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### Warming Up a Community

Ashleigh Jardine  
*Andrews University*

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## Warming Up a Community

BY ASHLEIGH JARDINE

**D**ragos Prahoveanu is making a difference in some Benton Harbor, Michigan, families. Dragos, a senior studying international business at Andrews University, created the Stay Warm Project in November 2010, and hopes to distribute 250 blankets by January 2011.



With his Stay Warm Project, Dragos Prahoveanu plans to provide blankets to needy families in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

Dragos realized his Sabbath afternoons weren't being used to God's glory. "The traditional nap after church is not helping to spread God's Word," says Dragos. "Actions are stronger than words. That's why, by giving these blankets, you replace a lazy Sabbath afternoon with something productive and rewarding." He wanted to get fellow students and friends involved in a community service activity of distributing blankets to people in need, so he created a Facebook page announcing his intentions. His Facebook message reads, "I personally hate being cold and I felt the need to make a difference. I am collecting blankets for those that need to stay warm this cold

season. These blankets will be distributed to different shelters: Niles, Benton Harbor, etc. Make a difference!"

In less than a week, the Facebook page had nearly 200 friends showing interest in the project. Realizing the huge impact the Stay Warm Project could have, Dragos began looking at area homeless shelters. He contacted Sherry Gopp, deputy director of Emergency Shelter Services Inc., and decided to donate the blankets to an ESS homeless shelter in Benton Harbor. Sherry told Dragos about people who don't have heat and some who have even frozen to death. For Dragos, this sounded unacceptable for the 21st century.

The Stay Warm Project donations are expected to cover nearly all blanket needs for an upcoming drive, giving Sherry and shelter volunteers one less thing to worry about. ESS will allow him to hand-deliver several blankets—an experience Dragos claims will bring true happiness and a warm-fuzzy feeling.

"It's reassuring to meet people who are willing to donate and help," Dragos says.

To learn more about the project, contact Dragos at 248-974-5887 or e-mail staywarmnow@gmail.com.

Ashleigh Jardine is a student news writer in the Office of Integrated Marketing & Communication at Andrews University. Originally from Romania, Dragos Prahoveanu is a member of the Metropolitan Adventist Church.

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