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## AA Teaches Compassion in Action

Steven Atkins  
*Andrews Academy*

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## [ EDUCATION NEWS ]

### AA teaches compassion in action

Michigan—For those who have not experienced Seventh-day Adventist high school education, one may think it is similar to a public school experience with the addition of Bible classes and worships. But the Andrews Academy school experience, as in other SDA schools, includes the integration of faith in every aspect of the school experience.

In my biology class, we have two textbooks: a biology book and God's book, the Bible. As we discover the intricacies of biology, we also discover the intricacies of why and how God wants us to live as Christians, how He created us, and biblical reasoning on ethical issues as they relate to science.

Andrews Academy students also enjoy many social activities together. It may be the Student Association weekend camping trip that is focused around a spiritual theme or going out in small groups to help our community.

Our service philosophy is based on Matthew 25:31-40: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (v. 40 NIV). We teach that we are not only to treat others as we would want to be treated, but treat others as if they were Christ Jesus Himself. Service is "compassion in action."

On community service day, the school day began with a devotional thought focusing on Christ's love and deep compassion for those in need. Students were encouraged to work hard — not to please people (as in the other students or their teacher) but God, and to realize that God calls them to be a light to the world. As Christians, our diligent, hard work is for the glory of God and a way to help bring others to Christ.

When Christian compassion is incorporated into the curricular and co-curricular activities effectively, students enjoy these experiences and create



During their five-day class trip, the seniors of 2012 participated in community service. Some said the best part of the trip for them was the community service day.



Students and faculty help beautify a stretch of highway by picking up litter and debris. Living out Christ's love through service is modeled at Andrews Academy. Pictured are: Brooklyn Wood; Sari Butler, guidance counselor; Ben Lovhoiden; Crystal Porter; Anna Rorabeck; Ivette Ruban; and Byron Graves, music teacher.

good memories. When the seniors returned from their five-day senior trip, I was pleasantly surprised with how many commented that the best part of the trip was community service day!

The Andrews Academy Student Association plans various vesper programs for the school. This past Christmas they organized a Friday evening caroling vespers at a nearby nursing facility. One student's comment reflected what many others expressed: "It was a lot of fun; the people there were really enjoying it. A number of them came out to say, 'Hi'; some gave chocolates, and gave us Merry Christmas hugs!" The Lord worked through this activity to intervene not only in the lives of the residents but in the lives of the students as well.

The Student Association Children's Christmas Party is designed to help



At the Student Association Children's Christmas Party, Santa is portrayed by Dillon Zimmerman, S.A. pastor. He holds a community student while Kyle Whiteside hands the child a gift. Also pictured is April Habenicht, Andrews Academy student

academy students grow in the spirit of giving during the Christmas season. The students sign up in groups of two to four to sponsor a child for the party. Various needy children from the community are invited for the evening. As the children arrive, the festive evening commences. The children and students draw Christmas pictures on their tables as the development of their relationship begins. I see God working in the lives of the little children as well as the "big" ones. I see smiles all around.

You often hear of schools that build school spirit, school pride and their identity through their sports teams. The success of their athletic department is central. At Andrews Academy, identity and school spirit is built on broader and what faculty and staff feel are more important things. Living out Christ's love through service is an

Photos by Steven Atkins

excellent way to incorporate the three components of a balanced education.

“Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education ... is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come” (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 13).

Having teachers work side-by-side with students during these service

projects develops a sense of respect, closeness and love between faculty and students. This love was demonstrated on the last day before winter break when we had an “Andrews Academy family prayer” for Patricia Banks, a home economics and health teacher who was moving away. Students gathered around her, placed their hands on her, and prayed for her.

We are blessed to be part of a team of believers in Christ who are dedicated to our objective that the students “may know Christ and the power of

His resurrection...,” and be “strengthened with power through his Spirit in their inner being, so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith — that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Philippians 3:10 and Ephesians 3:16–19).

Steven Atkins, science teacher, Andrews Academy, with his wife, Alice Atkins



BILL McCaw

The Pleasantview Christian School and Child Care Ministry daycare playground is circled by the NASTrike Raceway, a loop outside the play area for the kids to ride tricycles on. It takes 20 laps to make a mile.

## School recognized for excellence

Indiana—Pleasantview Christian School is known for its outstanding childhood education program. “We don’t do any [commercial] advertising. Everything is word-of-mouth,” said Michele McCaw, school principal and daycare director. “With 12 employees and 51 kids, we are full.”

Pleasantview and the Lafayette Church’s Child Care Ministry recently combined to create a glowing picture of Christian quality. “It is the best school I have found,” Becky Morales said. “I had Cece in a Montessori school, but they weren’t really teaching her anything. I pulled her out and brought her here. The teachers at Pleasantview are kind, helpful and far more involved with the kids. They are in tune with what the

kids are feeling as they learn. Their curriculum — it’s fantastic! Their teaching about the Bible is also a plus. I [expect] Cece will be here until they run out of grades for her to take.”

With the growth of the school and the merger of school and daycare, Pleasantview needed new rooms. “We needed one room for ten two-year-olds and two rooms for 18 children in pre-K,” McCaw said. “There was no way the church could come up with the money.” Pleasantview received a \$10,000 grant from The McAllister Foundation, which gives to high-profile educators such as Purdue and Ivy Tech. In 2006, The McAllister Foundation gave Pleasantview \$40,000 for new playground equipment.

“We never know when the state will come to inspect,” said McCaw. “Last time they visited, they pulled me aside and said, ‘I can’t find anything to write you up on. It’s one of the cleanest places and filled with beautiful color for the kids!’” Five years ago, the inspector brought five other inspectors to show them a top-notch daycare.

Since 1995, McCaw and her husband have cared for the reputable quality in Pleasantview. Almost immediately after joining the Lafayette Church, she was placed on the church board. “They mentioned a preschool, but thought they would ‘can’ the idea because nobody was interested in leading the project,” McCaw said. “I left the meeting thinking, *I can’t do this. Why would I ever volunteer to take this on?* After getting home, I asked my

husband, ‘What would you think if I taught preschool?’

“After thinking about it, he said, ‘If you can find someone to support you so you’re not doing it alone, then I, too, will support you.’”

“Would you be willing to help?” McCaw asked a neighbor.

“It was the right person, at the right time and place, because she easily answered, ‘Sure!’” McCaw said.

“The church board found an addition to our team, Gayl Stevens, who worked at a daycare. Gayl became the teacher, and we were assistants. We knocked out walls, added rooms and added a daycare on the side,” McCaw recalled.

That summer, McCaw and her husband funded getting the rooms ready for students. They laid carpet and tiles, and had the daycare painted.

The first year there were just five students in the elementary school, but their team’s standard of excellence has paid off. In 12 years, Pleasantview has grown more than ten times its original size, and has built a strong ministry that shows a picture of Jesus to the community, church and home.

For more information, see <http://www.pleasantview.us> or email [pleasantview.school@yahoo.com](mailto:pleasantview.school@yahoo.com).

Kortnye V. Hurst, correspondent, Indiana Conference