

Andreasen Center for Wellness Ribbon Cutting

Speeches, tours and happy faces at the long-awaited celebration

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President Emeritus Niels-Erik Andreasen and Demetra Andreasen chat with Newton Hoilette, former vice president for Student Affairs at Andrews University. (Photo by David Sherwin, assistant professor of photography)

On Thursday, Sept. 26, hundreds of individuals from the Andrews University community gathered in front of the Andreasen Center for Wellness for the Ribbon Cutting Celebration.

David Faehner, vice president for University Advancement, welcomed those in attendance. He recalled the groundbreaking of the Andreasen Center for Wellness 18 months prior and noted that 1,400 gifts from many people had added up to provide the building. He also recognized Niels-Erik Andreasen, the Center's namesake, who served Andrews for 22 years.

Dominique Gummelt, director of University Wellness and executive director of the Andreasen Center, reflected on the purpose of the Center, saying, "It is the mission of the University Wellness initiative to help every person live their life to the fullest potential, and as we have started on this journey, the new Andreasen Center for Wellness will provide a new massive pathway to make our desires for wellness become a reality."

She expressed gratitude, saying, “Thank you to each and every one of you that has made it possible to create a successful wellness initiative at Andrews University, and I kindly ask you today to pray for us, our team, our campus, as we move forward to becoming world changers through the power of wellbeing.”

Andrews University Graduate Student Association president Kenneth Choi shared a student perspective on the building, noting how it will better connect students on campus. “Now we have a reason to get up in the morning and take a short walk.... this is a place for us to hang out and to get healthy at the same time. To socialize and to get fit. This is an opportunity for us to bring together all the different students, all the different people on our campus, as well.”

The director of the Counseling & Testing Center, Judith Fisher, noted that faculty and staff are also looking forward to a healthier campus. “Our Andrews University world premiere changing institution has partnered once more with a community of friends, and today celebrates yet another investment destined to yield life-transforming results. This is an electrifying moment for each one of us, faculty, staff, members of this community of faith, who have watched with anticipation as this edifice emerged. And now, at last, the moment has come. The state-of-the-art wellness center is a symbol of our pledge to prioritizing the nurturing of our minds, our bodies and our souls as faithful stewards created in the image of a healthy God.”

Michael Hildebrand, president of Oronoko Township, brought his congratulations to Andrews University and posed the question, “What if the community joined together with the University and chose to be the healthiest community in the world?” He added, “I don’t even know if that’s an achievable moniker, but it might be a conversation worth having.”

Next, Paul Stokstad, co-chair of the President’s Council, shared his reflections. He said, “This is the high day for Andrews, and hopefully it will be a high day that continues on for year and year and year thereafter. So Lord, we thank you for this wonderful gift, and we use it to your glory!”

Dan Carrick, district director for Michigan Senator Kim LaSata, shared a tribute on behalf of LaSata, State Representative Brad Paquette and Congressman Fred Upton. The message noted, “The determination exhibited by the university is an effort to provide and establish the importance of wellness to all individuals, both on campus and throughout the entire community.” It also stated, “Perhaps the most important characteristic of [the] Andreasen Center for Wellness is that the center will focus on connecting wellness to the Creator.”

President Andrea Luxton reiterated the hope that the Andreasen Center for Wellness will be a place for both members of the campus and wider community to connect. She encouraged those in attendance to take the gift of the book “Rest and Redemption” by Niels-Erik Andreasen, published as a special edition by the Andrews University Press. She also noted there would be plaques recognizing donors as well as room names representing various locations around the world that Andrews students call home. In particular, Luxton emphasized three individuals honored in the Center for Wellness: Barbara Friesen, a faculty member who was committed to bettering lives through wellness; Dick Scott, a staff member who engaged with every area of campus and lived the mission of Andrews in every action he took; and Newton Hoilette, former vice president for Student Affairs who worked to deepen the student experience.

Artur Stele, chair of the Andrews University Board of Trustees, then offered a prayer asking for God's blessing on the Andreasen Center for Wellness and on the lives of those who enter.

Following prayer, 20 individuals participated in the ribbon cutting before all present were invited into the Center for refreshments and tours.

President Emeritus Niels-Erik Andreasen noted, "This center is attractive and inviting, bright inside and out, spacious and filled with exciting opportunities designed to keep us well and in good health. It is making the University a good place for students, faculty, staff, friends and neighbors to meet, a second "hello building" on our campus, and I am pleased and honored to provide it with its name."

The Andrews University Andreasen Center for Wellness will officially open for business on **Monday, Oct. 6, 2019**. To learn more about the Center and for information about becoming a member, please visit andrews.edu/wellnesscenter.