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Ministry Fair Fuels the Fire

Kristina Penny
Andrews University

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Daren Heslop/INC

The Ministry Fair was held on the green in front of the Howard Performing Arts Center.

Ministry Fair fuels the fire

Visitation Ministry, AUSA Outreach Initiative and AU Improv are just some of the newer ministry opportunities on the campus of Andrews University for the 2009–2010 school year. At the 2009 Ministry Fair: Fuel the Fire, held Friday, Sept. 4, these ministries plus nearly 40 others were exhibited, allowing students to get up close and personal with the many opportunities available for affirming their faith. This annual fair, now in its fifth year, was held on the green in front of the Howard Performing Arts Center prior to Fusion, a unique worship experience for students.

Keren Toms, chaplain for outreach and head organizer of the fair, says, “Ministry Fair is designed to bring as many opportunities together as possible to encourage the student body to find and connect with a ministry that can utilize their God-given talents.” She continues, “As we work to fuel the fire for His kingdom, we recognize that God has called each of us to serve Him in some capacity. Ministry Fair allows students, faculty, staff and community members to find a way to put their faith in action.”

Toms estimated more than 900 students, faculty, staff and community members attended the fair, perusing the aisles of booths while getting a taste of the opportunities available.

Representatives from each ministry talked with potential volunteers about the time commitment and skills involved in their specific ministry. Many of the ministry volunteers also shared their firsthand experiences working with their projects, highlighting the spiritual, emotional and social blessings that came with it.

“I’m blessed by this,” said Paul Torchia, a second-year MDiv student, of his involvement with Visitation Ministry. He joined the ministry in its infancy during the 2008–2009 school year. Every Friday afternoon, Visitation Ministry buses students to Benton Harbor where they connect one on one with youth, young adults and children in their homes. Through this intentional visitation with children, parents often become interested in church as well. Volunteers pray with families each week and invite them to the Sabbath programs held by other Andrews University outreach ministries.

Torchia says while bringing the youth in and having a program for them every Sabbath (the work of other AU Outreach ministries) is great, he believes the Friday visitation sends a personal message—“We care about you and Jesus cares about you”—to each individual. He was at the Ministry Fair recruiting students to join him in spreading that message.

Nick Snell, AUSA religious vice president, says, “We’re beefing up our evangelism on-campus, and striving to

reach those off-campus as well through AUSA Outreach Initiative. To live a balanced Christian life, we are not only taking in Christ, but also giving out Christ. If everybody at Andrews were to reach out to three people, then everyone in this community would know the love of Christ.”

Bryan Cafferky, AU Improv director, says this about Improv: “We aim for art and settle for funny.” In their stories, the ultimate aim is not to make people laugh, but to explore spiritual truths, principles and themes of the gospel that resonate with their audience; truths that both Christians and non-Christians can relate to. He continues, “We try to bring together the story of Divine with the story of common humanity.”

Improv uses play, spontaneity and humor as tools to build bridges between the church-attending community and the non-church-attending community. This ministry also strives to present Christian perspectives on life in a joyful and non-threatening environment, in the hope that non-Christians may become receptive to the life and teaching of Christ.

Toms says, “Not only has Ministry Fair attendance increased, the quality and dedication of our student volunteers seems to have increased as well.”

Kristina Penny, student writer, with Keri Suarez, media relations, Office of Integrated Marketing & Communication



Daren Heslop/INC

Patience Panneflek, student leader for the Puppet Ministry, recruits a new puppeteer.