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Nearly \$1 million raised to assist Andrews University students

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1998. They are a support system for individuals in Cuba who are willing to go and make a difference in the world for Christ by giving Bible studies and participating in evangelism.

Since 2013, Fernando Ortiz, director of Andrews University's Master of Divinity Program, has organized a Cuba Study Tour every year during spring break, allowing seminary students to engage in personal and public evangelism. In Spring 2020, they were all packed and ready to go with 60 suitcases full of resources.

Although they were unable to travel due to the pandemic, they eventually found a way to still make an impact. A shipping container loaded with supplies was sent to Cuba in December 2020 by Care for Cuba.

Cuba has been greatly cut off from trade, travel and the world economy over the last sixty years. Pastors, Bible workers and people in general are lacking many resources we take for granted, including bicycles, Bibles, mobile phones, computers, the internet and ministry resources.

While there are 100 pastors and 300 Bible workers in Cuba, few have cars. Bible workers often need to travel a distance to get from one family to the next. "With a bicycle you can cover three or four times as much [area], giving three



Kathleen Morrissy

▲ In addition to the farming curriculum, FARM STEW donated 2,000 feminine hygiene kits, with generous support from Days for Girls, a global movement that prepares and distributes sustainable menstrual health solutions to girls who would otherwise miss school during their monthly periods. Kauffman (right) is pictured with FARM STEW board member, Sherry Shrestha.

times as many Bible studies, and probably three times as many baptisms," said Ortiz, who founded Care for Cuba. "You will see people going to church, daddy driving the bicycle, mommy on the handlebars, and then a child in front and another child on the back." One bicycle can make a big difference there, so they were thrilled when one hundred bicycles for Bible workers were donated.

ABUNDANCE OF HOPE

In addition to the farming curriculum, FARM STEW, with a generous assist from Days for Girls, a global movement that prepares and distributes sustainable menstrual health solutions to girls who

would otherwise miss school during their monthly periods, donated 2,000 feminine hygiene kits with reusable menstrual pads, underwear and soap. Ortiz explained that these kits provide items that you simply cannot get in Cuba. The support from Village Church in Berrien Springs, Stevensville Church and the surrounding Southwest Michigan community has been amazing.

If you'd like to learn more, visit careforcuba.org and farmstew.org. ■

Kathleen Morrissy, Lake Union of Seventh-day Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries Communication director

Nearly \$1 million raised to assist Andrews University students

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich.—"It was a Friday afternoon, and I was getting off from work."

Melissa Blemur, a freshman pre-Nursing student, recalls the moment she received word of her financial situation from Andrews. Her academic advisor had called with the promise of good news and proceeded to let her know that she was a recipient of the President's Student

Scholarship Fund. Melissa recounts, "I thank God that I was in my car because I started screaming on the phone. I was very happy and also shocked because, out of all the kids coming to Andrews, I was accepted. Hearing the news, I felt really blessed."

Melissa believes God brought her to Andrews. She remembers that at the end of her senior year of high school, she paused to pray about her next steps. Andrews immediately came to mind, but she prayed again to be sure. That next Sabbath she discovered that the visiting pastor at her church was an Andrews alumnus. Melissa states, "I took that as my sign from God and here I am now."

This past year, hundreds of students benefited from two key financial aids offered by Andrews: the Student Life COVID-19 Emergency Fund and the President's Student Scholarship Fund. Together, the two forms of support provided immediate crisis assistance and addressed the long-term financial difficulties stemming from the pandemic.

