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Hugs from Home gives University of Lethbridge students a much-needed boost

At a time when students are facing multiple stressors including mid-term exams and assignments coming due, the University of Lethbridge Bookstore and Housing Services have joined forces for the Hugs from Home support campaign.



Parents of students living in residence were invited by postcard to order Hugs from Home packages online from the Bookstore. They chose from two unique packages, one which contained a mug, hot chocolate and chocolate bars and another that included treats like cookies and popcorn. Parents could also add other items to customize the gift for their student. The Bookstore packaged the gifts, along with an encouraging message sent by parents, for Housing Services to distribute.

“I think it’s an amazing program and I love getting a Hug from Home gift,” says Madina Ali, a fourth-year student from Calgary. “In my fourth year, I did not think my parents were going to send me one. We’re in the part of the semester where exams are taking over and everyone’s mental health has kind of taken a dip. Getting the email that I’ve got a hug to pick up, my heart just warmed.”

“We participated in the Hugs from Home program because we wanted to make Madina smile,” says Ambreen Ali, Madina’s mother. “We know the stress of exams and assignments and living on your own and we wanted our daughter to know we are thinking of her. We can’t physically be there to give her a supportive hug, but we can make her feel our support this way.”

Madina, who works as a residence assistant and is a representative on the U of L Students’ Union, knows other students feel the same way.

“People really like Hugs from Home because it’s a reminder that, even if you’re not with your family, they’re still always thinking about you,” she says. “Even though you’re away and becoming your own independent person, you still have your family supporting you.”

Not only are students dealing with extra pressures on the academic side, returning students are getting used to living on campus again after spending last year learning remotely due to COVID-19.

“Hugs from Home came at a really crucial time for students,” says Laura Correia, residence life education coordinator with U of L Housing Services. “They’ve been in the groove of school for a while and midterms are picking up. It’s an overwhelming time. Everyone comes in and they’re very excited to have that little gift they weren’t expecting at a time when it’s really needed.”

The Hugs from Home program, now in its fourth year, has always been popular, but this year it sold out. Annette Bright, Bookstore manager, suspects it’s because, for both first- and second-year students, it’s their first year on campus. Some parents have even purchased extra gifts to donate to other students in need.

“Parents are so appreciative because they were thinking about how they could connect with their student to let them know they’re thinking about them and that they’re behind them,” says Bright.

This news release can be found online at [Hugs from Home](#).

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