

# Expressions<sup>1st</sup>

THE NEWSLETTER OF

Thrive. Connect. Transition. Evolve. Advocate.

Generation  
@Scripps College

Scripps College

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## *A Letter from the Editors*

First and foremost, we want to thank our readers for such great support and enthusiasm from our first newsletter in October. It has given us the opportunity to reflect on the importance of presenting the first-gen narrative to the Scripps Community.

And yet, even with such support on campus, we also understand that there may be moments of homesickness throughout this college experience. As seniors, we have had plenty of experiences in which homesickness existed. Leah felt the closest thing to culture shock she had ever experienced after moving from Kentucky to California without ever having visited campus. Bea also felt a bit lost during her first and second years, even when her home was an hour away from campus. As seniors we could also attest to that fact that we grew and learned from each experience, challenging and questioning our spaces here, but still remaining proud of the decision to come to Scripps for college.

Therefore, this November Newsletter contains both student and staff experiences on homesickness. Read, laugh, and smile at these amazing stories!

We sure did,

**Leah Hughes '15**  
**Beatriz Maldonado '15**  
*Program Co-Interns*

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### *Don't Miss Out!*

We have some awesome programming this month including a Summer Options Workshop with Lesley Bonds from CP&R and Professor Edwards-Gilbert on how you can start preparing for summer plans --- AND an informal resource lunch that will cover tips and recommendations for day to day student life experiences!

## *Near and Far: the Homesickness Experience for Students*

### **Nere Montes '17**

#### **Eastern Coachella Valley, CA**

*Soy del valle.* I am from the Eastern Coachella Valley in Southern California, two hours away from Claremont. The east is all I knew before coming to Claremont's affluent community. I did not know how to react to this new white and rich environment so I became really frustrated at how affluent this new space was. I dealt with my frustration in unhealthy ways and ended up losing my best friend here. I was so wrapped up in my own feelings of frustration that I forgot why I wanted to come to Scripps in the first place: to make my Mexican community proud by getting an education.

It took tough conversations with people like Sonia to get me to snap out of it. I realized that though I wasn't in that familiar place in which I was comfortable with, I was still at home. It was through the community and friends I established at Scripps that I realized I did belong here and that this new whiter and richer place was more than that, it was also my space and my home.

Here I don't have friends, I have an extended family. My friends have become my sisters. They are what have made a difference. It was my Café Con Leche sisters and Sonia that help me get up. I



Nere

later reconciled with my best friend, Cynthia, who is now also my sister. She is there when I most need the warmth and love of a person, and I hope I can reciprocate and take care of her in the same way.

I am a lot happier at Scripps today. It was just a matter of finding my community and people who would make this place feel like my home.

### **Leslie Moreno '18**

#### **Houston, Texas**

It has been almost three months since I came to Scripps, and the memory of me saying goodbye to my parents, sister, and niece remains vivid. I



Leslie

have questioned my decision of coming to California for college, and I have asked myself, "Do I belong here?" These thoughts and that memory make me fall into the grasp of homesickness, and sometimes it feels like I'll never get out of it. In the beginning, I would let myself be homesick and pretend to be strong when, in reality, I was fragile. All I did was sink deeper, and I considered transferring to stop this sadness I felt from being far away from my home, my parents, and myself.

After some time, I slowly began to hate how I felt and I decided it was time to confront. I began to attempt to cope with homesickness and found that listening to country music helps me find some peace of mind. Also, I made friends that not only make me feel better, but make me feel happy that I chose Scripps. Although I wish I could click my boot heels three times and be home, I came to realize that I am home.

## *First-Gen Staff and Homesickness: the Out-of-State Experience*

# Lesley Bonds

*Career Counselor and Student Employment Coordinator, CP&R*

Neither of my parents graduated from high school, and I was the first (and only) person in my family to go to college. As a hard-headed and fiercely independent 17 year old, I left my home in Oildale, CA to attend college in Wilmington, NC. Not only had I never been on an airplane, I had never been farther than 3 hours outside of my hometown.

Alone and 3,000 miles from home, I lugged my two airplane-regulation, 50lb (to the ounce) bags up three flights of stairs to find my new roommate at the top. She was surrounded by family who were helping her decorate her side of the room. At least she was a fan of The Beatles.

As Audre Lorde would say, self-care “is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” For First-Generation students, it is a revolutionary act of survival.

I slept on a rolled up hoodie for the first two weeks until I earned my first paycheck from my work-study job to buy a pillow and comforter. I longed for the securities of a familiar place, but I never asked for help. I didn’t know my RA, I didn’t reach out to my peer mentor and I certainly didn’t call home. I knew I was lucky to be there – an opportunity my parents and siblings would never know – and I wasn’t about to complain. I had spent years dreaming of leaving my hometown; how could I be homesick, anyway? I put on a tough front, which affected my grades, my social life and my physical (and emotional) wellbeing negatively.

