

kate daub:

Surviving one fire, starting another for God



Kate Daub rejoices in her talks with Wesley Foundation Director Beth Tipton.

To this day, Kate Daub wonders why something so tragic happened when she thought she was getting her life on the right path.

Daub came to the University of Virginia College at Wise on a volleyball scholarship in fall 2003. Her dad is the tennis coach at the College of William and Mary – her mother is a former professional tennis player – so athletics are in her blood. She was a starter in her first year on the Cavaliers team.

Midway through her freshman year, though, Daub began to feel like “something was missing.” In the cafeteria one day, she saw a sign promoting an interdenominational chapel on Sunday night. She decided to go, and instantly found nourishment.

The chapel was led by Beth Tipton, director of the Wesley Foundation. “I felt comfortable with Beth,” says Daub, now 22. “I could talk to her about everything.”

For the rest of her freshman year and throughout her sophomore year, Daub experienced many spiritual highs. With encouragement from Tipton and a Christian friend, D’Ivonne Holman, Daub made a profession of faith and began studying the Bible. She attended Sunday-night chapel and Tuesday-night dinners and frequently stopped to chat with Tipton. At the end of Daub’s sophomore year, Tipton asked her to participate on the Wesley Leadership Team.

It was an exhilarating time for a young woman who vaguely remembered attending Sunday school as a child but felt she was making a “connection” to God for the first time. “My faith had really grown, and I wanted to get more people involved,” Daub says. “The Wesley Foundation is such a great opportunity, and I don’t think many people know this is here.”

In August 2005, Daub packed up her Voyager mini-van with all her belongings and left home in Williamsburg, Va., for her junior year. First stop was a lodge in Meadowview, Va., where she was to join the Wesley Leadership Team and help create a ministry plan for the coming year.

Daub was only a few feet from her destination when smoke started pouring from the van. She stopped, got out of the van, and saw “fire dripping from underneath.” Shaken, she got back into the car and frantically started calling Tipton, her parents, and 911 on her cell phone.

“Get out of the car!” shouted the people who had come running from the lodge.

The following moments – and days and weeks – are painful for Daub to remember. Although she got out safely, the van quickly burned with all her belongings. Her Wesley friends gave her clothes. The Wesley Foundation provided funds.

Even now, Daub says she goes looking for a photo or piece of jewelry from her past – until she remembers they’re all gone.

“I’ve had to ask myself, ‘How could this happen, when I was going on a retreat for Wesley?’” she says. But as months passed, Daub eventually found some peace in the belief that “God works in mysterious ways.”

“By having everything taken away, I’ve had to depend on people around me and my support system,” she explains. “A lot of people put a value on materialism, but things are not as important as people.”

Graduation approaches in May, and Daub, a theater major, has auditioned for the Barter Theatre Company in Abingdon, Va. She’s also considering a summer internship at the Hippodrome State Theatre in Gainesville, Fla.

But she grows wistful when she talks about leaving behind the love and support she found at the Wesley Foundation.

“It offers so much, and Beth has always been there for me. This has definitely been a home away from home for me.” ■



Life at the WF

Location: 1 College Avenue,
Wise, VA 24293-4400

Director: Beth Tipton

High attendance: 118 for the back-to-school “Buffalo Bash”

Core group: 30 students participate in weekly activities

Wish list: Food City gift cards to buy groceries for Tuesday-night dinner; a volunteer to paint lines on the parking lot

Web site: <http://people.uvawise.edu/wesleyfoundation>

Phone: (276) 328-6826

