

4-2006

Andrews Gears Up for Easter Passion Play

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Recommended Citation

Lechleitner, Elizabeth, "Andrews Gears Up for Easter Passion Play" (2006). *Lake Union Herald*. 599.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs/599>

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The Roman Encampment was a new addition to the 2005 Easter Passion Play.

Andrews Gears Up for Easter Passion Play

Where exactly in southwest Michigan might you bump into llamas and palm fronds in the middle of April? Or, for that matter, get mistaken for Barabbas, arrested by Roman soldiers, and witness the triumphant Resurrection? If you answered Berrien Springs, chances are you've either participated in or observed Andrews University's *Easter Passion Play* (*Passion Play*) a time or two since its debut in 2003. If not, then *Passion Play 2006* will hopefully be your first experience. With fingers crossed for shower-free weather and enthusiastic crowds, an estimated 600-member team of dedicated Andrews students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community volunteers is gearing up for the fourth annual *Passion Play* scheduled for the weekend of April 15–16.

This year, Center for Youth Evangelism's Brit Steele will direct the *Passion Play*. A firm believer in outreach, Brit is excited to help extend such a meaningful ministry to the community. Aside from revamping old standards like the marketplace scene and adding a new Bedouin tent site, Steele plans to boost the number of Spanish-language performances to accommodate an increasing Latino community.

Modeled after Oberammergau, Germany's world-renowned Passion, Andrew's *Passion Play* is held outdoors and emphasizes interaction between actors and audience members who really become participants rather than

mere spectators. This signature element of audience involvement lends *Passion Play* performances an authenticity not present in movie productions or books, and makes for an intensely personal experience.

But beyond enjoying the authentic sights, smells, sounds, and tastes of the production, *Passion Play* attendees have the opportunity to walk through a poignant portrayal of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that Steele and this year's volunteers hope will draw them closer to an even more personal Savior.

For more information on this year's play, including how to reserve tickets, log on to passionplay.andrews.edu.

Elizabeth Lechleitner, University Relations
student news writer

New Ministry Focuses on Public High School Students

"There was nothing for the public high school kids," says Andrews enrollment coordinator Maria Long about her experience as a public high school student. "I wanted someone to look up to, someone cool enough to hang out with, but who didn't know everything." Long's experience inspired her to start *The Basement*, a new weekly ministry at Andrews University designed specifically for public high school students.

Long says *The Basement* is "all about relationship." To facilitate these relationships, Long employs the talent and energy of a group of Andrews students,

many with their own background in public high schools. These leaders form accountability and prayer teams that interact with the teens on a highly personal level, creating an environment in which students can share their lives and prayers with one another. Throughout the week, leaders keep in touch with their "kids" by calling them or bringing them lunch at school. According to Long, "the leaders are leaders 24/7. The kids can call any time, and we'll do anything for these kids."

The Basement has been growing since week one. Nine kids showed up the first week, but attendance increased to fifteen by the next. By week three, the number had jumped to an amazing 47. Each week, students return excited about *The Basement*. Josh Hollobaugh, a junior at Berrien Springs Public High School, says that for him, "*The Basement* is a lot like a family. I feel comfortable with every person here and know that they will listen and pray for me."



The Basement is a new ministry for public high school students.

Not only is *The Basement* a meaningful part of the lives of the students, but it also has had a powerful impact on its leaders. Long says, "These are amazing kids. They're amazing to us and so important in our lives. They taught us what *The Basement* is."

Kristen Denslow, University Relations
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