So Much More Than a Stream

Andrea Luxton, president

One of the passages of Scripture I am drawn to time and again is Ezekiel 47. In this passage Ezekiel has a particularly evocative and picturesque vision. You may remember it. Ezekiel is taken to a temple and, as he sees it, a small stream flows from the temple. He follows and the water turns into a deeper stream, the stream into a river and then eventually the river into the sea, where saltwater becomes fresh. Not only does the water get wider and deeper it also serves to bring life, whether through fish and animals in the waters or the trees by the side of the waters that have leaves and fruits that are replenished constantly.

What is astonishing about this passage is the way that the trickle of water multiplies so rapidly and causes so much abundance of life. The power of positive influence; the capacity of something that starts small to bring change. From arid soil to rich vegetation. From dryness to flowing water in which you can only eventually swim, for it is much too deep to wade.

Sometimes it is easy looking from a distance at Andrews University to wonder whether the great experience you had is still true of the experience today. Are students still leaving as faithful Christians, faithful Seventh-day Adventists? Does the University and its graduates really make a difference in the world and live the University motto to “Change the World?” If you hear that is not the case, please don’t believe it.

My conviction, living here every day, is that Andrews University is very much a place of positive influence; comprehensively small, yes, but a place that is always about bringing change that aligns with the gospel and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As president, I have the wonderful pleasure of interacting with the committed professionals and students on this campus. I see them time and time again making decisions of faithfulness, of faith and of service. And I hear from so many beyond the campus that when they have paused to observe what has come out of this University they have indeed experienced a small stream that has turned into a river and then a sea of talent, commitment and service that continues to change lives and communities in so many positive ways.

We are in the holiday season, a time of thanksgiving and a time of praise. And as I pause to personally rejuvenate and to thank God for his leadership in my life, I also pause to be very thankful for what I see at Andrews University. No, we are not perfect, but we see God’s leading every day in this place and in our students. I am thankful both for the generous heartfelt service so many give to us at the University and for that service so many alumni and current students give to others. I hope that as you read this edition of FOCUS you will be encouraged as I am encouraged, for in this edition we will try to give you glimpses through some of the windows of Andrews University, so that you too can see the beginnings of the seas that today’s students will bring to the world of tomorrow.

May God bless you abundantly during this holiday season.
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Parents pray for Andrews students

Join the Andrews University Parents Prayer Group

This past summer, as Andrews University students finalized plans for the school year, a few parents began to interact for a very important purpose—praying for their children’s experience at Andrews.

Shirlean Seawood, who has two freshman attending Andrews, says, “Different parents here and there heard of other parents who had a child going to Andrews. The parents started communicating, started texting...they were really excited to connect.”

Parents of current Andrews students made themselves available to parents of incoming students and answered questions ranging from what stores are in the Andrews area to what is essential for a residence hall room. The parent group grew from two to six, and plans developed for the parents to pray together for their students throughout the school year. When the fall semester started, the parent group, now expanded to 14 members, met in person for the first time and prayed together with June Price, University chaplain.

Shirlean volunteered to coordinate the group and considered the best way to facilitate continued parent conversations. She created a website for the shared texts, emails, pictures and videos, and she arranged for a monthly prayer conference call.

The first prayer call took place on October 8, 2017, and 30 parents joined the call. The conference calls will continue the first Sunday of each month at 12 p.m. EST. Ten minutes are spent on welcome and announcements, and ten minutes are devoted to sharing prayer requests. The last ten minutes are spent in prayer for students, families and the University. Text message reminders also present names of specific students who are on the daily prayer list.

Casandra Slade, who has a freshman at Andrews, says, “Knowing that a broader ‘village’ is praying for my daughter is so comforting. The group has been very supportive by sharing experiences that have guided me in providing impactful support to my daughter. My daughter has been covered in prayer, and when I ask her if she has prayer requests for the group, she provides requests because she takes comfort in her prayer requests being prayed over.”

“It’s just encouraging,” says Shirlean, “to know there are other people in the same boat who have the same issues and concerns and worries. Even though you’re going to pray for your child regardless, you have other people praying for your child, as well. It’s pretty powerful.”

All parents and guardians of Andrews University students are welcome to join the Andrews University Parents Group.

Don’t forget to write

Letters are always welcome. To ensure a range of viewpoints, we encourage letters of fewer than 300 words. Letters may be edited for content, style and space.

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Andrews University Graduate Student Association: The Introduction—The Andrews University Graduate Student Association serves as the representative council with specific responsibilities to the graduate students and their families at Andrews University. (November 27, 2017)