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### Ucci Honored for 20+ Years of Prison Ministry

Patricia M. Spangler

Andrews University, [spanglep@andrews.edu](mailto:spanglep@andrews.edu)

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Ray Young

Burns Church members and Better Living Center volunteers showed their love as they sang carols and prayed with the homeless at Hart Plaza on Christmas Day.

## Better Living Center Volunteers and Church Members Take Christmas to the Streets

Lake Region—Once again, the Detroit Better Living Center (BLC) engaged area churches in activities to provide a special Christmas experience for Detroit's less fortunate.

A Christmas party for kids took place on Christmas Eve at the BLC. Nearly 100 children and parents from the community received a free gift, pizza, snacks and lots of love from church member volunteers. This Christmas



Ray Young

Nearly 100 children and parents attended the Better Living Center Christmas party. Each child and youth received a gift.

event gives us a chance to show God's love in action, and the community really appreciates it. The church volunteers and the Salvation Army in Wyandotte, Mich., donated hundreds of toys to make a difference this year.

On Christmas day, the homeless who were camped at a docking area at Hart Plaza (Detroit's world-class meeting and convention facility) received lots of love in a practical way from Burns Church members and BLC volunteers. Each homeless person the volunteers met received a warm blanket and selected from other items such as food, hats, gloves and personal items donated by area churches. Prior to the event, the BLC served as a staging area to coordinate distribution of the donated items. The event was planned and led by Yvonne Burns, Burns Church community services leader.

The BLC and the area Adventist churches want to help these homeless individuals all year long, and this Christmas outreach spearheaded by the Burns Church gave us a great start. We're hoping to get a vehicle to transport the homeless to the BLC for other social services and programs.

Ray Young, Better Living Center director

## Ucci Honored for 20+ Years of Prison Ministry

Illinois—Melinda Ucci, an 87-year-old member of the Rochelle Seventh-day Adventist Church, was honored on Oct. 12, 2007, during the McElmurry Ethics & Society Lectureship on the campus of Andrews University. The theme of the lecture series was prison ministries, and Ucci has been personally involved in this ministry for more than 20 years.

Ken Denslow, president of the Illinois Conference, interviewed Ucci before she was presented with a plaque by Russell Staples, chair of the planning committee. Ucci began a prison ministry in 1986 at the Dixon, Illinois, Correctional Center. At first, she came as a visitor to meet individually with two prisoners, but the numbers grew, and she was at the prison from



Russell Staples (left) presents Melinda Ucci with a plaque in honor of her 20+ years of prison ministry. Ken Denslow (right), Illinois Conference president, interviewed Ucci before she received the special recognition.

9 a.m. to 9 p.m. three days a week for a period. She was granted the status of volunteer, and conducted group meetings of worship. In 2000, she was named Volunteer of the Year.

Denslow later remarked, "The more I get to know Millie Ucci, the more I am amazed at what one little lady can do when she is committed to touch others for Jesus."

Patricia Spangler, assistant director of University Relations, Andrews University