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Alumni Unscripted: Tips for Transitioning to Your Home Away from Home

McKenzie Decker
Western Michigan University

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Post: Tips for Transitioning to Your Home Away from Home

[Blog Post](#) by [alumniunscripted](#) June 28, 2018

Many students who go off to college are typically more than excited to get the farthest distance possible away from their hometown—which is understandable. But, if you’re like me, you 1) couldn’t afford to go away to a big university further away, and 2) you just liked living close to your parents. (Yes, Mom and Dad, you’re right, I miss you). That’s why, sometimes it isn’t easy for everyone to transition from living close to home to moving to the other side of the country to start your life after college, job or not.

That’s what happened to me—kind of. I took a summer internship in Traverse City, Michigan, before my final semester at WMU. Don’t get me wrong, the summer was awesome, but, knowing that I had a “departure date” was comforting. I’d go back to my friends, go back to my reality and go back to my every day norm of work-class-study-repeat. It then became all too real after graduation when I took a permanent position within that same company I had interned for. Instead of being a quick 45-minute drive away from home, I was now a one-way four-hour trip away; the trip home wasn’t doable in a day, at least not comfortably. At first, it was stressful and

lonely, and I was feeling uncomfortable. I admire those who move 3,000 miles further from everything they know.

The reality is, moving to a new place can be not only cool and exciting, but also exhausting and quite terrifying, especially if you don't have anyone to show you the ropes of your new city. Lucky for me, I moved in with one of my friends, but I was still encouraged to take on this new place on my own, make new friends and establish the new me in a new location.

Here are some tips to making your new home feel like “home.”

Take time to get to know the area.

Get in your car, hop on your bike, walk around “downtown” or take a tour on your city's transit system. Get to know the roads, landmarks, and where important buildings are in relation to your workplace. By doing this, you'll be able to find hot spots and quicker routes to work and look like you've lived in the city your whole life.

Join a young professional organization in your area.

I can't personally say I've joined the Young Professional Network in my area, but I know one exists and I'd love to join when my schedule permits (Thanks to [business travel](#), I'm on the go often). By joining organizations, you'll be able to connect with like-minded individuals who are just starting out in their careers. If you're passionate about learning and networking, this is a great opportunity for you. You never know who else might be new in town and in your same situation! Your local Chamber of Commerce may have resources to help you connect with other young professionals in your area. Or, you can always do a quick Google search for opportunities near you.

Volunteer at community events.

See what kinds of programs and events your community puts on. Check out the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program, or connect with a representative at your local Goodwill. There are always ways to get involved and meet new people—whether that be helping recycle, running a booth or participating in after school programs with youth.

Get outside and be active.

It's easy. If you're lucky to live in one of the most beautiful places in Michigan like I do, you'll have umpteen amounts of access to hiking trails, state parks, beaches and water. Sunlight is thought to increase serotonin, which has a direct effect on your brain and mood lifting benefits. Being in nature has similar positive benefits. So get out there, get some vitamin D and get happy! And, if you're feeling *really* motivated, snag a gym membership—exercising releases toxins and burns off all that stress and worry, and is a great place to meet new people!

Mark your calendar for home visits.

There's nothing better than a countdown to relieve you from your home-away-from-home anxiety. Plan times you're going to visit home and mark them on your calendar. Keep in contact with your hometown family and friends to plan meet-ups—it always seems like a mini-vacation for me!

Making a new place your home isn't always easy, but it's worth giving it a shot for the right location and the right job. It's been just about a year since I moved to Traverse City and I'm still working through this transition phase. I hope you're willing to give your new city and these tips a shot.

Just remember, “there's no place like home.”

McKenzie Decker graduated from Western Michigan University in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in marketing. While attending WMU, she interned with VP Demand Creation Services, a printing/publishing and marketing execution company in Traverse City. Upon completion of her internship and graduation from WMU, VP Demand Creation Services offered Decker a full-time position where she is now the company's internal marketing manager. She is heavily involved in helping foodservice manufacturers find the marketing support they need, as well as being deeply committed to helping associations find new members. Decker currently lives in South Boardman, Michigan, where she enjoys camping and exploring with her boyfriend and dog, Luna. She has previously written for Alumni Unscripted [about business travel](#).