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Andrews Academy Takes an Adventure with God

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[EDUCATION NEWS]

Andrews Academy takes an adventure with God

Michigan—The day after Christmas 2012, 22 students gathered in the Chicago O'Hare International Airport to embark on what would be the trip of a lifetime. Andrews Academy's SOW Safari group was taking its first-ever trip across the Atlantic Ocean to India. Many of the young people going on the trip never had been out of the country, let alone halfway around the world. For some, it was even the first time to be on an airplane. With bags packed, hugs from parents and lots of prayers, these high-school students embarked on their adventure with God.

For this year's mission trip, Andrews Academy students traveled to Falakata, in northeast India. Its close proximity to the Himalayas causes the weather to be slightly colder than the temperatures that one normally would expect to find in India. Many of the Andrews Academy students found this out the hard way as they shivered beneath thin blankets at night in a room with no heat.

During the 16-day mission trip (Dec. 26–Jan. 10), the students spent the daylight hours serving the Falakata community by building two Seventh-day Adventist churches in the area and playing with the local village children. While the majority of the students never had done any construction work at all, they joyfully put on their hardhats and went to work putting up walls, trying their hand at roofing, and figuring out how to work power tools. Both churches were built and dedicated prior to their departure, and they already are overflowing with SDA members!

After a long day's work on the job site, these young people conducted both an evangelistic series for the adults and a vacation Bible school for the children who came from nearby villages. As some students summoned up the courage to tell Bible stories for the first time



Andrews Academy students stand in front of one of two churches they built in Falakata, India. They traveled to India for the school's biennial SOW Safari to participate in service, outreach and witnessing.

to 200-plus children, others preached their first-ever sermon to a packed church.

Anna Rorabeck, a junior at Andrews Academy, fondly recalls her time in India: "I miss the children that smiled all the time. I miss hugging them and pretending to know what they were saying in Bengali. I miss eating piles of Indian food. I miss seeing churches being built in front of my eyes and being a part of building them. I miss seeing that beautiful, big, red sun every morning. I miss the crazy traffic that made me think I was going to die. I miss the animals that roamed the streets, especially the adorable puppies. I miss the miracles I witnessed. I miss India."

However, she did add, "I love being able to drink water from the tap. I love seeing my parents again. I love taking hot showers that are *not* from a bucket. I love my soft bed, which is more than a two-inch-thick mattress on plywood. I love eating all-American macaroni and cheese. I love my phone. I love home."

As illustrated by Rorabeck's personal thoughts, we clearly can see that we are caught in-between two worlds: the world of our comfort and a world filled with great need. There are so many

people who need to hear of God or just receive a helping hand. I encourage you to follow these young people's example and go! Take the adventure of a lifetime with God and, while you are doing it, remember Jesus' words in Matthew 25:40: *Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me* (KJV).

SOW Safari, Andrews Academy's biennial two-week mission trip, has been an important part of Andrews Academy's mission since 1986. The name, SOW Safari, speaks to the reason for these trips: **service** through construction of a church or school building, **outreach** through vacation Bible school, and **witness** through evangelistic efforts. To date, several hundred people have been baptized through the evangelistic component of these trips, including some of the students themselves! SOW Safari mission trips are coordinated and led by Sari Butler, the school counselor at Andrews Academy, in partnership with Maranatha Volunteers International.

Lindsey Holland, mission trip adult sponsor and a graduate student at Andrews University currently doing her school counseling internship at Andrews Academy