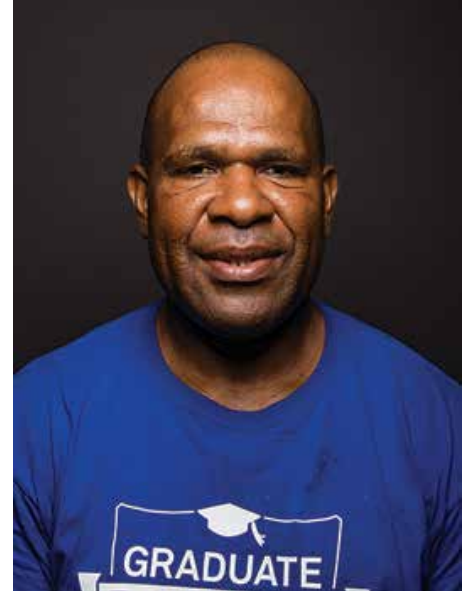
The Student Life COVID-19 Emergency Fund was created in direct response to the financial impact the pandemic had on Andrews students in March. Some students, unable to return home, lost their jobs on campus and in the community. The fund helps cover costs of rent



▲ Melissa Blemur



▲ José Antonio Alegria II



▲ Zuzai Hizoke

and groceries, providing much-needed support at the necessary times.

Originating in 1972, the President's Student Scholarship Fund assists students who have utilized all other financial aid resources — student loans, government aid, parent contributions, merit scholarships and employment — and still need a final push to complete registration. Awarded once per semester in the form of a specific sum, from \$500 to \$2,000, the scholarship allows students to complete their financial process and enroll at Andrews.

Communication about both funds was sent out this spring via emails, phone calls and social media to alumni and other willing individuals. In response, since April 2020, 532 donors have given gifts totaling nearly \$1 million. Thanks to this generosity, 460 students received essential financial assistance from one of the two funds.

Another student recipient of the President's Student Scholarship Fund, José Antonio Alegria II, joined the Andrews community this past fall as a freshman in pre-Nursing. José has a passion for his chosen career, community service and cars, and he recalls that he "wanted to come here [Andrews] since I was young." As he researched, it became clear that Andrews was the place that would foster the career he wanted to pursue.

He received the news of the scholarship at 2:30 a.m. the morning of his

journey from Chicagoland to Berrien Springs, remembering how he had to wait until the rest of his family awoke to share the good news. José admits, "I was feeling kind of scared and excited for this new college experience. This scholarship really reassured me and motivated me to put in more hard work."

One of his favorite things about campus so far has been the experience of meeting new people. He enthuses, "I love the campus, and the people here are great! I love the diversity." José is excited about the future and grateful for the part his scholarship has paid in helping him pursue his academic journey and future career.

Graduate student Zuzai Hizoke journeyed to Andrews with his family from Papua New Guinea in 2017, believing that the school has been blessed with two especially great things: the best professors and the best library. After completing prerequisites, he is now a first-year student pursuing a Ph.D. in missions with a cognate in religious education and discipleship — and has experienced firsthand the financial difficulty in being an international student from a country with such a small economy. He affirms, "The scholarship came at a time when I really needed a miracle ... It was relieving especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its serious effects. I can say, this timely scholarship has helped me to stay more focused on

my studies and not to worry about my fees. That is how powerful such timely assistance can be."

Zuzai participates as an active member of the campus community through preaching, Sabbath schools and Bible studies and plans to teach and minister back at home once he has obtained his degree. He and his family have a motto for when they leave Andrews: "Wherever the Lord calls." They remain open to God's guidance in future journeys.

For the time being, Zuzai voices his gratitude for Andrews. "Remember, it may be one of those normal things you do to give out scholarships like this to the so many that come your way, but please, be reminded, to some of us, it is a big thing — something that the family and our folks back home celebrate. It speaks highly of this country and its citizens and, more importantly, the University." He adds, "May I say, thank you to the masterminds behind this scholarship and prayers that our good Lord will continue to guide, lead and bless you all."

Individuals who are interested in giving to the President's Student Scholarship Fund can visit andrews.edu/go/give/pres. To contribute to the Student Life COVID-19 Emergency Fund, visit andrews.edu/go/give/studentlifeCOVID19. ■

Isabella Koh, University Communication student writer