My advice for you? You are worthy of self-care. You deserve to be here, and you deserve to do things that make you feel safe, give you a sense of belonging and help you create a foundation from which you will flourish in future years. Asking for help and seeking community does not make you weak, it does not make you selfish and it does not mean you haven’t succeeded. As Audre Lorde would say, self-care “is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” For First Generation students, it is a revolutionary act of survival.



Lesley (second from right) and the 2014-2015 Scripps CP&R Team

## *First-Gen Staff and Homesickness: the In-State Experience*

# Lindsey Martinovich

*Administrative Assistant at the Dean of Students Office*

It was my senior year of college on the morning of my birthday and I couldn't stop crying. I'm not saying I was shedding a few tears here and there; I am talking about soul-wrenching-snot-flying-hysterical sobs. I was officially 21 years old. What did this mean to me and why on earth was I so upset?! I wasn't sure, all I knew is that when my parents were 21 years old they were married homeowners with a child on the way and I knew one thing for sure: I wasn't ready for that. For goodness sake, I was still trying to figure

out what a "Bursar's Office" was. It wasn't until that moment that I realized what was wrong with me; I was homesick.

I realized it was normal for me to feel scared and unsure of what I was doing or more importantly, what I was "supposed" to be doing.

Here's the kicker, I was homesick and I was living at home! I felt guilty, in a sense, for growing up. No one in my family had ever gone to college and I felt as though being near the end of my undergraduate career somehow symbolized that I was an adult. I was about to enter a new uncharted territory of my life that no one in my family had ever experienced.

On the morning of my birthday, I realized how unsure I was of everything and so overwhelmed with emotion and fear of the unknown. I was homesick. I wanted to be a little kid again and I wanted my parents to take care of me. I didn't want to think about graduating college and all that it entailed. It wasn't that my parents were pressuring me to grow up either, it was just that no one in my family had ever gone to college so I didn't know what to expect once it was over.

The feeling that I had felt throughout college of being torn trying to balance classes and work with spending time with my family, had taken over and I suddenly felt guilty. I questioned myself thinking maybe I should have spent more time with my parents? Maybe I shouldn't have worked so many hours and taken so many classes because now, as I was on the brink of adulthood, I all I wanted to do was spend time with my family. With that being said, I eventually stopped crying around 10 o'clock that night and spoiler alert: I have been surviving life after graduation just fine. I realized it was normal for me to feel scared and unsure of what I was doing or more importantly, what I was "supposed" to be doing. It was okay that I felt homesick and it was okay that I felt guilty because those feelings have helped to shape me into the confident young woman that I am today.



**Lindsey and her Mom, Shelly**

# Homesickness Home Remedies

As you have read before, first-generation students experience homesickness even in the most unexpected moments. But do not fret! We have provided homesickness "recipes" just for those moments!



Keep some of your favorite things that remind you of "home" in your room and close by

Plan time to connect with loved ones over the phone or skype (not texting) at least once a week (it is easier if the time is routine and predictable because it will become something to look forward to for both you and your loved one)

Take a break and look at pictures that make you "smile"



Listen to "feel good" music that is tied to "good" memories with loved ones (consider making a station on Pandora of your favorite songs with family)

Pour a cup of tea or coffee and watch a funny movie that you enjoyed watching with loved ones



Eat food that reminds you of "home"



Spend time identifying and thinking about the great things that you love about your "new" home, to create special memories here as well.

Create a wall tapestry of those favorite things that remind you of "home" including cards, pictures, ribbon, receipts, anything that has special meaning (be creative in how you display these items...think of a bulletin board with your name spelled out by all of these mementos)

## Parting Words

Miss home? Us too. But armed with our trusty tools of empowerment,  
we can all be here and support each other!

In the meantime...

Leah will dream of celebrating with her parents in Kentucky...  
And Bea will remember her silly poses beside her mom...even in Spain.



### UPCOMING FIRST-GEN EVENTS:

- **Summer Options Workshop** with Lesley Bonds and Professor Edwalds-Gilbert at CP&R, 5:30-6:30 p.m. on Monday, November 10. We'll be discussing both internship options and research opportunities, so make sure to come through and bring your dinner!
- **Informal Lunch** on the topic of Resources on November 18th in the North Meeting Room @ Malott Dining Hall from 12-1p.m.!

## We Want to Hear From You!

To inspire our readers and recognize your accomplishments, we would like to feature your story in one of our upcoming newsletters. Please send us a personal article or poem depicting your experience as a first-gener to [firstgeneration@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:firstgeneration@scrippscollege.edu).