

18

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By: Dylan Lepore | dlepore1@radford.edu

Cathy Childress, a self-employed resident of Radford, VA, posted a photo of younger people hanging out in front of an apartment near Radford University despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Misty Henderson wrote, "Saw a group at the house near Belle Heth just a bit ago. I know they want to socialize, but they are endangering all of us. I imagine they've been to Walmart and Kroger, and this virus lives a bit on surfaces. I love our students, but please be smart!!" The photo was taken at 1215 Lawrence St Radford, VA, an apartment leased out by Radnor Apartments LLC, and was posted to the [COVID-19 Radford Community Support Facebook Group](#) on Sunday, March 28, two days before [Virginia Governor Ralph Northam's Executive Order Fifty-Three](#) for Virginians to stay at home.

Childress wrote, "This was taken today! Why can't they be fined or something? This is the reason it will keep on spreading!"

The Facebook post has gained 45 reactions, 76 comments, and 14 shares with the majority of the community upset.

Claudia Jones wrote, "Yep, this is why we will end up right where we started after every quarantine period. We need complete isolation for at least six weeks, possibly more or we'll be looking at two million dead and almost two years of social distancing."

Some commenters said they had seen similar groups at other houses.

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Jennifer Riggs posted another photo of younger people hanging out in a grey truck on the same day.



Photo Credit: (Jennifer Riggs) "This was yesterday. There was other groups around but this is the only one I took pic of."

President Hemphill said, "For students who returned to the local area and are residing in privately-owned properties, compliance with the Governor's order is not optional. It is mandatory. Those who do not follow this order will be held responsible by law enforcement and issued citations where necessary and appropriate." "Ya'll think the stores ran out of stuff fast when everyone went shopping at one time a few weeks ago," Riggs wrote. "Wait till we all get sick at the same time, and the hospital runs out of what they need. STAY HOME!!! We are not going to stop this, but we can prevent overrunning the hospital by not getting sick at the same time."

Radford Mayor David Horton added to the post stating, "PD [Police Department] is on it."

Mayor Horton also commented on his Facebook page, Monday, March 30, on [Executive Order Fifty-Three](#) stating in full:

"I've said it before, and I will say it again, Virginia and the USA are not police states and won't be hauling people off to jail over this - at this point. Certainly, if we get to a level where hundreds of thousands of people are dying, I cannot say what will happen."

"That said, the message is clear: Stay at home."

"We need people to stop having gatherings - and that is not just students at Radford University. There were get-togethers of other individuals over the weekend in a variety of places. This HAS to stop. The Governor is letting you know that it MUST stop."

"As Highlanders, we expect and deserve better than the manner in which some individuals have been responding to this very serious situation." "No government can really stop this as it is impossible to be everywhere at all times. This is about individual responsibility. All of us have to stay away from groups and sanitize like crazy."

"Please heed these orders from the Governor. Lives are depending on it."

Radford University President Brian O. Hemphill sent out a campus-wide email, Wednesday, April 1, addressing those students who may have returned to campus and are staying in Radford.

President Hemphill said, "For students who returned to the local area and are residing in privately-owned properties, compliance with the Governor's order is not optional. It is mandatory. Those who do not follow this order will be held responsible by law enforcement and issued citations where necessary and appropriate."

"Furthermore, students who are found in violation of this order and social distancing guidelines will be held accountable by the Radford University Office of Student Standards and Conduct through existing procedures as defined in the Student Handbook," President Hemphill said.

"As Highlanders, we expect and deserve better than the manner in which some individuals have been responding to this very serious situation."

As of Saturday, April 11, there are 1,696,139 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 376,200 people recovered, and 102,669 deaths worldwide, reported by the World Health Organization.

The Tartan has reached out to Cathy Childress for additional comments, but no response has been given.

Photo Credit: (Cathy Childress)