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## Andrews takes care of its neighbors

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## Andrews takes care of its neighbors

The Andrews University Student Gardens was awarded a Michigan State grant which allows the program to participate in a regional initiative to bring affordable healthy food to the community. The Gardens is now a part of the Be Healthy Berrien initiative. In partnership with the Berrien County Health Department and Planning Commission, the YMCA, Lakeland Healthcare, the cities of Buchanan, Niles and Stevensville, and United Way, the Gardens will help host a mobile farm market at strategic locations within the county.

“The county has identified seven locations in Berrien County with a high concentration of low income families who have limited access to produce and groceries,” explains Stephen Erich, Mobile Farm Market coordinator. “These areas are classified as food deserts.” The food truck will take fresh produce to the food deserts, sell it for affordable prices, and will accept Bridgecard food stamps, cash and credit/debit cards.

The Gardens also will work with Lakeland Healthcare to offer health and cooking classes for the community.

“We’re not just providing local families with tangible things; we’re also helping to educate them. It’s about building community and taking care of our neighbors,” says Erich.

Interns from the Gardens will travel to the mobile farm market locations. They will learn how to create similar programs in their own neighborhoods, while gaining business skills and work experience. Twenty student summer employees will plant, tend, harvest and deliver to those signed up for its produce subscription service.

“We’re emphasizing quality this year,” explains Arthur Mulyono, manager of Andrews University



The Andrews University Student Gardens is now part of the Be Healthy Berrien initiative. It will help host a mobile farm market at strategic locations within Berrien County, Mich.

Student Gardens. “We want our plants to produce as much as possible within each square foot, so we’re applying special styles of planting and tending to encourage healthier, more abundant growth in each individual plant.”

“This isn’t just about growing fruits and vegetables;” says Mulyono. “It’s about giving back to the community. When we take care of our fruits, vegetables and soil, giving food and necessary nutrients to the people, they will be healthier and better able to give back to the community themselves.”

Last year, Erich was involved with the Summit on Poverty in America at Andrews. When he saw an article in a local paper about the level of poverty in his own community, he couldn’t ignore it. Erich applied for an open position at the Gardens, and was hired quickly.

“There’s nothing else I’d rather be doing right now,” he says with a grin.

In addition to the partnerships Mulyono and Erich established through the county, each location for the mobile farm market represents a positive relationship with a local community center or church.

“It’s a wonderful witnessing tool,” says Erich. “It’s important for us as Christians and as young people within the Church to encourage healthy living and do what we can to provide that opportunity for those in our community who may not otherwise be able to manage it.”

To learn more about the Andrews University Student Gardens and the Mobile Farm Market, visit <http://augardens.com> and follow them on Twitter @berrienmarket and at <http://facebook.com/AUagri>.

Becky St. Clair, media communications manager, Division of Integrated Marketing & Communication



June Price, previously associate dean of women at Lamson Hall, a women’s residence hall at Andrews, is the new University chaplain. She officially began this role July 1. Price holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s in counseling with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy from Southern Adventist University. Previously, she has worked as a Bible and psychology teacher, school counselor, and marriage and family therapist. “My passion in life is the pursuit of God and his transforming power in our lives through changing the way we think,” says Price. “I pray that the Father will make me useful and pleasing to his Kingdom agenda here at Andrews University.”