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- 00:00:00,000** finding on campus housing at stores has been a major challenge. These past few months have honestly been probably the most stressful months of my life. What you just heard is a news coverage by NPC Connecticut on UConn's housing crisis
- 00:00:14,640** and the voice you heard is Gerald Houdley, a UConn student who struggled to get on campus housing and eventually got booted off the housing list due to UConn's inability to house many students which left him stranded. And as if getting a college education isn't already hard enough
- 00:00:30,960** but imagine having to worry about where you're going to live while getting that education. Unfortunately this has been the case for many UConn students who are left without housing as the university deals with a major housing crisis. One of those students, Maya Davis, a graduate
- 00:00:46,080** student at UConn talks about her experience with finding housing and the struggles that she has dealt with. So I have faced all the housing crises with UConn from regular housing to finding an off-campus house. So can you describe your experience like searching for off-campus housing
- 00:01:04,000** near UConn and like challenges that you faced? Yeah so at first when I was first looking for off-campus housing I only started looking for it because UConn was no longer providing housing to graduate into an already-god's UConn or it was very extremely difficult to get housing from them
- 00:01:21,840** specifically. So I was only looking for off-campus housing and at first I was looking for single people apartment. So like one bed, one bath and those were extremely high and at the time I also did have my contract so I didn't know how much I would be getting paid and then luckily I ran into
- 00:01:42,080** some people on UConn's off-campus housing website which has been very nice and one of them already had a house lined up. We're in a affordable price giving so I was pretty happy about that but we'll even before that between looking for two beds, two beds and then having to find a roommate

- 00:02:00,160** and then roommates cancelling on me, cancelling on me and my other roommate, a scrounging around to find a new roommate, it was just a loss and like a one-bed one bath was they were trying to charge like 16.3 full disclosure, I don't even get paid 1600 so I don't know how anyone is paying that.
- 00:02:19,120** So how far do you live off-campus and how does it impact your like daily routine? I live about 15 minutes off-campus so I have to leave here 15 between the parking crisis on campus so I would have to park in the walk in additional 10 minutes to my office, my lab where I work in.
- 00:02:40,720** So that's 25 minutes I have to block out in my morning routine just to get on time, not including waking up, getting ready whether or not my natural hair is out or I have braids so I have to plan whether or not I need extra time to do my hair, getting dressed, brushing my teeth,
- 00:02:55,760** making breakfast because I always prioritize breakfast, it has been an hassle and it was even a bigger hassle when my car was broken and I would have to Uber every day. So it's not, at least where I live, it's not very accessible if you don't have a car, in comparison like, well, I'm sick with
- 00:03:14,640** this bus, right? And you know, as a commuter myself like when you drive to campus you have to, you can't just drive them park anywhere because you're going to get a ticket and that's an additional cost so you have to park somewhere and then take the bus and then let the bus take you and
- 00:03:27,920** then it's just like a whole system and routine that I find a lot of commuters have to go through that, a lot of, I guess, not a commuters don't realize. So I guess my next question is, how do you manage housing costs with like other financial responsibilities like tuition, well, you don't pay tuition, so books,
- 00:03:45,200** daily expenses, groceries, like how are you, you know, able to make ends meet as much as you want to personally share. Yeah, I luckily I get paid enough where it balances out my paycheck and the road right? So or is my portion of rent? And by you get paid, do you want like a library, how

- 00:04:03,360** you get paid as a grad student? Yeah, so as a grad student, I get paid for being a TA in R.A. So in R.A. he's not a resident assistant otherwise I would be getting free housing right now. I would research assistant in my lab. I should have done that. You know, we all should have done that.
- 00:04:18,480** So as an R.A. I'm a research assistant underneath my P.I.'s lab who's like sponsoring my whole master's program. And then I'm also a TA for two courses, two intro site courses, and those also add up to my total pay. So I get paid from whatever my P.I. gets from grants in his lab,
- 00:04:41,280** and then I get paid from the Department of Psychology for TA. So it kind of adds up overall. Yeah, so what I try to do is I try to save all my money. So the first thing, every paycheck, if I can, I'll try to like put away for rent specifically. So like that page, every single paycheck, I take a bit
- 00:05:03,760** out for rent. Just the embed like for whatever you want to be a reason, whatever reason one paycheck is just not enough to cover, right? I had another one and I had another one that covered rent. Most of that goes into my savings. Yeah, and then I only personally leave myself about \$200
- 00:05:21,440** for two weeks and I try to be stingy with that. I am also a baddie on a budget. I know how to cook fun. There is no tomorrow and find a good deal. But that doesn't include like things going wrong, like my car breaking down. Yeah, that was like I had it by a new value. I was like 100 some
- 00:05:40,240** I dollars. I have to go get a new hood. That's like \$3,000 that I've been trying to save up. Yeah, it's \$3,000. Wow. So it's not like I try to just sustain living. Sometimes like that's also why I remember it's his making breakfast. So I don't have to buy food outside. I agree. Yeah, luckily,
- 00:06:01,280** don't get the \$6 meal deal. So I'm dying to need. I'll just buy that. But otherwise like I prioritize making food here and I don't think I've ever spent more than \$100 on groceries or I try to avoid spending more than \$100. Yeah, me too. And if I do get anything outside like food wise,
- 00:06:17,440** luckily my parents have like helped like gifted me like a little money just specifically like, oh, you want to go be with your friends? Use this little bit of money so you can prioritize saving, saving, and not just going out and having fun. I did allow myself one like gift in the form

