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Andrews University-A Gathering of the Nation

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BY KATIE SHAW

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

A Gathering of Nations

Andrews University proudly displays the flags of the nations their students come from.

Moving can be a difficult undertaking for anyone. But packing your belongings, your family, and your culture into a few boxes and shipping them to a new country can be monumental. International students deal with a vast amount of changes in a short period of time, emigrating temporarily from their home countries to obtain a Christian education at Andrews University.



Students are encouraged to wear their national attire and raise their country's flag at the international flag-raising ceremony during alumni homecoming weekend.

Some of them have to learn a new language before they are accepted for study abroad. Some have to adapt to a different type of school system. And still others must become well-versed in the art of layering their clothing to keep warm in the winter! But for each one, the sacrifice is worth the challenge of setting up a new life for themselves, because their dream is to realize a scholastic goal at a

Seventh-day Adventist Christian university.

Camille Butler, a student from Toronto, Canada, decided to come to Andrews University specifically because of the diversity. "Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world, and Andrews, with all its international students, reminded me the most of home," she said.

Marcus and Mathilde Frey, with their two daughters, Delia, 8, and Chiara, 3, left their home and jobs in Freiburg, Germany, so Mathilde could pursue master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees at Andrews University. Mathilde had worked as a pastor in Freiburg for a number of years. Marcus worked for a prominent chemical industry company, repairing pumps and serving as the company's employee rights advocate. Coming to Andrews without sponsorship was a huge



An Indonesian group plays the Anklung for International Sabbath.



Francesca Lippi works with Delia Frey on her English skills using one of Delia's favorite series, Amelia Bedelia.

commitment for the Freys, since they plan to stay in the United States for at least five years. Mathilde's F-1 visa allowed her to go to school, but initially, Marcus could not work. He was able to apply for an F-1 visa 90 days after their arrival, and received permission to work in mid-November 2003.

Although their parents spoke some English, Delia and Chiara hadn't had a lot of exposure to the language. Delia entered the third grade at Ruth Murdoch Elementary School, the university's laboratory school, at the beginning of the year. Chiara, still too young for school, learns English from her parents and older sister.

Delia's teacher, Stacey Campbell, recalls, "On Delia's first day of school, the only English she knew was 'Good morning, teacher.'" Delia and Stacie were able to communicate with the use of a



Peggy Whidden directs the Berrien Springs Children's Choir, largely comprised of international students.

German-English dictionary and the help of a classmate who spoke German. Delia was also enrolled in English as a second language (ESL) classes with Francesca Lippi, who works one-on-one with her. "Delia has made amazing progress," Francesca says. After just three months of school, she has picked up English so quickly that she is now writing complete stories.

When they return to Germany, Mathilde hopes to teach Old Testament studies at the Adventist seminary in Friedensau. She and Marcus feel that their experience at Andrews has been enriched by all of the other international students they have met. "It's very interesting to get to know people from all over," Mathilde said. "Our neighbors are from Rwanda."



Each April, international clubs have the opportunity to showcase food from their home countries at the International Food Fair.

Getting a Christian education is very important to the international students at Andrews. Students with families also appreciate the opportunity for their children to attend a Christian school. Adebola Osundina, a master of business administration student from Nigeria, was looking for a balanced education for his children. "I found it here at Ruth Murdoch Elementary School and the Crayon Box daycare center where all the values I teach at home are reinforced in school."

The high concentration of international students among the general Andrews population is a great asset, according to the professors, students, and alumni. John McVay, dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, appreciates the fact that theological students from the North American Division will know what a world church is like after attending the seminary. "They will truly appreciate that in either Kansas or Kenya, the same gospel is preached, just with a different language," John said.

Chris Bokich, an Andrews 1999 bachelor of business administration graduate, noted, "Once in my job at Volkswagen of America, where I am constantly traveling and dealing with other cultures, I realized how valuable my Andrews education truly was. I feel comfortable with



To help students who come with very few financial resources, free food is delivered daily at the university apartments parking lot where students can come and take what they need. This ministry is provided by Pioneer Memorial Church and staffed entirely by volunteers.

diverse groups of people. After leaving Andrews, I now feel like the world is literally at my fingertips because I understand and am at ease with a wide variety of people and cultures."

Every year hundreds of students come from around the world to Andrews University to study in a Christian environment and prepare themselves for service. They discover that the sacrifices they make to get a Christian education are well worth it.

Katie Shaw works in university relations at Andrews University.