am ready, but I want to be able to walk out my door and not have 50-200 people who know me be right there."

When considering students like Beveridge and Haid, Guilford should reevaluate its policy or rather have students take part in that reevaluation. Senior Mace Smith proposed a great solution to this.

"I think there should be a committee of students focused on thinking about the issue of the housing policy," said Smith. "It should be represented by a diverse team of two to three students who know all the talking points and issues surrounding the subject."

Residence life has intentionality behind students living on campus.

"We want a vibrant campus community," said Maria Hayden, coordinator of housing operations. "We want our residence halls to feel full and social."

Although this is true, not everyone is happy living at Guilford, and when students like Haid or Beveridge are denied, it starts to feel like a punishment.

The community should think about this issue because even if it means the policy stays the same, needs like Haid's and Beveridge's should not be pushed aside so easily. Happy students make a happy campus.

## Let immigrant children stay in N.C., instead of forcing them to leave

They come from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. They flee extreme poverty, drug violence and sexual abuse. They have traveled hundreds of miles through sweltering heat and dangerous terrain in search of a haven far away from the troubles back home.

And North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory doesn't want them in our state.

Federal immigration officials have placed roughly 1,200 unaccompanied children, who crossed into the U.S. illegally, with sponsors in North Carolina over the last year while awaiting hearings on their residency status. McCrory and other critics of this move have voiced concerns that sponsors haven't been properly vetted, that social services and schools

can't handle the additional people and that the children pose a public health risk.

Despite these issues, which have been greatly exaggerated by critics, we have an obligation to the children to help them and allow them into our state, at least until they have an opportunity to present their case for permanent residency in court.

Many of the children who have made their way to North Carolina are escaping extreme circumstances in their home countries.

Stacie Blake, the director of government and outreach at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, which partially operates in North Carolina, told The News & Observer that 95 percent of the girls in the program were raped before reaching the U.S.

"It is important to see the context of why the children are coming here," said sophomore José Oliva, coordinator of Roads to College and an immigrant from Guatemala himself, in an email interview with The Guilfordian. "A lot of them are leaving their countries because (of) crime and gangs. They often have two options: stay and die, or leave and try to survive."

One issue McCrory brought up at a press conference on Aug. 5 is that children are being placed with sponsors who haven't had proper background screenings.

"I feel very strongly that these children could be put in more harm's way than the conditions in which they came from," said McCrory.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the agency runs background checks on sponsors and home studies for households where safety is questionable before a child is placed.

"Under the law, we have a legal responsibility to place children in the least restrictive setting that is in the best interest of the child," said Kevin Wolfe, a spokesperson for the DHHS, to The News & Observer.

This usually means placing the child with a family member or, if that is not possible, another person the child knows. In almost any case, the situation is still better than what many children are fleeing in their home countries.

Other critics have said that allowing children into North Carolina will burden both public school districts and state social services.

"These 1,200 kids break down to 12 kids per county in North Carolina," said Dani Moore, director of immigrants' rights with the North Carolina Justice Center, in an interview with The Asheville Citizen-Times. "To say we cannot accommodate the number of endangered students is just ridiculous."

Additionally, because the children are not citizens, they will not receive most social services provided by the government such as food stamps. In fact, they will qualify for little more than some emergency Medicaid benefits and public school enrollment.

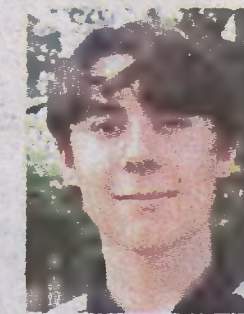
Another oft-repeated chorus from critics of placing children with sponsors in NC is that the children are a potential threat to public health especially when vaccination records aren't available.

However, according to the DHHS's website, all children are screened for potential health problems when they arrive at an Office of Refugee Relocation facility.

"As a precaution, ORR is providing vaccinations to all children who do not have documentation of previous valid doses of vaccine," said the website.

McCrory's criticisms, which seem to be prone to hyperbole, are far outweighed by the needs of the children. In addition, they appear to be motivated by a desire to position himself as a hardliner on immigration policy rather than on a need to do what is best for the children.

"Governor McCrory is sending a clear message that immigrants, even children who are fleeing violence, are unwelcome in North Carolina," said Angeline Echeverría, executive director of El Pueblo Inc., in a media statement on Aug. 5. "Instead of presenting proactive strategies for effective immigrant integration, the Governor continues to waste state resources by focusing his time and energy on this media campaign to criticize federal authorities."



BY MATTHEW JONES  
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