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Men's shoes at Planet Sole,
The Shops at Willow Bend
photo by Chris Fritchie



trendy store for just about everything. It is a popular store for high school, college and young adults. My girls love this store, especially for the tops.

One thing I would keep in mind if you are going off to school is laundry. Purchase clothes that are easy to take care of and won't get ruined in the first wash.

One thing I would keep in mind if you are going off to school is laundry. Purchase clothes that are easy to take care of and won't get ruined in the first trip through the wash.

The Back to Campus Shop

By Karen Long

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE summer has come and gone and fall is right around the corner. Summer seemed so short! But, there are a lot of advantages to 'Back to School,' not to mention the fact that your laundry task can be reduced by 50 percent, and your personal time can increase by 100 percent. Preparing our family for the new school year can be challenging and expensive. Here are some hints I have from years of experience for the college student with residual benefits for the little ones heading off to elementary school.

Living in Texas, it is a little hard to get the mind set around all that is required to prepare for the next few months because of the scorching heat. This can be especially challenging if you have a college age child getting ready to go off to school, particularly for the first time. Fortunately we live in an area with great stores and really good deals for college-bound kids. But, preparing for that college bound student to live on their own takes planning, time, money and a lot of energy.

Clothing is an expense that can add up quickly. I suggest that first-year freshmen make a list of everyday clothes they need right away and then, in a month or two, add to their list. They really haven't lived the lifestyle yet and do not know what to expect. If you have a daughter going

through sorority 'Rush,' I know the outfits are unending and cannot be worn twice, (according to the girls).

The Allen Outlet Mall has a wide variety of stores with great buys for back to school, including Nike, Addidas, Banana Republic and BCBG. If your child can wait a few weeks to buy the bulk of their first season of fall clothes, many stores will put them on sale in order to get ready for the holidays. In Texas, we can stretch the summer clothes into mid-fall.

Anthropology is a store I love for clothing and home accessories. My girls really love their stuff, too. They have a room at the back with a lot of sale items. Another favorite is Old Navy. They have tons of basic items to choose from for boys and girls. My girls especially love the flip flops at \$2.50 a pair. I believe it is the best deal around.

Nordstrom-BP department also has a great selection of T-shirts, jeans, jewelry, leggings, etc. for college-bound girls. Urban Outfitters is the

photo from Dreamstime.com



FROM CLOTHES TO LIVING SPACE

The next thing to consider and understand is their living space. If your child has a roommate, it's a good idea they get in touch and get to know each other a bit. For girls it is especially important to coordinate bedding and have a color scheme for their room or apartment. For the guys, they are more interested in comfort and the electronics part of the deal! If possible, discuss the opportunity of sharing costs. An example is one person buys the mini refrigerator and the other buys the microwave.

Before you head out to purchase the various things on your list, check and see who has the best prices. IKEA was one of my first stops. It really takes a couple of hours to get through the store. They have great storage and dorm room ideas...and the prices are reasonable. I especially like the bedding selections and the kitchen accessories. IKEA definitely offers a more contemporary look, which most college kids like.

Shopping around I found that Linens & Things and Bed, Bath and Beyond really cater to the dorm rooms this time of year. They also carry bedding that comes in extra long twin sets which is the typical dorm-size bed. Most of the stores including JC Penney, Wal-Mart, Target and Kohl's have great deals this time of year also. Target especially seems to have great deals on sheets, bedding, towels, etc. Kohl's has a good housewares department and almost every week has one of their towel lines on sale. They also have great throw rugs for bathrooms, and many of the dorm rooms have tile floors which can be cold. You can purchase a larger rug

at any of these stores to cozy up a room and add color.

Wandering through these stores I was surprised to see all of the storage ideas for kids and great bathroom items for keeping things neat. Crates and bins are great ideas for keeping the dorm room or apartment organized and less cluttered...if that is possible.

Besides bedding and clothing, Best Buy, Circuit City, Staples and Office Depot offer a great variety of laptops and other electronics at competitive prices. To personalize that laptop make a trip to Xstream Computers and your student will be able to customize their existing computer or purchase one built with exactly their requirements in mind. All of these stores also have a selection of computer tables and desks if your son or daughter is renting an unfurnished apartment. Many need to be assembled so remember, keep it simple.

Once your student gets to college and receives his or her schedule, they will need to purchase books for their classes. Books can add up fast. Almost every campus offers 'used books' which can save some money. Call the campus directory and they will let you know where you can purchase used books.

Finally, make sure your student has a working alarm clock. We all know how they love to sleep!

Karen Long is a Frisco resident and a partner in Before & After Interior Makeovers.



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