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Andrews Office of Campus Ministries Goes Mobile

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Andrews Office of Campus Ministries goes mobile

The Andrews University Office of Campus Ministries has gone mobile! Their mobile offices are a new initiative to bring this ministry directly to the students of Andrews University.

From Monday through Thursday, during the weeks of Sept. 10 and 17, the chaplains and their support staff wheeled a cart loaded with an electric teapot and an array of teas, apple cider and hot chocolate and set up camp in one of the campus lobbies. Beside the cart, they placed a large sign announcing their motto: “Keep Calm and Put the Kettle On,” a phrase history students will recognize from its similarity to the World War II British catchphrase, “Keep Calm and Carry On.”

“It’s an easy way of saying, ‘Pull up a seat and let’s talk about something serious and wonderful — Jesus in your life,’” says Japhet De Oliveira, University chaplain. Each day, Campus Ministries set up in a new area, traveling to Buller Hall, Nethery Hall, Architecture North Studio, Physical Therapy Building, Harrigan Hall Main Lobby, Bell Hall, Chan Shun Hall and the Seminary. By going to the students, they have the opportunity to meet and talk with students who may not normally spend much time in the Campus Center where Campus Ministries is located.

“We want to be where the people are,” says Jose Bourget, chaplain. “We get quite a bit of faculty, staff and students who come to our offices, but there are so many more that we now will be able to make connections with by being where they are.”

Influenced by one of his mentors, De Oliveira became impressed with the importance of going into the community. He realized that in order to connect with members, he needed to see them outside of church. “I can’t



University chaplain Japhet De Oliveira (center) chats with students in the Chan Shun Hall lobby, one of eight mobile office locations, during the weeks of Sept. 10 and 17.

preach, teach or connect unless I have a pulse for the community,” he says.

So far, the outreach has been well received. Some students who never had heard of the Office of Campus Ministries nor had an opportunity to meet the chaplains were able to interact with them. Many people expressed their appreciation for the chaplains’ efforts. One department chair even called the office to ensure they would be coming to her department. “We have had some great conversations with students we otherwise would have never met,” says De Oliveira. “Insight into their journey. Clarity on their needs.”

The chaplains intend to repeat the mobile office tour again later in the semester, as well as in selected other locations on individual days. They hope those they meet will be encouraged by their encounter to come to the Office of Campus Ministries for longer discussions.

“I think it’s a really good idea,” says Christina Dunn, a junior animal science major; “I was blessed.”

The mobile offices are one implementation of the new Faith Development program, which includes three elements: Program to Presence, Theory to Tangible and Control to Creative. The mobile office is an initiative of the first element, Program to Presence. With this initiative, the chaplains hope to make Campus Ministries a more palpable presence on campus and in the lives of students, faculty and staff.

Some other initiatives the Office of Campus Ministries is undertaking include submitting regular articles to the *Student Movement*, using interactive texting during chapels and promoting the availability of the chaplains for discussion, as well as regularly walking around campus to connect with students.

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