- 00:06:37,360** of each have those because it was variety for an exam. Yeah, however, it was also half off. So, you can make it work. I was paying \$70. You know? Yeah, so that's my process. Yeah, so I guess you can see that a lot of compromises have to be made to make it work, but I guess you're trying.
- 00:06:56,800** You're doing it. You're doing it. So how is the search for how did the search for housing and like the high costs and all these things we talked about? How and has it affected your academic performance or focus? I would say it does have a lot of focus out on me. So at least for the first
- 00:07:15,920** couple of months, I wasn't sure what my paycheck would look like, I mean, by like five weekly. So I was dressed out and like couldn't just like relax and do everything because then back in my head, I just really was like, I have to, sorry, I have to, I have to pay rent, I have to like fix my card, I
- 00:07:34,720** am gonna do all these things and I don't know what my money looks like each month to like be able to like budget for that or at least like no like, oh, okay, I can give myself this tiny little luxury in the form of like a burger from a nice place. So expensive, very good. Yeah, oh,
- 00:07:51,040** yeah, a movie burger because a movie burger and fries and a sheet, that's it. So good. Vegan burgers and fire. But like I was stressed. I actually called, I spent \$200 and two weeks and I called them all and I was like, mom, like I think I spent too much money. Like I don't know, I don't know what to do.
- 00:08:11,040** I feel like I'm spending too much money and I don't want to go out anymore so like see my friends as much because I'm spending all this money. She was like \$200 is not like your, budging enough where it's like you, you're not too stressed out. Like I used to have to pay tuition, but like I had
- 00:08:27,280** saved up so much money to pay tuition that I wasn't too stressed out about that each month, but now I'm paying like legitimate bills, you know, like overly aware of like how much I spent then yeah, it was taking a lot of focus away from me. I 100% agree. I think when you're doing a

- 00:08:45,200** thing, you can't just every single dollar counts. Like in the real world, like, you know, obviously not to be insensitive, but even in the real world, \$200 really doesn't do much. But as a student, like when you have school, when you have to budget and do what these things, \$200 is like when I think of \$200,
- 00:09:01,920** I think, okay, that's my groceries for a month and that's gas. Because definitely gas driving back and forth to campus that no one on I you can't compensate before and you also have to kind of make it work. And I even feel more for students who are coming like hours away. Maybe they don't
- 00:09:16,480** even live off campus. They still live at home, but they're daily commute was like 30 minutes one way for I know girl was driving over an hour one day a week of gas. That's like hundreds of dollars. And when you put it everything together, that's almost a maybe closer to a thousand dollars per month.
- 00:09:31,680** And that could have been rent. And some days, a lot of students are going through a lot. But I guess my next question is, did you ever look into resources at the university to offer you help in any way shape or form when looking for like off campus housing, financial situation, stress,
- 00:09:51,280** and did you find those resources helpful? Did you look into them? Did you find them? Did you find them helpful. No absolutely not, no. I know for all three. Yes all three. So I focused on it, issues with my financial aid before my school which also lied until I
- 00:10:05,760** stressed it my didn't get registered for classes I was not going to get paid meaning I could have paid my rents and I had a whole run around with financial aid versus your office just being able to pay off my last
- 00:10:19,360** semester's tuition which full disclosure was like five grand. It was a very small bell. So I was trying to get like a little low or something or like a little leeway so I could like start paying that off and then still a 10
- 00:10:32,480** school or like getting my thing. I had to go all the way to the dean of students to get an assistant. So me and you come financially, your personal office, housing, what you make of none of, I don't I try to avoid

