

# Christian co-op opens, 'builds love'

By Sara Martens

It's more than a place to eat and sleep, said housefather Jay Spilker, it's a place to grow and feel a part of a family. Jay and his wife Jewell are house parents for the Agape House, a Christian Co-op for university students at 1636 Q St.

Students living in the house agree with Jay, citing the Christian atmosphere as Agape House's major plus over residence hall or apartment living.

"I wanted the spiritual growth available here," said Diana Peate, a freshman English major who is one of ten Agape House residents.

Prospective residents are interviewed by Jay, who is a minister and Jewell to see if they share the beliefs and ideals of the house.

The co-op will house 24 students when filled, and Jay said he hopes the house will then be self-sufficient.

### Financial aid

At present the \$140 room and board per student does not meet operating costs. The house is aided by the College-Career Christian Fellowship organization and churches throughout Lincoln, he said.

C-CCF is a university organization which originated the idea for a non-denominational Christian co-op. The organization will use Agape House for its weekly meetings.

When the Pioneer Housed closed, the university made the building available to C-CCF, which took possession only two weeks ago.

"It's almost a miracle how quickly things have shaped up," Jewell said. However, renovation is not complete.

Painters continue covering the chipped green exterior with a new coat of paint. Inside, the first floor library and office spaces serve as storage rooms for paint cans, boards and old furniture.

### Old furniture

The upstairs bedrooms, which are slightly smaller than

the average residence hall room, are decorated by the students, using furniture left in the house by previous residents.

Daily operation of the Agape House is much like other co-ops with residents sharing cleaning duties within the house.

"Sharing these duties will make me more responsible," said resident Tim Williams, a junior elementary education major. "In the dorm all I had to do was feed myself and keep my own room up. Here I feel obligated to do my part. I feel it's only fair."

In addition to these duties, residents attend a weekly Monday night meeting to discuss operation of the house, meet with other members of C-CCF during their weekly Tuesday night meeting, and are planning prayer and Bible study meetings.

### No drugs

Other house rules prohibit the use of non-prescription drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, and the use of profanity within the house. Residents also are asked to be in the house by midnight, when the doors are locked.

Students living in the house feel its atmosphere aids their academic as well as spiritual growth.

"We can share other students' problems and pray for their needs," Williams said.

So far the residents of the Agape house have faced no major conflicts and freshman Dave Bilodeau does not think they will.

### Unselfish love

"We love each other and want to put other people ahead of ourselves. Because of this love, little things don't get on our nerves," he said.

Jay explained, "Agape is one of the Greek words for love. It is the highest form of love, not emotional or romantic but a self-sacrificing love, like the love of Jesus. We want this house to be the center of that type of love."

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