

University, residents collaborate on campaign for quiet



Signs in the Piedmont/Parker neighborhood remind students that Berkeley ordinances require quiet after 10 p.m.
Photo: Lance Knobel

This weekend, a group of local residents and Cal joined forces to ask for some peace and quiet in a southside neighborhood that embraces one of the university's biggest housing units, as well as fraternity row.

The Quiet Campaign of the Happy Neighbors Group posted signs all over the Piedmont/Parker neighborhood and hosted a low-key event on Clark Kerr campus to bring students together with local residents.

"It's going to take a while to have an impact," said Phil Bokovoy, a block captain for the Piedmont/Parker Neighborhood Watch, and a member of the chancellor's Student/Neighborhood Advisory Committee. Bokovoy spent a good part of Friday afternoon putting up the graphic "Shhhh!" signs. He said on Monday morning that he estimated about one-third of the signs had been taken down over the weekend. "But the other night I heard someone go by my house and say, 'Sh!'"

The Quiet Campaign aims to reduce the impact of more than 1,200 university students living next to long-established residential neighborhoods by increasing student awareness of the surrounding neighborhoods, educating neighbors on the resources available to address late-night drunken behavior, vandalism and out-of-control student parties, and creating expectations of student conduct. It

was developed after a series of focus groups of neighbors and students, as well as a survey of local residents.

The Happy Neighbors Project, a pilot project run by the Piedmont/Parker Neighborhood Watch group funded by the Chancellor's Community Partnership Fund, has been working for the past 14 months to develop interventions to reduce the impact of students living in and around and passing through the Piedmont/Parker and Dwight/Hillside neighborhoods.

"A lot of the neighbors are really burned out by this issue," said Karen Hughes, coordinator of <http://uhs.berkeley.edu/psafe/> in the University Health Services. "But we have 40% of undergrads reporting having their own sleep disrupted. We're trying to educate students and neighbors about the expectations."

According to Hughes, the major problem comes from drunken students who neither have awareness of the disturbance they are creating nor much self-control.

Hughes led an informal discussion on the Clark Kerr campus between residents (and their dogs) and students — with dog treats for the four-legged attendees and ice cream for students. She encouraged residents to call the UCPD if they heard disruptive students (the UCPD non-emergency number is 510-642-6760).

"We need neighbors to call and say the right things to UCPD," she said. "They should be accurate and descriptive. You have to call. This is [the UCPD's] job, but they can only take action if someone calls."

Hughes pointed out that there's an inherent conflict between the City of Berkeley's noise ordinance — which calls for quiet between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. seven days a week — and the university's own regulations, which mandate quiet after 11 p.m. on weekdays and after 1 a.m. on weekends.

Hughes encouraged two resident advisors who attended the get-together to encourage students to walk along non-residential streets where possible. For example, she said students should use Channing Way rather than Parker Street to get to and from Clark Kerr.



Karen Hughes speaks to residents and RAs at the Clark Kerr campus. Photo: Lance Knobel

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