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Michael Campos
Andrews University

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Offering Hope and Affirming Faith

BY MICHAEL CAMPOS

Helen Penn and Sara Moore are residents of Ruth Shriman House, an assisted living facility in Chicago, Ill. On March 28, about 25 Andrews University students had a chance to become their friends.

“You can’t imagine how everyone is buzzing about our afternoon,” Sara wrote in a thank-you letter. “It’s so good to get to speak with young people and get their views about the world. It’s also remarkable this group actually listened to what we have to say.”

Helen had a similarly positive experience. “I had the pleasure of meeting a group of students from Andrews University. They served us a meal and gave us music and fellowship. It was obvious they were from a religious university. The way they conducted themselves and the manner in which they treated the tenants was wonderful.”

The group who visited the residents were MyTown Ministries volunteers, an outreach opportunity for Andrews University students. Taking a creative approach to achieving the founding goal of “Touching Everyone for Jesus,” we, as college students, develop our talents through church and community service projects while also establishing a connection with Chicago-area Seventh-day Adventists.

On the last Sabbath of every month, MyTown Ministries holds its main activity with an average of 25–30 Andrews University students participating. We lead out in church services and perform afternoon community outreach such as volunteering at soup kitchens, door-to-door ministries, elderly visitation and working with children.

The weekend our group met Helen and Sara, MyTown Ministries volunteers joined forces with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly. Together, the two teams of volunteers hosted a banquet for Shriman House residents. It was three



Hafiz Ally (right) gets a hug from a resident of the Ruth Shriman House.



Erin Schutt (left) and Erika Martin (right) pose with a resident of the Ruth Shriman House.

hours of socializing, listening, singing and, most importantly, sharing the love of God with the residents.

Helen and Sara weren’t the only ones blessed by the experience. So were our volunteers.

“I felt privileged to spend some time with these adorable seniors as I noticed that they were having a great time with our group of volunteers,” said Rosiele Nascimento, an MBA student. “Even though it seems we were providing a service to them, I feel we benefited the most from them sharing their life experiences and wisdom with us.”

“When I first started talking to Sara, I was a bit saddened when she expressed her eagerness to speak with me, because

the social workers informed us earlier that they don’t get many visitors. Although she was very happy with the time spent, it is hard for me to even come close to imagining how she could have received more of a blessing than what she was to me that day,” said Hafiz Ally, an Andrews alum (BBA ‘07).

MyTown Ministries provides not only myself but fellow Andrews students an opportunity to affirm faith while changing the world—one person at a time. It’s my prayer that these activities will impact our lives and those we touch for eternity and ultimately lead individuals to the kingdom of God.

Michael Campos is coordinator of MyTown Ministries. He is a senior religion and Spanish major at Andrews University.

MyTown Ministries was created under the leadership of Kenneth Denslow, president of the Illinois Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and Jose Bourget, pastor, a graduate of Andrews University.