

Friends are Everywhere—You Just Need To Know Where To Look

By Nick Trela

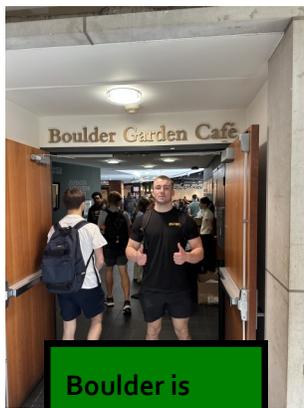


Loyola's rock wall at the FAC

For some, the transition into college can be very stressful and challenging. It's not easy to start in a new community, and most people face stigma or fear when it comes to making new friends, which is a normal feeling. Some people don't know where to look for new friends; others face the fear of rejection, social anxiety, fear of not fitting in, and the fear of not finding like-minded people. I had similar concerns during my transition into Loyola, and I wish someone had told me that this community provides so many amazing ways to meet people and create lasting friendships. Even my mother expressed her happiness that I had found a great group of friends. Initially, I was confused, but she explained that on Facebook, several other parents reported their kids were having difficulty making friends. By sharing my experiences, I hope to relieve some of the stress you may face. At Loyola, making friends is easy when you are open, approachable, and willing to put yourself out there. Loyola provides numerous resources, such as the [FAC](#), [DGA](#), [clubs](#), Boulder, and class engagement, which facilitate the creation of lasting friendships. These places and opportunities are always filled with students and future friends and are great tools you can use to interact with other students.

I HAVE MET A FRIEND AT ALMOST EVERY LOCATION ON LOYOLA'S CAMPUS AND YOU CAN, TOO.

As an upcoming freshman student, you might spend a lot of time at the [FAC](#). The FAC has everything you could ask for, from a weight room to a rock-climbing wall. As a fitness enthusiast, I wanted to meet students who shared my love for fitness. So, on my first day as a freshman, I walked over to the FAC, entered the gym, and started working out. Meeting people can be as simple as striking up a conversation, asking for a spot, sharing workout tips, or asking to share a machine. I've met some of my closest friends in the gym, and I am sure you will too. I interviewed one of my closest friends, Gjin, a Loyola freshman, who recalled meeting me in the gym, saying, "You looked like you knew what you were doing, and um, I approached you and introduced myself, and that's where it started." From that simple conversation, I met someone just like me, just by being willing to meet others. Gjin and I to this day frequent the gym together, while also enjoying the other fun things to do on campus.



Boulder is always full

Another resource that Loyola provides you with is Boulder, a great place to eat and talk to people. Boulder is very big, containing two floors full of food and many places for you to sit. Walking around Boulder, you notice many sports teams, clubs, and friends enjoying the food together. The easiest way to meet people is by sitting next to them and introducing yourself. I was able to meet another close friend named Jason this way. On my second day on the Loyola campus, I grabbed my food and came across Jason, who sat alone in a booth. I simply walked over, sat across from him, and introduced myself. I said, "Hey, my name is Nick. What's yours?" He looked up and said, "Hey, my name is Jason. It's nice to meet you." From there, we had a normal conversation about our interests. Shortly after, our roommates joined us. Within an hour, I had two new friends. To this day, I am convinced that food brings people together. After we finished eating, we explored the campus and discovered some amazing places.

Outside of Boulder, you will notice a huge turf field. This field is called the DGA, and you will be a part of many fun events here. The DGA hosts events almost daily; these events are very helpful when trying to meet others who share your interests. One event I enjoyed was the flag football tournament, with many games held on this turf. I've met many students from various grades who enjoyed football while playing fun and competitive games. Club sports games like lacrosse and soccer are hosted on this field. These games are entertaining to watch and typically accumulate big crowds, so there will be lots of students you can meet. In an interview with my friend Liam Sullivan, a freshman at Loyola, He claims, "Being on a club team rocks." When asked, what are some of the biggest resources Loyola has provided you, that have helped you build friendships? Liam said, "shout out the club lax team, I would definitely say I've made some great connections with people that love what I love." The team practices, games, and social events are perfect opportunities to bond with your teammates. The moments and memories made while being part of these teams will foster connections that will last beyond college.



Football at DGA

Loyola has many other clubs, like rock climbing, dance, theater, and sports clubs. There is so much to do and many people to meet that share your interests. I recommend joining a club because it allows you to meet and connect with others who share your passions, and being a part of a team will foster deeper relationships.

In an interview with Danny Reilly '27, he claims, "Getting to know your classmates is a great way to make friends... All these people are studying the same thing you are, and you never know, your best friend could be sitting right beside you." Classes provide a group of 15-20 students who share your interests in your major. I met one of my best friends just by walking to my Messina class. One day, I got lost trying to find my class and met a student named Matt, who was also lost. He asked an upperclassman for directions, and I realized we were heading to the same place. When I was asked if I needed assistance, I responded, "All good, I'm following big man right there." Matt turned to me, extended his hand, and introduced himself. We found the room we were looking for and started talking about our interests. I learned he loves football and plays golf. While we were getting to know each other, the teacher informed us we were in the wrong room. After finding the correct room, we laughed about the situation, bringing us closer together. To this day, Matt is one of my closest friends, and after class, we often head to Boulder with our classmates.

Transitioning into college can be an exciting and stressful time, and making new friends can be a challenging adventure in your life. However, Loyola makes the transition easy by providing many ways for you to interact with other students like you. As someone who has dealt with this transition, I want to tell you that by embracing the Loyola campus, you will make friends. I also want to remind you that making friends can be easy when you are open, approachable, and willing to put yourself out there. Sometimes, it might feel daunting, but the friendships you build at Loyola can be some of the most meaningful connections that will last a long time.

THE DGA FIELD IS ALWAYS FILLED WITH STUDENTS, AND LOTS OF CLUB GAMES THAT ATTRACT BIG CROWDS.



Making gym friends