

Staying Connected (Part 2 of 2)

As a recently graduated college alum, your attitude may be one of go forth and conquer. And if this is so, then may the wind be at your back, the ground rise to meet your feet, and all that good stuff. Just be sure to keep one thing in mind – it pays to stay connected to your school. **By Justine Simon**

Firstly, you should know that the mere act of staying in contact with your school is a big help to the institution. Your school relies on its pool of graduates for statistical information that's used to shape the direction and funding of its programs. Also, by adding your name to the database of alumni, you help the alumni network grow and get stronger.

If you live close to campus, and are looking for the opportunity to connect one on one with present day students, consider mentoring as a meaningful way to give back to your community. College mentoring programs provide students with a way to meet experienced professionals in their field of interest. As a mentor, you can provide invaluable insight and advice.

There are other ways to volunteer your time rather than your money, even if you live further afield. Whether it's helping out at your school's freshman orientation, offering your grant writing expertise, or getting involved with recruitment efforts in your area, the amount of time you're willing to commit is totally up to you, and your efforts are always much appreciated.

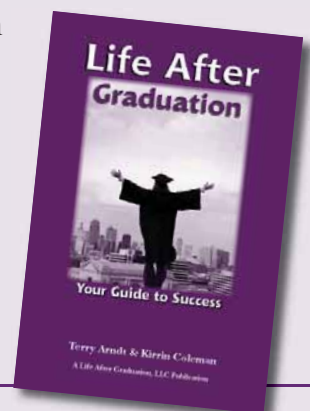
If you do have money to spare, even if it's just a little, financial contributions are important ways to help your institution. If you're the type of person who likes alma mater license plates, then you've found a quick easy way to give to your school. You can also take part in things like college credit cards or phone plans. In products like these, a percentage of your payment goes towards funding your school.

You can also make direct financial contributions in the form of gifts. There are different types of gifts, and cover a wide ranges of values – even as low as \$10. Designated gifts are a great way to help a specific department of your choosing, while unrestricted gifts leaves the decision of fund allocation to your institution's administration, department heads and alumni. If your company matches gifts, this is a great way to leverage the value of your contribution. Just make sure to keep these receipts so you can take advantage of all relevant tax deductions!

So get in touch with your school and find out how you can help. In the end, both you and your college community will benefit.

This is Part 2 of the "Staying Connected" article published in the January 2008 issue of *College Transition Times*. If you missed the first part, go to the website: www.LifeAfterGraduation.com to download Part 1 of "Staying Connected."

For more information about maximizing the benefits available from your college after graduation, read *Life After Graduation: Your Guide to Success*.



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