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No Power Play

09.19.2008 | Students, Campus and Community

When Sister Annette Schmeling, R.S.C.J., walked through the University of Dayton south student neighborhood earlier this week, she heard students strumming guitars and singing on their front porches. In the dark.

Without electricity to recharge their iPods, they created their own music.

"It made me think, 'Why not have a fun contest? Why not ask students to submit a playlist of songs that best expresses the spirit of what they experienced this past week during the windstorm and power outage?'" says Schmeling, who lives among students in the same neighborhood.

"No Power Play" is open to the approximately 2,400 upperclassmen who lost electricity in University-owned homes and apartments following hurricane-like winds on Sept. 14 that left 2.6 million people in Ohio without power. Electricity was restored for most University of Dayton students two days ago, with the remainder receiving power today.

"It's a cool idea," says Kevin Schultz, a senior management information systems student from Brecksville, Ohio, who invited powerless peers to sleep on his apartment floor all week. "You're hard pressed to find a student who doesn't have an iPod full of songs. If it takes a student 10 minutes to put together a playlist and, in return, get \$300 worth of groceries, why not? You could make a playlist of the last songs played on your roommates' computers before the power went out."

The weeklong contest kicks off Sept. 22. A panel of students and staff in the student development division will judge submissions and award prizes in two categories — individual or group — for "the most thoughtful submissions." The individual winner will receive an 8 gigabyte iPod Touch. The winning housemates will receive \$300 worth of groceries. Second-place winners will receive \$20 gift cards to the iTunes music store. All students who enter will receive a voucher allowing them to download 20 pre-determined songs by new artists, courtesy of the University of Dayton's Apple campus representative.

No sexually explicit, self-written or self-produced songs can be part of the mix, according to the contest rules on the "No Power Play Web" site (nopowerplay.udayton.edu).

Although Schultz is ineligible to participate — he never lost power — he can immediately name the song that will always come to mind when he thinks back on the Great Power Outage of 2008. "Live Your Life by T.I., featuring Rihanna," he says without hesitation. "It's a Hip Hop song, it's awesome. That song is so powerful with a great message. Don't chase after money, don't be a paper chaser. Just live your life, just take it one step at a time."

Sounds like the way most University of Dayton students reacted to the power outage.

"Students dealt with it. We just kind of made it work," says Schultz, who created the "No Power Play" Web site and helped develop the rules for the contest. "I'm part of the Student Government Association, and we handed out hundreds of flashlights. I hosted people on my apartment floor. We had a little fun. It's times like these that are reaffirming. It's why people love UD."

Although it shouldn't be hard for students to develop a mix of songs, the "No Power Play" Web site offers some tongue-in-cheek help: "What song did you listen to when your fire alarm wouldn't shut off? What was the last song that played in iTunes before your computer battery died? What song did you play over and over again on your iPod?"

"The contest is just one more way this campus has rallied this week," Schmeling said. "The students have pulled together and supported one another in such an admirable way."

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