

Andrews University Prepares for Change Day 2019

Third annual Change Day takes place Tuesday, Sept. 24

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Participants in Change Day 2018 (Photo by Shiekainah Decano)

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On Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2019, Andrews University will hold its third annual Change Day. University faculty, staff and students will collaborate with approximately 70 sites around the community and in Berrien County.

Project sites include community organizations such as Harbor Country Missions, Habitat for Humanity, Salvation Army, Adopt-a-Highway, the Benton Harbor Charter School, Silverbrook Cemetery, Berrien County Youth Fairgrounds, Neighbor 2 Neighbor and many other organizations and non-profits that serve the local community.

“Last year we had over 1,200 volunteers that went out into the community to give back at over 60 different locations. This year we are excited to add even more volunteer locations,” says Teela Ruehle, Change Day coordinator and director of service & missions with Campus Ministries. “We hope that our efforts on Change Day will bless our community.”

Change Day developed out of Andrews University's mission to "Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World." The first Change Day was held on Sept. 14, 2017, and the second on Sept. 13, 2018. For both days, classes were canceled to encourage involvement in the event. During the first Change Day, participants worked at 63 sites across Berrien County. Projects ranged from painting a mural in a school to cleaning beach areas and parks to offering hundreds of high school students information about career choices. On the second Change Day, participants again worked at 63 local volunteer sites but in seven neighborhoods and two counties. Project sites included the Therapeutics Riding center, the Area Agency on Aging and Habitat for Humanity.

Those impacted by the annual Change Day have been appreciative of the results. Michigan's state representatives, Fred Upton and Debbie Stabenow, even sent their greetings and thanks to the students and faculty for their work in the community.

Change Day participants have had a variety of positive, influential experiences. "I learned that sometimes the most glamorous jobs are not necessarily the ones that need to be done. Sometimes, just scraping tape off a desk will make someone else's life a lot easier and they will be very grateful. Small gestures are still acts of service, and God can still work through those small moments and allow you to build a community with others," says Yasmine Siagian, senior psychology/behavioral neuroscience major.

Jasmine Achoki, a senior psychology/brain & cognition major at Andrews, adds, "It's always humbling to be reminded of our true purpose in life—to help others. University can act as a bubble that isolates students from society, but Change Day helped me to become a part of my larger community and I really appreciate that."