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A spiritual oasis

Hannah Gallant

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▲ David Springer

A spiritual oasis

Since August 2019, David C. Springer has been studying at Andrews University to earn his master's in Social Work as part of the Fulbright Foreign Student Scholarship Program.

"I have been working in the helping professions for my entire adult life. Social work means that I utilize the skills of leadership and communication to fulfill my passion for service to others that God has been developing in me since I was 16 years old," Springer explains.

Before coming to Andrews, he was completing his thesis for an M.A. in Communications Studies at the University of the Southern Caribbean and working

as a prison officer with the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service.

There, his latest post was in the Communication Department where he worked on community outreach, media and public relations, as well as a rebranding campaign for the entire service and creating a Spanish training course for new recruits in 2018.

Springer's assignments motivated him to further prepare to work as a change agent. In light of this, he submitted his application to the Fulbright program. The Fulbright process took almost a year and included taking the GRE, completing an interview with a panel of former Fulbright scholars and applying to universities. He was accepted by Andrews University, Columbia University, Florida State University and University of Pennsylvania.

"Receiving the Fulbright scholarship was a humbling experience for me. God showed me in one act that He was in charge of my life. Despite my own deficiencies and foibles, He is making something positive out of me," he says.

Springer ultimately chose to study at Andrews because it had the most family-friendly environment with the lowest cost of living and a quality, educational experience. He is the first Fulbright Foreign Student Scholar to attend Andrews University.

While at Andrews, he has served as brand manager for the Andrews University Graduate Student Association (AUGSA), on the University's Institutional Diversity & Inclusion Council, and as a bilingual social work intern at Neighbor to Neighbor.

In response to COVID-19, he worked on a collaborative effort between AUGSA, God's Abundant Pantry and Michigan Conference's ACS-DR team to support adversely affected students. He is a member of several clubs and associations, including the Social Work, French, Haitian and African clubs and the

Andrews University Latino Association (AULA).

"I've learned so much from Andrews University," he says. "I've realized that the experience at Andrews is holistic, developing the whole person and not only academic pursuits."

Springer's interactions with the Andrews community have opened opportunities for him to sing at several churches—he hopes to impact others for God through music. He also would like to complete an MDiv at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and is waiting to see how God will lead in that possibility.

"My experience at Andrews University has further affirmed that my life has to be one of service to others and humility before God. The Christ-centered focus of Andrews has been a refreshing breath of air for me," he says. "It has proven to be an oasis for my soul, spiritually." ■

Hannah Gallant, contract writer, University Communication, Andrews University

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