



STUDENT WOW

Welcoming New Students

Overview

How we welcome new students is important. It should feel more like a celebration for the positive life decision they have made and less like processing an application. This can be done in a few simple ways with the right preparation.

Preparing for the Moment

Supplies should be kept in an easily-accessible area. Welcome baskets can be pre-made but should have room for personalization. Communication with staff and current residents is key to creating a welcoming environment. This welcome should carry through from the first moments with the admissions staff, to meeting the Director, to having their first meal with the students in the dining room.

Staff Needed

- One person at the center designated to hang the banner and gather the “welcome committee”.
- Communication between the Admissions department and the staff on site.

Supplies Needed

- Welcome Banner. This can be a personalized poster board signed by all of the staff and residents that is kept by the new resident, it can be an erasable white board, or it could be an electronic screen in the entrance.
- Welcome Basket filled with snacks, toiletries, and gifts (journal, pens, water bottle). This can be given in the Admissions Office or on their new bed for when they arrive.
- Welcome card signed by staff and current residents.

Budget

- Start up costs can be controlled with what is already available at your center. Baskets used at welcome can be collected and reused.



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Potential Partners

- The local food bank or anywhere else you already receive donations of food and toiletries.
- Support groups, women's guilds, volunteer groups that want to partner with welcoming new residents.
- Local church partners that may purchase Bibles or journals.

Execution

One center for women and children will go out to the driveway when a new resident walks in and give the mother a bouquet of flowers and the child a new stuffed animal to welcome them home. Whenever possible, alleviate that fear of being in a new place by greeting them outside and walking through the doors together.

Put the welcome sign up early in the day so you do not forget. Check the welcome basket early in the morning and communicate with on-site staff and students on who will be entering the program that day. Make sure staff knows you need a hot meal or an available washer and dryer so you can be attentive to any needs the new student may have.

Try to have all of the paperwork done ahead of time and streamline any of the application process so it does not become the main part of the day. Leave plenty of time for questions and a tour to introduce them to everyone. Make sure they are comfortable and have everything they need. Make sure when they are transitioning in they are with a staff or student that understands hospitality.