- 00:10:45,720** though if I physically care because they give you the right around. Yeah I agree. I remember so I transferred a you call last year and I remember if you're an email and some people and asking them for help and all of them were just like
- 00:10:59,240** there's nothing we can do and I'm like I mean pretty good that it ended up working out but what if there are students out there who don't know how to tackle these things like I think these things also come with adulting and you have to kind of
- 00:11:10,100** have a sense of like survival instincts of forgot okay this person is trying to be down I'm just gonna move on but for a lot of students for example sophomore or also like getting kicked off campus or you know they're just kind of hitting
- 00:11:21,920** the adult face with life and they don't or maybe they're used like your parents don't start for them because I think that also comes in to play about how you're able to handle these situations it's like what what are the students supposed to
- 00:11:31,200** do you know when they turn them down and sometimes you know you hear a lot of complaints about the university doing absolutely nothing for students who go to these things so you can if you're listening to this we would love it for you
- 00:11:43,120** guys to come up with some way to help your students better and be more clear about how much things cost yeah I was doing it summer housing for like a week and I'm a little bit crazy yeah I went into my summer housing portal no
- 00:11:56,440** not super-housing it's all I got a new charge in Berzer and I had estimated I was gonna have to spend like seven thirty five yeah yeah you know I was like saving up already like seven fifty each so I was like saving up I was like okay I
- 00:12:10,280** got to make double that right right day when I got to the campus and I went to check and I decided you know what I'm actually not gonna stay here for this week I'm gonna go home they were trying to charge me and you're too grand no double what I've
- 00:12:23,920** had already like based off what on what's on their website was voted for so I was like I don't know why you I called them and I was like I better not get charged for this I do I'm not living here do not charge me for anything and you're

- 00:12:38,160** definitely not gonna charge me double what your site is saying I'm gonna be paying for multiple days right so how did they take that they luckily we're like yeah we know we're not gonna charge you because you're canceling the very first day you
- 00:12:49,160** haven't picked up your keys or anything but like God forbid I had picked up keys and everything and I just didn't realize that they were gonna charge me to grad yeah that's crazy I think this could even go into things like even
- 00:13:03,920** parking tickets like the amount of like you know commuters is like I've learned a few printing tickets but you know I'm a commuter soon to are already stressed with paying friend or paying gas just to go see a \$70 ticket on their car and it's like
- 00:13:17,240** they're so unforgiving with your appeals like I've a good I always appeal my ticket always even if it's gonna get denied because I'm like close-mouse don't get fed but I might even think it like imagine I have rent due next week and
- 00:13:30,320** then here you go with your \$70 on my car and it's like not have to think about an additional cost mine is that to work with my gross trees and gas in the car exactly and a lot of times even when you live off campus house and it's not just your
- 00:13:43,400** rent or paying you also paying Wi-Fi and it would just go exactly and those old will become additional bills so yeah so I guess my final question for you is what do you think that you caught or I guess other won't you caught I guess could
- 00:13:58,880** do better and supporting their students intensively housing financial strains any are there any specific changes you'd like to see based off of your experiences as we discussed for me personally with housing they need to stop
- 00:14:13,880** admitting student over admitting students and they also need to go with their word so they said they're gonna offer camp like housing for people what if they chose a school they have to like stick with that specifically for grad students
- 00:14:31,240** they said that they had grad student housing and they didn't stick with that they'd try to get me the oaks which we are very discussed in \$2,000 I'm not doing that so I think they need to be more have more housing one too also I think they

- 00:14:49,000** need to offer resources to their students in regards to paying for housing with the riding cars in landlord especially like a housing I know I was for New York we have section eight which is great I'm initially from New York also to
- 00:15:03,220** sell at one out but if they had something similar like a financial program for those who have to live all campus yeah that would be very helpful I know sometimes our loans that we take our government loans are so good to help us with housing
- 00:15:17,380** right but if all those loans because I know for me personally last year all my loans went straight to the school for tuition specifically yeah I think they need like some type of financial assistance program yeah I agree all right so
- 00:15:31,840** yeah I think those are all the questions that I have you already they don't like to add you can't fix your housing problem and if you're a student you struggling with housing or finding trying to struggling to find housing it's
- 00:15:42,840** okay don't stress too hard it's all gonna work out in the end if you're a student who's actively currently like living paycheck to paycheck you lean on friends I know one of my grad students at the beginning but my fellow grad student he was the
- 00:15:56,880** they were struggling from paycheck to paycheck and like it was like little things like hey I'm gonna get you this beer tonight because we're all going out together because we're celebrating you all right or like oh I have like I made
- 00:16:10,560** extra lunch you want this like I have this snack and I have this snack just like it's for for those who are struggling for those who have something to give try to give as much as you can yeah ask for help and don't be of ask for
- 00:16:25,680** help and give help yes it's because I think that when you are able to give you also get back because when your struggling someone else can be of help to you that's kind of how the world works that we all kind of rally wrong to help
- 00:16:38,840** what another and their times of need because life can be unpredictable so thank you guys so much for tuning in since it's an episode I had a great time talking to my mom I would thank you so much for joining me on this episode and

00:16:51,800 I will see you guys later bye