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A View from Melrose

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The power of community



In the fall 2014 edition of *Linfield Magazine* I wrote about community at Linfield – more specifically, about our campus learning communities. I am proud of the innovative, exciting ways our students discover and share their passions for academic research, the arts, athletics, sustainability, service, and justice.

The tremendous strength of our community was revealed even more profoundly when one of our students, Parker Moore '17, was killed in an off-campus incident that was inexplicable, random, and tragic. College staff, students, and faculty immediately responded with grace and compassion for the Moore family and for each other. Parker was a typical Linfield student; he was a member of several “sub-communities” at Linfield, including the football team, the Business Department, and the residence hall staff. He was religious, well-liked, a fully integrated member of the Linfield family. And we still mourn his passing while placing our arms around each other, remembering how much our community matters to us and how important each person is.

I expected the response on campus – I’ve lived here for nearly nine years, and I know first-hand the dedication of our faculty and staff. But I was surprised and deeply gratified by the outpouring from the greater Linfield community that extends beyond our physical borders. We received many words of encouragement and love from parents of students, from neighbors and friends of the college, and especially from alumni all around the world, who not only wrote or called but even transformed their Facebook images into the Linfield Wildcat or Parker’s football jersey #35 or the phrase, “Linfield Strong.” All of us on campus were comforted to know that we were not alone. Parker’s death reminded us of what is important, and how much we all love this college and each other.

Every time I ask alumni about their experience at Linfield, they speak of relationships with mentors, with fellow students, with friends, even with life partners they’ve met here. While some relationships may fade after graduation, others become even stronger or evolve in new ways. Our graduates go on to do great things, usually for new communities but also for their alma mater. At Linfield we proudly educate students for service to the world, and a key part of that education stems from the community that we celebrate and share, in victory and in tragedy. That’s the power of our small college. That’s the power of community.

Thank you being one of us, and for making Linfield strong. 🍷

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–Thomas L. Hellie, President