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AU Music Ministry Hits a High Note

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Journey performing at the Village Church in Berrien Springs in October.

AU music ministry hits a high note

Michigan—A music ministry comprised of current and former Andrews University students is reaching out to touch people with more than just music.

For 13 years, the choir Journey has performed on campus, as well as places including a homeless shelter in Benton Harbor, a maximum security prison in the Bahamas, a naval base in Illinois and at last year's General Conference session in San Antonio.

Last year, after interviewing dorm deans, Campus Ministries and others on campus, it was evident that many students were feeling disconnected. "They felt alone and that no one cares for them or what happens to them," said Journey manager Wanda Cantrell. After discussion with founding and current director Marguerite Samuel, Operation Student Care was created. This is a program where Journey leaders receive information on a student with a special need. "Some of the issues that have been addressed are

death of loved ones, depression, illness and lack of winter outerwear," said Cantrell who has been with the group since its 2003 inception. "No names are given, only the circumstances."

After taking a survey of what students would like to see in a package and with the direction of the Holy Spirit, members of the group prepare packages specially created for each student with items that address the stated need. For example, winter coats were purchased for two students who couldn't afford to buy them. Medicine was purchased for another student who had been sick for three weeks. Other items in the packages may include a down throw, chocolate, soup, tea, devotional book, mug or journal.

To date, more than 150 care packages have been delivered, and the experience has blessed everyone involved. "Overall, it was more rewarding than I would have first imagined, getting to meet someone new through ministry," said Kellie Shelton. Whereas one of the package recipients gratefully responded, "How did you know? Everything in the package was

my favorite thing!" Even the colors were right!

As Journey explores ways to further reach even more students, they're grateful for God's provisions along the way. Most of the funding for purchasing care package items has been provided by one of the campus churches, One Place; however, they're currently looking for additional donations. "We're soliciting the help of the community," says Cantrell. One of their dream projects is to deliver a bag of cookies each month to one wing of a dorm, eventually giving to every student on campus.

For more information on the group, visit <http://www.Journeymi.com>.

Wanda Cantrell is manager and sponsor for the group Journey.