

**F**ROM THEIR PERCH ON THE FIFTH floor of Schurz Hall, Megan German and Liz Clarkson get a good look at the town-within-a-town that is Mizzou. The residents of this floor have come together on the theme of wellness, which works itself out in a number of ways, including study, song and sport.

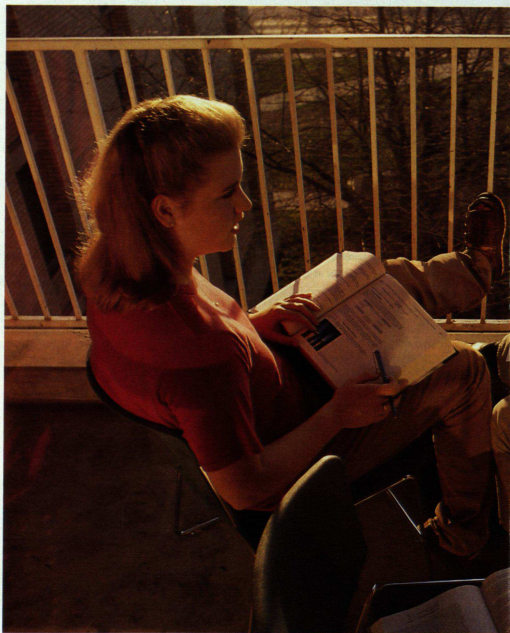
The Wellness House is more than a place for nonsmokers and fitness nuts, says their adviser Christine Callier: "My residents are close. They do a lot of things as a group."

About 61 theme communities ranging from the humanities to nursing to women in engineering contain students with common interests. About 35 communities are freshman interest groups (FIGs), where residents share course work. Such structures make residence halls locales of learning that help students raise academic standards and become integrated into college life. Recent research found FIGs students averaged a 2.89 GPA compared to 2.66 for other first-time freshmen; and 6 percent more FIG residents returned as sophomores than non-FIG students.

"Learning communities at MU are being emulated across the country," says Charles Schroeder, vice chancellor for student affairs. What makes Mizzou's communities unique is the effort to make such groups a part of the core college experience. "No other school is making that commitment," he says.

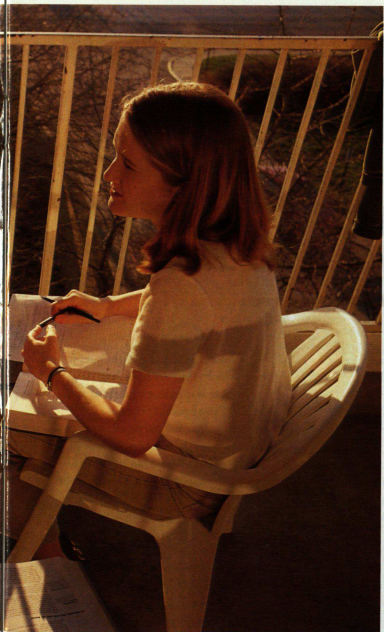
With support from MU's award-winning Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team, and the Wellness Resource Center, these Schurz residents learn that wellness is not only about confronting physical hazards, but also about coping with emotional, spiritual or social pitfalls. Last spring, committees of residents presented programs, such as cultural wellness (ethnic foods capped a sometimes intense discussion on race relations), and spring break (safety tips regarding relationships, sunscreen, drinking and driving).

Says Christine: It comes down to providing information and support for 18- and 19-year-olds to make intelligent, healthy choices about college and beyond. ☼

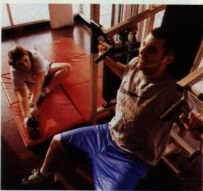


# LIVING Well

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROB HILL



**Voices on high** Jennifer Moore attends Campus Crusade for Christ meetings every Thursday in Memorial Union, usually with Brian Crowley, left. Friend and fellow Wellness House resident Ryan Lincoln, foreground, is a regular, too. Music is a natural expression of religious faith as well as her course work, says the broadcast journalism major and music minor from West Plains, Mo. Brian and Ryan are from Liberty, Mo.



**Cracking the books** Megan German, left, and Liz Clarkson are often seen studying on the fifth floor of Schurz Hall. "I study primarily in my room or the lounge," Liz says. "I feel pretty lucky it's such a good place for academics." The program's goals include combining intellectual growth with a healthy spiritual outlook and physical routine. Megan is a biology major from St. Charles, Mo., and Liz, from Brookfield, Mo., is a chemistry major.

**Getting physical** Dominic Flora's game is basketball, but lifting weights is a regular part of his life, either at the Student Recreation Center or at Bingham Body Shop, just a quick elevator trip away from the Wellness House. Katie Reis of St. Louis or another neighbor often accompanies him. "The best thing about the floor is the opportunity to explore subjects such as emotional or cultural wellness," he says. Dominic, a freshman prejournalism major from Kansas City, will become an alcohol and drug abuse peer educator in the fall.