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School of Business Administration students partner with local nonprofit

Laura Fierce
Andrews University

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▲ Christina Lobraco

Faith journey leads employee to spiritual care position

Christina Lobraco's faith journey began in 2008. After being a stay-at-home mom for 18 years and newly divorced, Lobraco went back to work. She was hired as a registrar in the Emergency Department (ED) at AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Hinsdale. At work, she overheard a co-worker talking about a devotional and asked what it was. Her friend showed her the book.

"The devotionals brought an awareness to me of other people living everyday life, like me, and how God responded," said Lobraco.

Lobraco and her co-worker took a few minutes during quiet time in the ED to read the devotional and accompanying Scriptures. Soon, others from the medical center joined them.

"I was curious about Him, Jesus, God. God was so amazing and consistent throughout all the stories, all the Scriptures, all the books, over and over

again. I just could not ignore my feelings to want to get to know Him," she said.

As her faith continued to grow, Lobraco visited churches in search of the right one for her. In 2013, she had some clarity and decided to get baptized. She was growing spiritually and getting to know God and Jesus.

"I had been praying for a friend to come to Jesus and, in my sorrow, pain and suffering knowing that that was not happening, I realized that it was me that God was after all along," Lobraco said. "In a moment of clarity, I knew I wanted – needed – to be dunked in the water and washed clean of all my past mistakes, shame, guilt and anger, and be born again as a child of the King."

Years later, Lobraco was recommended by a former supervisor for a new job at AMITA Health. The position was with a newly formed Clinical Mission Integration team, whose goal was to provide spiritual

support, ministry of presence and promotion of whole-person care to outpatient associates and physicians. After training at AdventHealth in Florida, Lobraco joined the department as a Clinical Mission Integration specialist. She said she still marvels at the path that led her to her new position.

"My prayer to God for many years has been for Him to guide me to a place where I can best serve Him. From my prayer, an entire department is created and positions opened, and, miraculously, the job finds me. Only God could make that happen," she said.

In the hospital, chaplains and spiritual care are available to patients. The goal of this program is to support the spirituality of associates and providers in the outpatient setting. This aligns with AdventHealth's mission of whole person care and extending the healing ministry of Christ. The department also instituted a spiritual wholeness screening during which clinicians ask patients questions, such as: "Do you have a source of joy in your life?" Jesus talked about all three indicators – love, joy and peace.

"Christina is just lovely, joyful and spiritual – a perfect person to work in this department," said Heather Hoffman, regional director, Clinical Mission Integration. "Every step led her here. She's a 'people person' on fire for Jesus who encourages individuals through Scripture, prayer and friendship in our Christian organization. We are so blessed to have her work with us."

For Lobraco, the joy comes from being part of a team with an important mission.

"Something sacred happens when my prayers or simply my presence offers the slightest speck of hope in another human being," she said. "Honored doesn't even seem like a special enough word. It is a blessing to do this work. His work." ■

Katie Lesch, Communications manager

School of Business Administration students partner with local nonprofit

In 2015, when Berrien Springs residents saw community students in need of school supplies, they created Backpacks for Berrien (B4B), collecting over 200 backpacks to distribute at the start of the 2015–2016 school year.

In January 2018, Andrews University students in the School of Business Administration's chapter of Enactus (an international organization that brings together student, academic and business leaders in community projects) connected with B4B.

B4B has now expanded to include another major initiative: weekend meals for students on the free lunch program in addition to providing school supplies and a backpack. Each week, several Enactus members fill plastic grocery bags with individually packed food items that children can easily serve themselves. These bags are delivered to schools on Thursdays for students to pick up on Fridays.

Sixty-eight percent of K–12 students need food assistance during the school day in Berrien Springs public schools. Students notify school counselors if they need help, and counselors encourage parents to approve their child to receive B4B benefits.

"We know the need is greater," says Kimberly Pichot, associate professor of Marketing and Enactus sponsor. "A year-and-a-half ago, B4B served only 25 kids.

Now it serves 81 at five different schools, and it's estimated the need is at least double what we're currently serving."

The cost to feed a child each weekend for a year is about \$300. This fact has impacted the students working on the project. Shannon Huang, a junior Informatics major and Enactus member, says, "I grew up with the privilege of having plenty of food at home. I wanted to work on this project specifically because there are kids who don't have the necessities — things that allow them to learn well. I just hang out with my friends and listen to music

for two hours every week to pack bags, and it helps get food to kids who need it."

"It's a huge responsibility and not something we can take lightly," says Pichot. "The Andrews students who are really involved, they *know* they're making a grassroots impact. A child went to bed with a full tummy and they had something to do with that."

Dhillon Gurpreet Singh is a junior Marketing major who connected with the project through his e-marketing class, which has created multiple social media

accounts for B4B. "Marketing a nonprofit organization is not easy," he says. "You can't just sell your faith and expect people to believe in your faith. You have to show what the group is doing and give people something to believe."

He continues, "I come from a family where my father and all my uncles are businessmen and very financially conscious, but I've learned something new. The motivation behind marketing nonprofit is about more than making money — it's about making others feel better."

Andrews students also assist B4B in other ways: creating a new promotional video, the process of incorporating B4B to have official 501c3 (not-for-profit status), and writing grants.

"My hope is that as a community, as a university, we can address long-term solutions to child hunger because it's very real in our own backyard," says Pichot. "We can't do it alone — it has to be a community effort." ■

Laura Fierce, University Communication student writer, Andrews University



Darren Heslop

▲ Dhillon Gurpreet Singh and Shannon Huang